A Process to Develop Rewarding Natural Resources Internships

by
Michael F. Butkus
Academic Advisor
College of Natural Resources
Utah State University
The Process:

- Develop a Plan, Protocol, or Procedure
The Protocol:

• Define an Internship “An internship is a temporary employment position with an emphasis on more rigorous on-the-job training and education rather than merely employment. An internship could be paid or un-paid and can occur either during the academic year or summer. University credit is often granted for the internship.”
• Encourage student participation.

  Advertise

  Emphasize the benefits

  Explain the process
Meaningful Work Experience
Earn College Credit
Enhance Your Employment Potential
Many Summer Jobs Qualify
Distinguish Yourself

Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences
Wildlife Science
Recreation Resources Management
Geography
Environmental Studies
Rangeland Resources
Forestry
Watershed and Earth Systems

How Can I Participate?
Michael Butkus, Academic Advisor
michael.butkus@usu.edu
SUMMER INTERN/ SEASONAL POSITION 2012
Salt Lake City Public Utilities Watershed Division

Typical Duties
1. Restroom maintenance and cleaning
2. Treatment of invasive weeds, including application of watershed-safe herbicide
3. Assist in land management programs
4. Assist with recreation site maintenance, including trail maintenance, trash pickup, brush pruning, etc.
5. Mapping of invasive weeds
6. Lead environmental education fieldtrips
7. Assist in Watershed Ranger patrols

Summer 2012 Paid Internship Opportunity
Wildlife Brigade, Grand Teton National Park

DETAILS
1. Intern will be required to display a pleasant, helpful and professional attitude during daily contact with park visitors. Interactions with visitors who are disgruntled or in violation of regulations will occasionally occur, requiring tact, patience, and other social skills.
2. Intern will work in close proximity to bears, moose, and other large, potentially dangerous mammals. Some assistance to biologists and rangers in nuisance bear management situations may be required, as well as directing visitor activities when observing animals at close range.
3. Work may require both independent work/decision making as well as coordination with other Wildlife Brigade members.
4. Work will be performed mostly outside with significant time standing and/or walking, sometimes in cold, heat, or other inclement weather.
5. Students may use this internship to satisfy academic requirements, e.g. to fulfill internship requirements, senior thesis, etc.
Positions Advertised as Seasonal/Temporary

Forestry Technician (Timber Sale Preparation)

Duties
1. This position would serve as a crew lead for a timber crew, as an assistant for sale layout and preparation.
2. They would also implement various assigned targets i.e.: reforestation, timber stand improvement, stand exams, small sale and permit administration, and the maintenance of timber equipment.

Visitor Services Information Assistant position

Duties include but are not limited to:
1. Greeting visitors and providing public information at the front office
2. Answering phone and email requests for information
3. Development and presentation of informational exhibits in the visitor center
4. Maintaining brochures in visitor center and outdoor kiosk
5. Developing and presenting interpretive programs
6. Act as liaison with local schools, the town of Yampa and other local organizations to provide environmental education
7. Update web pages for the Yampa Ranger District on the MBRTB website
8. Collections Officer duties, such as selling maps, interagency passes, and forest timber products
9. Radio contact and monitoring for field going personnel
10. Coordinating with staff specialists and forest Public Affairs personnel to keep self and front desk seasonal abreast of the latest forest/district news and information
11. Posting information flyers and news releases on district information trap line
Benefits to Student

• Gain knowledge of employment demands and responsibilities in a favored organization
• Network with professionals in chosen field
• Help to make college education more relevant and meaningful
• Value-added learning, not just work
• Self-evaluation of personal strengths and weaknesses
Benefits to Hiring Organization

• Meaningful work from a dedicated and motivated worker
• Potential employee socialized into work environment
• Maybe unpaid position to gain work experience and college credit
• Work experience better organized with specific goals identified in advance
Benefits to Academic Institution

• Meaningful work experience bringing valuable case studies and examples to benefit the college
• Valuable recruitment and retention tool
• Encourage future internship experiences
• Valuable connection between the academic institution and the host organization
• Known for offering valuable voluntary and committed education experiences beyond the classroom/laboratory
• Identify the internship objectives:

  Individualize
  Job description
  Anticipated product
  Grading
  Consensus among:
    Student
    University
    Hiring organization
Develop the Memorandum of Understanding:

- Agreed upon objectives
- Timeframe
- Monitoring plan
- Anticipated product
- Signed by all parties
  - Student
  - University representative
  - Hiring organization
• Registering for credit:
  University-wide course #
  Fall semester following
  1-3 credits/internship
  Rigor of experience
  Stated goals
  Difficulty of product
  Elective credit
  Graded A-F
  Work performed
  Extent objectives met
  Employer involvement
  Quality of product
The Process:

• Monitoring:
  Planned and scheduled
  Expectations
  Student and employer
The Process:

- The Product:
  Appropriateness
  Report
  Presentation
  Poster
  Usefulness
  Involvement of employer
The Process:

• Evaluation
  Student of experience
  Employer of student
  Employer of experience
  University of student
  University of experience
Successful Examples

European Starling Damage Management
Arctic Fox control in the Barrow Steller’s Eider Conservation Planning Area

Invasive weed control
Airport wildlife conflict management

Brown trout removal project
Black bear telemetry tracking

Environmental Education
Michael Butkus
Academic Advisor
College of Natural Resources
Utah State University
michael.butkus@usu.edu