

**Job Description:**

The Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness Foundation (ABWF) is seeking three (3) **Wilderness Steward Interns** for summer 2023. Each steward will work with U.S. Forest Service trail crews and ABWF staff and volunteers in the Custer-Gallatin National Forest's Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. Duty locations include:

- Gardiner Ranger District, Gardiner MT
- Yellowstone Ranger District, Livingston MT, and
- Beartooth Ranger District, Red Lodge MT.

Each position will include backcountry hitches as long as 9 days at a time, requiring hikes with heavy packs as much as 12+ miles a day. Qualified candidates will (a) come with strong backcountry experience, (b) be able to do hard work for long days in rugged conditions and mountain weather, (c) be self-sufficient and comfortable living in a remote environment, (d) have strong communication skills, both for visitor outreach and for working with team members and supervisors, and (e) be a cheerful and positive coworker and representative of the USFS and ABWF to wilderness visitors, volunteers, and partners. The 16-week seasonal positions run from **May 15-September 15, 2023**.

**Work Duties:**

- (a) Manual labor on a variety of wilderness stewardship projects including trail maintenance, site restoration, and weed eradication
- (b) Visitor contact and outreach work including education on wilderness ethics and regulations, and collecting visitor use monitoring data
- (c) Logistical support and co-leadership of volunteer stewardship projects
- (d) Positively representing the USFS and ABWF to a wide variety of wilderness visitors, volunteers, and community partners

**Qualifications:**

- (a) Ability to effectively and cheerfully do rigorous manual labor, outside in a high elevation, mountain environment, in weather conditions ranging from cold wet snow to hot dry sun. Backcountry hitches will require up to 9 days living and working in remote conditions with no modern facilities or conveniences
- (b) Ability to live, work, and communicate as a team member with USFS crews (5-6 trail crew professionals) and ABWF crews (6-7 volunteers plus ABWF staff). The stewards must also work cooperatively with other ABWF and USFS staff including wilderness rangers, district rangers, trail crew supervisors, and forest managers; and in some cases may need to work independently by themselves

(c) Be adaptable and a quick learner, able to learn new skills – from manual labor techniques using traditional hand tools to data collection following exact protocols to detail-oriented logistic and administrative tasks – and employ them to professional standards

(d) Be safety-oriented, aware of and able to avoid hazards inherent to wilderness travel and work, while also keeping an eye on the health and safety of others like coworkers and volunteers.

(c) Wilderness experience – applicants MUST have previous experience backpacking in remote environments, including experience planning, packing, and cooking for themselves on multi-day, overnight backcountry trips, navigating on and off trail, and hiking as much as 12+ miles a day in high elevation, mountain terrain. They MUST also be comfortable living and working alone in the wilderness, as some work duties may require solo work. They should also have all of their own backpacking equipment (hiking boots, sleeping bag, tent, stove, cook gear, etc. – other equipment like trail work tools and bear spray will be provided). However, ABWF may be able to support interns by providing some of these items to supplement their kit.

(d) Ability to work with a variety of trail maintenance hand tools – including crosscut saws, pick/adze, Pulaski, rock bar, shovel, and rake – and maintain them in a professional manner

(e) Desire to develop as a professional conservationist, gaining skills and experience for both public sector (i.e., USFS) and private sector (i.e., nonprofit groups like the ABWF) conservation work

(f) A passion and appreciation for wilderness and its many values (recreational, cultural, ecological, economic, etc.) that they are excited to share with other wilderness visitors.

**Preferred Candidates** will have:

(a) Previous experience working on a trail crew.

(b) CPR, 1<sup>st</sup> Aid, and/or Wilderness First Responder certifications.

(c) Ability to commit to the entire 16-week season that ends in mid-September.

**Compensation:**

Wilderness Stewards will receive a \$1,200+ month tax-free stipend, and shared housing at USFS bunkhouses (which include a mix of shared and individual rooms, shower facilities, and shared kitchens and living areas).

**About the ABWF and the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness:**

ABWF is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting stewardship of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness and fostering appreciation of all wild lands. We work with the U.S. Forest Service supporting 'boots-on-the-ground' projects including volunteer engagement, education and outreach, and collaboration with a variety of community partners. Our annual

internship program is one of the best ways we can support our USFS partners while also developing a strong cohort of professional wilderness stewards.

The Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness of Montana and Wyoming is a 944,000 acre wilderness area nestled against the northern edge of Yellowstone National Park. One of the largest wilderness areas in the U.S. outside Alaska, it is characterized by rugged peaks over 12,000 feet in elevation (including the highest in Montana), alpine lakes, and broad expanses of tundra-covered plateaus above treeline. A diverse flora and fauna live here in abundance--grizzly bear, lynx, mountain goats, whitebark pine, and subalpine fir. Sixty trailheads lead to over 700 miles of trails in the A-B Wilderness alone.

Gardiner (pop. 500, elev. 5,000'), Livingston (pop. 9,040, elev. 4,501'), and Red Lodge (pop. 2,500; elev. 5,500') all have vibrant summer tourism economies being gateway communities to Yellowstone National Park. They are a short drive to larger cities including Bozeman (pop. 40,000, 1.5 hours from Gardiner and 0.5 hours from Livingston) and Billings (pop. 125,000, 1 hour from Red Lodge) with airports, hospitals, major retailers, and other services and amenities.

**To Apply:**

Send (a) cover letter, (b) resume, and (c) three references to ABWF Executive Director Patrick Cross at [pcross@abwilderness.org](mailto:pcross@abwilderness.org). Applications will be accepted until the positions are filled.

*ABWF is an equal opportunity provider dedicated to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment.*