NPS UNIT: JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

Position Title: Natural Resource Interpretive Assistant (1)
Position Type: GIP Intern
Primary natural resource discipline: Geologic resources
Project keywords: Interpretation, Geology, Paleontology, Natural History, Presentation
Location: Twentynine Palms, California

PD #: 2020420

COVID-19 NOTICE
This project description was developed prior to the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak. Therefore, project timelines and structure remain flexible and it may be necessary to postpone start dates, begin work remotely, or reformulate the project’s description. Should any development in the COVID-19 outbreak impair a project’s timeline or results, the GIP Team will work with the park and project mentors to assess the situation and determine the best course of action at that time.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND WORK PRODUCTS

Position Description: One of the most visited parks in the NPS System, Joshua Tree National Park preserves the ecological and geological dynamism of the California Deserts. This intern will assist the Division of Interpretation and Resource Education in the development of outlines and resources (graphics and other props) for several different geology programs. Programs will include Fossil Chats and Geology Hikes, and may also include Oasis Walks (along the Pinto Mountain Fault), Patio Talks, and/or an Evening Program. The intern will educate park visitors about park geology and help visitors form their own connections to park resources through a variety of interpretive programs. At the same time, the intern will be developing materials that can be used by interpretive rangers in the future. Sometimes the intern will spend an afternoon roving Keys View, interpreting the landscape shaped by the San Andreas Fault.

If interested in environmental education programs for school groups, the intern will also have an opportunity to assist with 4th grade geology programs and provide input and ideas for that program. Most of the intern’s time will be spent in developing and giving programs, but they will also occasionally assist in providing trip planning information at visitor center desks (no more than 20% of the time, and without handling money).

This intern will expand the number of geology programs we can offer in the park during the busy spring season. The intern will also be creating a set of outlines and materials that will make it easier for future interpretive staff to develop their own geology programs. Each program will include relevant resource management and safety messages, expanding the number of visitors we can reach.

This position is offered through the National Park Service’s Geoscientists-in-the-Parks (GIP) Internship Program in partnership with Stewards Individual Placement Program (Stewards) and The Geological Society of America (GSA).

Work Products: At least three different interpretive programs will be developed and given numerous times to groups of two to seventy (if an Evening Program is one of the programs) park visitors. For each program, clear outlines and props will be developed for future use in the park. There may also be opportunities to assist park staff in Resources Management field work, education programs for schools, research for the ongoing Wayside Exhibits project, or putting together a resource binder for roving in the park. This will depend on park needs at that time, and especially on the interests of the intern.
QUALIFICATIONS
The applicant needs a solid understanding of geology including, at minimum, several college courses. Prior experience in interpretation or education is preferred. An interest in working with the public and developing interpretive skills is essential. We are looking for a motivated self-starter with strong interpersonal and public speaking skills as well as the ability to write detailed and clear outlines. Creativity and artistic skills can also be put to use. Flexibility, good humor, and patience will be important given the number of park visitors during our busy spring season and our cramped work spaces.

The applicant must be a U.S. citizen or U.S. permanent legal resident (“green-card-holder”) between the ages of 18 and 30 years old, inclusive, or veteran up to age 35. Prior to starting this position, a government security background clearance will be required.

VEHICLE AND DRIVER LICENSE REQUIREMENTS
Applicant must have a valid driver license and a good driving record. When giving programs or roving in the park, the intern will generally drive a park vehicle.

A personal vehicle is REQUIRED for this position. The intern will need a vehicle to get to work, to shop, and sometimes to travel between the Oasis Visitor Center/Park HQ and the Joshua Tree Visitor Center. If housed in the Black Rock Fire Dorm, it’s a 40-minute commute to Park HQ, although sometimes it may be possible to carpool or to remain at Black Rock for program prep.

