

Public Lands Stewards

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What is Public Lands Stewards?

Public Lands Stewards is an AmeriCorps program of the Mt. Adams Institute. It focuses on connecting young adults (ages 21-30) with federal, state, and local public land management and natural resource agencies to:

1. Support the individual with career development
2. Address the unmet needs of our nation's public lands / natural resource management agencies and organizations.

Public Lands Stewards is a 25 week (6 month) internship program in which participants learn new skills, gain knowledge and build professional contacts within the public lands / natural resources management / environmental career field. Internship partners are located in OR and WA and include U.S. Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and regional non-profits. Occasionally, there are shorter-term positions available: 13 weeks/490 hours, and 18 weeks/685 hours.

Public Lands Stewards interns' responsibilities can vary depending on the need of the local site and have included wilderness monitoring, visitor education, trail maintenance and log-out, invasive fish surveying, environmental education and other support activities. Local sites determine the specific position responsibilities.

What is the Mt. Adams Institute?

[Mt. Adams Institute](#) (MAI) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with the mission to strengthen the connection between people and the natural world through education, service learning, career development and research. MAI is headquartered in Trout Lake, Washington and currently operates in 10 states across the country.

What is AmeriCorps?

[AmeriCorps](#) is a national volunteer service program that engages more than 75,000 Americans a year, in service that supports nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community and faith-based groups across the country. Since founded in 1994, more than 900,000 AmeriCorps Members have contributed more than 1.2 billion hours in service across America while tackling pressing problems and mobilizing millions of volunteers.

AmeriCorps assists Members by providing pathways for people entering the workforce. AmeriCorps places thousands of people into intensive service positions where they learn valuable work skills, earn a modest living stipend and money for education, and develop an appreciation for volunteerism and community service.

All Public Lands Stewards interns are enrolled as AmeriCorps Members for the duration of the program.

What Agencies/Organizations Partner with Public Lands Stewards?

Interns are placed at [Partnering Organizations](#) such as the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and regional non-profits. Public Lands Stewards positions focus on a wide variety of public lands management careers. Most day-to-day supervision and mentorship for participants comes from these on-site partners. MAI plays a support role through human resource functions, connection to resources, career development support and finding meaning in your career through your connections to the natural world.

Who Can Apply for a Public Lands Stewards Internship?

Applicants must:

- Be within the age range of 21-30 years old by the start of the program.
- Be a U.S. citizen, national or lawful permanent resident.
- Possess a high school diploma or equivalent, or commit to earning one prior to receiving education award.
- Have the ability to commit to the full 25-week term of service.

- Pass the National Sex Offender Public Registry, state of service and state of residence criminal history check and a national FBI check.
- Must be willing to respond to COVID-19 restrictions by altering duties, serving remotely from home, wearing designated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks, ensure social distancing and follow all agency requirements while serving and living in agency housing.

Why is this Program Just for ages 21-30?

Public Lands Stewards is designed for young adults who are interested in learning more about the public lands/natural resources career fields. The grant through which we operate the program requires this age range due to the Public Land Corps partnership authority with the Forest Service.

Is the Internship Full-Time?

Yes. Public Lands Stewards Interns will serve an average of 38 hours per week. Individual positions might vary in how and when that time is spread throughout the week. Some interns may serve four 10-hour days; others will have scheduled hours on weekends; and still others may work 7 days straight and then have 5 days off.

How Long is the Internship?

Public Lands Stewards is a 6-month program (25 weeks). Interns must commit to the duration of the program from start date to end date, and complete a minimum of 940 hours of service during that time. This averages out to be about 38 hours per week. Occasionally, there are shorter-term positions available: 13 weeks/490 hours, and 18 weeks/685 hours.

Do Interns Get Paid?

Interns earn a modest living stipend of \$375/week (**paid monthly** & pre-tax amount). The actual amount is dependent on the number of weeks of service in each month. Months with four weeks of service = \$1,500 (pre-tax); five weeks = \$1,875 (pre-tax). Stipends are deposited directly into Interns' bank accounts on the 10th of each month. Applicants are highly encouraged to actively work with a budget to make sure that participating in the program is financially feasible.

What Other Benefits Are There?

In addition to the living stipend, Public Lands Stewards Interns, who are serving 940 hours, earn an education award of \$3,247.50 (upon satisfactory completion of the program), qualification to apply for food stamps and student loan forbearance. Shorter terms of service will receive smaller education awards; check the specific position description for amounts. Many positions also offer free or reduced agency housing. Please read each position's benefits section to find out if and what type of housing options are available. Check out our current positions on our [website](#).

