

Wisconsin Forestry Career Profile

Wildland Firefighter



Photo courtesy of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

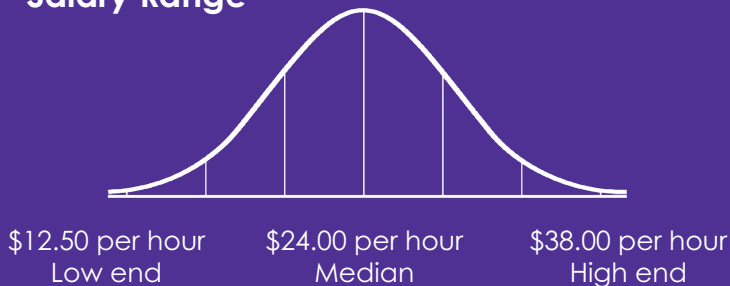
Job Description

Wildland firefighters manage and suppress uncontrolled fires in grass, woody or forested areas as well as conduct prescribed burns to improve habitat and control invasive species. Many wildland firefighters also have forestry responsibilities, so it's recommended to have experience in both fields. Wildland firefighters must understand key fire management principles, how the weather plays in how fire behaves, as well as understand fire suppression tactics, specialized equipment and the Incident Command System, which is used to organize resources in major natural resource disasters.

Common tools used by wildland firefighters include engines, off-road vehicles or UTVs, pumps, hoses, radios, and hand tools such as axes and shovels. Specialized aircraft and UAS (drones) can also be used for fighting fires.

Wildland firefighters can take on different roles like forester, fire specialist, smoke jumper, fire ecologist, pilot, and more.

Salary Range



High School Courses

- Forestry
- Environmental Science
- Physical Education
- Biology
- Chemistry



Education/Training

- High school diploma or equivalent
- Recommended 2-year or 4-year degree
- National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) S130/S190 prescribed fire training course



Responsibilities

- Suppress fires in the wildland, including the management of prescribed burns
- Maintain and repair equipment
- Assist in fire training, orientation, and education programs
- Record and maintain fire logs
- Interpret weather and plan burns
- Support all-hazard incidents
- Use radio, GPS and various IT (for example, computers, software, mobile devices)



Skills

- Communicate clearly
- Plan and prepare effectively
- Operate in stressful environments
- Operate complex equipment
- Use hand tools
- Pay attention to detail
- Problem solve
- Work collaboratively



Abilities/Personality

- Strategic thinker
- Strong, can lift and carry 70 pounds and push/pull 100 pounds
- Hike several miles at a time
- Dependable
- Focused on safety



Work Environment

Wildland firefighters travel to where they are needed. They must be able to use hand tools to make fire breaks, lift heavy objects, and hike long distances. Wildland firefighters work long days when called to a fire. On days without fire, wildland firefighters plan prescribed burns and practice fire suppression methods.

