

# Range Conservationist (GS-11)

## Major Duties

A Forest Service Range Conservationist (GS-11) is responsible for planning, coordinating, reviewing and reporting on the range management program within a Forest Service Unit. A Range Conservationist's job involves;

- Managing range vegetation to achieve other resource objectives such as protecting vegetation for big game winter ranging, and for promoting ecological diversity for a wider variety of uses.
- Reviewing range conditions with people having permits to use rangeland, in order to resolve management problems.
- Studying, inspecting, and analyzes range resource conditions and determining alternative range management practices.
- Helping plan the overall unit's land use strategies for multiple uses of unit lands.
- Preparing plans based on resource needs, available work force, equipment and budget situations, and public demands for using the land.
- Preparing/ reviewing environmental analysis reports and applications for permits.
- Resolving disputes between wildlife and livestock needs on rangelands.
- Meeting with the general public to represent the District Ranger.

This career includes many different assignments and involves making recommendations about many resource areas. A Forest Service Range Conservationist served on interdisciplinary teams studying how best to use and care for the land. This person also acts as the District Ranger in the latter's absence. The Range Conservationist also supervises other employees. This can require monitoring employee performance, conducting performance appraisals, developing budgets, coordinating staff efforts, etc.

## A Typical Day

Martin took a job with the Forest Service after graduating with a college degree in biology. He has been with the Forest Service for 22 Years, working in many different jobs during that time. He's been a soil scientist, Hydrologist Technician, Heavy Equipment Operator, and Range Technician before becoming a Range Conservationist (GS-11).

Martin's typical day is a long one. Since he supervised five employees and spends many hours in meetings and out in the field checking rangeland conditions and preparing reports and recommendations. It is not uncommon for him to put in 12 to 14 hour work days.

That might sound like a lot of work, but martin loves his job. He gets to do so many things throughout the typical day that time speeds past. One minute he's checking on the progress his employees have made on their range management assignments, the next minute he's on the phone to region headquarters giving input on new Forest Service policies. Then, he's off to a meeting with the public and land users about multiple-use planning.

## Range Conservationist

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## Knowledge and Education

A college degree is recommended for those interested in becoming a Forest Service Range Conservationist. Courses leading to a college degree in Range Conservation include

- Soil Science
- Wildlife Management
- Mathematics
- Physical Science (Earth Science)
- Geology
- Hydrology
- Psychology and Human Relations

## Career Path

Jobs that lead to becoming a Range Conservationist (GS-11) include

- **Student Trainee (Range Conservationist GS-4)** – This is a student trainee position under a cooperative education agreement with a college or university. The person holding this job participates in many on-the-job training activities to increase their basic knowledge of the job as practiced in the Forest Service. Types of things this person does include
  - Counting livestock and inspecting grazing allotments on rangeland.
  - Explaining grazing permits standards to users.
  - Inspecting water development, fences, proper distribution of livestock.
  - Assisting in range analysis (recording types of vegetation, soil classification, etc.).
- **Range Conservationist (GS-5)** – the person in this position is a basic trainee receiving on-the-job training. They assist in various range conservation activities including
  - Contacting and monitoring those with permits to use the rangeland.
  - Explaining permit terms to the permit tee.
  - Preparing reports about grazing actives.
- **Range Technician (GS-7)** – Types of things this person does include
  - Helping develop range management plans and programs.
  - Collecting data about range use and grazing allotments.
  - Gathering information about forage density, population, and rate of vegetation growth, soil depth, compaction, and erosion.