



## **Forest Health Operations Manager**

### **About Whitebark Institute**

Whitebark Institute is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to addressing environmental challenges and fostering resilient communities in California's Eastern Sierra. Our work prioritizes landscape and community adaptation to climate change, particularly wildfire risk reduction. We play a key role in advancing the region's wildfire resilience efforts in communities throughout the Eastern Sierra by bringing together local scientists, environmental planners, government agencies, educators, communities, and businesses to collaboratively develop, plan, finance, and restore healthy landscapes in Inyo and Mono Counties.

Whitebark Institute makes an impact in our communities and provides a great place to work. We are a small, growing organization with a skilled staff that brings experience from a multitude of scientific disciplines and applied areas of expertise. With an indescribable passion for this place, Whitebark is made up of talented outdoor enthusiasts who care deeply about where we work and live. Collaboration is one of our core values, and we recognize that a healthy work-life balance is essential to our long-term success.

### **About the Position**

The **Forest Health Operations Manager** will coordinate and oversee all aspects of forest health and fuels reduction projects including mechanized and hand thinning operations, under the guidance and supervision of the Forest Health Program Director. A primary responsibility is to oversee work on the Eastern Sierra Climate & Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP) including leadership and supervision of staff responsible for project management and implementation, as well as close coordination with the Inyo National Forest and other partners.

This position requires a self-directed, highly organized professional who excels in both independent work and collaborative environments. The ideal candidate will be a proactive leader capable of elevating the efficiency and efficacy of the Forest Health Program. The dynamic nature of the work requires a leader committed to creative problem solving and relationship building. Proactive, effective communication with partners such as the Inyo National Forest and Town of Mammoth Lakes is an essential part of this position. Coordination with Whitebark staff from other program areas is often required to effectively achieve project outcomes. The Forest Health Operations Manager is a full-time, year-round position with benefits.

### **Duties**



The Forest Health Operations Manager will perform a wide variety of work to support the Forest Health program and initiatives within Whitebark Institute, including but not limited to:

#### Operations Oversight (35%)

- Lead team of talented staff (currently 3-6 staff members, varies seasonally) with the design and implementation of ecological forest health and fuels reduction projects.
- Support staff by coordinating timelines, logistical considerations, and communication needs across multiple partners and projects in different phases of completion.
- Successful execution of Whitebark's forestry-related initiatives in the ESCCRP and other project areas, with target acreages of >1,000 acres per operating season.
- Draft annual program of work to guide Forest Health operations and assign staff to duties based on abilities and program direction.
- Assist with decision making about Forest Health program directions, including grant opportunities, staffing, and out-year projects.
- Support staff with on-site inspections to evaluate progress and project compliance with plans, specifications, and overall project objectives including specific regulatory permits and environmental compliance documents (NEPA/CEQA).
- Lead hiring and training of new Forest Health staff.
- Devise annual training plan for staff based on individual skills and interests.
- Identify opportunities to streamline processes by developing SOPs and templates.

#### Collaboration & Coordination (35%)

- Coordinate with USFS, CAL FIRE, TOML, MMSA, and other federal, state, and local agencies and private organizations to achieve forest health and wildfire resilience goals.
- Serve as a liaison with USFS Timber Management Staff, ensuring clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations are established.
- Oversee program-level coordination of timelines and logistics for implementation and planning of treatment units, identifying appropriate external partners to include.
- Collaborate with implementation partners in the ESCCRP and other projects.
- Work collaboratively with multiple partners to coordinate biomass disposal and identify creative biomass solutions across implementation areas.
- Represent Whitebark in partnership meetings as appropriate and participate in collaborative working groups, in coordination with other Whitebark staff.
- Perform other duties as assigned to support program and organizational success.

#### Administration (30%)

- Provide oversight and review of implementation project contracts.



