



Position Description

Position Title	Backcountry Trail Ranger
Partner Organization	Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest
Website	www.fs.usda.gov/okawen
Project Location	428 West Woodin Ave, Chelan, WA 98816
Internship Dates:	May 4 – October 16, 2026 (24-weeks, 40 hours/week)

Position Summary

In partnership with [Mt. Adams Institute \(MAI\)](#), the Chelan Ranger District of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest will host a Land Stewards AmeriCorps Intern to serve as a Backcountry Trail Ranger. The Intern will spend the season maintaining trails, trailheads, campsites and campgrounds and educating hikers and visitors on Leave No Trace principles in the rugged North Cascades backcountry. This position ensures district recreation facilities are maintained to Forest Service standards and are safe and enjoyable to visitors. This position is ideal for a person who has a passion for being in the mountains and “living” in the backcountry.

The project locations vary from established administrative buildings to mountainous wilderness areas. The locations will vary each trip. Ninety percent of the service, related travel, and living is performed outdoors. The position requires strenuous physical exertion, including walking in steep or uneven terrain, heavy lifting, and carrying backpacks weighing 55 pounds or more. Exposure to extreme weather and temperature is expected. The position requires backcountry living and experienced camping skills. The schedule is typically eight or nine days “on” followed by five or six days “off” but may vary. Often, the first day of each hitch is spent at the Chelan Ranger District office complex, and the remaining days are spent in backcountry/Wilderness areas.

Essential Functions

To include, but not limited to:

- Use tools safely to clear and maintain Wilderness and non-wilderness trails, campgrounds, and trailheads. Tools include handsaws, axes, hoes, loppers, shovels, picks, crosscut saws, chainsaws, hedge trimmers, and power brushers. Training is provided.
- Maintain developed recreation sites, by cleaning bathrooms, picking up trash, cleaning firepits, etc.
- Demonstrate and educate visitors on tread lightly, Leave-No-Trace ethics, and proper backcountry practices. Training will be provided.
- Clearly communicate with members of the public, volunteers, and Forest Service employees in a friendly and non-confrontational manner.
- Keep a daily log of service activities, daily visitor contact data, trail survey data, and trail conditions.
- Live safely in the backcountry and set the example for others by observing and adhering to Wilderness regulations, guidelines, and ethics.
- Become educated on current issues, and controversial-use practices affecting wilderness recreation.
- Complete internship requirements and submit all necessary paperwork and reports in a timely manner.

Position Requirements

- Must have a valid driver's license, clean driving record, and ability to provide documentation when requested.
- Between the ages of 18-30 years (up to 35 for military veterans), at the start of the program.

- A U.S. citizen, U.S. permanent resident, or a non-citizen with specific authorization to work in the U.S.
- Ability to commit to the full internship.
- Be physically fit prior to starting position - able to walk long distances (5-15 miles/day) carrying heavy loads (50+ lbs) with steep elevation gains (2000-5000 vertical feet/day).
- Willingness to engage in intensive training sessions to learn a variety of new skills necessary for position.
- Must be comfortable working alone and being self-sufficient for extended periods (up to 9 days).
- Travel, serve and live safely in mountainous wilderness settings and/or remote community setting, including proper and safe use of backpacking/camping equipment during trips.
- Work alone and/or with others (land and resource managers, Forest Service wilderness crew and other employees, community volunteers, and Forest visitors) in both an office and field setting. Be able to communicate clearly and professionally with all working groups.
- Serve cooperatively with other co-workers on 9-day wilderness trips. Must also be able to communicate clearly and respectfully with the different working groups.
- Able to proficiently and safely use hand tools for long periods. Training will be provided.
- Maintain physical health and a positive attitude while performing physical labor in extreme conditions (heat, cold, rain); season will start and end with snow on the ground; in between, it will be hot and dusty.
- Enthusiastic about wilderness recreation and being in various wilderness settings.
- Attend program orientation, MAI trainings, and other required MAI meetings.
- Selection, placement, and retention are contingent upon receipt of a satisfactory criminal history report.
- Must follow all health and safety policies and procedures, including any changes that are implemented throughout the course of the internship.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience with safe use of hand tools (this could include experience in farming, gardening, orchard work, landscaping, carpentry, construction, etc.).
- Experienced in safely spending extended periods backpacking in the backcountry.
- Experience communicating with the public.
- Knowledgeable about Leave-No-Trace and wilderness ethics.
- Knowledgeable/educated about high elevation, and fragile ecosystems.
- A passion for and being involved with wilderness & non-wilderness stewardship.

Benefits

- \$13,200 stipend for 24 weeks; \$550 weekly (before taxes).
- Housing allowance (see more information below).
- Observance of federal holidays (site-specific).
- Professional development, trainings, and networking opportunities.
- Live and work in a beautiful setting with many opportunities for outdoor recreation.
- Provide meaningful service to the local citizens and environment
- The Forest Service will provide most backpacking, camping equipment, and rain gear, or you may use your own if you prefer. However, you must provide your own sturdy, (6 inch minimum) leather hiking boots (required safety equipment) and clothing appropriate for the extremes of mountain weather (ex. Socks, warm layers).

