



United States Department of Agriculture

RESOURCE ASSISTANTS PROGRAM

Winter 2022 Cohort



Forest Service

January 2022





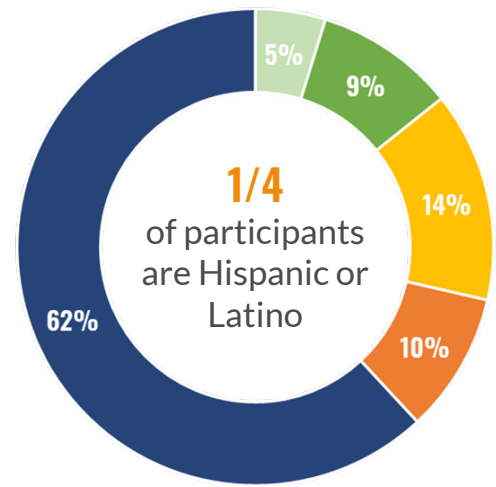
“The Resource Assistants Program is a unique opportunity to shape and influence the next generation of our workforce and exemplifies our core values of service, conservation, diversity, interdependence and safety. Working with partners the program is a resource to develop talented and diverse emerging professionals for natural resources and environmental careers with the Forest Service and in other sectors. Every new cohort presents an opportunity for the Forest Service to create new pathways in support of our workforce planning goals. Thank you to the Resource Assistants joining our team, and the Partners, host units and other staffs who make it possible.”

Tina Terrell, Associate Deputy Chief, National Forest System

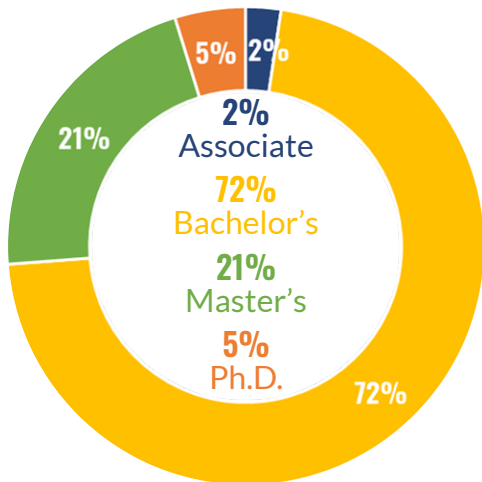
The **Resource Assistants Program** is a rigorous, immersive, paid development experience for emerging professionals.

Its primary goal is to **attract and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce for the Agency.**

Resource assistants **accomplish mission-critical work** in all areas while developing leadership, critical thinking, and strategic communication skills.



