

FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
CAREER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

# 2023 - 2024 ANNUAL REPORT





# WHO WE ARE

The mission of the Forestry and Natural Resources Career Mentorship Program is to increase recruitment and retention of early-career forestry professionals by: pairing university and community college students with a professional mentor, providing networking and training opportunities, and offering insight into a forestry career.

The Program recognizes that a diverse and expanded workforce is essential to addressing current and future challenges facing the field. We encourage support for underrepresented groups in the profession, including women, Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and LGBTQIA+ by: providing training on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) for participants, pairing participants based on shared professional interests and identity (when requested), and highlighting the diversity of identities and specialties that exist within the field of forestry.

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please contact Liana Vitousek at [liana@placerrcd.org](mailto:liana@placerrcd.org). The application period begins in late August. Please visit [placerrcd.org/mentorship](http://placerrcd.org/mentorship) for more information.



CALIFORNIA  
LICENSED  
FORESTERS  
ASSOCIATION



California Women  
in Timber

*Funding for this project is provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Business and Workforce Development Grants, with support from above organizations.*

# OVERVIEW

In the 23-24 academic year, the Program served 53 students from 7 community colleges and universities throughout California (Figure 1). These students were mentored by 50 mentors from various forestry and natural resource related sectors (Figure 2).

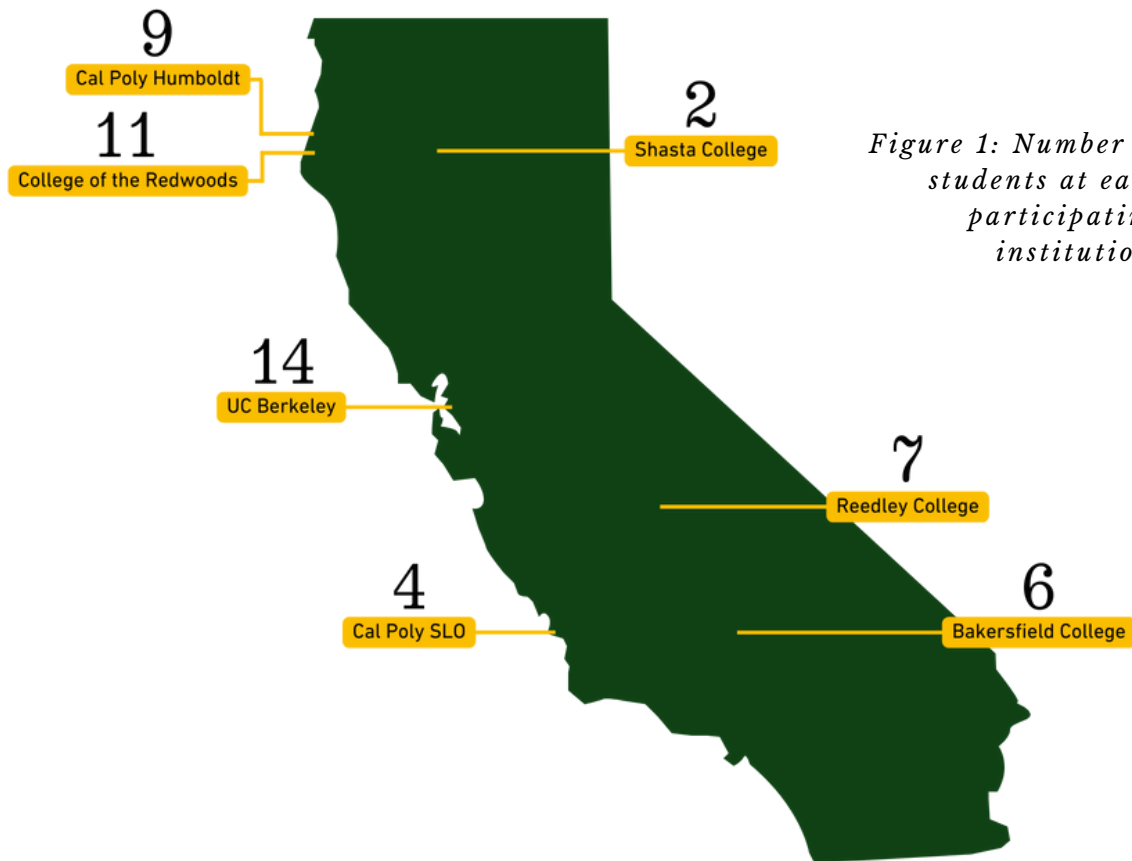
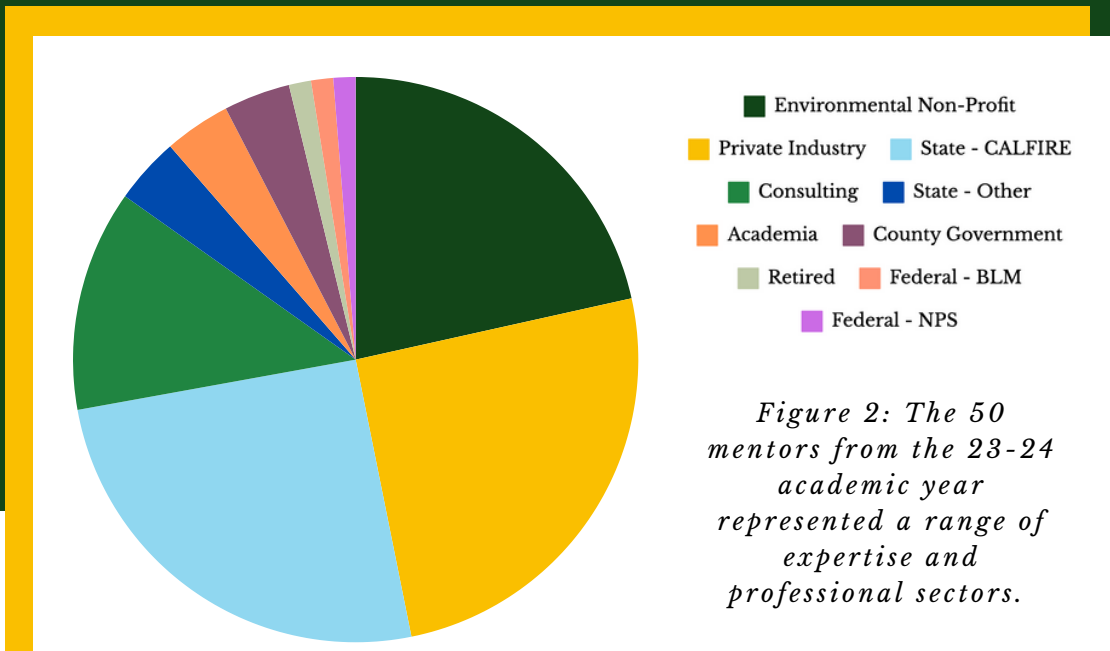
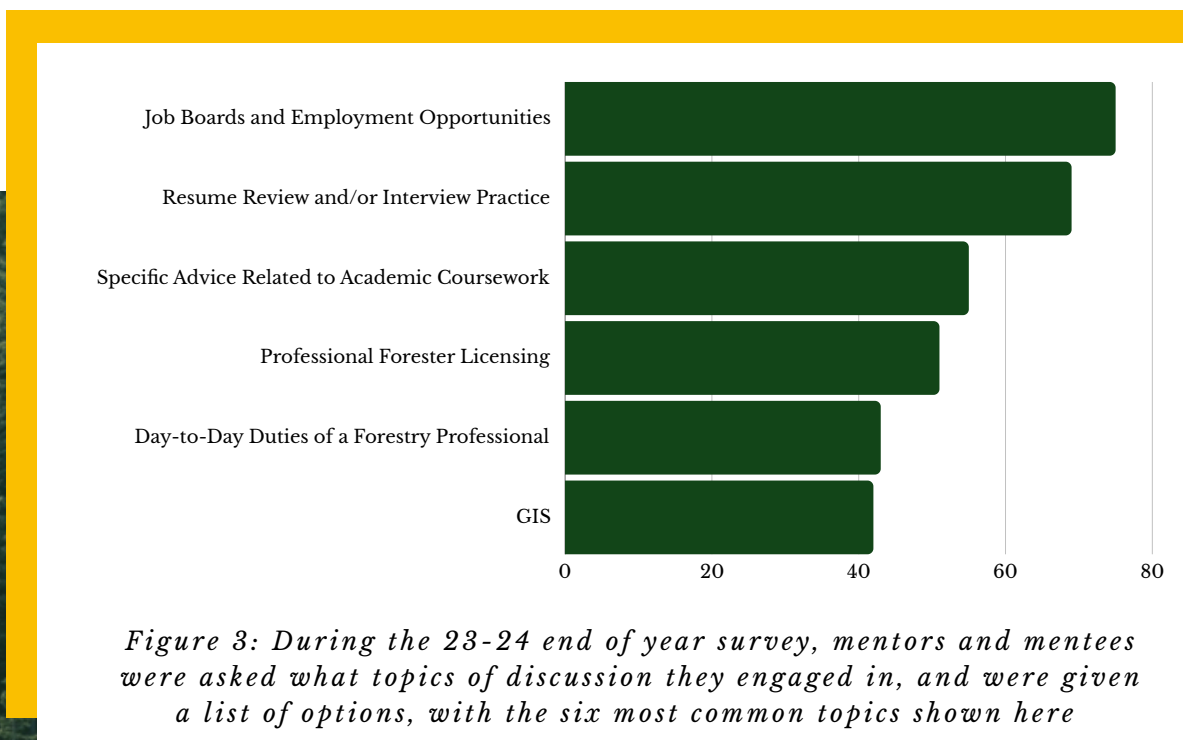


