

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
POSITION DESCRIPTION

Classification: Plant Pest & Disease Specialist - Advanced

Working Title: Forest Health Specialist

Location: West Central Forest Health Zone

- *Eau Claire is the preferred work location; however, other West Central Forest Health Zone locations within Buffalo, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, St. Croix or Trempealeau counties may be considered based on the business case presented, space availability and management approval.*

POSITION SUMMARY: The Forestry Division Forest Health Specialist implements the statewide Forest Health program across multiple ecological forest habitat types. Specifically, it provides forest entomology, pathology, and abiotic diagnostics, investigatory and survey services as well as integrated pest management recommendations for forest health issues to public and private forest landowners. The position offers increased awareness and understanding of invasive plant identification and management. It also supports policy development, program management, and training for the statewide Forest Health program for the Division of Forestry. The Forest Health Specialist is a key internal and external consultant for staff, leadership, inter-divisional teams, and partner groups. This position maintains cutting-edge knowledge and expertise by staying abreast of current research and maintaining an effective professional network. This position may assist across work areas when workload demands.

LOCATION, GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE & TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS: This position's location is negotiable within the assigned West Central Forest Health Zone whose primary service area contains the following counties: *within Buffalo, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, St. Croix and Trempealeau.* This job holder is expected to be available to assist other teams across established boundaries. The Forest Health Specialist travels frequently within the assigned work area with an occasional overnight stay. Travel outside the assigned work area also may be required to complete statewide assignments, to assist with Division priority activities or foster program-wide coordination and/or to attend out-of-state training.

SCOPE OF AUTHORITY: This position works under the general supervision of the Forest Health Team Leader within the Bureau of Applied Forestry and is expected to work independently with minimal supervision while conducting day-to-day duties within the assigned work area.

GOALS & ACTIVITIES:

40% A. Provide Technical Expertise in Forest Health Diagnostics and Management

- A1. Provide technical forest health expertise on insect, disease and abiotic, issues and management options to Department foresters, other public forest managers, community and urban forestry staff, private land managers and the public.
- A2. Evaluate forest insect, disease and abiotic issues.
- A3. Recommend ecologically sound integrated pest management options, including pesticides and biological control.
- A4. Provide on-site diagnostic services when requested by forest land managers or in situations that have broad landscape implications.
- A5. Develop chemical, biological or silvicultural pest management procedures and prescriptions in cooperation with Department staff and other partners.

A7. Provide guidance with Invasive Plants Coordinator to district and field staff in the Forestry Division, county forest staff, industrial foresters, loggers and landowners on the methods and practices for managing invasive plants that minimize their impacts on forest ecosystems and forest operations.

20% B. Conduct Surveys of Forest Health Concerns

B1. Conduct detection and evaluation surveys to assess potential impacts and losses to the forest ecosystem.

B2. Monitor, survey (ground and aerial) and evaluate forest insect, disease and abiotic issues in work area or across work areas in times of major outbreaks or heavy priority workloads.

B3. Collect GIS data on forest health damaging agents.

B4. Collaborate with regional partners to monitor forest health issues across state borders.

10% C. Develop Policy and Procedures

C1. Administer the development and evaluation of policy and procedures for the implementation of the Forest Health program.

C2. Develop Issue Briefs, Budget Initiatives and work on Administrative Rules as assigned.

C3. Respond to Legislative inquiries and letters to the Secretary.

C4. Provide presentations to the Natural Resource Board, Governor's Councils, and Division leadership.

10% D. Provide Technical Expertise in Collaborative Development of Training

D1. Train Department forestry staff and internal and external partners on pest identification, risk evaluation, damage assessment and management practices.

D3. Coordinate with Division, Department staff and partners to identify training needs for forest health issues.

D4. Identify and conduct outreach and education efforts.

10% E. Develop and Maintain Internal and External Partnerships

E1. Serve as a member of the statewide Forest Health Team.

E2. Represent the Division of Forestry and foster partnerships with Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumers Protection (DATCP) and the University of Wisconsin, federal agencies including the USDA Forest Service (USDA-FS) and Agricultural Plant Health and Inspection Service (APHIS), Invasive Species Council and the forestry community.

E3. Cooperate with Department foresters, other public forest managers, community and urban forestry staff, private land managers and the public to identify forest health issues and management options.

E4. Partner with research scientists to investigate the cause of unknown forest health issues.

10% F. Carry Out Performance Management of Forest Health Programs

F1. Provide input and guidance for Division-wide work planning.

F2. Work with the Forest Health Team Leader to monitor and evaluate work plan outcomes and recommend to leadership how to measure success.

F3. Collect and analyze data to measure success of work plan outcomes.

F4. Identify and evaluate conflicts and limiting factors and develop action plans to maximize the effectiveness of the Forest Health program.

F5. Prepare reports, write newsletters, craft articles and other print material and submit web site updates.

F6. Contribute pest survey data results to the annual statewide forest health report.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Ability to obtain and maintain a WI driver's license.
- Ability to obtain and maintain Wisconsin Commercial Pesticide Applicator Certification in category Forestry 2.0.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES:

1. Knowledge and skill related to forest pathology, forest entomology and forest resource management; academic degree preferred.
2. Skills in field survey techniques related to forest health, ability to read maps and plat books, and protocol for documentation of survey results.
3. Knowledge of principles of forest ecology and forest management.
4. Abilities using computer-based systems for information management and exchange including database, spreadsheet, word processing, GPS, GIS, PowerPoint and Internet.
5. Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
6. Effective prioritization skills.
7. Knowledge of state laws, administrative rules, codes, procedures, standards and specifications relating to forest health issues.
8. Knowledge of forest health diagnostic protocols and management recommendations for Wisconsin.
9. Knowledge of regional forest conditions, soils, Ecological Land Classifications, Land Type Associations, Forest Habitat Types and other site evaluation tools.
10. Knowledge of advanced scientific technical terms related to forest entomology and pathology.
11. Knowledge of state and federal policies that guide the prevention and spread of forest health damaging agents.
12. Knowledge of forest entomological and pathological invasive species biology and control options (chemical, biological and silvicultural integrated pest management strategies) and related ecological principles used by federal, state and local agencies.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS & ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS: Physical requirements include talking in front of groups, sitting for long periods of time, and lifting and carrying 5 to 30 lb. Environmental factors include working indoors in an office setting and independently traveling to offices around the state. This position spends approximately 50% of its time outdoors, meaning one could be exposed to extreme cold (temperatures below 32 degrees for periods of an hour or more) and possible extreme heat (temperatures above 100 degrees for periods of more than one hour).

Equipment Used: Motorized vehicles, ATV, monitoring and sampling devices, hand tools, hand lens, microscope, binoculars, radios, digital camera, GPS/navigation equipment, GIS software, aerial photos, digital mobile sketch mapper, weather monitoring equipment, standard office equipment (computer, multi-media software, telephone, photocopier, calculator) and flying in small aircraft to conduct aerial forest health damage surveys.

TELEWORK EVALUATION:

Based on an assessment of the goals and work activities, this position may be eligible for telework. Telework approval is based on individual circumstances and is subject to supervisor approval and DNR telework policies. Approval is subject to change without notice based on business needs.