Public Lands Stewards is a career development program designed to help interns navigate a career in the natural resource and public land management fields. The internship provides opportunities to build professional networks, experience a desired career path, and understand hiring practices. Training will address position specific skills and certifications as well as developing resumes and other application materials.

Do These Positions Require a Covid-19 Vaccination?

Yes. All staff and AmeriCorps Interns **must be fully vaccinated** against Covid-19 with the ability to provide documentation or have an approved [Medical Exemption](#) or [Religious Exemption](#) prior to the start of a position. See our [website](#) for policy details.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers an individual fully vaccinated against Covid-19, if they are:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.

If you do not meet these requirements, you are not fully vaccinated.

What Will I be Doing?

Public Lands Stewards internships represent a variety of positions offered through the natural resource/public land management field and will vary according to the specific needs of each agency / organization. Interns can expect to spend at least 80% of their time in service activities and on the job training. Service activities may include recreation site maintenance, volunteer coordination, restoration work, invasive species removal, education and outreach, facility improvement, forestry projects, trail maintenance or emergency dispatch. Up to 20% of an intern's time is spent on activities focused on an intern's growth and development in the field. These include MAI's week-long orientation, community service projects, professional development trainings, sharing experiences with other Interns and self-directed learning.

What Positions are Available?

Public Lands Stewards internships cover a variety of job types available in the public lands / natural resources management / environmental sector. Some positions involve serving outside every day on trails, wilderness or forestry projects; others are more office situated and can involve outdoor education or volunteer coordination. It is important to understand that Public Lands Stewards internships are entry-level, and as a part of normal position description duties activities **may** include tasks such as: litter removal, chain sawing trees, mowing, toilet cleaning, fence-repair, and other "less than glamorous tasks".

For the most up-to-date open positions, please visit our [website](#) or contact the Program Coordinator, Erica Bingham, at: erica@mtadamsinstitute.org Monday-Friday 9a-4p Pacific. Public Lands Stewards positions are posted in December. Applications are accepted until positions are filled, but keep in mind that interviews will be offered starting in Jan/Feb and many positions can fill 2-3 months before the program start date in May.

How Do I Apply?

Email the following documents to Erica Bingham at erica@mtadamsinstitute.org:

- [Resume](#)
- [Cover Letter](#) (One for each position applying to).
- [Three Professional References](#) – Information to include: Name, Title, Relation to you, Email & Phone Number.
- [Supplemental Questions](#):
 - What is your motivation for applying to Public Lands Stewards?
 - What are you hoping to get out of this experience?

Can I Apply to More Than One Position?

Yes, submit a separate cover letter for each position that you are interested in applying to. [Macslis](#) has great information on creating cover letters, resumes, etc...

What is the Interview Process?

- MAI screens application materials, conducts pre-interviews, and recommends qualified applicants for Service Site interviews.
- Service Sites interview candidates, conduct reference checks and recommends placement.
- If position is offered, additional paperwork will be required.

Where are the Positions Located?

Public Lands Stewards positions are offered in Oregon and Washington. Most positions are situated in very remote, rural locations. For the most up-to-date service locations see our [website](#).

Where Would I live?

Housing options differ for each position and depend on what service sites provide. Options available could be:

- Free or reduced cost, on-site options.
- No assistance and the full cost must be accepted by the Intern.

Participants are ultimately responsible for securing housing and should ask about the options during their interviews. Housing details for each position can be located in the position descriptions on our [website](#).

I Don't Live Near the Position Location, Would I Have to Relocate?

Yes, many participants relocate to take part in the Public Lands Stewards program. This can be an added challenge that requires adequate research and planning. We encourage applicants who are considering a move to make sure that the position and location are a good fit. Mt. Adams Institute is not able to offer relocation assistance.

I Have a Family or Pet, Can They Relocate with Me?

Families may join you, but you will likely have to seek out and pay for your own housing. Potential housing provided by specific internships sites is often very limited and most times cannot accommodate families or pets.

What Does the Free or Reduced-Cost Housing Look Like?

Most Forest Service / Fish & Wildlife Service housing is bunkhouse style. This means that you may share a bedroom with another Intern or FS employee and share kitchen, living room and restrooms with other bunkmates. Most bunkhouses are outfitted with basic furniture and kitchen tools. You will need to provide your own toiletries, bedding, food, etc... (Please discuss specifics with site supervisors during an interview as each bunkhouse is unique.) Bunkhouse housing is usually within walking distance to the service site; generally, on the same compound. Federally owned bunkhouses do not allow drugs (regardless of individual state laws), alcohol or firearms. Pets are generally **not** allowed in bunkhouses.

