



Meet the Scientist!



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A geologist for the Forest Service conducts studies and investigations on projects where minerals and geology impact the development or management of the forest resources (e.g., trees, range land, soil, water systems, wildlife). Geologists also manage mineral projects that are conducted on public lands and mitigate Abandoned Mine Land features.

Jenna Padilla

Geologist

B.S., University of New Mexico
USDA Forest Service scientist

Important Scientist Characteristics:

Being a geologist requires critical thinking, good record-keeping, and great communication skills. I am continually collaborating with the mining industry, scientists, and other government agencies to reduce impacts to other forest resources.

Example of a simple research question I have tried to answer:

How do we protect small wildlife from becoming trapped in a water sump (large hole in the ground) that is used for a gold exploration project? We installed small ramps around the sump so that critters could swim along the edge and climb out.

Technology or equipment used in research:

I use a Global Positioning System (GPS) app on my cell phone when I am in the field. I can upload any National Forest map or maps I make on the computer to the GPS app. With these maps, I can know my exact location when inspecting a project area on Forest Service lands.

Most Exciting Discovery

My most exciting project was discovering an Abandoned Mine Land (AML) shaft that was a safety hazard for humans and wildlife. We plugged it with foam, covered it with dirt, and seeded it with native seeds. It was exciting to locate a hazard and make it look like it was never there.

When did you know you wanted to be a scientist?

I knew I wanted to be a scientist for the Forest Service since I was a little girl. I always lived near a National Forest growing up, and I knew that I wanted to have a role in fulfilling the Forest Service motto of "Caring for the Land and Serving the People."

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