



Wilderness Fuels Module, Crew Leader

Term: May - October 2025

Start and end dates are subject to change based on weather and site accessibility

Wage Range: \$27 - \$29 per hour commensurate with experience

Benefits: Sick leave, Holiday leave, Wildfire Mitigation leave

Training: Crosscut Felling, Wilderness First Aid, S-212 Basic Saw Training

Position Overview

The Sierra Institute for Community and Environment (Sierra Institute), in cooperation with the Lassen Volcanic National Park (LAVO) is hiring one Wilderness Fuels Module (WFM) Crew Leader to lead an eight person crew performing fuels management in LAVO to promote future prescribed and/or managed fire activities in wilderness areas of the park. The WFM Crew Leader, under the direction of Sierra Institute support staff and LAVO specialists, will be responsible for leading the WFM crew in safely falling, bucking, and limbing live and dead trees and constructing fireline using predominantly non-mechanized equipment (e.g., crosscut saws, axes, etc.) in undeveloped wilderness areas. Crew members will also use non-mechanized equipment to fall low-complexity, small diameter trees. Mechanical thinning (chainsaws) may be used for project implementation in non-wilderness areas. Fuels are rearranged, either by piling or lopping and scattering depending upon fuel loading, to facilitate future prescribed fire. The WFM Crew will also be responsible for mentoring Sierra Institutes youth corps, "P-CREW", for a portion of the season while they assist with the project. The crew may also assist as necessary with other activities to advance landscape restoration in the region.

The WFM Crew Leader will advance their knowledge of Sierra Nevada mixed-conifer forest ecosystems, wilderness management, collaborative forest management processes, and crew management and leadership. They will work with project supervisors to implement and adapt silvicultural prescriptions and/or remove fuels based on designated cut trees, depending upon the complexity of the location. The crew leader will be expected to recognize tree species, defects, and environmental hazards in executing the prescription and cut tree mark, calling attention to unnecessary risks and flagging hazard trees for future removal using mechanized equipment. The Crew Leader will help plan crew work and assess progress towards objectives, manage crew safety, and assist with training crew members. Crew Leaders and Crew Members will receive project-specific training on tree-species identification, crosscut felling, prescription implementation, and wilderness management.

In all work, the crew is expected to uphold the ethics of Wilderness land management, working to minimize the visual and ecological impacts of human intervention and practicing Leave No Trace principles. Training will be provided to inform decision making in the wilderness in line with the 1964 Wilderness Act and for adherence to minimum visual retention standards in the USFS Scenery Management System.

The majority of project work will occur adjacent to and within the northern area of the National Park near Manzanita Lake. The project area lies within the heart of the beautiful, rugged, and diverse landscape of northern California's headwaters. A small portion of project work may be within the boundary of the recent Dixie Fire (2021) and Crew objectives will support several projects in various stages of implementation. Manzanita Lake, known for its views of Lassen Peak reflected in its crystal clear water, and the area around it remain unburned. . The crew will also spend time conducting fuel management in the wilderness areas around Juniper Lake. This area did suffer from mid

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to high severity burning during the Dixie Fire. This is an opportunity to deploy a niche skill set, non-mechanical hand treatments, in order to advance post-fire recovery in burned areas and promote fire resilience in unburned areas.

The Crew Leader must be organized, open to learning, possess the ability to motivate and supervise a crew, and be willing to work hard in a physically demanding role. This position requires hiking while carrying a heavy pack and paint and mitigating known and unforeseen hazards that may include smoke, heat, and strong wind. This crew will utilize a 8-6 work schedule consisting of eight 10-hour days followed by six days off.

This is a unique opportunity to contribute to fuels reduction activities within a designated Wilderness area in a National Park. Those with an interest in Wilderness land management, active management of forested landscapes for ecosystem resilience, and/or the use of fire as a tool to promote ecosystem health, are encouraged to apply. Crew leaders must possess a full COVID-19 vaccination status (vaccinated and boosted).

