

Career Day

(Story words: ranger, follow, country)

Linda woke up and got dressed for school. Then she remembered. Something interesting was going to happen today. After lunch, students were going to skip their regular classes for career day.

Linda had not chosen which speakers she wanted to hear. At the last moment, she went with her friend, Steve, to hear about the career of a forest ranger.

The forest ranger was named Mike. Mike explained that rangers did many different things and that most of them involved being outside. Sometimes rangers had to help rescue campers and backpackers who got lost or injured in the back country.

Sometimes, Mike said, his job was to remind the public of the rules they needed to follow, such as getting permits for day hikes or overnight stays when entering forest lands.

Most times people were polite and respectful, but at times interacting with the public was stressful when people did not want to follow the rules.

A lot of a ranger's time is spent maintaining trails. Trails need constant work to remain in shape. Mike said rangers have strong arms and backs because of the time spent loading logs and branches into the backs of trucks. Sometimes he and his co-workers planted new seedlings to replenish parts of the forest.

Mike's most important work involved preventing fires. He often worked on a team of rangers to construct fire lines. A fire line is like a path in which anything that could fuel a fire, such as plants or sticks, is scraped away. Mike explained that a fire line needs to be wide enough so that an ember cannot jump over to find new fuel to continue the fire.

Steve had always liked being outside. In the summers, Steve worked coaching and teaching swimming. He liked

everything Mike said about his life as a ranger. Linda had been to forests on summer trips, but she had never considered a career as a ranger. She was surprised to find that many things Mike said about being a forest ranger appealed to her too.