

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT:

GEORGE MELENDEZ WRIGHT INITIATIVE FOR YOUNG LEADERS IN CLIMATE CHANGE

The National Park Service (NPS) is pleased to announce the 2017 *George Melendez Wright Initiative for Young Leaders in Climate Change* (YLCC) to provide a pathway for exemplary students in higher education (graduate students, advanced undergraduate students, and recent graduates) to apply their skills and ideas to park-based challenges and solutions. The Initiative offers 12-week paid internships which allow students to gain valuable work experience, explore career options, and develop leadership skills through mentorship and guidance while helping to advance the NPS response to climate change. Successful students may be eligible for non-competitive hire into federal positions for which they qualify following completion of all academic requirements.

DEVELOP MODELS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED DIALOGUES ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE IN LOS ANGELES

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
Thousand Oaks, California

Engage with community partners and residents of Los Angeles on the effects of a changing climate in their own backyards as well as their closest national park, the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Foster relationships and enable future park visitors to understand the implications of a changing climate to our national parks and to our neighborhoods.

INTERNSHIP PROJECT BACKGROUND

Southern California is already affected by changing climate. Future models predict that Los Angeles will experience hotter weather more frequently, rising oceans, and water shortages. Models also show that high density populations will be the most negatively affected by those changes, in part because they lack access to green space (concrete and industrial infrastructure raise local temperatures). Based on these models, under-served communities are more at risk than surrounding affluent neighbors who have the means to live near the ocean or parks. This current and projected inequity raises questions about climate change resiliency and adaptation, park access, and environmental justice.

At the Santa Monica Mountains NRA (SAMO) we preserve a Mediterranean biosphere where many of the plants and animals found here are uniquely adapted to live in this semi-arid climate. Models predict that the regions' plants and animals will continue to be stressed and pushed further northwards if drought and continuous record heat days persist. SAMO functions as an 'air-shed' for the people of Los Angeles and provides some cooling effects when the plants are green and healthy, but as more plants die back the air-shed effect will be diminished. Because SAMO offers fee-free park sites within short commuting times from many of LA's largest communities, it is imperative that we understand what the impacts of changing climate will have not only on our park, but the communities we serve. We need traditionally under-served communities who may be the most affected to also be advocates of their local green space.

SAMO seeks to host an intern to facilitate climate change dialogues with vulnerable communities in Los Angeles. This proposal takes a radically different approach to science communication by implementing facilitated dialogue techniques, which are particularly effective at addressing controversial issues and inviting active and civic participation. Moving to be more audience-centered, participants identify their most pressing social issues first, then find personal relevance within climate change and its impacts on their local parks and SAMO. The intern will support the park's effort to develop interpretive programming for a new urban park, as well as launch our participation in a new environmental justice network within the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.

INTERNSHIP PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The intern will engage with urban communities in Los Angeles on how climate change relates to pressing community issues, like access to healthcare, clean water, safe public spaces, and public transportation. The intern will help develop programming that is replicable and relevant to community needs. The intern will also benefit by learning facilitation and community organizing skills.

Audiences: The intern will work with underserved communities in Los Angeles by working through several established park partners, especially California State Parks. CSP and NPS are currently planning programming of new park in LA in collaboration with volunteer Promotoras (park promoters). At the new Los Angeles State Historic Park, the promotoras will provide interpretive and educational services. The climate change intern would interface directly with this group, testing out dialogues and ultimately establishing trainings and models for long term programming.

Stakeholders: Divisions of Interpretation and Resource Management, California State Parks, City of Los Angeles, and the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.

Impacts: With a better understanding of the concerns and priorities of its local communities, the intern will create a series of audience-centered products and replicable programs that will benefit the park's programming beyond the length of the internship. Dialogues will also positively benefit the community participants, as their discussions and solutions are self-generated and personally relevant.

