

Boots in the Forest

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS



Hi, I'm Paula Bailey. I've been the Regional Forester's Executive Assistant for 5½ years. My official title is Program Specialist.



Hi, I'm Kim Cornwall, Staffing Assistant for the Deputy Regional Foresters. I was here on a detail before taking this job about a month ago.



Hi, I'm Tamara Minnock, Secretary to the Regional Forester's Office. I've been working in this office for 5½ years.

What kind of skills do you need for your jobs?

You need to have superb customer service skills, for internal customers and as well as externals such as Congressmen. This includes the ability to communicate well (verbally and in writing), to respond promptly, and to be friendly and kind. A professional appearance, telephone etiquette, and good manners are important. You also need to know how to type, to use MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint, and to learn new systems such as our travel and correspondence programs.

What kind of footwear do you typically wear?

We spend 99% of our time in the office so we wear formal but comfortable shoes. We also have uniforms and proper footwear for the field.

What do you like most about your job?

Paula: I like knowing what is happening in the agency and why. Listening to people throughout the day is part of the job because we need to know what's going on. It's very interesting to hear about what we're doing regionally and nationally. It provides a perspective of where Region 4 fits in the national scheme of things.

Tamara: My favorite part is the people. Our employees are the ones who help us meet the Forest Service mission of caring for the land and serving people. If I can provide that little piece to help them, I'm happy.



Paula, Tamara, and Kim wear nice sandals to the office in the hot summer months.

Kim: When I fly, I like to ask the person next to me about their job because I always learn something interesting. It's a similar situation here, especially during the morning "stand-up" meetings when the Regional Forester's Team and the Directors talk about what's going on in their corners. I also like it when they're all content at the end of the day and can go home without stressing about tomorrow.

Have you had any special experiences with the Forest Service?

Paula: Yes, when I was the Ashley National Forest's property manager for a time, I spent two summers visiting and numbering every building. It was great to be out in the field. I knew where every single building was.

Tamara: While I was detailed to the Ogden Ranger District as a Support Services Specialist, I went on a few ride-alongs with most of the employees. I was able to see the District and what we do as an Agency. I enjoyed going out into the field and learning about the different aspects of what we do.

Kim: My special experiences have included learning about the Forests, understanding the people and forest needs, and being a part of such a wonderful agency.

Where else have you worked?

Kim: I started my federal career with the IRS in Ogden. I also worked for the US Postal Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the US Geo Survey before joining the Forest Service. I was the executive assistant for three Forest Supervisors on the Caribou-Targhee National Forest before coming here.

Paula: Twenty-four years ago, I began working for the Forest Service as a frontliner on the Ashley NF's Duchesne Ranger District. I held other positions on that forest: resource clerk, purchasing agent, human resources assistant, and executive assistant for three Forest Supervisors. I had attended a small business college that prepared me for all of those jobs because it included coursework in computers, accounting, English, and more.

"I love that—at the end of the day—I have helped people get things done. Accomplishing that makes my day." – Tamara

Tamara: I had a variety of customer service jobs. Because my husband was in the military and we moved a lot. I was a manager/supervisor of a tax office before I joined the Forest Service 5½ years ago.

What do you like to do outside of work?

Kim: I love reading, writing, and spending time with my 13-year-old Labrador. He's a great dog and we go on three walks a day.

Tamara: I like to read, hike, camp, and spend time with my family and dogs. I'm also active in the Family Readiness Group, which provides support to Army Reservists.

Paula: I like going with my husband on his fishing trips and I read a lot. I also enjoy visiting my friend's ranch and riding horses or hiking.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS OF THE PAST

In the Forest Service's first decades, executive assistants were called clerks. The majority were men although women held a few positions. In 1924, the 55 clerks in Region 4 held a convention in Ogden to discuss "the underlying principles of their work." The Ogden paper provided an agenda:

The program for the first day is to be as follows: Opening of the meeting from 9 to 9:15 a. m. with brief address by District Forester Rutledge. "Appraisal of the Forest Clerk's Job," to be presented by A. L. Moats of the Challis national forest; "The Ability of Male Clerks Compared to Female Clerks," R. F. Bowman of the Sawtooth national forest and Margaret E. Jensen of the Cache national forest; typewriting speed test (entries for the test are to be from the field clerks and the district office clerks); "The Selection of Clerks," discussion to be led by R. W. Strong of the Boise national forest; "What Clerks May Expect Under Reclassification," by Allan Richards of the Great Basin experiment station; "Filing in Supervisor's Office," Mrs. June P. Allen of the Boise national forest.