

Tips for CVs

1. Use a CV instead of a Resume

- In the natural resource's profession, resumes (a single page, including education, work, & a few skills) are rarely used.
- Frequently, career centers at colleges or universities guide you towards writing a resume, but a CV will be a better fit for natural resources jobs.
- CVs are a better reflection of your skills, knowledge, and efforts in the professional field.
- CVs are generally preferred in this field, but ensure you read the requirements of the job posting before proceeding with any applications. If they specify resume only, provide one.
- Some activities may specifically request an abbreviated CV (i.e. grant applications, TWS's Leadership Institute, or certain accreditation programs).

2. What to include at the top of the first page

- Your Name. Should be first thing seen, font should be legible, bolded, easily visible at the top of the first page of the document. Generally, your name is in a larger font size than the rest of the document, so it stands out.
- Contact Information. Include an email & a phone number as a minimum.

3. Different CVs for different positions

- You might have a few standard CVs where you prioritize different things. For example, one with education and outreach categories prioritized for public engagement type jobs. Another with land management experiences prioritized for biologist jobs.
- **Federal Jobs.** Here you'll want to match language as closely as possible to the job posting. Search for key words in the posting (words that are used frequently) and do your best to incorporate those words into the CV and/or cover letter. Federal jobs also require exact start and end dates and salaries for past positions, so be sure you maintain a list of those for all jobs in case you need them.

4. Use headers and/or footers to keep pages together & organized

- In case the pages of your CV/Resume get separated, headers/ footers allow the documents to easily be placed back together.
- Options include your name, contact information, or page numbers.

5. Be Concise

- Be concise but be sure you are adequately reflecting on what you can do.
- Don't just say "sampled fish", instead describe what techniques were used (i.e. seine net, backpack electro shocker, gill net, etc.).
- An example of unnecessary details is saying that you spent 4 hours on a boat on Long Lake. This does not help the employer understand your skillset.

6. Example headings

- Are you forgetting categories on your CV and therefore selling yourself short? Use this list as a guide for potential CV categories.

Awards or Honors	Certifications	Conferences Attended or Conference Organization	Data Collection & Management	Grants	International Experiences	Invited Talks/ Podcasts
Meetings Attended or Meeting Organization	Planning & Coordination	Popular Articles	University Activities	Professional Memberships or University Activities	Reports or Publications	Research Experience (not part of a job or degree)
Scholarships/ Fellowships	Skills	Teaching Experience	Trainings/ Workshops Attended	Trainings/ Workshops Organized or Facilitated	Vaccinations	Volunteer Experience
Poster Presentations	Professional Presentations	Public Presentations				

7. Content order

- Start with education, then work experience. Follow with other experience (see examples of headings above).
- List categories in order of relevance based on that specific position (e.g., if the position is focused on outreach, list any experience pertaining to outreach near the top). Assume an employer will stop reading before the end. What is most important for them to see first that makes you a good fit for the position?

8. What should be included

- Be careful not to assume you know what a hiring committee wants and remove things you deem “irrelevant”. You’re better off erring on the side of caution and including things unless there’s a good reason not to.
- Avoid “padding” your resume just to make it longer. Keep wording concise.
- If there’s an opportunity for a cover letter, that’s where you would highlight the specific skills you feel qualify you for the job.

9. Avoid abbreviations

- You may think your school’s acronym or a sampling tool’s abbreviation is common knowledge – it is not.
- Always spell things out unless they are very universal like GPS or ArcGIS. A good rule of thumb is if you could say it to a grandparent or cousin and they know what it means, it’s fine to use the acronym.

10. Use consistent formatting

- Consistency shows attention to detail. Spacing, font, how you list dates, all should be consistent throughout your CV.
- There's a difference between - and – and —. A hyphen (-) is one space and used to hyphenate words like mill-on-the-floss. An en dash (—) takes two spaces and conveys the word through (i.e. May–December). An em dash (—) takes three spaces and separates clauses—they're often used in place of commas: I love cheese—sharp cheddar in particular—and so does my cat, so we share.

11. Have someone review your CV

- When you have been looking at the same document for so long, it all starts to look the same. Have someone else review it, they will often find things that were missed or helped find inconsistencies.

