

Public Lands Corps (PLC)
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

September 2017

Q1: What is the PLC Program?

The PLC is a work and education program involving the nation's conservation and service corps that contributes to the rehabilitation, restoration, and repair of public land resources and infrastructures. PLC projects provide opportunities for community and national service, work experience and training to young men and women 16-30 years old, inclusive, who are unemployed or underemployed persons. The PLC is authorized by the Public Lands Corps (PLC) Act of 1993 as amended by the Public Lands Corps Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2005.

Q2: What types of projects do PLC members accomplish?

PLC members perform a wide range of services ranging from maintaining and restoring the many thousands of miles of trails to coordinating volunteers and special events on National Forests and Grasslands. Members create healthy and safe environments for recreation and exercise, support visitor experiences, and preserve historic structures. They assist with prescribed burns, may be red-carded firefighters, serve in leadership roles as team or crew leaders, conduct research and needs assessments, and support hydrology programs. PLC members perform many of the functions that contribute to Forest Service mission accomplishment.

Q3: Are there age requirements for PLC members?

Yes, PLC members are participants between 16 and 30 years of age (inclusive). Individuals who are above the age of 30 are ineligible for the PLC program.

Q4: What is the PLC noncompetitive hiring authority?

The PLC hiring authority is a noncompetitive recruitment source that may be used along with other recruitment sources to consider eligible candidates when announcing positions under merit procedures (FSH 6109.12 Employment and Benefits Handbook, Chapter 10-External Recruitment, Section 13-Public Lands Corps Hiring Authority). After successful completion of a PLC project which includes 640 hours of work on a project that furthers the conservation, restoration, construction or rehabilitation of natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or scenic resources, PLC members may be considered noncompetitively for not more than 2 years from date of completion of their service (FSM 1800 Youth, Volunteer, and Hosted Programs, Chapter 1820 Public Lands Corps). Individuals responsible for certifying the PLC graduate service must ensure they are between 16-30 years of age (inclusive), when the certification of completion of service is signed.

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Q5: What are the objectives of the PLC noncompetitive hiring authority?

The objectives of the PLC noncompetitive hiring authority are:

1. To provide flexibility and opportunities for the Forest Service to hire current and former members of the PLC;
2. To meet the employment needs of the Forest Service and members of the PLC; and
3. To assist the Forest Service in its progress towards a workforce reflective of the nation's diverse population.

Q6: How can former PLC members be eligible for the PLC noncompetitive hiring authority?

To be eligible for the PLC noncompetitive hiring status, the candidate must meet the following criteria:

1. Served as a qualified participant between the age of 16-30 inclusive, on an appropriate conservation project completing a minimum of 640 hours of satisfactory service that included at least 120 hours through PLC; **and**
2. Meet OPM Qualification Standards and any other qualification requirement(s) stated in the vacancy announcement for the position for which they are applying (including any selective placement factors, positive education requirements, physical requirements, etc).

Please note: The Public Lands Corps - Certificate of Eligibility for Noncompetitive Hiring Status must be signed by the Line Officer when the PLC member is between 16-30 years of age (inclusive). Eligibility for noncompetitive hiring status under this authority continues for not more than 2 years after completion of PLC service. **The 2 year timeframe cannot be extended. Appointment to the Federal service must be within 2 years of completion of the program. The individual must be on-boarded before the expiration of the 2 years. This authority cannot be used to hire an individual who is 33 years old or older.**

Q7: Do outreach activities apply to filling positions under this noncompetitive hiring authority?

Yes, outreach activities must be conducted in accordance with the direction set forth in Forest Service Manual 1720, Public Notification, and collective bargaining agreements.

Q8: Does the Agency's order of consideration provisions apply when filling positions under this non-competitive hiring authority?

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Yes, all appointments are subject to the provisions of the agency order of consideration; to include, clearance of the Reemployment Priority List (RPL), Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP), Workforce Restructuring and Placement System (WRAPS) and Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP) provisions and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

Q9: What documentation must a PLC eligible candidate submit in response to a vacancy announcement for consideration under this noncompetitive hiring authority?

Use the applicant's resume, Public Lands Corps - Certificate of Eligibility for Noncompetitive Hiring Status (ex. 01), and transcripts (if the applicant is using education to qualify) to verify the qualifications of the applicant for the grade level being filled. (Note: if applicant does not have the Public Lands Corps - Certificate of Eligibility for Noncompetitive Hiring Status included in their application package, consider them ineligible).