Internship Tasks

The intern will:

- Learn about current climate change research and impacts at Santa Monica Mountains and in Southern California.
- Attend facilitated dialogue and interpretive techniques training.
- Build and evaluate at least two climate change dialogue arcs.
- Lead at least 6 dialogues with community members in Los Angeles.
- Coordinate 1 field trip to the park for the dialogue participants.
- Train Los Angeles State Historic Park volunteers (promotoras) and SAMO interpreters.

Internship Products

- The intern will provide a dialogue model that can be replicated by future SAMO interpretive staff and the promotoras. This model will focus on engaging communities on the issue of climate change with space for the participants to provide their own concerns about environmental and social issues in their own communities.
- The intern will create community profiles (one for each dialogue) that represent what issues matter most to each group.

- Intern will create 3-5 impact messages that integrate climate change research with concerns of urban residents.
- Intern will make a final presentation to SAMO staff regarding their internship and experiences.
- The intern will also virtually present to the environmental justice network with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.

QUALIFICATIONS

As this internship is focused on working with diverse and urban communities in Los Angeles, having interpersonal skills and high emotional intelligence are critical to the intern's success, just as much as a formal coursework. Experience working with diverse and urban communities regarding community leadership and advocacy are important traits the intern should have as well. The intern should also have basic scientific literacy and a solid understanding of climate change causes and impacts AND an ability to communicate science clearly and creatively to non-scientists. Coursework might include: sociology, psychology, anthropology, communications, environmental science, and urban planning. Extracurricular activities should demonstrate leadership, teamwork, and working with urban communities. Due to the nature of the job and the communities where the intern will be working, Spanish-language fluency is required, and primary consideration will be given to applicants from the local commuting area.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The intern will be co-supervised by the park's visual information specialist and an Los Angeles-based park ranger. Both will provide extensive training at the onset of the internship, not just about interpretation and local climate change impacts, but also the skills required to be successful in a professional work environment, working with senior managers, park partners, and urban communities. An individual development plan will be established at the beginning of the internship to identify personal and professional goals. The park commits to sending the intern to a week of facilitated dialogue training, which teaches a formal structure and skill set for leading groups through deep, personal, and highly-participatory dialogues on today's most pressing issues. Daily interactions and regular meetings between supervisors and intern will provide opportunities for feedback and discussions about leadership growth.

DATES OF POSITION

Approximate start date is June 5, 2017. Start and end dates are flexible but position will be filled during the late spring/summer months.

COMPENSATION

This initiative supports one student at \$15/hour for 12 weeks, or 480 hours.

HOUSING

Ideally, the intern would be recruited from and already live in Los Angeles, as the primary workspace will be the downtown office where the Los Angeles district staff work. Some travel may be required to and from the duty station in downtown Los Angeles and park head quarters in Thousand Oaks. A government vehicle will be provided for these trips. If the intern is non-local, there are many short-term

rentals or sublet options available within commuting distance. The intern's supervisors are available to help identify ideal neighborhoods and housing.

Alternatively, there is room available at the park's seasonal housing. This co-ed dormitory houses more than 20 interns, volunteers, and seasonal employees. There are two people per room and all have access to shared kitchen and living areas. The dormitory is located in a rural setting in Calabasas, CA, yet is close to many services and amenities one would find in any large city. The commute to the Los Angeles office is approximately 35 miles away and can be over an hour in traffic.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Intern will spend time in the office and field, approximately 60% in the field and 40% in the office. Field conditions will be in the Santa Monica Mountains and adjacent natural parks near Los Angeles in potentially rugged terrain. Los Angeles in the summer generally experiences hot and sunny weather with temperatures sometimes exceeding 100 degrees F. Potentially hazardous wildlife and plants that may be encountered includes; rattlesnakes, stinging insects, ticks, and poison oak.

Office space will be provided at the park headquarters in Thousand Oaks and in the LA District office located at El Pueblo State Historical Monument in Downtown Los Angeles.

Intern will spend most of the field work time at and around parks and community centers near downtown Los Angeles, including but not limited to; Griffith Park, the Audubon Center at Debs Park, Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook, and the Los Angeles State Historic Park.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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