



Valley Forge National Historical Park Natural Resource Management

Natural Resource Management Internship Summer 2012 Announcement

Job Title: Volunteer Student Intern (non-paid), Natural Resource Management

Deadline for Application: Until position is filled

Job Description:

Valley Forge National Historical Park (VAFO) is home to over 1,300 species of vascular plants and vertebrates, contains a variety of vegetation communities (e.g. forest, meadows, wetlands), and includes significant water resources (e.g. Schuylkill River, Valley Creek). The purpose of this internship is to provide college-level students with a concentrated, practical experience in natural resource management that affords the opportunity to apply classroom theory through “hands-on” experience in the National Park Service. At the same time interns will contribute to the collection of data and implementation of projects that benefit park resources and will assist park managers in achieving management goals. Specific internship activities may vary from year to year, depending on park needs and priorities. In 2012, specific duties will include:

Non-native Plant and Animal Management (40%). Interns will: (1) Participate with park staff and the NPS-Exotic Plant Management Team to control invasive, non-native plant species within the park; (2) Map the distribution of high priority invasive plants and treatment areas within the park; (3) Work with park partners to control non-native, invasive plants on lands outside the park boundary; (4) Remove the non-native, invasive Rusty Crayfish from Valley Creek using netting and trapping techniques; (5) Conduct data collection, data entry, and implement quality assurance/quality control procedures; and (6) Work closely with summer high school crews on projects to remove non-native plants and animals. Non-native plant control activities will primarily involve manual control methods (e.g. mowing, hand pulling, cutting) requiring the use of hand tools (mechanized and non-mechanized). Safe application of chemical herbicides may be required in specialized circumstances and will be conducted under the direct supervision of NPS staff with a Pesticide Applicators License after appropriate training and with required personal protective equipment.

Independent Project (15%). Interns will work with Natural Resource staff to develop an independent project to be completed during their internship experience. Past projects include development of a long-term amphibian monitoring program, assessment of tree seedling regeneration in established vegetation monitoring plots, development of curriculum-based lesson plans, and researching and compilation of data related to historical meadow management practices in the park. Individual interests will be considered when developing projects however projects will be selected based upon the needs of the park.

Wildlife and Vegetation Management (10%). Interns will: (1) Locate and conduct condition assessments of protective fencing within forests and along riparian buffers and make necessary repairs; (2) Install and maintain fencing to protect rare plant populations; (3) Contribute to the collection of data related to white-tailed deer (e.g. morphology, presence of chronic wasting disease); (4) Maintain tree shelters; (5) Participate in the maintenance and care of plants in the park greenhouse; and (6) Work closely with park volunteers and other summer work crews on wildlife and vegetation management projects.

Trails Management (15%). Interns will: (1) Work with park partners on maintenance of trails both inside the park and on nearby partner sites, including clearing, mowing, vine removal, and installation of water management structures such as waterbars.

Water Resources (5%). Interns will: (1) Participate in implementation of conservation projects (e.g. streambank stabilization, tree plantings) conducted by members of the Valley Creek Partnership; (2) Assist with the collection of long-term water quality monitoring data; and (3) Participate in river clean-up days and other organized volunteer events.

Natural Resource Interpretation (5%). Interns may: (1) Contribute to development of park informational brochures on natural resources; (2) Assist with development of a GPS-based virtual cache/geocache program; and (3) Assist with delivery of a variety of natural resource interpretive programs including Jr. Ranger Summer Camp.

Park Planning (5%). Interns will be afforded the opportunity to attend and participate in a variety of planning efforts related to natural resources (e.g. Natural Resource Condition Assessment, Valley Creek partnership meetings), participate in meetings with resource professionals, and assist with filing, photocopying, and general office organization (limited).

Benefits:

- Dorm-style housing provided if not local resident. Office is within walking/biking distance of housing.
- Vehicle provided for use during work (private vehicle recommended for personal use if living in park).
- NPS Volunteer t-shirt (3) and baseball cap provided.
- Training related to specific activities as well as general park operations and management of the National Park System provided.
- Experience in the National Park Service conducting work that will serve as a foundation for future employment (build your resume!)

Qualifications:

- Major in a field related to the biological sciences (e.g. wildlife and fisheries science, biology, urban and community forestry, forestry, environmental science, etc.) with a minimum GPA of 2.5 (preference juniors and seniors).
- Must possess a valid driver's license
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Applicants must pass a criminal background check which requires fingerprinting by park law enforcement or your local police department prior to start date.
- **Preferred:** Experience working with Microsoft Office products (e.g. Word, Excel, Powerpoint), Geographic Information Systems (e.g. ArcGIS), and experience with global positioning systems.

Activities will require the ability to hike up to 5-7 miles per day across varied terrain and to operate basic mechanical and electronic equipment (e.g. weed whip, gps unit, etc.) and may include exposure to extreme weather conditions, herbicides, poisonous plants, stinging and biting insects and wild animals.

Time Commitment:

Full-time, five days per week (generally Tuesday-Saturday), eight hours per day with some flexibility; 10-12 weeks; Start date June 4, 2012.

How To Apply:

Please submit the following to the **Volunteer Coordinator** by mail or fax:

- Cover letter indicating the title of the position you are applying for, how you found out about the position, and whether this experience will contribute toward college credits. **Preference in selection will be given to students who receive college credits for this experience.**

- Resume
- Transcript (official or unofficial)
- Writing sample indicating what you hope to gain through an internship experience and interests as related to an independent project. (No more than 1 page)
- Contact information for two academic or professional references

For additional information on other volunteer opportunities at VAFO please contact the park Volunteer Coordinator. For information related to the specific duties of this internship or park natural resources please contact the internship supervisor (See below for contact information).

Park Information:

Located approximately 20 miles northwest of center city Philadelphia, Valley Forge is the site of the 1777-1778 winter encampment of General George Washington and the Continental Army. The park receives 1.2 million visitors each year and contains about 3,500 acres of forested rolling hills, tall grass meadows, wetlands, and rough lawns. Recreational and cultural opportunities are abundant, including museums, theaters, concerts, fishing, boating, hiking, etc. For additional information please visit the park website at <http://www.nps.gov/vafo> or Valley Forge Convention and Visitors Bureau at <http://www.valleyforge.org/>.

Contact Information:

Volunteer Coordinator:

Ernestine M. White, Volunteer Coordinator
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