Figure 1: Number of students at each participating institution.



*Figure 2: The 50 mentors from the 23-24 academic year represented a range of expertise and professional sectors.*

**77% of pairs met once per month or more, and used their time to discuss job boards and employment opportunities (76%), day-to-day duties of a forestry professional (69%), professional forestry licensing (55%), resume review and interview practice (43%) and more (Figure 3).**



*Figure 3: During the 23-24 end of year survey, mentors and mentees were asked what topics of discussion they engaged in, and were given a list of options, with the six most common topics shown here*



# PROGRAMMING

The Forestry and Natural Resources Career Mentorship Program provided 13 unique opportunities for mentors and mentees to meet, expand their understanding of forestry and natural resources careers, and for students to enhance their professional development skills. The Program also offered four different diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) trainings for all participants to deepen their knowledge of DEIJ and understand how to apply those principles to their professional careers. Three of these events were in-person, while 10 were remote.

**WHICH PATH TO CHOOSE?**  
Do you wonder which forestry career path is right for you (federal, private, etc.)? Join us for a virtual career panel to discuss the pros and cons of different career trajectories!  
Monday, May 6th, 2024 from 4:30 - 6 PM PST  
CLICK HERE for Zoom Registration  
With Panelists:  
Brita Goldstein (Green Diamond Resource Company RPF No. 3061), Kyla Sabo (US Forest Service), Kieran O'Leary (Butte Co. Firesafe Council RPF No. 2466)

**BECOMING AN RPF**  
AN INTERACTIVE VIRTUAL CAREER PANEL  
DO YOU ENJOY THE OUTDOORS? ARE YOU SEEKING JOB SECURITY IN A DYNAMIC INDUSTRY?  
WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BECOMING A REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL FORESTER?  
JOIN US ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10 FROM 5:30 - 7:00 PM PST  
TO LEARN ABOUT BECOMING AN RPF BRING YOUR QUESTIONS FOR OUR PANEL OF FORESTERS!  
ZOOM LINK

**Restoration in Forestry and Natural Resources**  
Monday April 29th, 4:00 PM  
Join Zoom Meeting: Register Here  
Meeting ID: 910 6016 6802 Passcode: 952973  
Guest Speakers: Dr. Stephanie Yelenik, US Forest Service; Dr. John-Pascal Berrill, Cal Poly Humboldt; Mitchell Hayes, Save The Redwoods League

