



Career Spotlight

Forest Service
Career Pathways



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Forest entomology is the management of insects in a forest ecosystem and in wood products. Entomologists in the Forest Health Protection unit of the Forest Service respond to damaging insects and focus on maintaining or restoring healthy forests.

David Mausel Forest Entomologist

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Which of your talents or skills contributes most to your work and why? A good education in sciences like biology, physics, statistics, economics, chemistry, mathematics, geology and botany is fundamental. Forestry and entomology education in college coupled with outdoor work experience, knowledgeable mentors, keen observation of the natural world, and critical thinking are important as well.

What is a challenge you have encountered in your position? How do land managers respond to a damaging insect when little is known about its biology? This is often the case with nonnative invasive species. By investigating the insect and environmentally safe ways to reduce its damage, we can help protect our forests.

What is an example of technology or equipment that you use in your work? A mentor of mine once said, "If you are going to work with bark beetles, you better be good with a chainsaw." Chainsaws can be used to cut down and remove infested trees to stop an outbreak and save neighboring trees.

What has been your most exciting project?

I was fortunate to work on a project in college investigating bark beetles in Chile, a country in South America. We determined how to prevent bark beetles from colonizing logs bound for export. This prevents the introduction of nonnative insects to other countries.

When did you know this career would be a good fit for you?

An internship surveying the damage caused by the hemlock woolly adelgid in Connecticut showed me the devastating impacts invasive insects can have on our forest ecosystems. I knew I wanted to help conserve forests and saw many opportunities in the field of entomology for discovery.

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