1/4
of participants
are Hispanic or
Latino

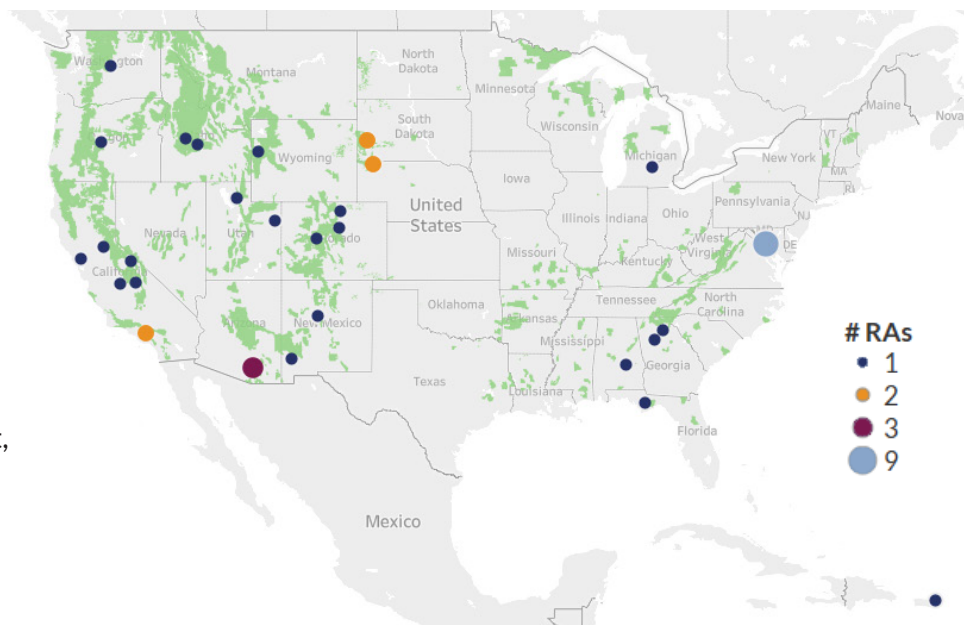


1 in 4
have, or are
working toward,
a graduate
degree

■ Asian
■ Multiracial*
■ Black or African American
■ Not Specified
■ White

* Multiracial is any combination of White, Asian, Black or African American, Native American or Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

The Winter 2022 Cohort will be working virtually and in person across six National Forest System Regions, Research and Development, and the Washington Office.



Hawaii

Rocky Mountain Region (R2)



JACKI DAILEY

Nebraska National Forests & Grasslands

B.S. Rangeland Management/Wildlife Management, Chadron State College

I enjoy both science and education, so my goal is to advance from the field to a wildlife leadership/mentor position with the Forest Service. I am excited to explore the work the Pine Ridge Ranger District is conducting on bats, natural re-habitation of mountain lions, elk, and introduction of bighorn sheep and black footed ferret. I love camping, backpacking in the mountains, cross country trips to National Parks and Forests, reading, crafts, and woodworking.



DAVID ESCALERA

Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands

B.A. Anthropology, San Jose State University

I aspire to be in a position where I can contribute to the preservation of artifacts and historical sites. I hope that my work can further our understanding of history while also promoting the importance of sustaining and protecting our environment. I look forward to becoming familiar with the day-to-day duties and responsibilities of the U.S. Forest Service. Most of all, I look forward to doing work that I find fulfilling and meaningful. In my spare time, I enjoy reading and exercising.



ANNA KISTNER

White River National Forest

B.A. Geography, University at Buffalo

I aspire to pursue a career in recreation with the Forest Service. I enjoy solving management issues through analyzing data, collaborating with colleagues, and developing solutions in the field. I look forward to using my knowledge from previous seasonal positions, developing a wilderness permit system, and working with new people within the Aspen-Sopris District and beyond. I love mountain sports (especially trail running), yoga classes, and hand building at the community clay studio.



AMANDA GRACE SANTOS

Region 2 Regional Office, Recreation

M.A. Archaeology, Boston University

I am passionate about education on all scales, especially where it intersects with conservation efforts. In my research, I engage with landscape archaeology, cultural resource management, and conservation. I am excited to cultivate respectful relationships with local and Native communities and translate learning into strategies that benefit local and Native communities along the Continental Divide Trail. I enjoy horseback riding, reading, practicing yoga, and eating/cooking spicy foods.

Southwestern Region (R3)



JOSE LUIS DELGADO

Gila National Forest

B.S. Forestry/Wildlife (Geographic Information Systems), Western New Mexico University

My professional pursuits and aspirations are to begin my professional career in range/land management, become skilled and proficient at the job, and conserve the land for future generations. I look forward to being introduced to different folks within the range management department of the Gila National Forest and learning various management techniques and practices from more experienced folks on the forest. I love being outdoors, hunting, fishing, hiking, UTV riding, and wood working.



RHYANNA FLEMING

Coronado National Forest

B.A. Information Science and Arts (Computer Science), University of Arizona (in progress)

I aim to have a career that allows me to engage with my passions, like environmental issues. I find it important to be able to indulge my creative side in all aspects of life. In addition, I aspire to do work I find meaningful – labor that I can see benefits the people and causes I care about. I look forward to being able to play a part in the work the Forest Service does to protect our environment. I love art, politics, and technology. I spend most of my free time consuming and creating media.



