



National Park Service 50-50 Program



About the 50-50 Program

The 50-50 Diversity Seasonal Hiring Initiative (50-50 Program) was designed by the National Park Service (NPS) to support Intermountain Region (IMR) parks with diversity hiring. The 50-50 Program provides fifty percent funding for the salary costs of Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) positions; the other half of the funding is supplied through a variety of sources. The 50-50 Program provides students with an exceptional professional development opportunity and sets students on a viable career path.

The Funding

The 50-50 Program offers fifty percent of the salary costs for hiring a diverse STEP student for a seasonal position. The other fifty percent and all remaining costs such as housing, uniforms, final student selection, background check, and seasonal hiring paperwork are the responsibility of the host park supervisor. The 50-50 funding allows the NPS to include more students from underrepresented groups and improve the NPS's relevancy with the public it serves.

The Applicant Pool

The applicant pool usually contains over one-hundred and fifty applicants of diverse college and trades school students who have met NPS recruiters and have been identified as good candidates for the NPS and the Student Education Employment Programs (STEP/SCEP). Eligible candidates are identified as those who are: students in good standing, currently attending school at least half time, and who are U.S. citizens. After the initial meeting with recruiters, Intermountain Region Workforce Enhancement staff will contact each applicant two or more times a year to verify their continuing interest in NPS employment, current student status, and request an updated resume.



Meet the 2011 Rocky Mountain National Park 50-50 Students

Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) is proactive in its recruiting and retention efforts. Supervisors leverage 50-50 funding to stretch existing funding and create more positions for STEP employees. In 2011, there are six 50-50 STEP employees working in Rocky Mountain National Park. These 50-50 students are working on diverse crews in the divisions of Resource Stewardship, Interpretation, and Facilities Management.



Amber Courtney
Interpretation

Amber Courtney

I was born in New York and I am currently pursuing my Master of Arts in Literary Studies at the University of Alabama at Birmingham after receiving my degrees in History and English at Tuskegee University where I was first introduced to the NPS. Slightly disenchanted with Law (my initial pursuit), my new career path has focused on education. I am in the Interpretation Division and this is my third year as a STEP with the NPS. I have been thoroughly enlightened to the importance of preservation of natural and historical landmarks in our country and intend on continuing to be a part of that message.



Jon'Ya Crawford
Facilities Management

Jon'Ya Crawford

My name is Jon'Ya Crawford, I am 19, and I was born and raised in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I recently graduated from Eagle Rock School, and I am preparing to attend Potomac State College in the fall to major in Secondary Education with a minor in American Sign Language Interpretation. I believe my experience working in RMNP has not only prepared me for the work force later in life, but it has also been a great way for me to meet people with different careers and knowledge. Though I plan to be a high school teacher/interpreter, I plan to get into Law Enforcement in the park to prepare me for my goal of teaching Juvenile Jails.



Renee Gallardo
Resource Stewardship

Renee Gallardo

I am 20 years old and I am originally from Orange County, California, but I am living and going to school in Corvallis, Oregon. I enjoy being outside and being around enthusiastic and fun people. I enjoy outdoor recreational activities, such as, fishing, hiking, camping, snowboarding, cross-country skiing, exploring, etc. I currently work in RMNP with the Division of Resource Stewardship. I had the amazing opportunity to do the Rocky Mountain Internship through the high school I went to, Eagle Rock School. Now being in my third year with the park, I have continued strong with the exotic plant crew where we manually and chemically control and treat invasive plant species around the park. I am proud to help our native species grow without competition from a noxious weeds. Every summer I learn something new and it is hard to describe the appreciation and gratitude I have for everyone in the Division of Resource Stewardship. They have all become my teachers and I can't thank them enough. Working in the park has been the greatest achievement of my life and I hope to continue working in national parks all over America.



Natalie Osorio
Interpretation

Natalie Osorio

My name is Natalie Osorio. I was raised in upstate New York around a very natural setting—woods and a lake made up my backyard. I would explore trails, bike, and swim any chance I had. My most prized possession at the time was my rock collection. I'd spend hours on adventures searching for new rocks to add and aspired to become an archeologist. In 2007, I arrived at Eagle Rock School, and my time and experiences there only heightened my appreciation for nature. My experience in the park has already had a huge impact in my life and has completely shaped my mindset for the future. Not only do I hope to gain strong professional development skills to strengthen myself for more seasons to come and future career path, but I also hope to gain a stronger spiritual connection to both nature and myself. My lifetime goal is to leave this world better than when I found it.



Dwayne Smallwood
Resource Stewardship

Dwayne Smallwood

My name is Dwayne Smallwood, and I work for Rocky Mountain National Park within the NPS. I am currently a Biological Science Aide, and I work for the vegetation restoration crew. There are so many reasons why I want to work for the NPS, but the main reason why I want to work for the NPS is because of the amazing views, and all of the different types of animals and plants I will interact with. What I want to gain from this summer as a Biological Science Aide is to learn more about plants, animals and the environment itself. Gaining all of this in the summer of 2011 will help me in the future by getting a job in the NPS or a job in the field I am majoring in which is Environmental Science.



Hector Verdugo
Facilities Management

Hector Verdugo

My name is Hector Verdugo, I am 20 years old, and I am originally from Las Angeles, California. I came to Colorado when I began at Eagle Rock School. I worked for Rocky Mountain National Park within the division of Facilities Management, and specifically with the auto shop and roads crew. I really enjoyed this job because there is always something new to do, I was able to work with lots of great people, and it allowed me to work with my hands—something I really enjoy. I feel my experiences at RMNP have helped me to become more independent and responsible, has shown me possible careers, and provided a positive work environment.