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Questions from April 8, 2025 Career Call

Reflecting on your unique role

1. When you think about and reflect on trees-forests-forestry what immediately comes to your mind? How do you see yourself in this triad?

Planning for studies and careers

1. What does “forestry” and a forestry career look like?
 - a. Today appears to be moving beyond the timber solely model.
 - b. Conservation has altered the landscape in Maine, according to some.
 - c. Shift in priorities in how to manage land over the years.
 - d. The Guild has been a leader in “ecological forestry” coming to the foreground.
 - e. Very important to have social and interpersonal skills in this work
 - f. Ecological forestry is very interdisciplinary
 - g. Forestry includes education, policy, research, *and* work in the woods
2. I am a masters student in Natural Resources (forestry concentration), but I have limited field experience and was not able to take some foundational courses like dendrology, plant taxonomy, forest economics, etc. What are some ways in which you all have continued your education after leaving school?
 - a. Mackenzie, on staff with the Guild, did the same thing! And found herself living in a very different landscape and ecosystem than where she went to school. She joined an invasive control team as a field tech early on and learned a ton of plant ID, site characteristics, skills such as chainsaw use and herbicide application.
 - b. It is often about who you know as much as what you know. Volunteering with local organizations who do trail work, other forestry activities, and networking that way can build up your knowledge.
 - c. Wherever you are engaging in learning and experiences, ask questions!
 - d. Entry level jobs didn’t expect me to know a ton of specifics starting out, but tree ID was important early on as I searched.

- e. Be open to starting from basics, even with your Masters.
3. What were some graduate courses which were most valuable to your professional forestry career? Why?
- a. Social behavior in the social environment studies dug into effective communication and helped as I had to work in groups and with communities.
 - b. Interpersonal relationships training and experiences are really key
 - c. You can gain this locally and professionally. Volunteering and in community settings in your field.
 - d. Between undergrad and graduate school, spend some time in the field if you can. It gives you a good perspective on what sparks your interest.
4. In your view, what is the value in participating in a fellowship post graduation, and where do you recommend students search for these opportunities?
- a. See internships below.
 - b. Look into the conservation job board and Texas A&M job board (if you are willing to move). Otherwise local organizations are a great place to even just call and chat with someone.
5. What kind of job would you recommend doing to replace a post-doc? I'm a PhD student, not interested in being a professor. I'd rather work with people doing management on the ground. I don't want to close the door entirely on being an instructor at a community college or smaller university (I'm just not interested in doing research forever). Is skipping out on a post-doc frowned upon, or, does it really matter?
- a. PhDs and post-docs take a next-level of commitment to a project or research question you really want to dig into. Our panel was curious why someone who doesn't want to do research predominantly would go for a research-based track like this. Sometimes we feel pressure to do so to get to the top tier of skills and experience. It's not always necessary, depending on what you want and where you are looking.

- i. Guild staff will gather some additional answers to this question and add them here in the future..

Jobs now

1. What kind of jobs are still available in the current political climate?
 - a. Is the non-profit move secure?
 - i. Current political climate is likely better than government jobs. You are part of a team that helps guide from the ground up and funding opportunities come differently, sometimes more organically.
 - ii. Smaller organizations, land trusts, non-profits have some more flexibility in the skills you develop.
 - iii. Could work with a forester you know.
 - iv. Sometimes the pay is less than government positions. Not always! Same with health and leave benefits.
2. Do the forestry schools provide info on numbers of students and jobs likely to be available? Do the schools provide guidance on how to locate possible positions and apply more successfully? These were both lacking when I was a student.
 - a. Unsure. Guild staff will ask member faculty across the country for their thoughts on this and add it here...
3. I would like to ask about internships and possible career pathways.
 - a. Follow up question: Stockton U requires internships. If it doesn't completely align with what you think you want, is the internship valuable?
 - i. Have you journaled on what you feel your ideal is? "If you had your preference, this is how I would interact with forests, forestry, trees in my career...." This may help you frame the value of certain opportunities.
 - b. Non-profits are often easier to find internships with than corporations or government.

- c. Consider working to build relationships with local organizations or professionals and create agreements for your own internship. “Here’s what I want to learn, here’s what I can bring to the table, what are your organization’s needs, can we develop a win-win internship?”
 - d. Land trusts are a great place to plug in.
- 4. How much desk work is involved?
 - a. There’s no solid amount to state, though more in the modern times than with forestry 50 years ago. So much technology is available now, through GIS and mapping and so much data collection and processing. And, conversations happen a lot via email in general today.
 - b. Suggestion: talk with people who have jobs you are considering in natural resources about what their day looks like. Maybe these are people at your school, or maybe they work for your local park or National Park. Typically, if they can, people are willing to share about their experiences, especially to help young professionals.

Resources:

Check out job listings, events, the webinar library, research and management pages, and more at <http://foreststewardsguild.org>.

[Consider joining the Guild](#) to stay engaged and meet aligned students and professionals virtually and in person. Membership is free for students while in school and for a year after or while you are unemployed.

The Guild is working on developing/supporting a flexible job shadow program among our student and professional members. We will keep you posted! However, also feel free to use our Find a Forester Directory (will be improved soon...some of the searches are currently not working correctly) to find a Guild member to connect with and reach out.