KAITLYN OLSON

Region 3 Regional Office

B.S. Biology (Earth and Planetary Sciences), University of New Mexico

I aspire to pursue a career in conservation or biology in a federal or state entity and plan to go back to school to pursue a master's degree. I am looking forward to learning new skills, enhancing my knowledge in conservation, networking with professionals in the Forest Service, learning more about the agency, and exploring the education aspect of the agency and of conservation. I love camping, kayaking, paddle boarding, hiking, playing with my dog, reading, and watching movies.



LEA SCHRAM VON HAUPT

Coronado National Forest

B.A. Cultural Anthropology, Western Washington University

I would like to work in environmental planning for a federal land management agency. I look forward to learning from the Coronado National Forest team. I enjoy being outside and exploring as much as possible, on foot or on bike. I also enjoy baking and reading.



PHOENIX SPIVEY

Coronado National Forest

B.S. Environmental Science (Applied Ecology & Biological Sciences), North Carolina State University

My dream is to use my passion for soil, water quality, and watersheds to aid vulnerable/minority communities and ensure their voices are heard, especially in critical decisions affecting their land and livelihood. I look forward to sharpening my knowledge on Forest Service water rights and uses and the application of flow data and stream channel characteristics. I love to read, hike, collect rocks, and run away from my pet roosters.

Intermountain Region (R4)



ELIZABETH BJERKE

Sawtooth National Forest

B.S. Conservation of Natural Resources: Planning & Management, University of Idaho

My ideal profession is working for a federal agency that provides the opportunity to explore my passions in natural resources and help people while also helping conserve the environment. I look forward to acquiring new skills that will benefit my career, meeting new people, networking, and building professional relationships. I love camping, fishing, climbing mountains, and solo drives, but I also enjoy cross-stitch, makeup, listening to music, and spending time with friends and family.



HANNAH JACOBSEN

Bridger-Teton National Forest

B.S. Human Dimensions of Natural Resources, Colorado State University

I aspire to improve existing skill sets, develop lasting professional mentors, gain work experience with land management agencies, and ultimately pursue these roles in an international capacity. I'm looking forward to working with experienced professionals, networking, exploring the Bridger-Teton, and applying knowledge gained from my degree. In my spare time, I enjoy connecting with friends and family, traveling, hiking, and skiing. I love to read, bake, and pursue amateur photography.



COLESON KASTELIC

Ashley National Forest

M.S. Biology, University of Utah

I aspire to do something that is impactful and gets me outside sometimes. This could be doing land management work with the Forest Service or another agency. I am looking forward to learning new things and growing my professional career. I am excited to have this opportunity to work at the ranger district and get a diverse work experience. I love mountain biking, backpacking, and pretty much anything outdoors because that is where my passion is.



JOE PILOT

Boise National Forest

M.S. Recreation Administration, Indiana University, Bloomington

My professional aspirations include outdoor recreation and visitor access management. I hope to continue working with the public to ensure successful recreation opportunities. I look forward to the opportunity to help offer positive, quality experiences that align with conservation efforts and goals. I enjoy hiking, fishing, kayaking, and camping as well as many other outdoor activities. I also enjoy drawing and creating multimedia works and draw inspiration from our great national landscapes.



BEVERLEY THOMPSON

Region 4 Regional Office

B.A. Environment & Sustainability Studies (Sustainable Energy, Resources, and Climate) and B.A. International Studies (Global Development), Indiana University, Bloomington

I plan to earn a J.D. in environmental and sustainable development law and a master's in environmental policy. I aspire to represent the US at the UN Framework on Climate Change Conference. Academically, I'm interested in international environmental justice and sustainable development law. I enjoy reading, thrifting, and spending time in nature.

Pacific Southwest Region (R5)



OLIVIA BARNES

El Dorado National Forest

B.S. Environmental Science (Wildlife Habitat Management), Louisiana Tech University

I would like to work in a land management/habitat sustainability position. Currently, I am gaining skills and experiences to help me execute this goal in a well-rounded manner. I am passionate about contributing to the natural resources field. I look forward to learning how to properly utilize various land management techniques and methods and accrue more GIS experience. I enjoy traveling and seeing different parts of the world, being outdoors, hiking, longboarding, and beach days.



