



## Insider's Look at Grand Canyon

### Webisode #4 – Interview with park aid Amanda Myer Transcript

**Patrick:** On this webisode of Insider's Look at Grand Canyon I am joined by Ranger Amanda Myer. Amanda, welcome to the show.

**Amanda:** Hey, how are you doing Pat?

**Patrick:** I am doing pretty good. Why I asked you on the show is that you're one of the "park aid" rangers. I feel that being that type of ranger is really helpful to us here, but folks don't know what you do. Let me start out, let me ask you this and will lead to a lot of great things; what are the two most asked questions that you get?

**Amanda:** What do I do around here and how did I get this job.

**Patrick:** Well, how do you answer them?

**Amanda:** First off, I just say; "I'm great and that's how I got the job"...then they laugh at me and will have funny faces. Then I say; "I answer questions all day".

**Patrick:** ...and they are like, "really"... O.K., we get 4.5 million visitors here a year and most of them come to the south rim. But, answering those questions that is, key here. Where do you do that, what's the whole thing, do you get scheduled to be specific places, how do you answer those questions to help the visitors?

**Amanda:** Actually, we do have a schedule. It changes every day, but we are only at a place an hour or two. We do roving, which is walking around the village area. We hike some of the trails. We ride the buses. Oh man, what else do we do... we work some of the visitor centers, all three of the visitor centers. So we are all over the park, walking around, whatever question someone has we have to know.

**Patrick:** Wow that means you have to be rounded in all topics. A lot of folks think that at national parks it is the visitor center or nothing. So, you guys are out there answering questions, everything they need in all those spots..... what is your background in (*your*) education?

**Amanda:** I am a social welfare and justice major. Which really does not have anything to do with the park. So I also get weird looks when people hear that response. But, it has got me thinking about disaster relief and all of that kind of stuff and I get to deal with people all the time. And that is what I love to do, I love people, I love interacting with them and seeing their interactions and all of that kind of stuff. So, it does have a lot to do with my major.

**Patrick:** That's excellent, and you are actually going back to school real soon, aren't you?

**Amanda:** Ya, I am leaving Saturday to go back to Milwaukie.

**Patrick:** So, as a park aid yourself and the other park aids (*are*) just here for the summer when we get the masses of people coming and visiting us. So, if someone else, in college, and they wanted to come out and be a park aid, be a park ranger, see what it is like at the Grand Canyon, are there any programs that you might suggest to them that might help them?

**Amanda:** Yes, there are. I actually called up Glacier National Park, asked for a STEP application, which is Student Temporary Employment Program. They sent me a packet; it was like twenty pages long. I filled it out, made ten copies, sent it to the different parks and heard back from them after that. So, if you want to become a park aid, that's how you have to do it, through that application. That is how I found out about it. When I was younger, I went to Yellowstone, talked to one of the girls and that is how she said she did too.

**Patrick:** That's a great program. So, the thing for students is; you're in school, off for the summer, and you're going back to school. And it is really nice for park aids because you do not have to compete with a lot of other rangers you have been here for many years and it really gets your foot in the door. So, do you have anything that you really thought was fun this summer or some incident you would like to share about being a park aid?

**Amanda:** No particular incident, but I loved the JR. Ranger Program. I love making kids JR. Rangers, because I remember that from when I was little and that was how I grew to love the park and the national park service. So, just getting to see the little kids and seeing their faces light up, you announce that they are JR Rangers, and it is an awesome feeling.

**Patrick:** That's great! Could you just maybe spend.... one, maybe a half a minute telling some folks more the JR. Ranger Program? What do kids do to become a JR. Ranger and what do they get when they complete it?

**Amanda:** O.K., the Jr. Ranger Program, they get a booklet that has different activities in it for different age groups. Then they have to go to one ranger led program, which the hardest part for most people. We have kid programs that they are able to attend. When they are finished they bring it back to any of the visitor centers or if they spot a ranger most of them carry around the JR. Ranger badge, which is what they receive when they complete their book and they also get a certificate. They can buy patches. Here at the national park I encourage everyone to do it, because there is no age limit. So, I still go places and get my JR. Ranger badge, but that's basically what they do. The JR. Ranger Program is there to educate children so they learn a little bit more about the parks and how to take care of what they have been given.

**Patrick:** You know Jr. Rangers are some of the best allies of national parks, getting the kids to know what it is all about, and they really look up to you as a role model. So Ranger Amanda thank you so much for joining us on the show today. I once met a woman who had been a nurse at Yosemite National Park in the 1950's. She said; "You know those rangers who come just for the summer, we had a name for them, they were called, "**Summer Wonders**". Yourself and all the other park aids, you bring a lot of energy into it, and on behalf of the rest of the Grand Canyon park ranger staff; thank you for being here for the summer and we hope to see you again as a ranger.

**Amanda:** Thank you Pat, it has been a wonderful summer and I am very glad I got the opportunity to come out here.

