

1. WHAT IS FORESTRY?

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) defines forestry as the science, art, and craft of creating, managing, using, conserving, and repairing forests and associated resources in a sustainable manner to meet desired goals, needs, and values for human benefit. This broad discipline includes specialized areas such as agroforestry, urban forestry, industrial and procurement forestry, and utility forestry.

2. WHY IS FORESTRY AN IMPORTANT DISCIPLINE?

Forests are an important renewable natural resource and must be managed in a sustainable manner so that future generations can benefit from a broad array of forest products and ecosystem services. The practice of forestry has many useful outcomes such as: producing timber as raw material for wood products, improving wildlife habitat, supplying high quality water, providing recreational opportunities, creating aesthetically appealing landscapes, maintaining biodiversity, controlling soil erosion, and preserving forests as sinks for atmospheric carbon dioxide.

3. WHAT CAREER OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE TO GRADUATES?

There are five main career paths that Glenville State College (GSC) forestry graduates have traditionally taken. These include procurement forestry, forestry consulting, state government, federal government and utility forestry. Procurement forestry is where a forester buys timber for a wood manufacturer such as a sawmill, paper mill, biomass energy mill or engineered wood manufacturer. Traditionally, most of our graduates have pursued this career path. The demand for employees from these manufacturers fluctuates with the construction industry and overall economy. Forestry consulting is a forester or group of foresters working independently by contract for a forestland owner. Many large tracts of forestland are owned by corporations that hire forestry consultants to manage the forestland. After a couple years of experience you could open a forestry consulting business and be your own boss! Graduates could also start their own timber harvesting business as well. The WV Division of Forestry has employed many GSC graduates over the years. Employees work in one of three areas: landowner assistance, fire protection or logging compliance. There are a number of federal agencies that employ GSC alumni including the USDA Forest Service, US Army Corps of Engineers, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and National Park Service. The last career path is utility forestry which includes working for power companies managing the right of ways along power lines and in recent years, opportunities in the oil and gas industries in West Virginia have increased.

4. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FORESTERS AND FOREST TECHNICIANS?

According to the SAF, foresters typically spend their time in forest resource planning and development, management and supervision, and policy and program administration. They often work as part of a team with other professionals such as wildlife biologists or planners. Forest technicians spend their time cruising timber, laying out timber sales, supervising logging and tree planting crews and conducting prescribed burns.

5. WHAT TASKS DO FORESTERS AND FOREST TECHNICIANS PERFORM ON THE JOB?

Some of the tasks that foresters and forest technicians carry out include:

- Develop forest management plans
- Advise private forest landowners
- Work to keep forests healthy and sustainable
- Supervise timber harvesting operations
- Buy timber for a manufacturing plant
- Measure and appraise forestland and trees
- Create reports and maps
- Use global positioning systems to collect data
- Use geographic information systems to manage information
- Fight and prevent wildfires
- Identify and plant trees

6. WHAT IS THE JOB PLACEMENT RATE OF GSC GRADUATES?

Over the past few years, 81 – 86% of all graduates from GSC have gotten a full time job. Most of the remaining graduates work part-time, seasonally or are employed temporarily. The job placement rate for forest technology graduates is generally about the same or higher. A relatively low proportion of forest technology graduates enter careers other than forestry due to personal reasons.

7. WHAT ARE THE SALARY RANGES?

According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, most foresters who have several years work experience earn between \$43,000 and \$65,000 annually. In West Virginia, starting salaries generally range from \$30,000 - \$45,000 depending on the type of career path the graduate chooses and the characteristics of individual students.

8. WHAT ABOUT SUMMER EMPLOYMENT/INTERNSHIPS?

All students are required to complete a summer internship. This normally occurs in the first summer of the program. The student has to complete 320 hours of forestry work, submit bi-weekly reports and be evaluated by their employer. Typically, students obtain paid internships with private companies or government agencies. These internships are a valuable experience where students apply what they have learned during the academic year. Frequently, the internship can lead to full time job offers and are good ways to explore the various career paths within the forestry discipline.

9. I LIKE THE OUTDOORS, IS FORESTRY THE JOB FOR ME?

Most starting forestry positions require a large percentage of time working in the forest. Many positions require that 50 - 90% of the work week be spent in the field. Generally, field work is required regardless of the weather or forest conditions. So, during the course work at GSC, we spend a lot of time in the forest preparing you for your career.

10. IS THERE ANY SPECIAL EQUIPMENT I NEED FOR THE COURSES?

A pair of OSHA compliant logging boots is required during the second year Timber Harvesting class. Field clothing and footwear suitable for mountainous terrain and variable weather conditions are recommended for outdoor field classes. Other equipment used in field exercises is supplied by the college.

11. HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO GET MY DEGREE?

The degree is designed to be completed in two years if students are fully prepared with adequate math and language skills and are attending college full time. For students who need Developmental Math or English classes, it will take 3 years to complete the degree program due to prerequisites in the Forest Measurements class. Students need good math skills to complete Forest Measurements. Tutoring sessions are available in Math and English.

12. WHAT FOUR YEAR DEGREES ARE AVAILABLE?

Students who wish to obtain a bachelor degree can do so by continuing their education at GSC. We offer a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Management with a Forestry Technology concentration. This degree program can be completed in 2 additional years after you earn your associate degree. So within four years a student can earn two degrees. Students take additional classes in management, natural resources and the natural sciences.

13. I'M IN HIGH SCHOOL NOW. WHAT CLASSES SHOULD I BE TAKING TO PREPARE?

You need to take classes that will prepare you for college such as geometry, algebra, biology, and other science classes. If high school forestry classes are available in your area, then you should take those.

14. HOW DO I OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION ABOUT APPLYING TO GSC, FINANCIAL AID, AND THE PROGRAM?

The easiest way to apply for admission is online at: <https://www.glenville.edu/apply/index.php> . Financial aid information is available here: http://www.glenville.edu/financial_aid/index.php . Additional information about the forest technology program can be obtained from the Land Resources department at 304-462-4135 or http://www.glenville.edu/academics/land_resources.php Please contact us to schedule a tour of our campus and facilities and to meet with faculty members.