

## School of Environment and Natural Resources

# Naturalist Internship with the ODNR

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### BACKGROUND

This summer I had the privilege to work for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) as a naturalist intern. I was stationed at Wingfoot Lake State Park near Akron, Ohio.



My position was within the Division of Parks and Watercraft, which is one out of the 12 divisions within the ODNR. The ODNR's mission statement is "to ensure a balance between the wise use and protection of our natural resources for the benefit of all". The ODNR has something for everyone, as there is a wide range of professions including engineering, biology, and law enforcement.



### DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES

Each day on the job was different than the next!



This is from my favorite program, our Thursday Turtle Talks! During this program, I took our ambassador box turtle outside for a walk and talked about turtle facts!

This photo was taken during our Friday archery program! We used compound bows to teach both children and adults!



This is a photo of me releasing a monarch that we raised in the nature center. We were able to watch multiple monarchs grow from eggs into caterpillars and then into butterflies!



We had the opportunity to host a lot of school groups! Here, the other intern and I are taking a group of 6<sup>th</sup> graders on a nature hike.

Most of my duties as a naturalist intern revolved around programming. We had a variety of programs offered out of the nature center including wildlife programs, archery, fishing, and kayaking. On top of programming, I:

- completed a special project
- staffed the nature center
- took care of the ambassador animals
- created educational materials
- Interacted with park guests

### SPECIAL PROJECT



My special project was a "nature nook" in all of the park's kiosks. I designed and created each poster in the kiosk. It included a nature eye-spy, a scavenger hunt around the park, and nature facts! The purpose of the nature nook is to promote spending time in nature.

### REFLECTION

Before this internship, I did not know what I wanted to do for my career. This position made me realize that I want to go into nature education. I hope to return to Wingfoot Lake State Park next summer!



The nature center at Wingfoot Lake State Park.

I would tell someone looking for a similar position to take advantage of the career services offered here at Ohio State, as I heard about this position in a career advising session. Secondly, I would say to apply for anything that interests you, even if you do not think you are qualified! I did not think I was qualified for the position and was hesitant to apply. I am so grateful now that I did. I would recommend a student interested in a similar experience to learn everything they can about what they are passionate about. You cannot be an expert in everything, but you can be an expert on one subject! This will help greatly in your programming in your future position.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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