



As a geologist for the Prescott National Forest, I review mining proposals from small mineral extractions to large quarries. I assist with identifying abandoned mines for future closures, inspecting existing projects, and conducting site visits.

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Frances Alvarado Geologist

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Career Pathways



Which of your talents or skills contributes most to your work and why?

Being patient with the public is an important skill. Some members of the public are novices to mining, which may require guidance from my end to help with their proposal prior to submittal/acceptance. It's important to develop a good rapport with the public on the administration of projects prior to approval.

What is a challenge you have encountered in your position? I attended a local public meeting with several coworkers. The project was contentious and involved the presence of three law enforcement officers. When the meeting got heated, and some members of the public were getting upset, it was important that I kept my cool.

What is an example of technology or equipment that you use in your work? For collecting Global Positioning System (GPS) data, the Avenza app is on my work phone and contains several topographic maps. Maps are created using the ArcGIS Pro software. Be field-ready with essentials: hiking boots, hat, sunglasses, water, map printout, etc. You may need a four-wheel drive vehicle because forest roads can be rough.

What has been your most exciting project?

I assisted with a Superfund cleanup on our forest. The site had abandoned equipment, structures, and containers of known/unknown chemicals. I coordinated with many personnel: attorneys, law enforcement, and personnel at different levels.

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

My grade school teacher occasionally referenced the Grand Tetons in class. Later, I took an introduction to geology course as an elective, loved it, and made it my college major. I finally saw the Tetons while attending field camp in Wyoming.

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