

## POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT:

### GEORGE MELENDEZ WRIGHT INITIATIVE FOR YOUNG LEADERS IN CLIMATE CHANGE

The National Park Service (NPS) is pleased to announce the *George Melendez Wright Initiative for Young Leaders in Climate Change* Initiative (YLCC) to provide a pathway for exemplary students in higher education (graduate students and advanced undergraduate students) 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.

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### Creating a Web-Based Template for Climate Outreach

Congaree National Park  
Hopkins, SC

#### CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE

NPS sites provide exceptionally powerful opportunities to inform and inspire everyone – including staff and visitors – to become climate stewards. In fact, climate change communication is one of the four high-priority cornerstones of the NPS Climate Change Response Program. Such communication should be crafted to include hopeful messages in plain language in at least four areas:

1. Every park's unique "climate story"
2. Impacts to NPS resources
3. NPS commitment to proactive adaptation planning
4. NPS commitment to mitigation through sustainable operations

This communication is needed to inform and inspire a wide range of audiences both inside and outside the NPS. Examples might include decision makers, front line staff working with visitors, partners, stakeholders, the visiting general public, and virtual visitors from around the world. The goal of the presentation in reaching these audiences is to inform and inspire climate stewardship. All of these needs are being considered in the development of the NPS Servicewide Climate Change Interpretive Strategy, which is currently in development and scheduled for release by the end of calendar year 2015. These needs are especially acute in the Southeast Region of the NPS, where issues ranging from sea level rise to drought to phenology to complex watershed interactions all pose a significant challenge to the long-term legacy of park resources.

Given these needs, a dedicated web page on the public-facing NPS website is a logical, convenient, widely accessible option to reach these audiences. Such a page can be hosted on a park's individual website to engage visitors there. The NPS uses a content management system, so developing the page primarily requires a team that can creatively work within that framework to develop an appealing design and layout. As web-based presentations are especially relevant towards engaging younger, tech-savvy audiences, this project requires true leadership from college students who understand how to maximize engagement with their peers.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The intern for this project will work with various NPS staff to develop consistent climate change communication web pages for at least three parks in the Carolinas and Georgia. By simultaneously considering various program needs at each park, the final product will be a more robust “template” that will be subsequently available to a wider range of additional parks. This invites consistent presentation by the NPS, but also serves as a “writing prompt” of sorts to help other staff thoroughly consider various dimensions of climate change for their park.

This project will be managed through partnerships with NPS staff in at least six parks and programs, including the following:

1. Old-Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center (OGBFREC; <http://www.nps.gov/rlc/ogbfrec>) staff will formally host the intern and provide daily supervision
2. Congaree National Park (<http://www.nps.gov/cong>), the OGBFREC host will serve as a host and primary example for the web page development
3. South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (SALCC; <http://www.southatlanticlcc.org/>) staff will assist with in-depth project development
4. The Gulf Coast Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (GC-CESU; [http://www.cesu.psu.edu/unit\\_portals/GUCO\\_portal.htm](http://www.cesu.psu.edu/unit_portals/GUCO_portal.htm)) staff will assist with in-depth project development
5. Staff from at least two additional NPS sites in the Carolinas and Georgia will provide relevant climate change information for the additional web pages. These sites are to be determined based on evolving factors in the spring of 2015.

The intern will serve as a nexus between these partners. By developing a consistent, convenient, web-based template for parks to compile and communicate information about climate change, the intern will directly help inspire park visitors to implement climate friendly actions at home.

In addition to web page development, the intern will also provide training for NPS staff about the template, help draft communication strategy for directing user traffic to new web pages, and potentially assist with delivering a K12 teacher workshop focused on climate change.

In addition to professional networking and mentoring opportunities, the intern will receive specific training in Federal Information Systems Security Awareness (FISSA), NPS climate change response, climate change communication, and the NPS Content Management System. Additional training will include American Heart Association First Aid/CPR as well as a field orientation to Congaree National Park.

## QUALIFICATIONS

This work is open to a wide range of student backgrounds. The successful applicant must meet the following minimum academic requirements:

1. Be in good standing as a Junior in the Spring 2015 semester
2. Nine (9) credit hours of graphic design, communications, computer science, or other courses that are broadly relevant to designing an attractive web page within a content management system.
  - a. This requirement may be balanced with links or examples that demonstrate a proven ability to design web pages or similar media.

3. Nine (9) credit hours (including at least one laboratory course) of STEM courses that are broadly relevant to the science of global change and sustainability science
4. Six (6) hours of social science, marketing, journalism, or other courses that broadly relate to understanding audience segmentation and/or cognitive psychology of climate change communication
  - a. This requirement may be balanced by references or examples that demonstrate a proven ability to manage similar types of complex communications.

