

Land Surveyor (GS-11)

Major Duties

A Forest Service Land Surveyor has the responsibility for Surveying National Forest land to identify, locate, and mark property boundaries of National Forest lands. A Forest Service land surveyor's job involves;

- Planning and directing complex survey projects concerning boundary disputes, title claims for certain portions of the land, engineering surveys, and right-of-way surveys
- Recommending solutions for such things as mining claims, homestead surveys, and right-of-way surveys
- Providing help for other Forest Service employees on technical issues and offering advice with boundary issues (recommending policies and procedures, recommending which survey methods to use, offering legal interpretations)
- Working with government officials, property owners, land surveyors, and others to get information about previous surveyors affecting Forest Service property lines
- Supervising other members of the Forest Service survey crews
- Writing legal reports related to land surveys
- Maintaining files about Forest Service land

Being a Land Surveyor requires working behind a desk and in the field. A Land Surveyor may work outside in cold or hot weather, walking long distances over rough and uneven land. Someone in this job should enjoy being in the outdoors. The job may also require long periods of standing; a person at this level may also supervise other employees (this can require monitoring employee performance, conducting performance appraisals, developing budgets, coordinating staff efforts, etc).

A Typical Day

DeWayne worked his way up through the ranks in the Forest Service from being a Surveying Aid (GS-3) to his present job as a Land Surveyor. He spends a lot of time behind the desk now, although when the situation requires, he'll get out in the field to meet with his crew.

Today started out pretty normal. DeWayne had planned to meet with other Forest Service managers to go over a request from the local power company for a right-of-way to run a high power electric transmission line through Forest Service land. He was just finishing up a report and recommendation on the request when one of his crew members called in from the field. It seemed that a local rancher was packing a shotgun and making a fuss about the survey crew being on his land – when they were actually doing a survey on National Forest land.

DeWayne thought this sounded enough for him to get out to the area right away. He asked his assistant to cancel the right-of-way meeting, and DeWayne began searching the files for survey documents to show the rancher. By the time he'd found the documents and made it out to the site, the rancher was pretty mad. DeWayne asked him to calm down and together they looked at the survey documents to try and resolve the dispute. After going over the documents, it became clear that more investigation was needed in order to solve the problem. DeWayne told the rancher that he'd get right on it in the morning and call him with an answer to the problem by the afternoon. DeWayne told his crew to pack up their gear and head back to the field office – and that he'd "have another project for them in the morning"

Knowledge and Education

A college degree is recommended for those interested in becoming a Forest Service Land Surveyor. Useful courses include;

- Advance Mathematics
- Computer Programming and Operation of Programmable calculators
- Physical Science (Earth Science)
- Statistics
- Geology

Career Path

Those interested in becoming a Land Surveyor should seek out summer jobs during their schooling in order to get a good idea of what the career offers. In addition to summer employment, there are some jobs that lead to becoming a Land Surveyor (GS-11):

- **Surveying Aid (GS-3)** – This person serves as a member of a Forest Service survey crew. Job duties include;
 - Holding a survey rod for taking measurements
 - Measuring the slope of the land and using special instruments
 - Cutting brush and small tress that block the line of site
 - Figuring out level and topographical data
- **Lead Surveying Technician (GS-5)** – This person leads a survey drew in carrying out different surveying assignments. Job duties include;
 - Instructing aides in doing certain tasks
 - Giving on-the-top training for new employees
 - Distributing work among crew members
 - Reporting on work accomplishments
 - Conducting simple surveying studies
 - Recording and calculating surveying data
 - Using scientific instruments to set right-of-ways and land lines
- **Land Surveyor (GS-7)** – Job Duties include;
 - Directing field surveying projects
 - Conducting studied to determine property ownership
 - Making sure field survey data is accurate
 - Writing survey reports and legal descriptions