CHAD-MICHAEL GILBUENA

Sierra National Forest

B.S. Recreation Administration and Adventure Tourism, California State University Fresno (in progress)

I aspire to work in Natural Resource Management, whether it is offering adventure opportunities, managing land for recreation, or managing the financial aspects of the forest. I look forward to becoming familiar with the forest we operate on and learning how to manage the funds allocated to recreation and the Forest Service. I love rock climbing, mountaineering, backpacking, snow sports, and hiking.



YERCENIA GUTIERREZ

Angeles National Forest

M.A. Geographic Information Systems, Northeastern University

I would love to be part of something that makes a difference, big or small. I am looking forward to the hands-on experience I will have, as well as working alongside professionals in the field. I love to read (especially fiction) and listen to all kinds of music.



RAYMOND LOPEZ

Sequoia National Forest

B.S. Environmental Science, University of Nevada, Reno

I aim to work in land management for the Federal government, specifically in forest/fire management. I am most looking forward to learning from experienced professionals, as well as gaining experience in planning and implementing fuels treatments on the landscape. Generally, my interests include outdoor recreation (hiking, backpacking, trail running), ultimate frisbee, and cooking.



KAREN RAMIREZ

Angeles National Forest

M.S. Geographic Information Systems, California State University, Northridge (in progress)

I see myself completing my master's in Geographic Information Science and interpreting data and creating maps and infographics to relay important information to the public. My career goal is to lessen environmental impacts at the source and work on research to support ground-level work. I look forward to on-the-job training and networking with conservation professionals. I'm currently interested in hiking, crocheting, and drawing.



SYRI RUNYAN-ABANILLA

Region 5 Regional Office

B.A. Global and International Studies (Latin American Studies), Western Michigan University

I hope to someday become a Program Director for a conservation corps. I am really looking forward to learning all about the different opportunities that exist within the Forest Service. I worked alongside the Forest Service during my time with conservation corps but have only worked with trails and recreation. I enjoy multiple outdoor activities such as cycling, climbing and hiking. I also enjoy crocheting and cooking.



ALLEGRA TORRES

Inyo National Forest

B.S. Environmental Studies (Geology), University of North Carolina at Asheville

My life mission is to preserve and protect public lands for future generations. I look forward to making new connections with the local community and discovering what the Inyo National Forest has to offer. I enjoy long distance thru-hiking, foraging, herbalism, and shredding powder.

Pacific Northwest Region (R6)



LENNA CHERRY

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest

M.A. History (Public History), Southern New Hampshire University

I would like to enter a career in the field of Historical Preservation and/or research in order to help protect, identify, and inform about local/regional history. I am looking forward to the opportunities this position offers to expand my skill set within my chosen field. I am also excited to gain hands-on training to build upon my prior education. My hobbies include reading, drawing, gardening and playing board games. My interests include history, anthropology, theater, and music.



KYLER SPEICH

Deschutes National Forest

M.A. Sustainable Resource Management, University of Oregon (in progress)

My goal is to complete my master's degree and Ph.D. focusing on climate change and human migration, and ultimately work towards becoming a District Ranger. I look forward to helping citizens connect with nature in meaningful and sustainable ways and serving the public for the greatest good. I am a father of three children and spend a lot of time teaching my kids about the great outdoors, including rock climbing, hiking, and backpacking.

Southern Region (R8)



PAULA GARCÍA ALMODÓVAR

El Yunque National Forest

B.S. Integrative Biology, University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras

My goal is to integrate the participatory mechanisms I learned in Planning School in ecology and land management. I aspire to integrate different knowledge-based systems, like Indigenous knowledge, into managing our natural resources. Additionally, I want to be part of environmental education efforts in Puerto Rico and pursue a Ph.D. in Forestry. I love nature, hiking, the beach, outdoor activities, pursuing a sustainable lifestyle, and crafts courses on making candles, sewing, and making soaps.



