

# AMERICA'S RAIN FORESTS

## A DISTANCE LEARNING ADVENTURE

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### Working in Forests

The Forest Service is a part of the United States government. The United States government is often called the federal government. The federal government is made up of many departments and agencies. Each department addresses different types of needs on behalf of the Nation's citizens. You might be familiar with some of these department names, such as the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Defense. The Forest Service is a part of the Department of Agriculture. As an agency of the Department of Agriculture, the Forest Service is concerned with the Nation's forests and grasslands.



You can learn more about the federal government by visiting <http://www.usa.gov/>. You can also check out the Department of Agriculture's Kid's Page. To learn more about the Forest Service, keep reading!

The Forest Service has three main branches. The largest branch consists of people who care for 155 national forests and 20 grasslands. National forests and grasslands are very large natural areas that are owned by the public, including you! This largest branch is called the National Forest System. The second branch works with your State government and people and businesses that are concerned with forests in your area. This branch is called State and Private Forestry. The third branch of the Forest Service consists of scientists and others who conduct research to discover new things about our natural environment. This branch is called Research and Development.

The Forest Service also has an Office of International Programs. Through this office, the Forest Service works in 59 countries around the globe. When working internationally, the Forest Service works with foreign governments, universities, non-profits organizations, and businesses. Their goal is to help forests around the world become and stay as healthy as possible while providing forest products to improve the lives of people.

The Forest Service is led by an individual who is called the Chief of the Forest Service. Chief Dale N. Bosworth leads the Forest Service today. He wants everyone to learn about the Forest Service!

#### **The National Forest System**

The National Forest System consists of people who care for the Nation's 155 national forests and 20 grasslands. These lands belong to YOU and to all American citizens. Together, national forests and grasslands cover 200 million acres of land. This is an area equal to the States of New York, West Virginia, Alabama, Wyoming, and Oregon combined. To view a map of national forests and grasslands, visit National Forest map (<http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/map/finder.shtml>) To learn more about recreation opportunities on the national forests.

National forests and grasslands provide a lot of benefits to you and to all Americans. You probably never think about most of these benefits. Large areas

of forest and grassland provide clean water for human use and for other animals and plants. Forests and grasslands also provide places for you and your family and friends to visit, so that you can do fun things like hiking, camping, and canoeing. National forests provide trees, some of which will be used for houses, chairs, and tables. National forests also help to keep our air cleaner and they provide homes for animals that live in the wild.



You can see that by having national forests and grasslands now and in the future, you and other people will have cleaner water and air, places to have fun in the outdoors, more animals to watch and enjoy, and products that can make your life better.

### **State and Private Forestry**

Have you ever had a question about how to plant and care for a tree? State and Private Forestry works with people in your State, who in turn help you by answering your questions. This branch of the Forest Service works with all kinds of people in your State, including businesses and people who own forest land. When you have a question about forests in your State, you can contact your state government. The Forest Service is there behind the scene, helping your state to help you.

You can learn more about your State forestry agency by visiting <http://www.stateforesters.org>. Go to the "State Forestry Home Pages" to find your state's forestry agency.

### **Research and Development**

Research and Development is made up of scientists and others who solve problems and discover new things about our Nation's natural environment. The Forest Service has the largest group of such scientists in the world! The Natural Inquirer presents the research of some of these scientists.

### **How People Relate To and Use Things from the Land**

People use the natural environment for many purposes. For example, they like to have fun in the outdoors and they like to use wood products. They like to visit parks, and they like to watch wildlife. Sometimes money is involved when people use natural resources, and sometimes the use of the land has nothing to do with money. The Forest Service studies the ways that people use things from the land, as well as the value the natural environment has for them.

### **Using and Protecting Trees and Other Plants**

You know that it is important to have trees and forests to help clean the air, protect the water, provide products and places for people to visit, and to provide homes for animals that live in the wild. Forest Service scientists study the relationship of trees and plants to other living and non-living things in the environment. Some of the things they study are the good and bad effects of fire and insects, the way all the parts of the natural environment interact, and how the climate affects the Nation's trees, plants, animals, and forests.

### **Animals in the Wild**

#### **Fish, Water, and the Atmosphere**

Forest Service scientists study the natural environment where animals live. The place that an animal lives is called its habitat. Forest Service scientists study many kinds of animal habitats, but they are often concerned with animals whose existence is threatened or actually in danger. Other things that they study include the Nation's fresh water. This is the water that is found in streams, rivers, lakes, and even underground. Forest Service scientists also study the role of air quality in the health of forests and people, now and into the future.

**Describing the Nation's Natural Environment**

Have you ever listed and counted your possessions? Why is it important for you to know how many things you have, and what kind of shape they are in? The Forest Service does the same thing with the Nation's natural environment. The Forest Service has been doing this since 1930 (How many years have they been doing this?). They do this to understand what kind of trees and other natural resources that we have in this country. The Forest Service also wants to know how healthy our natural environment is.

**Deputy Chief for Research and Development**

Forest Service scientists are led by an individual called the Deputy Chief. The Deputy Chief helps the scientists to determine what is important to study. The Deputy Chief also tells the United States President and Congress about the new things Forest Service scientists are learning about our Nation's natural environment.

(NOTE: This information was taken from <http://www.naturalinquirer.org/>.)