12. What to list under work experience

- Call this section “work experience” rather than “jobs” or “employment” as this heading encompasses more than just typical jobs. Work experience does not necessarily mean *paid* experience.
- If you **volunteered** somewhere full-time, list it as work experience, but if you help for 2 hours once a week at a pet shelter, list it as volunteer experience.
- If you **studied abroad**, and you were doing substantial volunteer work, it can be listed under work experience or volunteer experience. If it was focused on taking classes, you can either add an “international experiences” category or incorporate it within your education section.
- **Internships** (paid or unpaid) can be listed as work experience.
- If you did a **teaching assistantship** during grad school, list that under work experience.

13. Positions that built skills, but you don't want to list

- Sometimes, experiences aren't always positive. You might not want to list something you've done, so you don't have to associate with an experience you had. There are still ways to include this experience. Be creative, work with peers, or ask a trusted advisor for advice with these types of situations.

14. Listing classes

- Many jobs or graduate schools require your transcripts, so you do not need to list them on your CV.
- Some jobs may request specific coursework, so you will want to list them, especially if they don't request a transcript.
- If there are skills you learned from a specific course, list that under the skills section instead.
- If you do list some coursework, you can either list it under your education section or as its own section under a “Relevant Coursework” header.

15. Listing skills

- Only include skills that you can do. Ask yourself if someone asked you to do task, could you be successful. For example, could you make a map in GIS or drive a screw with a screwdriver.
- You don't need to be an expert, but you want to have a basic grasp of skills listed.
- If there are skills on your list that you used to be able to do, but that is no longer feel capable of, remove those from the list.
- You can use proficiency level descriptors such as “highly proficient” or “proficient” where applicable, but avoid using the words “good”, “very good”, or “excellent” as they can be more individualized value judgements.
- Durable or “soft” skills like communication can be trickier to list because saying you're a “good communicator” can sound like you plucked buzz words off the internet. These skills are also open to interpretation because what one person deems as good communication could be poor communication in another person's eyes. Typically, these skills are reflected elsewhere in your CV, such as presentations, awards/honors, or publications.
- Use the table below as some example skills you can list if applicable to you.

Animal Handling	ArcGIS or Map Making Programs	ATVs/ Snowmobiles/ Tractors/ Boats (motorized)	ATV Safety	Audacity/ Audio Editing	Bird counts (point counts, etc.)
Boater/ Snowmobile/ Paddling Safety	Canoeing or Kayaking	Construction/ Power Tool Operation	CPS/ First Aid	Electric Skills	Engines or Transmission
FEMA Incident Command System	Fish Survey Equipment	GPS Units	Hunter Education	InDesign or graphic design software	Languages
Manual Transmission	Mist Netting	Microsoft Access or database software	Openshot or Video Editing	Painting or Drawing	Photoshop
Policy and permitting related – National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 7 Endangered Species Act (ESA), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), Institutional Review Board, Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), etc.			Project, Wild, Wet, Flying Wild	R/ Python or other specialized programs	Scuba Diving
Snowshoes/ Cross Country Skis	Social Media Management (not personal accounts)	Trail cameras	Trapper Education	Traps	Web Coding or Design

16. References

- You should include them unless the system you are applying through has them included elsewhere.
- Provide 3, make sure your references know they are your references, and make sure you are picking people that feel they can give you positive references.
- You can ask someone a variation of “I’m starting to apply for jobs, I was wondering if you’d be willing to be a reference and felt you could give positive feedback about me and my performance?” If they hesitate too long or seem uncertain about the answer, that should be read as a ‘no’ and you should ask someone else who answers yes without reservation.
- For federal jobs, they will need a list of every past supervisor. Make sure you maintain a list of that information, even if you don’t think you’ll apply for federal jobs. Some other employers also request that information, so you should have it easily available, even if you’re not listing it on your CV.

17. Optional additions

- **Photos.** These can lead to implicit or unconscious bias, recommend not including.
- **Hobbies.** These can be included at your discretion but be cautious. Some may make assumptions about you based on the hobbies you list. Don’t list hobbies that aren’t your actual hobbies because you feel there’s an expectation from any employer that you should participate in a certain hobby. Be genuine, focused, and brief, or don’t include them.

Tips Beyond a Resume/ CV

1. Cover letters

- Cover letters give you personality and allow you to highlight specific reasons you’d be a good fit for a position.
- You can upload it into many hiring systems or send it as the text body of an email.

2. Contact potential employers

- Don’t be afraid to reach out to the hiring official with questions or to follow up with an email of appreciation/interest after an interview. A thank you can go a long way.
- It’s okay to email about a timeline for hearing about a job, just ensure you keep the number of requests limited.