DAVID JONES

Region 8 Regional Office, Resource Information Management

M.S. Geoscience, Murray State University

My goal since starting college was to gain employment in the Forest Service. After working for a year between degrees, I went to graduate school to earn an MS in GIS. I would ultimately like to attain a GIS position. I look forward to advancing my career and getting involved in other opportunities such as fire and administration. In my spare time, I like to do woodworking and timber framing with antique hand tools.



DERONTAE JORDAN

Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest

B.A. Criminal Justice, University of West Florida

My professional aspirations are to become a Law Enforcement Officer with the U.S. National Forest Service. I look forward to being able to take care of the forests and allowing others to safely use the forests as I did when I was younger. My hobbies revolve around being outdoors, especially hunting. I also love to cook.



WILLIAM MARRAPODI

National Forests in Alabama Supervisors Office

B.S. Environmental Science (Geology), Florida State University (in progress)

I hope to use my knowledge of aviation, conservation, and recreation together to have meaningful impact of how we interact with our green spaces. I am looking forward to learning how our greatest resources are being managed for the benefit of all. I love exploring nature by any means, especially camping and disc golf. I also love making art and music, especially with my children.



LINDSEY PARMETT

Apalachicola National Forest

B.S. Environmental Science, Florida State University

My professional aspiration is to receive a Ph.D. in environmental science or earth science. With this Ph.D., I would like to become a college professor. I most look forward to collaborating with others in my cohort and learning skills from my mentor. I am looking forward to making connections to further my knowledge in the field. Besides being an environmental scientist, I hike, practice yoga, scuba dive, and crochet. I also enjoy listening to and making music, reading, and writing.

Research & Development (R&D)



KYSON DUNN

Pacific Southwest Research Station

A.A. Tropical Forest Ecosystem & Agroforestry Management, Hawaii Community College

Mālama ‘Āina (caring for the land) is a part of my culture so I hope to gain the skills, experience, and qualifications to continue environmental work and help preserve nature. I would love to continue exploring Hawaii, discovering rare plants, and conducting projects that help the environment. I enjoy doing things that involve the sea, like swimming, spearfishing, body boarding, and body surfing.



MARGARET GREGORY

Washington Office, Knowledge and Communications Staff

M.A. Science Writing, Johns Hopkins University

I aim to support conservation and preservation by using engaging, empowering science writing to transport the public to natural lands and convince them to care about issues that aren't directly affecting them. I am excited to better hone my craft as a writer and reach a broader audience than I have before. My favorite activities are running through the hills and forests of the Nebraska National Forest, hanging out with my husband and cat, and attempting to garden, cook, and practice yoga.



CASSIDY MOTAHARI

Washington Office/Rocky Mountain Research Station

B.S. Wildlife & Fisheries Biology, University of Vermont

I'm passionate about environmental conservation, community outreach, and creative media and hope to share scientific research and land-management policies in an accessible, engaging, and relevant manner. I'm looking forward to learning about natural resource management in the Western United States and networking with others in the conservation field. In my free time, I can be found hiking, climbing, and exploring outside with my camera in hand, on the lookout for my next favorite camping spot.



PAULA MARIA SILVA

Rocky Mountain Research Station

B.A. Environmental and Earth Science and Sustainability, Miami University

I aspire to develop and strengthen my professional skills in the natural resource and environmental field, eventually pursuing a master's degree in sustainability management. I look forward to helping with science delivery at the Maintaining Resilient Dryland Ecosystems Lab, learning more about their research, and communicating the science to the general public. My hobbies include reading, baking, staying active, spending time outdoors, traveling, listening to music, and spending quality time with friends and family.



JAMILLE BRIANNA DOMINIQUE ST. HILAIRE

Washington Office

B.S. Sustainable Biomaterials, Purdue University (in progress)

I plan to create new technology or material that is sustainable and eco-friendly. In doing so, I aspire to be in research or a designer of these products and services. I am looking forward to diving into a more professional atmosphere and using the skills I've gained over my college career more extensively. I hope to learn more about the processes of what goes into research, as well as what I enjoy doing. I like to improve on my language skills, travel, and exercise.