Qualifications

Required

- Minimum of three years' combined field experience in forest or other natural resource management, this may include but is not limited to biological research, survey work, land conservation, or wildland fire.
- Minimum 18 months experience with crew leadership, oversight/safety management;
- Minimum 6 months data collection methods;
- Experience with utilizing non-mechanized equipment (crosscut saws, axes, etc.) to perform fuels reduction (i.e. felling and bucking);
- Minimum Faller 1 or equivalent (minimum Class A);
- Experience with maintenance of non-mechanized tools and ability to teach others appropriate tool maintenance techniques;
- Familiarity with mixed conifer forests and the ability to identify common tree species in the northern Sierra Nevada and southern Cascades or willingness to learn necessary skills;
- Ability to use compasses, topographic maps, and handheld GPS units or tablets to navigate and collect data in the field;
- Ability to interpret and communicate stand prescriptions;
- Good physical conditioning to work and walk in the forest all day carrying day-packs with equipment during all types of weather;
- Ability to live in a campsite setting for eight days at a time;
- An ability to bring adaptability and improvisation, critical thinking skills, creativity, and humor to the workplace;
- Ability to effectively work with diverse teams or with diverse groups of people;
- Ability to effectively serve as a field supervisor for other staff while also conducting implementation activities;
- Ability to be punctual, diligent, and thorough in their work and support a similarly strong work ethic amongst crew members;
- Ability to perform physically taxing work in all weather conditions in rugged mountainous environments;
- Interest in, or familiarity with, principles of Wilderness land management;
- Possess a valid, clean, state-issued driver's license, with an ability to safely operate a 4WD vehicle;
- Full COVID vaccination status (vaccinated and boosted).

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Preferred

- Familiarity with the use and maintenance of crosscut saw and other non-mechanized equipment;
- Current wilderness medical training certification (e.g., WFA, WFR, WEMT);
- Leave No Trace or other backcountry ethics training;
- Certification in S-212 (Federal Wildland Chainsaws).

We invite all interested parties to apply including those belonging to Tribal communities, women, POC, and LGBTQ+ persons.

Skills or experiences that can fill in for qualifications will be considered.

Physical Requirements

The incumbent will be expected to walk 4-8 miles per day with a field pack, ample water, and tools over rough terrain and in variable weather conditions, which will likely include high temperatures in the summer months and can quickly drop to dramatically colder temperatures in the fall months.. Strenuous and repetitive physical effort will be associated with fuels reduction activities, including the use of a crosscut saw and rearrangement of fuels.

While working, the incumbent will be provided an opportunity to camp for multiple nights in a developed campsite within Lassen Volcanic NP.

Compensation

Compensation is \$24-\$26.00 per hour DOE. Health benefits through Sierra Institute are not available for this position but may be obtained through Covered California (<http://www.coveredca.com/>). Field staff will be provided monthly sick time, paid holidays, and a set number of paid wildfire mitigation leave. Paid wildfire mitigation leave is intended to mitigate work days impacted by wildfire and smoke.

About the Sierra Institute

The Sierra Institute promotes healthy forests, watersheds, and communities by investing in the well-being of rural communities and strengthening their participation in natural resource management. Our work supports initiatives that simultaneously benefit the environment, economy, and equity within a given landscape. Sierra Institute is located in Taylorsville, CA (population 154), and lies within an area referred to as “Indian Valley” that includes the communities of Greenville and Crescent Mills. Indian Valley offers uniquely rural community events and is surrounded by public lands including Plumas National Forest, Lassen National Forest, and Lassen Volcanic National Park.

About Lassen Volcanic National Park

The Wilderness Fuels Module is based in scenic Lassen Volcanic National Park (LAVO), where the crew will implement prescriptions developed by a team of natural resource professionals dedicated to fuels reduction and reintroduction of fire in the novel landscape of LAVO.

Lassen Volcanic National Park is located in Northeastern California at the southern end of the Cascade Range. The plateaus, valleys, meadows, and forests of the park are marked by volcanic activity as made evident by its active boiling mud pots, fumaroles, and hot springs; and plentiful volcanic rock dispersed throughout the landscape. The dominant feature of the park, Lassen Peak, is a large plug dome volcano, the largest of its kind to exist in the Cascade range. 74% of the park is designated Wilderness.

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In 2021, the Dixie Fire burned 73,420 acres of the park at mid to high severity. This was the largest fire within park history. The increasing size and severity of wildfires within the park underscores the need to implement controlled burns and fuels reduction in order to reduce adverse effects of wildfires. Projects such as the Northwest Gateway and the North Fork Feather River Headwaters aim to reduce fuels while adhering to wilderness regulations and apply prescribed fires in targeted areas.

The park is fairly remote, with the closest amenities such being in Redding, Susanville, or Chester. While in the park, visitors have access to excellent recreation sites, with plenty of scenic hiking trails along pristine lakes and volcanic peaks. The characteristic forest type is red fir forest, and some old growth stands remain intact.

How to Apply

Please send your cover letter, resume, and contact information for three references as **one PDF** to jobs@sierrainstitute.us with "Wilderness Fuels Module - Crew Leader" in the subject line. Please include where you heard about the job in the text of the email (please be as specific as possible). Position is open until filled, applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Please call 530.284.1022 or email jobs@sierrainstitute.us if you have questions.