Funding for this project is provided by the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection's Business and Workforce Development Grants, and by the following organizations: [Logos for various partners]



- NOV 2023**      Program Kickoff Meeting  
Job Preparedness Workshop  
Mixer & Mill Tour: CA Licensed Foresters  
Association Fall Workshop
- DEC 2023**      DEIJ Workshop: Psychological Safety, DEIJ,  
and Working Effectively Across Difference
- JAN 2024**      Career Panel: Becoming a Registered Professional  
Forester
- FEB 2024**      DEIJ Workshop: Unconscious Bias  
Mixer: Sierra Cascade Logging Conference
- MAR 2024**      Virtual Discussion: Equitable Hiring Practices  
Mixer: Redwood Region Logging Conference
- APR 2024**      Career Panel: Restoration  
DEIJ Workshop: Active Bystander and Active Self  
DEIJ Workshop: Complex Identities and  
Power Dynamics
- MAY 2024**      Career Panel: Which Path to Choose?
-



*Mentors and Mentees connect with the California Licensed Foresters Association.*





# SUCSESSES

Overall, mentors and mentees of the 23-24 academic year came out of the program excited about their growth, connections, and future relationships with one another. Whether using a mentor's expertise to develop interview skills, instilling confidence in a mentee, or fostering a collaborative partnership, those who participated largely came away with a sense of satisfaction.





**“My Mentee seemed to gain more confidence in himself after each session.”**

*- Mentor, 2024*

**“Thanks to the help of my mentor in my application and interviewing skills, I'll be doing research in a natural resources lab at Cornell University this summer.”**

*- Mentee, 2024*

**“The pairing process is really robust and I found a good fit in the program!”**

*- Mentee, 2024*

**“I really enjoyed connecting with my mentee and I believe we were able to learn from one another. “**

*- Mentor, 2024*

**“[My Mentor] really helped me out when it came to perfecting my resume for summer positions which resulted in me getting hired for a field assistant position!”**

*- Mentee, 2024*

**“Not sure how you all do your pairings, but every year I've had such a great connection with who I've been paired with. I love being a part of this program.”**

*- Mentor, 2024*

---



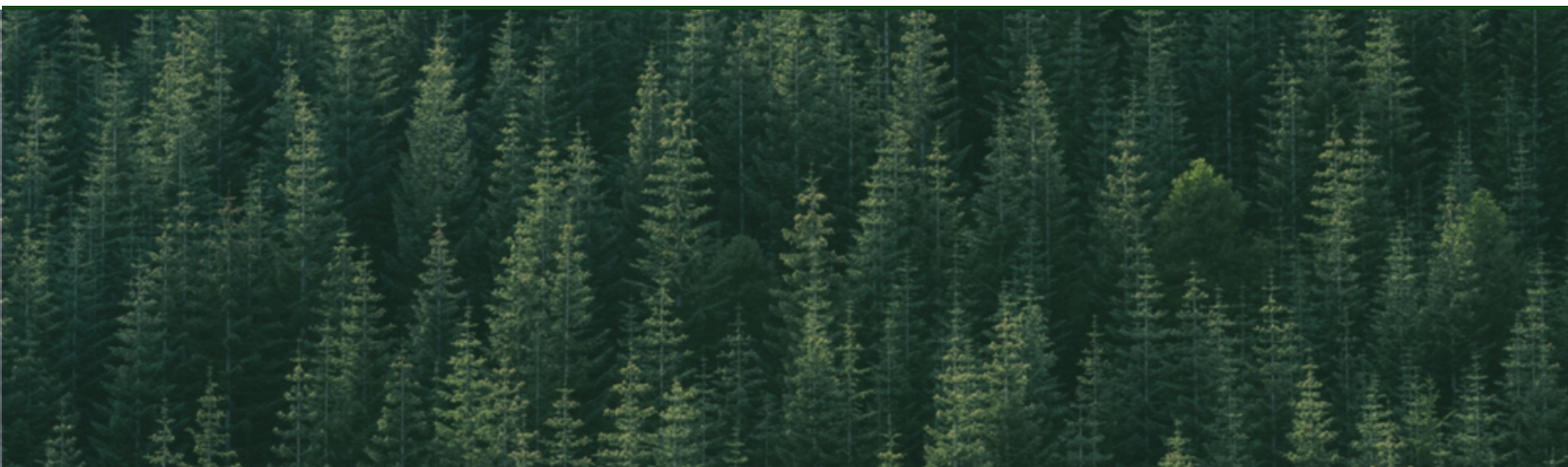
*Mentors and Mentees tour a mill at the California Licensed Foresters Association Fall Workshop.*