PHILIP YANG

Rocky Mountain Research Station

B.S. Biology, Villanova University

I aspire to become a leading research scientist in coastal and marine sciences and eventually the director of a National Estuarine Research Reserve. I want to study and protect these ecosystems from climate change and anthropogenic impacts. I look forward to applying my scientific skills in a work environment to improve land management. I am passionate about outdoor activities like sailing, hiking, and camping. I grew up playing basketball and I still enjoy pick-up games where I can find them.



JULIA ZICK

Northern Research Station

B.S. Biology (Geology), Bowling Green State University

My goal is to contribute to important studies in the fight against invasive species, earn a master’s degree in forest ecology or a related field, and ultimately obtain a research-based job with the Forest Service. I look forward to expanding my horizons by focusing on entomological aspects of ash tree research, doing lab-based research, and networking with professionals with common interests. I enjoy listening to music, archery, kayaking, and taking pictures and finding new plants while hiking.

Washington Office (WO)



MARK ADAMS

Office of Sustainability and Climate

Ph.D. Geography, University of Wisconsin Madison

I aim to use GIS analysis to enhance the equitable distribution of the public benefits of management, and ultimately seek a career position with a federal lands management agency. I am eager to collaborate with and learn from colleagues representing all the Forest Service’s deputy areas, as well as work with and mentor junior GIS specialists. My hobbies include nature photography, road cycling, trail running, and building a library of classical and jazz music recordings.



KEREN CRUM

Office of Sustainability and Climate

B.S. Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of California Santa Cruz

I aspire to use my GIS skills to develop policies that will help manage our natural resources equitably, sustainably, and economically. I’m excited to build my GIS mapping and data analysis skills to create maps to understand environmental justice within and around our public lands. I have a love for learning and am interested in the natural world. I enjoy cooking, hiking, swimming, reading, gardening, foraging for mushrooms and berries, and playing games with my family and friends.



ISABEL DIAZ

Recreation, Heritage, and Volunteer Resources

B.S. Anthropology, Florida State University

I aim to continue working on my research involving community outreach and sustainability initiatives and pursuing further federal employment after this position ends. I look forward to the opportunity to learn about the inner workings of a federal agency like the Forest Service, getting into a Ph.D. program, fleshing out my research, and my general future. I enjoy writing poems and stories, reading, cooking and baking bread, and growing potted herbs.



CAROLINA KELLY

Capital Assets

Ph.D. Civil Engineering, University of Central Florida

I aspire to work directly with industries and policymakers to develop effective real-world solutions for today's sustainability problems and pursue a career in sustainability research and engineering. I look forward to gaining industry experience in conservation and resource management, working with and learning from my professional mentors, and collaborating on real-world projects. My hobbies/interests include preparing herbal remedies and other products, bike riding, reading, and writing.



MARY POWERS

Office of Sustainability and Climate

B.S. Biology, University of Central Florida

I aspire to serve my community, advocate for sustainable solutions, and preserve the environment. Through GIS, I hope to monitor, discover, and communicate ways to promote a more sustainable future. I look forward to learning from experts and contributing to research that will help promote public service and environmental stewardship. I love painting, hiking, bird watching, making bad puns, running with my dog learning new things, experiencing new cultures, and traveling whenever I can.



RACHEL MARIE SANTOSPIRITO

National Partnership Office

B.S. Environmental Science, Temple University

I hope to one day work within the conservation ecology field. I am not yet sure where or which federal service I want to work with, but I am looking forward to working within the federal sector and exploring various career paths. I am very interested in marine/estuary research as well as landscape ecology and management.



CARA VASSO

National Partnership Office

B.A. Environmental Studies, Ursinus College

I aspire to a career in natural resource management that focuses on the link between public health, the environment, and advocates for environmental justice. I'm looking forward to learning about the Secure Rural Schools program and relationships between the Forest Service and other groups, which are integral to effective environmental problem solving. I enjoy spending time outdoors, especially going on hikes with my dog and practicing yoga, and I also enjoy thrifting to shop sustainably.

Email the WO Volunteers and Service staff
(SM.FS.21CSC@usda.gov)
to learn more about the Resource Assistants Program and
how you can recruit a resource assistant for your unit.