- Contribute to program financial sustainability, including writing grant proposals and agreements to secure funding for future projects.
- Administer and/or oversee government grants, including budget tracking, deliverables, amendments, and reporting.
- Review, contribute to, and approve detailed reports and invoices for grant compliance.
- Draft and manage USFS Collection, Partnership and Stewardship Agreements, and other relevant Agency agreement mechanisms to allow authority to work, in collaboration with Whitebark Leadership Team.
- Participate in Whitebark team meetings to align program goals, inform strategic decision-making and support organization-wide initiatives.
- Conduct performance evaluations and provide mentorship tailored to individual needs.
- Work with Whitebark's Leadership Team to ensure budgets are optimized and well-managed.

**Required Qualifications:**

- Bachelor's degree in forestry, ecology, environmental sciences, or a related field.
- 10+ years of professional experience in natural resource management, including project management, budget management, and/or personnel supervision. An equivalent combination of education and experience will be considered.
- Experience collaborating with multidisciplinary teams and fostering productive relationships with a wide range of community members, governmental agencies, local communities, and academic institutions.
- Expertise in forest health practices, including fuels reduction, silviculture treatments, prescribed fire, and/or restoration.
- Strong proficiency in Microsoft Office, ESRI Products, and GIS software, with the ability to effectively manage data.
- Self-directed, with supervisory experience and the ability to prioritize and coordinate workload, both independently and as part of a team.
- Proven ability to set goals, prioritize tasks, and manage complex projects.
- Strong interpersonal skills with the ability to develop and maintain partnerships with agencies, landowners, Tribal staff, and community members, including people with a wide range of backgrounds and communication styles.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with experience in grant writing and public speaking.
- Strong program management skills including experience developing and managing grant and program level budgets, prioritizing multiple projects simultaneously, and making strategic budget and staffing adjustments to deliver projects on schedule at



a programmatic scale.

- Valid California driver's license with a clean driving record.

### **Preferred Qualifications:**

- Advanced degree in forestry, ecology, environmental sciences, or a related field.
- Technical expertise in forestry, ecology, hydrology, botany, wildland fire, and/or wildlife management.
- Familiarity with Eastern Sierra forests and ecosystems, including silviculture methods, disturbance regimes and natural history.
- Hands-on experience with mechanical and hand forestry operations, such as unit layout, operational methods, timber volume estimates, and skid trail identification.
- Knowledge of local, state, and federal environmental policies and regulations pertaining to resource management programs, including NEPA and CEQA.
- Familiarity with USFS grants, agreements, land management planning directives, and processes.
- Professional certifications such as Registered Professional Forester (RPF), Arborist, or other forestry-related credentials.
- Experience managing forestry operations contracts, including knowledge of State and Federal laws and regulations, and working with mechanical timber operators and hand crews.
- Experience managing staff, providing training and mentorship, and completing performance evaluations.
- Experience developing grant proposals with a track record of obtaining funding.
- Operational fire experience in Federal or private sector.

### **Work Environment**

This position involves a combination of office and fieldwork, with the majority occurring in an office setting. Regular travel is required to attend meetings, visit field sites, and collaborate with partners across the Eastern Sierra—often in remote locations. As such, a valid California driver's license, clean driving record, and personal vehicle insurance are required. Hybrid remote work is acceptable, with leadership approval.

### **Compensation & Benefits**

This is a full-time, year-round position with a competitive salary range of \$95,000 - \$115,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications.

### **Benefits include:**

- **Health Insurance:** 75% employer-paid medical, plus 100% employer-paid dental, vision,



and life insurance.

- **Retirement:** Employer-contributed retirement program.
- **Paid Time Off:** Generous Vacation Time Policy and an additional 11 paid holidays per year.

### **How to Apply**

To apply, email a resume and cover letter to [administrator@whitebarkinstitute.org](mailto:administrator@whitebarkinstitute.org) with the subject line: Forest Health Operations Manager. Position will remain open until filled, and applications will be reviewed on an ongoing basis until the ideal candidate is identified. First round of evaluation of applications is expected to take place by July 7, 2026.

**Whitebark Institute is an Equal Opportunity Employer.** We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive work environment for all employees.

### **For more information:**

Visit <https://whitebarkinstitute.org/careers/> or contact Ali Urza at [ali@whitebarkinstitute.org](mailto:ali@whitebarkinstitute.org)