

Boots in the Forest

NURSERY MANAGER

Hi, I'm Clark Fleege, nursery manager for the Lucky Peak Nursery on the Boise National Forest.

Where were you when this photo was taken?

I was standing in one of the nursery's greenhouses where we grow seedlings of native trees and shrubs.

What were you doing that day?

I did a variety of things on this day, including directing some of our nursery staff on a project, working on administrative duties, and tending to our seedlings growing in the greenhouses.



What kind of training or education do you need for this job?

We tend to hire foresters, biologists, botanists, and horticulturists. We look for people who have a commitment to produce plants for the restoration of public land. The nature of this work is pretty complex and we need people who can adapt to change. Nursery employees need to know how to research and produce plants requested from a large portion of the western U.S.

What is a typical day for you?

Part of my time is spent managing the administrative portion of the nursery, processing orders, and so forth. But I really enjoy being outside, working on seed planting, packaging seedlings to be shipped, or planting fields of sagebrush. While the job, from a year-to-year perspective seems routine, every day is different.

What kind of footwear do you typically wear?

Maine hunting boots are my footwear of choice for working in the nursery—rubber on the bottom to handle the mud and leather on top to increase stability.



Clark's Maine hunting boots

What do you like most about your job?

It's very rewarding to be part of the Forest Service side of nursery management because I'm helping with the restoration of public land. We provide plants for land management, meaning that we get the chance to play an active role in the restoration of the western U.S.

If you had to pick another occupation, what would it be?

I have the best job in the outfit.

"I really believe in public lands. As employees of the Forest Service, we are charged with proper land management. We are stewards of the land, and it is up to us to assist by doing our jobs in the most cost effective manner that will benefit current and future generations."

[Read more](#)

NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM NURSERIES

- *Charles E. Bessey Nursery
Halsey, Nebraska*
- *Coeur d'Alene Nursery
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho*
- *J. Herbert Stone Nursery
Central Point, Oregon*
- *James W. Toumey
Watersmeet, Michigan*
- *Lucky Peak Nursery
Boise, Idaho*
- *Placerville Nursery
Camino, California*

The first Forest Service nursery was established in 1902 to provide seedlings to the Nebraska National Forest. From there, the nursery program expanded to include facilities across the United States. Nursery growth was particularly rapid during the Great Depression to provide seedlings for the Civilian Conservation Corps reforestation efforts and soil erosion mitigation. The Forest Service maintains six operating nurseries today, continuing to advance the reforestation science for National Forests and other public lands. Click [here](#) to learn more about the Forest Service nursery program.



Checking the progress of young seedlings
at Lucky Peak Nursery, 1970