



CITY OF NEWARK, NJ

DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SEWER UTILITIES

Pequannock Watershed

Forester

Purpose:

The City of Newark, New Jersey is seeking a dedicated and skilled professional to serve as the Forester for the Pequannock Watershed. The selected candidate will lead efforts to manage and protect the watershed's forested lands, ensuring their sustainability while safeguarding water quality and ecosystem health. This position offers an exciting opportunity to implement innovative forest management practices, contribute to wildfire prevention and climate adaptation strategies, and oversee reforestation and vegetation management projects. The forester will also collaborate with stakeholders to align forest stewardship efforts with the City's commitment to sustainable resource management and enhanced environmental resilience.

The Community of Newark and its Pequannock Watershed

The City of Newark is a dynamic urban center made up of five distinct wards, over 25 vibrant neighborhoods, a bustling downtown, and a host of world-class cultural, recreational, and entertainment amenities. Located just 12 miles west of Midtown Manhattan, Newark serves as the largest city in New Jersey and the county seat of Essex County. With a population of over 300,000, Newark is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse cities in the Tri-State area, boasting a Black majority population alongside significant representation from Hispanic, Latino, Asian, and Caucasian communities. Spanning 26 square miles along the Passaic River, Newark offers easy access to New York City, regional attractions, and transportation networks.

The Pequannock Watershed, a critical resource for Newark and its residents, encompasses over 35,000 acres of pristine forested land spanning multiple counties in Northern New Jersey. As the primary source of Newark's drinking water, the watershed is home to five major reservoirs—Charlotteburg, Echo Lake, Clinton, Canistear, and Oak Ridge—collectively providing millions of gallons of high-quality water daily to the City of Newark and several surrounding municipalities. Managed with a focus on ecological health, forest stewardship, and climate adaptation, the watershed plays a vital role in ensuring the sustainability of Newark's water supply and the surrounding environment. The forests and reservoirs of the Pequannock Watershed also contribute to regional biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and recreational opportunities, serving as a key natural asset for both the City and the Highlands community which hosts it.

Together, the City of Newark and the Pequannock Watershed demonstrate the interconnectedness of urban and natural systems, highlighting Newark's commitment to balancing growth with environmental stewardship.



Mayor Baraka's Agenda & City Governance Structure

Mayor Ras J. Baraka, currently serving his second four-year term, leads the City of Newark's executive branch with a commitment to the *Newark Forward* agenda. This agenda emphasizes creating an empowered, safer, collaborative, and equitable city while fostering sustainable practices that benefit both urban and natural environments.

As a critical part of the City's infrastructure, the Pequannock Watershed plays a pivotal role in achieving these goals by ensuring a reliable and high-quality drinking water supply for Newark's residents. The Forester will contribute to this vision by implementing forward-thinking forest management practices that protect water resources, promote ecological health, and support Newark's resilience to climate change.

The Mayor's administration has prioritized sustainability and innovation as key pillars of Newark's growth. Through transformative initiatives, the City is positioning itself as a leader in environmental stewardship. This role aligns with the Mayor's broader agenda to safeguard natural resources while advancing equity and opportunity for Newark's communities.

The City of Newark operates under a strong governance framework, with Mayor Baraka appointing the heads of 14 city departments, including the Department of Water and Sewer Utilities, which oversees watershed operations. Collaboration with the City Council, a nine-member legislative body elected to four-year terms, ensures alignment between legislative priorities and executive initiatives.

The Forester will play a vital role in advancing the City's environmental and water management objectives, contributing to Newark's renaissance as a model for urban and environmental synergy.

About Newark's Department of Water And Sewer Utilities

The Department of Water and Sewer Utilities is responsible for the planning, operation, maintenance, and modernization of Newark's water supply, treatment, transmission, and distribution, as well as the wastewater and stormwater collection infrastructure. With jurisdiction over the city's water system, from source to tap, the Department is committed to advancing equitable access to high-quality water services for Newark's residents, businesses, and visitors. In alignment with Mayor Ras J. Baraka's *Newark Forward* agenda, the Department supports sustainable resource management, climate adaptation, and infrastructure resilience as key pillars of its operations.

The Department oversees more than 400 million gallons of finished water storage across its reservoirs, over 35 miles of water distribution and sewer pipelines, and state-of-the-art treatment facilities. It also manages initiatives to modernize infrastructure, improve efficiency, and protect natural resources, including innovative approaches to watershed and source water protection.

With the support of the Mayor Ras Baraka and the Director of Water and Sewer Utilities, Kareem Adeem, Newark seeks forward-thinking leaders who can help the Department achieve its mission of providing safe, reliable, and sustainable water and sewer services. This includes addressing emerging challenges such as climate change, aging infrastructure, and environmental protection to safeguard Newark's water resources for generations to come. Therefore, Newark is seeking candidates who can lead with vision, recommend strategic improvements, and implement innovative solutions to meet the evolving needs of the city and its residents.



