



Lead Forester

Posted Date: February 14, 2024

Closing Date: Open until filled; early application encouraged

Work Arrangement: Hybrid position based in the Arkansas River Basin, some office work and travel required

Job Classification: Full-Time, Hourly (Non-Exempt)

Location: Salida, Colorado (or nearby community)

Supervisor: Executive Director

Compensation: \$29-32/hour (\$60,320-\$66,560/year)

Position Overview

The Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative (ARWC) seeks a motivated individual to manage and advance forest health projects across the Arkansas River Basin. The Lead Forester plays a pivotal role in the organization, managing ARWC's robust forestry program, including wildfire risk reduction, fuels mitigation, and fire and flood projects. This position requires a mix of field expertise, program development, and community collaboration.

To date, ARWC has completed hundreds of acres of forest health and wildfire risk reduction projects in close partnership with Federal and State agencies, municipalities, and other nonprofit organizations. The Lead Forester will focus primarily on the Upper Arkansas Basin (Lake, Fremont, Chaffee, Custer, and Teller Counties) but may work throughout the basin as projects are developed.

About Us

ARWC champions watershed health initiatives for economic, ecological, and societal benefit throughout Colorado's Arkansas River Basin. We create resilient and healthy watersheds, build networks of informed and active community members, and provide expertise and support in the wake of wildfires. Together, we're not just envisioning—we're actively building—a sustainable legacy for the Arkansas River Basin. Discover more at arkcollaborative.org.

Location

To best serve the needs of our basin, ARWC employees are located throughout the organization's service territory. Staff work from home offices and travel to project sites when necessary. We also have dedicated office space at Colorado Mountain College in Salida, Colorado. Forestry projects occur throughout the basin and current focus areas include Lake County, Teller County, and the Wet Mountains region. The successful candidate will be expected to relocate to the Arkansas Basin within six months. Relocation assistance may be available to highly qualified candidates.

Core Responsibilities

Program Management (50%)

- Develop, implement, and manage complex fuels mitigation projects across federal, state, and private land.
- Coordinate with local communities to develop and implement sustainable mitigation programs.
- Serve as the forestry specialist, providing technical and educational information to the board, staff, partners, and the community through presentations, reports, and tours.
- Hire, train, and supervise staff and contractors as needed to maintain effective forestry program.

Program Development (25%)

- Develop, build, and maintain community partnerships to achieve wildfire risk reduction goals across wide geographical areas.
- Work with local communities and fire protection districts to develop and implement fire and flood mitigation planning (Community Wildfire Protection Plans, rapid assessment, etc.).
- Pursue funding opportunities in collaboration with ARWC staff and partners, including grant writing and fundraising from key stakeholders.
- Complete forest management activities including forest inventory, risk assessments, project layout and design, tree marking, and skid trail designation in accordance with best management practices and in compliance with funder requirements.
- Explore and implement innovative forest health treatments and slash management ideas.

Monitoring and Evaluation (15%)

- Manage contractors and conduct site visits to determine project efficacy and to ensure compliance with funder requirements.
- Collect and manage project data and provide reports and data to funding organizations when requested.
- Utilize current technologies to streamline field data collection, data analysis, project monitoring, and data management.

Administrative & Other Duties (10%)

- Work with the Executive Director and board to develop and monitor the forestry program budget.
- Supervise other staff on forestry-related projects in the field and office.
- Provide reports to staff, board, and partners.
- Assist with the development of grants and other relevant fundraising activities.

Who you are:

- You have at least two years of relevant experience and hold a Bachelor's or Associate's degree in forestry.
- You are skilled in managing multiple tasks and projects and are capable of meeting deadlines in a fast-paced and demanding environment.
- You have demonstrated knowledge of forest health treatment prescriptions in multiple forest and terrain types found in the Arkansas Basin.
- You have experience with Microsoft Office, Google Suite, and other typical office software
- You possess a valid driver's license and are open to travel using a personal vehicle, as necessary, to perform work-related activities (travel expenses are reimbursed).
- You possess the physical ability to hike through Colorado's varied landscapes and travel via vehicle over rough terrain, sometimes in remote locations and in varying weather conditions. You are able and willing to work in various settings, including office, vehicle, and outdoors, and are able to carry up to 50 pounds for 100 feet.

Preferred Attributes:

- Master's degree in forestry or related field.
- Experience leading forestry projects in a collaborative environment.
- Experience using tools and chainsaws (or willingness to learn).
- Proficiency with ESRI, GPS, and data collection apps (ArcGIS Collector, Survey123) and experience with online platforms for grant applications and report submissions.

Joining ARWC means...

- A chance to be part of a small but mighty team with opportunities to grow and learn.
- A significant role in a nonprofit that's making a tangible impact on the Arkansas River Basin's future.
- A position with travel and the flexibility of a hybrid work arrangement, including a dedicated office space in Salida.

Compensation and Benefits

This is a full-time, hourly position with an average of 40 hours/week. Compensation is commensurate with qualifications and experience, but we anticipate hiring between \$29 and \$32/hour. ARWC offers a generous benefits package, including health insurance, life and disability insurance, paid time off (sick, vacation, holidays), SIMPLE IRA matching contributions, and flexible work arrangements.

How to Apply: This position is open until filled. Early applications are strongly recommended. Applicants should submit 1) a cover letter, 2) resume (max 3 pages), and 3) list of 3 references (in a single pdf) by e-mail to jobs@arkcollaborative.org with the subject line "Lead Forester". References will only be contacted if you are selected for a final interview.

Please respond to the following questions in your cover letter

1. Why does forestry and watershed protection work in the Arkansas basin matter to you?
2. Please describe your experience relevant to the position's core responsibilities.
3. Why are you interested in working for ARWC?