

Big Cypress National Preserve

Environmental Education/Outreach Internship Description

Park: Big Cypress National Preserve is 729,000 acres of swampland in south Florida. Part of the Everglades ecosystem, Big Cypress is a critical watershed for the Ten thousand Islands area to the southwest. It is home to many endangered species including the Florida Panther. Incredible wildlife viewing opportunities, canoeing, hiking and biking are just some of the activities available during the winter months in the swamp.

Job Title: Intern - Environmental Education Assistant

Dates: Four month to eight month internships September through April (dates flexible)

Duties: November through Mid April the intern's main duties are working in the preserve's Environmental Education Program, S.W.A.M.P., Swamp Water and Me Program, a hands-on, curriculum-based environmental education program with the 6th grade students and their teachers from the Collier County public and private schools. Interns either assist rangers or lead own groups depending on staffing during the field trips. This involves hiking into a cypress strand, prairie and pineland with the students to assist them with field experiments, data gathering and other activities such as radio telemetry, dip netting, water quality testing, soil sampling, animal and vegetation identification and weather tests. While the hiking is not long in distance it can be very physically demanding as it involves walking through knee to thigh deep water, heat and humidity, mosquitoes, uneven footing and other swamp creatures besides the 6th graders! These groups are extremely diverse in learning levels and cultural backgrounds. Interns will also present the pre-site programs in the classrooms and assist in the facilitation of the S.W.A.M.P. Teacher Workshop.

Interns will develop and present a variety of requested interpretive outreach programs to school groups and organized special interest groups of all ages. These take place in the community or in the preserve and may include wet walks, canoe trips, bike trips, boardwalk tours and formal interpretive programs. Interns represent the preserve at special events and festivals, assist in the training of new volunteers, develop interpretive bulletin boards, articles and exhibits, develop new activities and teaching materials, judge local science fairs, and maintain equipment and supplies. Interns may also assist in the facilitation of teacher workshops such as Project Wild, Growing Up Wild, Flying Wild, and Florida Black Bear Curriculum.

The Interns work a minimum of 40 hours per week, typically Monday through Friday with the education program, however must work some weekends to cover special events, workshops, requested programs and training opportunities. Interns will have all holidays off.

Interns will have the opportunity to assist with projects in and learn about the operations of the other divisions including Resource Management, Fire Management, Administration, Maintenance and Law Enforcement.

Interns will have the opportunity to visit many other agencies and attractions in the local area and will attend programs, workshops and trainings presented by these agencies when possible.

Interns will be working directly with the Education Specialist on a daily basis as well as have the opportunity to work with the Chief of Interpretation, Administrative Officer and Assistant Superintendent to be exposed to and gain experience in many operational aspects of the preserve, including programming, management, budget, facilities, and public relations

Who should apply: Interns are typically undergraduate or graduate students fulfilling a degree requirement or recent graduates of a related field such as Outdoor Recreation, Environmental Education, Environmental Studies or Biology.

Skills: Must enjoy and have experience working with children. An education, recreation or biology background is preferred. It is necessary to have knowledge of natural science, good communication skills, be flexible, a self starter and in good physical condition. Must have enthusiasm!!!

Compensation: Interns receive a reimbursement of \$150.00 per week. The position is designed to give you first hand workplace experience. Housing will be provided on-site. Laundry facilities, a pool and a weight room are also available.

Area: Big Cypress National Preserve is located in South Florida on Highway 41 just thirty miles east of Naples and seventy miles west of Miami. Temperatures during the winter months are usually in the 80s during the day and 60s to 70s at night. Everglades City is the closest town, five miles, with a small grocery, convenience stores, gas stations, and restaurants. The area lends itself to kayaking, canoeing, fishing, birding and many other recreational activities.

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