

## **POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

### **FUTURE PARK LEADERS of EMERGING CHANGE**

The National Park Service (NPS) is pleased to support the *Future Park Leaders of Emerging Change* (FPL) program as a pathway for exemplary students in higher education (advanced undergraduate students and graduate 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 NPS efforts on emerging management issues. 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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### **International Dark Sky Designation Coordination**

Voyageurs National Park, Dark Sky Initiative, National Park Service  
International Falls, MN

#### **INTERNSHIP PROJECT BACKGROUND**

Public lands in the arrowhead of Minnesota and southwest Ontario Canada comprise one of the largest expanses of green space in the center of North America. Land managers and local stakeholders have been working together for over ten years on a vision to promote the economic, cultural and natural health of the lakes, forests, and communities on the Minnesota-Ontario border. These lands provide vast areas of relatively natural night skies and the partnership has identified the preservation and promotion of this resource as a high priority. The biggest threat to night skies is light pollution from outdoor lighting; a pervasive threat with widespread impacts including wildlife, visitor experience, cultural resources, wilderness character, energy efficiency, environmental sustainability, and public health and safety. Further, outdoor lighting is a major driver of climate change, contributing between 6-8%.

#### **INTERNSHIP PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This project involves developing applications for International Dark Association (IDA) Certifications among Voyageurs National Park (VOYA), Grand Portage National Monument, Boundary Waters Wilderness (USFS) and four provincial parks in Ontario Canada to recognize and promote stewardship of night skies. Night skies are one of the fastest growing emergent issues for NPS yet one of the least understood.

Dark sky parks are protected through a partnership of land managers that recognize the value of natural nightscapes through regulations, formal agreements, and long term planning and therefore, the intended audiences for the interns work include partners, stakeholders, the public, land managers and the International Dark Sky Association.

The intern's work will form the basis of the IDA applications and upon certification will guide the parks in strict conservation measures for night skies as well as contracting and procurement of park friendly outdoor lighting, and gateway community education.

The application process will require working with stakeholders, partners (NPS, USFS and parks in Ontario Canada) and the public, as well as the Natural Sounds & Night Skies Division (NSNSD) and the International Dark Sky Association (IDA).

Tasks include:

- Coordinate the development of and submission of applications for designation as an International Dark Sky Park for areas managed by the National Park Service, US Forest Service and Ontario Provincial Parks in Canada.
- Develop briefing papers and presentations for national and international partners and stakeholders.
- Develop a lighting plan based on previous examples and protocols. Conduct education and outreach activities with community leaders about the importance of natural darkness and the impacts of light pollution.
- Project management to keep many moving parts and partners on track.

Products include:

- Presentations and briefing materials for partners and stakeholders.
- International Dark Sky Association application components for NPS, USFS and 4 Canadian parks.
- Lighting plans based on existing examples.
- Education materials on the importance of naturally dark night skies and the impacts of light pollution for community outreach purposes (a requirement of certification as well).
- Summaries and analysis of night sky conditions and measurements.
- Summaries and analysis of lighting inventories.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

We are looking for a graduate student with an interest in sustainability, climate change, astronomy, engineering, natural resource protection, large landscape conservation, international affairs, multi-agency coordination, policy and planning, and environmental outreach and education.

*Qualifications include:*

- Excellent writing and speaking skills, ability to come up to speed quickly on new concepts, ability to think critically and problem solve, analytic skills and handling large data sets, comfort with technology and instrumentation, basic understanding of natural resource principals.
- Maturity and poise to represent NPS in national and international meetings with agency staff necessary to coordinate the IDA application.
- Experience with land use or recreation planning helpful but not required.

## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

The project will foster critical thinking, problem solving and leadership skills and NSNSD and park managers are committed to helping mentor and evaluate the intern in that regard. The application process includes the development of a lighting plan that will reduce impacts to national park resources which requires substantial critical thought and problem solving. Coordinating among NPS, USFS and Canadian parks will require analysis of and application of the different enabling authorities/policies and opportunities for critical thought in developing novel approaches for the application process. This project will foster leadership skills by representing the NPS in important meetings, assembling information to develop and make presentations to park managers and community leaders. We anticipate having the intern spend a week in Fort Collins, CO for training before deploying to the park and then sending someone up to VOYA to get the intern settled in.

## **DATES OF POSITION**

Ideal dates of position are May 28 to August 16. Start and end dates are somewhat flexible.

## **COMPENSATION**

This initiative supports one student at \$16/hour for 12 weeks, or 480 hours.

## **HOUSING**

Housing is the responsibility of the intern but a stipend of \$600 will be allotted per month to locate housing in nearby International Falls, MN. International Falls is a community of approx 6,500 people with a sister city of Fort Frances, Ontario of another 7,000 population across the International water. The area allows for the following amenities: hospital, clinic, schools, community college, and grocery stores. The nearest largest city is Bemidji Minnesota (2 hour drive) with chain stores and Duluth, MN (3-hour drive) of a population of 50,000.

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

Voyageurs National Park is a 218,000 acre park that is 40% water. Visitors to the park and staff who work in the park must access the majority of the park via watercraft. The project encompasses the Arrowhead Region of Northern Minnesota where there are plenty of lakes, lush Boreal Forests, biting insects and ticks. The person in this position will be required to travel to several different locations within the park via park-provided watercraft (driver may be provided or training on watercraft driving will be provided), as well as travel via vehicle (vehicle provided) to Grand Portage National Monument, Superior National Forest, Quetico Provincial Park (Canada), Kekebecca Falls Provincial Park (Canada) and other sites. Terrain is rock outcroppings with dense brush forest mixed with Spruce, Fir, Pine, Aspen and Birch trees. Bogs, swamps and fens are present in all areas. Biting insects and ticks along with sun, rain, and wind are all part of the climate in Northern Minnesota. The intern will be hiking for long periods of time, carrying heavy equipment, boating, canoeing, standing and sitting for extended periods of time. Some office work is included. The intern will be stationed at Voyageurs National Park Headquarters just outside of International Falls, MN.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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