# 23-24 FY EXPENSES

Category	Expense
Program Manager Salary and Travel	\$25,754.32
Administrative Costs	\$15,176.88
Student and Mentor Support	\$2,799.84
DEIJ Workshops and Honoraria	\$6,550.00
Expenses from Donor Fund	\$1,410.87



# LOOKING FORWARD

---

As The Forestry and Natural Resources Career Mentorship Program continues to strive toward expansion of resources for students, a few big changes are coming in the 24-25 academic year.

Taking perspectives from the 23-24 end-of-year survey into account, the Program is working to develop more in-person networking and training opportunities, with a particular focus on hosting DEIJ workshops that are in-person and specifically geared toward forestry and natural resources, utilizing a new training facilitator versed in natural resources.

Additionally, as of June 2024, Program management has shifted from long-time lead Allison Erny to her Placer RCD colleague, Liana Vitousek. Allison has done a remarkable job of managing the program since its inception, and maintains an active role as the Program's Vice Chair heading into the 24-25 academic year. Liana's experience in natural resources, science communication, community engagement, and events coordination, paired with guidance from the Steering Committee, puts her in an excellent position to take on the tasks required of the Program Manager.

---



As the Program approaches the end of funding from CAL FIRE's Business and Workforce Development Grant, the incoming Chair, Program Manager, and Steering Committee will continue to utilize existing funding with care, while seeking new income streams to ensure the Program continues after grant expiration in March of 2026. The Program relies on volunteers and donations now more than ever.

With your support, the Program can continue to bolster early-career forestry professionals and create a more diverse and equitable workforce for the future.

Donations via check may be written to the Placer Resource Conservation District with "Forestry Mentorship Program" in the memo line.

Attn: Liana Vitousek • Placer RCD • 11641 Blocker Drive  
• Auburn, CA 95603

*Funding for this project is provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Business and Workforce Development Grants.*

*The organizations below contributed funding and fiscal sponsorship to the Program.*





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

## STEERING COMMITTEE

**Christie Pollet-Young**, SCS Global Services

**Corrie Munger**, California Licensed Foresters Association

**Joseph King**, Sierra Pacific Industries

**Katie Low**, UC Cooperative Extension

**Mary Mayeda**, CA Women in Timber

**Nic Dutch**, UC Cooperative Extension

**Louis Cimmino**, Student Representative, UC Berkeley

**Renaldo Arroyo**, Bakersfield College

**Ricky Satomi**, UC Cooperative Extension





**FACULTY AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

**Cal Poly Humboldt**

Faculty Representative: **Erin Kelly**  
Student Representative: **Jayce Burniske**

**Cal Poly SLO**

Faculty Representative: **Lily Kaarakka**  
Student Representative: **Eden Eliahou**

**Bakersfield College**

Faculty Representative: **Renaldo Arroyo**  
Student Representative: **William Brown**

**UC Berkeley**

Faculty Representative: **Rachelle Hedges**  
Student Representative: **Lee Kim**

**Reedley College**

Faculty Representative: **Kayla Rodriguez**  
Student Representative: **Ashton Ferry**

**College of the Redwoods**

Faculty Representative: **Valerie Elder**  
Student Representative: **Aquila Phelps-Gellman**

**Shasta College**

Faculty Representative: **Melissa Markee**

---





**THANK  
YOU**