If your site does not offer housing, or you plan to cover the full cost of housing, then you may find your own pet / alcohol /etc... -friendly housing. If you have a certified service animal, let our recruitment staff know and be prepared to discuss options with the Site Supervisor during an interview.

What are the Physical Requirements?

Physical requirements vary with each position. Some positions require 38 hours per week of mostly desk time. Others are very physically demanding, and all work takes place outdoors in rugged wilderness. If you are offered an interview with agency staff you will be asked to discuss your ability to take on the physical requirements of the position. All position descriptions on our [website](#) clearly explain the physical requirements of each position. Please speak with recruitment staff if you have questions or concerns about a specific position.

Can I Go to School or Work Another Job While in the Program?

Interns are expected to work 40 hours per week, which can make in-person classes challenging to accommodate. Past Interns have completed online classes while participating in Public Lands Stewards, however, most of our service sites are in remote location with unpredictable internet service. Interns are allowed to take part-time jobs in their time off, but those shouldn't interfere with their Public Lands Stewards schedule.

Will I Get a Job at the End?

There is no guarantee of employment when the program is completed, but interns have ample opportunity to network, learn new skills and explore potential jobs during their term of service. Many service locations use the Public Lands Stewards program as a conduit to seasonal hiring. Interns will take part in career development coaching and workshops during a required mid-term training with Mt. Adams Institute staff. Intern experiences vary in scope and opportunity, but each individual participant is encouraged to proactively seek out opportunities that will enhance a resume, and help to become a more desirable applicant.

I Have Been Convicted of a Crime, Can I Still Take Part in the Program?

Yes. The only automatic disqualifiers are a murder charge/conviction and any required registration on the National Sex Offender Registry. Participation in the Public Lands Stewards program is contingent upon passing a state and federal background check as well as a name-based search in the National Sex Offender Registry.

A prior criminal record could impact your selection, but it will not immediately disqualify you. If you fail to disclose any infraction (even minor ones) and it shows up on your criminal background check, you can be immediately disqualified. It is better to be forthright with this information from the beginning of the application process. Don't hesitate to contact MAI recruitment staff if you would like to discuss your particular situation.

I am Active in the National Guard/Reserves, Can I Take Part in the Program?

Generally, the Reserves of the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, the Army National Guard, and the Air National Guard require reservists to serve one weekend a month plus 12 to 15 days a year (hereafter referred to as the two-week active-duty service). If Interns have a choice of when to fulfill their annual two-week active-duty requirement, they should do so when it will not disrupt their AmeriCorps service. In instances where the dates of active duty are inflexible and conflict with AmeriCorps service, Interns will be granted a leave of absence for the two-week period of active-duty service in the Reserves.

Interns may not receive time-off for additional Reserves-related service beyond the two-week active-duty service. No AmeriCorps service credit is earned for the once-a-month weekend service in the Reserves. Interns will receive credit for AmeriCorps service hours during their two weeks of active-duty service in the Reserves if it occurs during their AmeriCorps service. The Intern would receive credit for the number of hours he or she would have served during that period had there been no interruption. For example, if a full-time Intern is signed up to serve 30 hours of AmeriCorps service one week and 40 hours of AmeriCorps service on the following week, they would receive 70 hours of AmeriCorps service credit for the two weeks of active-duty service regardless of the actual number of hours served in the Reserves. Interns will continue to receive the living stipend for the two-week period of active duty.

I'm Interested in a Position, What Steps Can I Take to Prepare Myself?

Many Public Lands Stewards positions are located in very remote locations; but even if a position is in an urban or suburban area, applicants are encouraged to research about the local offerings. Some things to consider are:

- Accessibility to medical facilities, grocery stores, and other personal services. A vehicle may be required to access services and off-time recreation
- Airport locations
- Reliable internet
- Weather conditions
- Community / social activities

Many of these questions can also be answered by Site Supervisors during an interview. Applicants should research locations and have specific questions to ask during interviews. Other resources to consider are: local Facebook groups, Chambers of Commerce and town or county websites. In some cases, Mt. Adams Institute staff can connect applicants with current or former Interns serving at a specific location.

If you have any other questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact our program coordinator- Erica Bingham at erica@mtadamsinstitute.org Monday-Friday 9a-4p Pacific.