

School of Environment and Natural Resources

Camp Kern— Senior Camp Counselor

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BACKGROUND

Camp Kern is located on over 480 acres in Oregonia, Ohio. During the summer session multiple teen and child programs, run for 9 weeks. The mission of Camp Kern revolves around 4 core values:

- Honesty
- Responsibility
- Caring
- Respect

I was once a camper myself and was excited to join the staff for my internship.



Map overview of the camp including: lakes, buildings, and outdoor activity areas

Kern aims to reintroduce kids to nature while instilling meaningful values and building lasting relationships. Camp Kern's official mission statement is "To unleash the potential in all through enriching outdoor activities." A task each member of its staff is expected to carry out.



My fellow lifeguards and I posing for lifeguard appreciation day

DURING THE WEEK

As a counselor, I worked with kids of different age ranges throughout the summer. The kids would arrive on Sunday evening, and we have them until Friday afternoon. The week was comprised of:

- Themed games
- Outdoor and indoor activities
- Campfires and camp outs



My campers and I participating in a sack race

Some weekly activities included:

- Arts & Crafts
- Swimming
- Nature hikes
- Climbing
- Archery

I worked with a lot of the nature hikes and helped work in the camp's nature center with all the unique animals that had made their way to camp. The nature center had snakes, lizards, frogs, turtles, geckos, and other unique animals for the children to interact with. I helped to handle and feed a number of these animals.



This photo is of Zeus, one of the camp's bearded dragons, being pet by a few campers during a visit to the nature center!



During a rainy day I spent some time teaching campers new arts and crafts.

Throughout the week I often needed to plan activities and quickly problem solve for when things went wrong, test my leadership abilities and engage with my peers, campers, and leadership, and work on my communication skills.

Some activities I planned included:

- Leaf etchings
- Fossil Hunts
- Creature Crawls
- Flora and Fauna Safaris



Kids shooting at the archery range at camp

REFLECTION



My acceptance of an award given to me by my village leader for my exemplary work with campers.

This internship gave me the opportunity to build upon my existing skill sets and strengthen my leadership skills. I was able to learn so much about the outdoors and my own relationship with nature. I had originally chosen this internship because I was interested in teaching or working with children in some way, and this was the perfect chance to try just that. Being able to help kids experience nature through activities and experiences I planned was extremely rewarding. Moving forward I will keep this experience in mind, but I would also like to look into other career paths, especially on the more corporate side of the environmental industry. My advice to any future students would be to be prepared. This experience came with a lot of stress and pressure as you are in charge of the health and safety of these kids. It can be a lot of fun, but you will be required to do things outside your comfort zone, and you must be resilient.



My co-workers and I helping to prepare campfire meals

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