Housing

- A \$750 per month housing allowance is provided. This payment is deposited monthly and is taxable.
- Forest Service bunkhousing is available to rent in Entiat, WA (optional):
 - The bunkhouse is located at the Steliko Work Center about 10 miles from the Entiat Ranger Station and 30 miles (45 mins) from the office in Chelan, WA. The intern will share the house with other Forest Service seasonal staff.
 - The bunkhouse has bedrooms, a full kitchen, dining area, living room and bathroom. The intern may have to share a bedroom and will share a bathroom with other bunkhouse residents.

- Bed frames and mattresses are provided, but you will need your own sheets and pillows. The kitchen is fully stocked with utensils, pots, pans, plates etc. There is a washer and dryer in the house, although you will need your own detergent.
- There is no television and cell service is not available at the bunkhouse. There is Wi-Fi in the bunkhouse and Wi-Fi calling is available.

Transportation Information

- Forest Service provides transportation between the Chelan Ranger Station and the trailheads in the form of ferryboat, bus tickets, or rides in Forest Service boats and vehicles.
- Interns must have their own vehicle to access accommodations/supplies/equipment and to travel on days off.
- Travel reimbursement is provided up to \$750 total to assist with travel costs associated with getting to the site. If traveling by car, Intern must meet MAI's insurance requirements to qualify. More information will be provided during interview.

Other Considerations

- Service sites are either road accessible on the Chelan or Entiat Ranger Districts (campgrounds and trailheads) or are backcountry settings located in the "uplake" part of Lake Chelan - in the Glacier Peak and Lake Chelan Sawtooth Wilderness Areas. The "uplake" part of 55 mile long and 1 mile wide Lake Chelan (an inland fiord) is one of the deepest gorges in the United States with elevation gains of 7,000 ft. (between the shores of Lake Chelan and the passes over the surrounding ridge tops). Some primary service locations include the Holden Village area, Lyman Lakes area, the PCT in Agnes Creek, and the Lake Chelan Sawtooth mountains. Access to many of these sites and trailheads is only by boat on Lake Chelan; there are no roads (or cell phone service) to these villages, sites, or trailheads.
 - Holden Village is located 12 miles up Railroad Creek, an "uplake" side drainage to Lake Chelan, and is reached by boat then FS vehicles or Holden buses operating on the road between Lucerne Landing (on the shore of Lake Chelan) and Holden Village. During the busy summer months, Holden Village will house up to 400 visitors on a daily basis, many of whom utilize Forest Service hiking trails in the area. www.holdenvillage.org
 - The Lyman Lake area is an 8-10 mile hike from Holden Village into the Glacier Peak Wilderness' subalpine and alpine basins of upper and lower Lyman Lakes, and Cloudy and Suiattle Passes.
 - Agnes Creek, also in the Glacier Peak Wilderness, has 18 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail from Suiattle Pass down to the North Cascades National Park at the High Bridge Trailhead along the Stehekin River.
 - The Lake Chelan-Sawtooth mountain range is located north of Lake Chelan, and is home to the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness as well as non-Wilderness areas. This range is home to beautiful and extensive networks of Wilderness and non-Wilderness (motorized) trails.

About Mt. Adams Institute

Mt. Adams Institute, is a nonprofit organization based in the rural community of Trout Lake, Washington with a mission of strengthening the connection between people and the natural world through education, service learning, career development, and research.

MAI Land Stewards is a career development internship for young adults, ages 18-30 (up to 35 for military veterans) interested in learning more about public lands and natural resources management. Land Stewards interns are placed at local, state, and federal land management agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and environmental nonprofits throughout Washington and Oregon.

Equal Opportunity Employer

MAI celebrates equity, diversity, and inclusiveness and does not discriminate against any person or group based on race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, expression, gender identity, ability, national origin or ancestry, veteran status, social economic class, religion, professional status, pregnancy, or parents/guardians with children. MAI is

committed to a diverse workplace and to supporting our Interns and staff with trainings and career development opportunities.

MAI provides reasonable accommodations to applicants and employees. Applicants with disabilities may request a reasonable accommodation and/or alternative formats at any point in the employment process.

How to Apply

Submit the following to Erica Keleher at erica@mtadamsinstitute.org:

- **Cover letter** - include your motivation for applying; and your experience as it relates to the position if it is not represented in your resume. If you are applying for more than one position, submit a cover letter for each position you are applying for (3 maximum).
- **Resume**
- **Three Professional References** (former supervisors, mentors, colleagues, etc. - military, civilian, or academic. Do not include family members.
 - Include - Name, relation to you, email & phone number.

Interview Process

1. **Mt. Adams Institute**
 - Screens Applications
 - Conducts interviews
 - Recommends applicants for Service Site interviews
2. **Service Sites**
 - Interviews candidates
 - Conducts reference checks
 - Recommends placement

Additional Information

- [Land Stewards Program Overview](#)
- [Land Stewards Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)

Questions? Contact:

Erica Keleher

MAI Program Manager

erica@mtadamsinstitute.org

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