If the GIP is required to drive a park vehicle for their position, Stewards will perform a driving records search, and the GIP’s ability to drive a park vehicle during work hours will be contingent upon the results. GIPs will have to have had their license for 3 years or be over the age of 21 to be insured as drivers under Stewards insurance policy. Examples of things that will preclude a GIP from driving a park vehicle include: GIP under the age of 21 years old that has been licensed less than three years, DUls, multiple moving vehicle violations, suspended or revoked license, or three or more accidents (regardless of fault) in the last 3 years. If the driver’s search is favorable, Stewards will provide driver’s liability insurance while the intern is driving a NPS vehicle for their GIP position. If the GIP is denied coverage by Stewards, they will not be permitted to drive during work hours.

HOUSING
Park housing is available and will be provided at no cost to the participant. Housing will be in a dorm room-style shared living. This includes a private bedroom (twin bed) or shared room with bunk beds. Shared kitchen, bathroom, and laundry facilities are found onsite. Pots, pans, and basic kitchen appliances are included. There may be up to a 40-minute one-way commute most days, but car-pooling may sometimes be an option.

INTERNSHIP DATES
Start Date: 2/8/2021
Number of weeks: 12 weeks
Flexibility of dates: Yes

LIVING ALLOWANCE
12 weeks ($350/week = $4,200)

RELOCATION ALLOWANCE
$250
AMERICORPS PROGRAM

AmeriCorps is a program that engages individuals in intensive community service work with the goal of “helping others and meeting critical needs in the community”. The GIP Program is supported through AmeriCorps by providing a Segal Education Award in addition to the GIP’s living stipend and relocation allowance.

Upon successful completion of the GIP position, the GIPs (AmeriCorps members) are eligible for a $1,612 - $6,095 pre-tax education award that can be used for paying back student loans or for continuing their education. The amount of the education award is based on the length of the position.

AmeriCorps limits the number of terms an individual can serve to 4 terms. If an applicant has previously completed 4 GIP or other AmeriCorps positions, they will not be eligible to apply for an additional GIP position.

NATURAL AND PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

Natural Environment: The park is in the high desert. Temperatures during the winter and spring months typically range from highs of 50-85°F to lows in the upper 30-50s. Most annual rainfall occurs between November and April, but the average annual precipitation totals between 4.5" and 6" in most parts of the park. The housing will be located either 5 miles south of the town of Yucca Valley, CA with a population of 25,300 and an elevation of 4,000 feet, or in the town of Twentynine Palms, CA with a population of 26,000 and an elevation of 2,000 feet. Both towns have supermarkets, pharmacies and restaurants. Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley are within an hour drive of the park.

Physical Work Environment: Work will be a mix of office and fieldwork. Much of the work (especially in the first few weeks) will be sitting in an office for long hours working on a computer. About 30% of work time will be spent outdoors, standing at a scenic overlook or giving interpretive programs on park trails, patios or campground amphitheaters. Up to 20% of time may be spent indoors assisting park visitors while standing at a busy visitor center desk. Hiking up to 2 miles and standing up to 4.5 hours at a time will sometimes be necessary.

MENTORING AND LEARNING GOALS

Mentoring: The park will pair the GIP intern with park staff working in Interpretation and if interested, also Resource Education. The intern will also be introduced to Science and Resource Stewardship staff as their research needs and interests dictate. The intern will receive training in current NPS Interpretive principles including Epbley Institute online training, and will have an opportunity to shadow interpreters and educators in the field conducting formal programs. The intern will be coached in developing and giving effective interpretive and education programs.

Learning Goals: The intern will become an expert on the diverse geology of Joshua Tree National Park, and will be immersed in two highly diverse desert ecosystems (Mojave and Colorado Desert). The intern will gain skills in writing and presenting a variety of interpretive and education programs revolving around aspects of the park’s geology. They will receive training and coaching in interpretive principles and techniques, and will build a strong portfolio of programs given. There may also be opportunities to explore other aspects of Park Ranger work, such as going on a “ride-along” with Law Enforcement or assisting in field work by staff in the Science and Resources Management division.

SUPERVISORS/MENTORS

Primary:
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