Q10: Who is the approval authority responsible for signing the Public Lands Corps - Certificate of Eligibility for Noncompetitive Hiring Status?

The line officer who oversees the work or signed the agreement which codified the PLC partnership for a Forest Service Unit.

Q11: Must individuals be U.S. citizens?

Yes, an individual appointed under the PLC noncompetitive hiring authority must be a U.S. citizen.

Q12: Does Veterans' Preference apply when issuing referrals under the PLC noncompetitive hiring authority?

Yes, within the PLC eligibles, a non-preference eligible cannot be selected over a preference eligible.

Q13: Are there any restrictions on the type of positions (occupational series and grade) that may be filled using the PLC noncompetitive hiring authority? No, managers may consider this noncompetitive recruitment source along with other recruitment sources when filling permanent General Schedule and Federal Wage System positions under merit promotion procedures.

Q14: Can this authority be used to fill temporary or term positions?

No, this authority cannot be used to fill temporary or term positions. It may only be used when filling permanent positions under merit promotion procedures.

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Q15: Must a vacancy announcement be posted for use of the PLC noncompetitive hiring authority?

Yes, a merit vacancy announcement must be posted to the USAJOBS website and the Public Lands Corps Noncompetitive Hiring Authority must be included under the Special Hiring Authorities.

Q16: Must a PLC be specifically included in the Area of Consideration?

Yes, hiring managers should discuss with the HR staffer the various hiring strategies to most effectively meet their hiring needs. Staffers should follow the current standard operating procedure "Who May Apply" for standard statements to use when describing the Area of Consideration.

Q17: Must an individual meet the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) requirements?

Yes, individuals must meet OPM qualification standards for competitive service positions and any other qualification requirement(s) stated in the vacancy announcement for the position for which they are applying (including any selective placement factors, positive education requirements, physical requirements, etc.).

Q18: How are individuals appointed under the PLC noncompetitive hiring authority?

Individuals are selected from a noncompetitive certificate for employment into the competitive service. Although the PLC noncompetitive hiring authority is a noncompetitive recruitment source, individuals are appointed into the competitive service. Compliance with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations, Merit Promotion Plan, collective bargaining agreements and other requirements regarding competitive service employment apply.

Q19: Does the 640 hours of satisfactory service count toward the competitive service requirement for career tenure or probationary period?

No, although time served in the PLC is creditable experience for qualification purposes, it is not creditable for purposes of computations for retirement, time-in-grade, leave or the Thrift Savings Plan; does not count towards probationary period or career tenure; and does not accrue adverse appeal rights.

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Exhibit 01

Must be printed on Forest Service letterhead

Public Lands Corps Certificate of Eligibility

Legal Name of Individual
(First, Last)

has successfully completed a minimum of 640 hours on appropriate conservation projects including at least 120 hours on U.S. Forest Service Public Lands Corps projects and was 16-30 years of age (inclusive) during participation as of

DATE

As provided by 16 USC 1723-1726, Public Lands Corps Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2005 and Public Law 109-154, this individual has earned a noncompetitive hiring status that provides eligibility to apply to internal permanent merit vacancy announcements with the U.S. Forest Service. This eligibility is for a period of not more than two years from the date certified above. Appointment must occur before the individual's 33rd birthday.

Certified by Line Officer:

[Signature]
[Signature block]

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Exhibit 02



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Humboldt-Toiyabe
National Forest

Santa Rosa Ranger District
3275 Fountain Way
Winnemucca, NV 89445
775-623-5025

Public Lands Corps Certificate of Eligibility

Phillip Skageens

Legal Name of Individual
(First, Last)

has successfully completed a minimum of 640 hours on appropriate conservation projects including at least 120 hours on U.S. Forest Service Public Lands Corps projects and was 16-30 years of age (inclusive) during participation as of

March 25, 2017

DATE

As provided by 16 USC 1723-1726, Public Lands Corps Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2005 and Public Law 109-154, this individual has earned a noncompetitive hiring status that provides eligibility to apply to internal permanent merit vacancy announcements with the U.S. Forest Service. This eligibility is for a period of not more than two years from the date certified above. Appointment must occur before the individual's 33rd birthday.

Certified by Line Officer:

John Smith
JOHN SMITH
District Ranger



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