

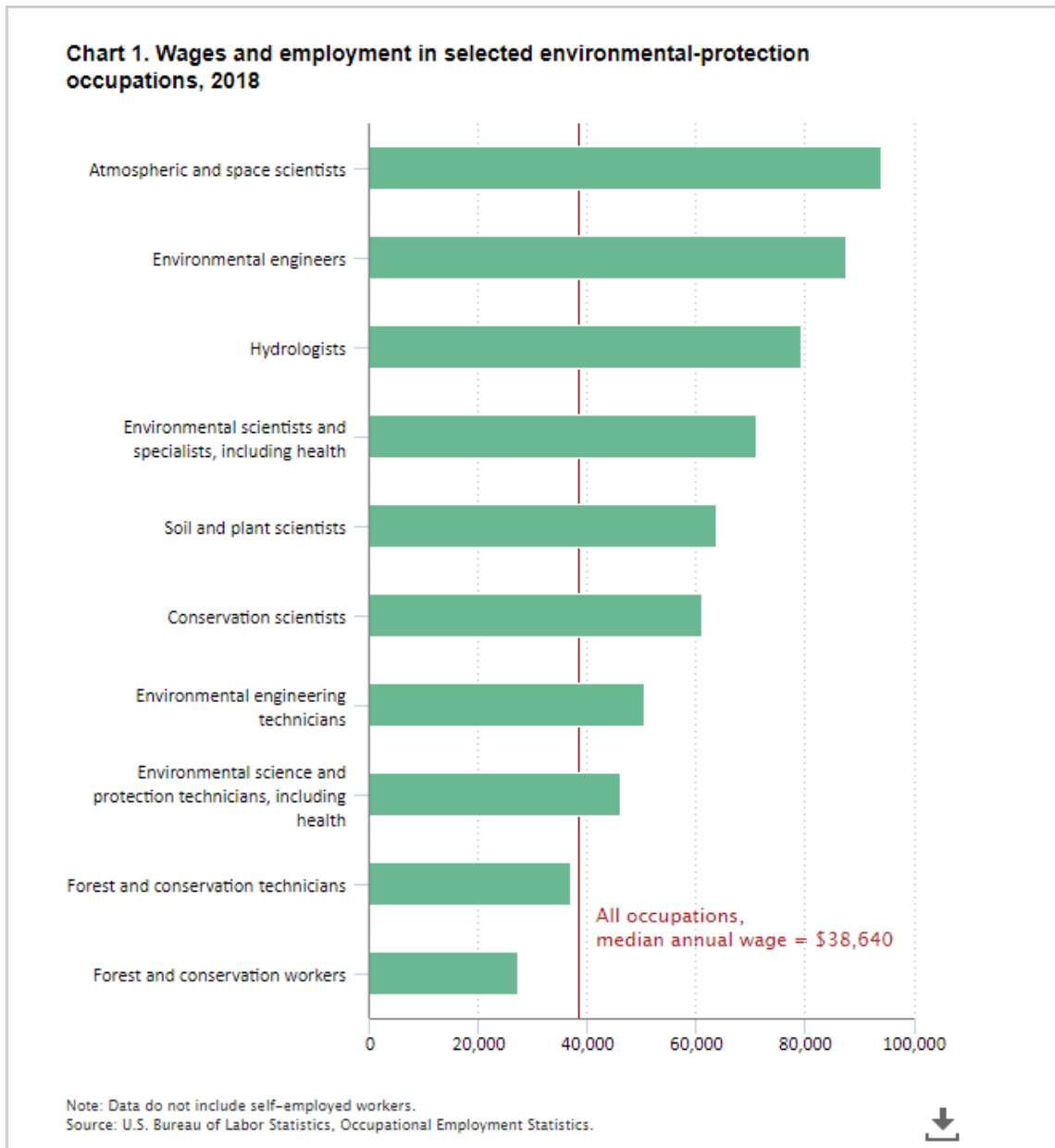


Earning green by working green: Wages and outlook in careers protecting the planet

Elka Torpey | April 2019

What's good for the earth may be good for your earnings. Wages in many occupations related to environmental protection were well above the \$38,640 median annual wage for all occupations in 2018, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Chart 1 shows 10 occupations that involve monitoring the environment and preserving natural resources. In some of these occupations, wages were more than twice the overall median. [Atmospheric and space scientists](#) had the highest wage of the occupations in the chart, \$94,110.



Rapid employment growth is expected over the 2016–26 projections decade in half of these eco-friendly occupations. (See table 1.) But together, the occupations shown in the chart account for less than 1 percent of all jobs in the economy. [Environmental scientists and specialists](#) have the most employment; [hydrologists](#) have the least. It’s therefore important to consider the average number of openings expected annually.

Table 1. Job outlook in selected environmental-protection occupations

Employment growth and change rate, projected 2016–26; occupational openings, projected 2016–26 annual average; and typical entry-level education



Occupation	Employment growth, projected 2016–26	Percent change in employment, projected 2016–26	Annual average openings, projected 2016–26	Typical entry-level education
Atmospheric and space scientists	Faster than average	12%	900	Bachelor's degree
Environmental engineers	Average	8	4,000	Bachelor's degree
Hydrologists	Faster than average	10	700	Bachelor's degree
Environmental scientists and specialists, including health	Faster than average	11	9,500	Bachelor's degree
Soil and plant scientists	Average	9	2,200	Bachelor's degree
Conservation scientists	Average	6	2,000	Bachelor's degree
Environmental engineering technicians	Faster than average	13	1,700	Associate's degree
Environmental science and protection technicians, including health	Faster than average	12	4,600	Associate's degree
Forest and conservation technicians	Slower than average	4	4,000	Associate's degree
Forest and conservation workers	Decline	-2	2,100	High school diploma or equivalent

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program.

For example, the occupation of [environmental engineering technicians](#) is projected to have the fastest employment growth of all occupations in the table; however, the 1,700 openings projected annually, on average, for that occupation are fewer than half of the 4,000 openings projected for the slower growing [forest and conservation technicians](#).

All of these environmental-protection occupations, except [forest and conservation workers](#), typically require an associate's or a bachelor's degree to enter. Learn more about these and other occupations in the [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#).

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SUGGESTED CITATION:

Elka Torpey, "Earning green by working green: Wages and outlook in careers protecting the planet," *Career Outlook*, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, April 2019.

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