Applicants must also meet the following, additional non-academic requirements:

1. The willingness to initiate the background check by March 2015. This is required so that the intern can start in May with computer access. This process will require several hours of work to compile and submit detailed residence/ work histories for the last five years as well as separate coordination of appointments for digital fingerprinting.
2. Experience with customer service, retail, or other activities that involve representing and organization while interacting with a range of clients, customers, visitors, partners, etc.
3. The willingness to synthesize selected pre-reading materials including some strategic plans and program documents
4. Valid driver license and clean driving record, as they may need to drive government vehicles to visit partner parks
5. Onsite access to a personal vehicle for the duration of the internship; this is due to the park's relatively remote location with respect to grocery stores, amenities, entertainment, etc.
6. An eagerness to live in a busy dorm on the edge of a floodplain wilderness in the height of the hot, muggy South Carolina summer

Applicants with stronger backgrounds in the above requirements, both academic and non-academic, will be preferred.

## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

The intern will have the chance to demonstrate, practice, and hone leadership skills in several areas. These include:

1. Peer leadership. As web-based presentations are especially relevant towards engaging younger, tech-savvy audiences, this project requires true leadership from college students who understand how to maximize engagement with their peers.
2. Professional networking. The intern will serve as the liaison between several Federal partners, including NPS staff from at six different programs including the Old-Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center, Congaree National Park, the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative, the Gulf Coast Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit, and more.
3. Climate change communication. The intern will develop skills to effectively and creatively integrate multimedia web page design with considerations of climate change science and audience segmentation/needs.
4. Web page design. The intern will develop specific experience working with the NPS Content Management System for web site development.

5. Professional presentations. The intern will deliver professional training about the web page template to NPS staff. This presentation will be specifically coached by the education coordinator at the Old-Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center.
6. Strategic planning. The intern will be expected to work with a number of internal plans to see that the web page design, content, and organization are consistent stated program goals.
7. Big Picture. By the end of the experience the intern will gain a more holistic understanding for the complexity of multi-program partnerships

All of the skills above are absolutely critical to professional success in climate change communications, general communications, and IT careers the federal service.

## **DATES OF POSITION**

The dates for the 12-week internship are Monday, May 18 to Friday, August 7. These dates are non-negotiable as we will be hosting a single orientation for multiple summer staff at the Old-Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center beginning on 5/18.

## **COMPENSATION**

This initiative supports one student at \$14 / hour for 12 weeks, or 480 hours.

## **HOUSING**

Housing will be provided at no cost to the intern in the dormitory facilities operated by the Old-Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center at Congaree National Park. The center's ADA-accessible facilities include a multi-use indoor space laboratory / classroom / compute lab, outdoor classroom, picnic area, 12-bed bunk-style dormitory, kitchen, equipment storage, and laundry facilities. The first week to two weeks of the internship will be dedicated to an in-depth orientation to Congaree National Park, including field excursions, paddling, hiking, and more, as well as climate change and communications training

This intern will be one of a cohort of summer interns working at the OGBFREC. Other interns will be working on various projects including teacher workshops, hydrology monitoring, exotic plant management control, big tree surveys, and more. Residents are responsible for general upkeep of the facilities, which are subject to regular inspections to maintain cleanliness, identify maintenance needs, and minimize pest issues.

Congaree National Park ([www.nps.gov/cong](http://www.nps.gov/cong)) protects over 26,000 acres of forested floodplains along the Congaree and Wateree Rivers in central South Carolina. The vast majority of the park is designated as Federal Wilderness. Park lands also include 11,000 acres of old-growth forest that represent one of the largest and finest examples of such forest remaining in the United States. The primeval landscape is home to several national champion trees and an incredible diversity of life. Floodwaters from the 14,000 mi. watershed periodically inundate the forest, bringing sediment and nutrients. In addition to being a popular recreation destination and a significant research site for scientists, the park is recognized as a National Natural Landmark, a RAMSAR Wetland of International Significance, an International Biosphere Reserve, and a Globally Important Bird Area.

There are many opportunities for a rich experience both at and beyond Congaree National Park. Opportunities to participate in park events and programs will be available, including guest lectures and evening park programs. Congaree National Park provides diverse recreational opportunities including hiking, camping, and canoeing/kayaking. With a 30+ minute drive interns can be in downtown Columbia, SC, which is the state Capitol, a metropolitan area of over 500,000

people, and home to the University of South Carolina. A wide variety of cultural events (music, arts, night-life, theaters, etc.) are available there. The surrounding state network of parks provides access to mountain biking, boating and hiking trails. The Atlantic Coast and Southern Appalachian Mountains are also within driving distance for long day trips or weekend getaways.

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

After completing a mandatory background check, the Intern will have access to the NPS computer network through a computer work station at the Old-Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center and/or the Harry Hampton Visitor Center at Congaree National Park. Approximately 60% of the work will involve sedentary work at the computer. Additional work will involve reading documents, in meetings, and on conference calls with off-site project staff. Pending partner funding, the intern may make day trips to participating parks to interview staff about climate change stories, resource impacts, adaptation actions, and sustainable operations. In this case the intern would be responsible for their food but travel in an official government vehicle at no cost to themselves. Overnight trips are not anticipated, but if they are necessary then the intern will be provided with reasonable lodging at no cost.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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