

# Student Trainee Pathways Park Ranger, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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## POSITION BACKGROUND

- The position I held for the summer recreation season of 2020 was a Student Trainee Pathways Park Ranger in Natural Resources for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Deer Creek Lake in Mount Sterling, Ohio. I have been active in the position since June 2019 and currently remain in the position.
- I found my position through an agency recommendation by a previous SENR career advisor Trish Preston my 1<sup>st</sup> year in the winter of 2019. I then called the Deer Creek Lake Corps office to see if they had any positions available and sent my resume to the acting manager at that time. The manager became an advocate for me finding a position within the Corps and after attending the university career fair in the spring of 2019 and meeting the Assistant Operations Manager of Scioto Area, the acting Deer Creek Lake Manager and the Assistant Operations Manager of Scioto Area decided offer me a Student Trainee Pathways position.
- The position is a position that is held until graduation and after which you have the possibility of internal direct transfer to a Park Ranger of Natural Resource Specialist open position within the Corps.



Assisting with the creation of a life jacket loaner station display rack.



Driving the patrol boat with the Natural Resources Specialist.

## THE AGENCY EXPLAINED

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's is a federal agency under the Department of Defense and U.S. Army that manages infrastructure in the U.S. while offering engineering assistance over seas for the military as needed. The Corps also assists with developing managing techniques to reduce natural resource depletion.
- The mission of the U.S, Army Corps of Engineers is to "Deliver vital public and military engineering services; partnering in peace and war to strengthen our Nation's security, energize the economy and reduce risks from disasters."
- As a byproduct of developing and maintaining infrastructure, especially flood risk management infrastructure, the Corps manages many waterways and the surrounding lands which facilitates many recreation opportunities and needs for environmental stewardship. The need for management of natural resources has allowed the Corps to offer many Student Trainee, Park Ranger, and Natural Resources Specialist positions.

## ON THE JOB

Typical duties:

- Conducted multiple terrestrial patrols around the Corps managed area daily to enforce Title 36 rules and regulations, assist the public, and ensure the safety of the recreation areas.
- Operated the patrol boat on the lake each weekend to ensure public safety, enforce Title 36, and assist boaters if needed.
- Ensured that the park was well maintained by completing maintenance tasks as needed and conducting cleaning inspections.
- Assisted dam tenders with the maintenance, inspections, and instrumentation readings for regular dam operations and flood events.
- Performed daily water quality testing in recreation areas for public water use in the park as well as bi-weekly to monthly lake profiles testing the dissolved oxygen of the lake and downstream areas.
- Created interpretive and informational content for the Deer Creek Lake Corps Facebook Page instead of facilitating in-person public events due to COVID-19.

Accomplishments to mention:

- Learned to operate various machinery such as a boat, dump truck, skid-steer loader, chainsaw, and a variety of power tools.
- Established and fostered a relationship with a partnering non-profit called the Scioto Area Corps Cooperating Association (SACCA).
- Became an editor and administrator of the Deer Creek Lake Corps Facebook Page.



Operating a dump truck for the first time to move soil to a dam abutment area.



Performing maintenance on the dam tainter gates.

## REFLECTION

- During my second recreation season at the park I was able to take on more responsibilities and learn more tasks and expectations for what it would take to be a full-time Natural Resources Specialist.
- My post-graduation goal is to use the experience that I have gained in this position to become a full-time Natural Resources Specialist for the Corps with citation authority and boat patrol training completed prior to graduation.
- My future plans are to get whatever position I can after this internship and eventually work my way up to being a Project or Park Manager for the Corps, but I am open to taking whatever other opportunities may present themselves.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Always ask questions and try to meet as many people as you can that work for your agency as this could be beneficial in the future.
- If you are going to be holding a position for a long period of time, write down your completed activities so you can keep track of everything you have learned.
- Remember that you are a trainee. It is easy to become discouraged and overwhelmed with all the things you have to learn. Try to take the stress of all you have to learn with grace and push to be taught the things you are interested in to develop skills that will take you far in future positions.
- To find similar positions, look frequently on USA.jobs and if you are comfortable call the location of interest to see if positions are available.