Job Duties and Responsibilities¹

- Execute forest management plan, tailored to maintain and enhance the ecological health of the Pequannock Watershed, with a primary focus on protecting and improving water quality.
- Conduct regular assessments of forest conditions, identifying threats such as pests, diseases, invasive species, and wildfire risks, and implement mitigation measures to safeguard forest and watershed health. Document all forestry activities, prepare reports on forest health and management outcomes, and contribute to watershed management planning.
- Oversee and participate in sustainable forestry activities, including timber stand improvement, selective harvesting, reforestation, and invasive species management, to achieve ecological balance and optimize resource use.
- Design and implement soil stabilization and erosion control measures to minimize sedimentation in reservoirs and watercourses, ensuring the preservation of water quality.
- Collaborate with water quality monitoring teams to align forest management practices with water resource protection goals, including controlling nutrient loading and runoff from forested areas.
- Develop and implement wildfire mitigation strategies, such as fuel reduction, firebreak maintenance, and controlled burns, to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires in the watershed.
- Work closely with the watershed ecologist to align forestry operations with broader ecological restoration and habitat management goals, ensuring the watershed supports biodiversity and resilience.
- Supervise and provide training, fostering the development of technical skills, safety practices, and knowledge of sustainable forestry methods.
- Conduct forest inventories, GIS mapping, and other data collection activities to inform management decisions and document the impact of forestry operations on watershed health.
- Ensure all forestry activities comply with state and federal forestry laws, water protection regulations, conservation easements and best management practices for forest and watershed conservation.
- Partner with state forestry agencies, conservation organizations, and other stakeholders to align the watershed's forestry program with regional and statewide environmental goals.
- Participate in public outreach programs to educate stakeholders and local communities on the role of sustainable forestry in protecting water quality and the environment.
- Stay informed of emerging forestry technologies and practices, incorporating innovations that enhance operational efficiency, ecological health, and water quality protection.
- Develop and monitor budgets for forestry projects. Identify and pursue funding opportunities, including grants and public-private partnerships, to support program expansion and innovation.

¹ **Disclaimer:** The duties and responsibilities outlined for this position are not exhaustive and may evolve based on the needs of the Pequannock Watershed and the Department of Water and Sewer Utilities. The forester is expected to cross-train in all aspects of watershed operations, including but not limited to reservoir management, water quality monitoring, and ecological restoration activities. This role requires a flexible and collaborative professional who is willing to step in and address departmental needs as they arise to support the overall mission of protecting Newark's water resources and ensuring operational excellence.



Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

The ideal candidate will be a technically skilled, proactive, and adaptable professional with a strong commitment to sustainable forestry and watershed management. This individual will demonstrate a collaborative and solutions-oriented approach to maintaining forest and water quality, possess excellent communication skills, and be dedicated to supporting the overall mission of the Pequannock Watershed.

The ideal candidate will have:

- Deep knowledge of sustainable forest management practices, including forest inventories, reforestation, selective harvesting, and invasive species control, with an understanding of their impact on water quality.
- Proficiency in GIS mapping, forest modeling tools, and data collection techniques to inform forest management decisions and measure outcomes.
- A strong understanding of the relationship between forestry practices and water quality, including sediment control, nutrient management, and ecological restoration.
- Experience in or knowledge of wildfire prevention strategies, fuel reduction techniques, and post-fire recovery planning to reduce risks within the watershed.
- Capacity to train and mentor, fostering technical expertise, professional growth, and a collaborative team culture.
- A flexible mindset with the ability to address emergent needs across the department and take on tasks beyond the core forestry responsibilities when required.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills to collaborate effectively with ecologists, team members, stakeholders, and external partners.
- Familiarity with federal, state, and local forestry and water quality regulations and policies, ensuring all activities meet legal and environmental standards.
- Ability to perform fieldwork in diverse and challenging environments, including dense forests, steep terrains, and varying weather conditions.
- A commitment to innovation, sustainability, equity, and stewardship of natural resources, with a leadership style that inspires confidence and teamwork.
- Effectively prioritize tasks, set goals, follow direction, communicate verbally and in written format, keep accurate records, and synthesize facts to reach a logical conclusion
- Ability to hike 5 – 10 miles through wooded and/or steep terrain and carry 30 lbs of equipment over the course of the day



Minimum Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in Forestry, Natural Resource Management, Environmental Science, or a related field.
- **Preferred Qualifications:**
 - Specialized training in wildfire management, water quality improvement, erosion control, and/or climate adaptation.
- **Preferred Experience:**
 - At least three years of professional experience in forest management, preferably within a watershed or water quality context.
 - Experience with GIS, forest modeling, and data-driven decision-making.
 - Supervisory or mentorship experience is highly desirable.
- **Licenses/Certifications:**
 - Certified Forester or ability to obtain certification within a specified time frame.
 - Appointees will be required to possess a valid driver's license in New Jersey if vehicle operation is necessary to perform essential duties of the position.

Compensation & Benefits

The salary for this position will align with industry standards and depend on experience and qualifications. The City of Newark also offers an attractive benefits package (including insurance for health, dental, vision, and life insurance).