



Summer Day Camp Counselor

Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks

About Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks

Mission Statement: To conserve open spaces, while providing places and opportunities that encourage people to discover and experience nature.

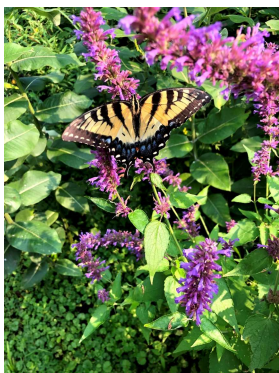
There are 23 different locations within the Metro Parks system. I had the opportunity to travel to 10 of the parks during my time as a summer camp counselor.

How did I find this internship opportunity?

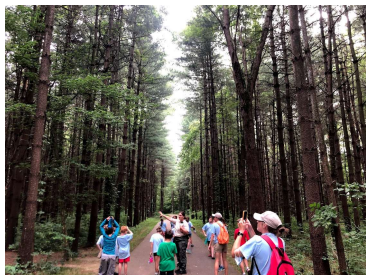
I attended a CFAES career fair pre-pandemic during the spring semester of 2020. I got the opportunity to interview for this position and I even made it to the second stage of interviews. Unfortunately, I did not receive a job offer.

After a year of growth and professional development, I attended a virtual career fair during the spring semester of 2021. I went through the interview process for the second time and got the job as a summer camp counselor.

A butterfly in a pollinator garden at Highbanks



Tall Pines Hiking Program lead by Walnut Woods Park Manager



Job Description and Duties

The Metro Parks summer camp is an outdoor day camp, no overnight options are available.

- Assist with the daily operation of week long summer day camp programs for 15-40 children designed to provide outdoor activities that promote environmental awareness, appreciation, and familiarity with natural settings.
- Ensure the safety of campers at all times; keep camps clean, and demonstrate a concern for the environment.
- Direct activities of campers, serving as their counselor and leader; involves all members in group activities; promotes spirit and enthusiasm throughout the day camp experience.
- Maintain good working relationships with employees, the public, parents or guardian of campers and campers in assigned group.
- Ensure high quality programs; assist with and participate in camp-wide activities; provide support and leadership in conjunction with camp staff.
- Provide a fun, memorable, and equitable camp experience for all children.
- Be able to work outside all day, rain or shine.

Different Types of Camps

I was assigned to the "trifecta" camp team. This team has the responsibility of facilitating three different camps that would change each week throughout the summer. Also, the location of each camp would change to provide a wider reach to provide more accessibility for different areas of central Ohio.

Early Childhood Camp:

- 2 groups of campers split into AM and PM sessions
- Ages 3-6 years old
- Each session had around 15 children
- This camp utilized indoor facilities (Nature Center or Lodge)
- Creeking and crafts were the big events of the week

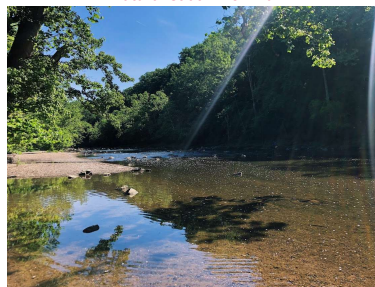
Nature Adventure Camp:

- Ages 6-8 years old
- This camp utilized a shelter house as "home base"
- Fishing, archery, creeking, and camp cookout were the big events of the week

Travel Camp:

- Ages 8-12 years old
- Pick up and drop off at one "home base" shelter
- Must safely drive the campers in Metro Park vehicles to different park locations to explore
- In addition to the big events in the Nature Adventure Camp, kayaking and paddle boarding were provided

The Olentangy River during a Water Hike with Naturalist at River Bluff



A picture of me inside a giant sycamore tree during an off-trail Naturalist hiking program



Reflection Section

Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks is an important asset to our central Ohio communities. Metro Parks strives to provide an equitable parks system that is clean and environmentally sustainable. Being able to learn about how the park functions, and all of the personnel need was very eye opening.

I learned so much and would recommend this internship to anyone who is looking for a great work environment and who loves the outdoors. I am very thankful for this experience, and I have developed a greater appreciation for our parks.

Being able to give children a fun and educational summer outdoor experience was very fulfilling for me. I helped kids go out of their comfort zones by catching their first fish, helping them toast their first marshmallows, and visit their first farm while touring Slate Run historical farm.

Considerations for Future Interns

There is another option!

Traditional Day Camp:

- You are assigned to a camp location and work with your camp team every week at your home park.
- Each week your campers get the opportunity to kayak, cookout, go fishing, shoot archery, and participate in different activities and programs to spark their curiosity and expand their understanding of the environment.

If you do not have experience with children:

This is a fulltime, summer internship that requires a big commitment. Serving and supervising groups of children while creating a positive and fun experience can be difficult to do as a full time commitment. Especially if you do not have experience with children. I would consider getting some experiences working with children before committing to this opportunity.

If you do have experience working with children:

Be prepared to be outside, rain or shine, for this fulltime internship. Being outdoors presents different and unique challenges so be prepared to learn about different problem-solving techniques. These techniques are taught during training.

Will I return next year?

I want to diversify my overall internship experiences while I am and if I do return, I will be able to continue my growth at Metro Parks, maybe expanding to a new position in the park.

Acknowledgements

I had the best team. I worked with two other young women, one head counselor and one other counselor. I was given so much support this summer and my team helped me grow and learn along with the campers. They made this a truly memorable experience and I am grateful for this opportunity.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Priscilla Howland