

# What you need to know about working on summer staff at Green River Preserve

## The Living Situation:

Our cabin buildings are set up like duplexes in that there are two rooms with a bathroom in between. Each cabin group lives in one room with 5-7 campers and 2 staff members. Within the one cabin building there are up to 14 campers and 4 counselors. Additionally, each cabin building is assigned an “Adopt-a-Mentor,” that is one of our professional naturalists or administrative staff who will eat meals with your cabin, check in with you at night time, as well as be your first person you should seek support from when handling a challenging situation.

## Daily Schedule:

The day is split up into thirds. As a counselor, you will serve in many different roles throughout the day.

### **Mornings:**

Morning hikes are led by professional naturalists, who we call Mentors. Between breakfast and lunch all of our campers go out on **Mentor Hikes**. Green River Preserve is located on a 3,400 acre private wildlife preserve and the campers spend almost every morning out on the land exploring caves, waterfalls, rivers, and beautiful views. As a counselor, you may be assigned to go on a hike with a co-ed group and it is your responsibility to supervise campers, ask questions, and share knowledge that you have. You will be crawling into caves, hanging out under waterfalls and hiking up to 4 miles on any given day. You may be traveling up steep hills, down slick trails, through mud, into caves, or walking in creeks or rivers.

If you are not assigned to assist with a hike, you may be assigned “On-Duty” which means while the campers are on a hike, you will stay at base camp and assist with a variety of projects that may include but are not limited to: sorting mail, doing cabin inspection, doing trail maintenance, completing maintenance projects around camp, cleaning community spaces, keeping camp “tour ready,” or assisting at the farm with weeding, harvesting or other projects.

All counselors will have at least one morning off during each session where staff are allowed to leave camp at 8 a.m. and return to camp by 12:30 p.m. for lunch. This is also a great opportunity to go back to bed and catch up on sleep or take care of projects like registering for classes or interviewing for jobs.

### **Afternoon:**

After lunch, we have rest hour, which is then followed by afternoon activities. Counselors are responsible for teaching or assisting with instruction for any (or any combo) of the following: Archery, Arts & Crafts, BB Skeet, Canoeing, Climbing Tower, Creative Writing, Dance, Drawing & Painting, Drumming, Fencing, Fly Fishing, Field Games, Guitar, Knitting/Fiber Arts, Low Ropes, Mountain Biking, Nature Art, Outdoor Living Skills, Pioneer Cabin, Pottery, Theatre, Trail Running, Woodworking, and Yoga. Campers sign up for and are assigned activities for two days segments. For instance, a camper may take

Archery, Yoga, and Fencing on the first Monday and Tuesday they are at camp, and then Canoeing, Drumming, and Fly Fishing on Wednesday and Thursday. There are opportunities for Activity Coordinator positions based on experience and expertise. Counselors typically teach or assist every activity period in anywhere from 1 to 5 different activities during their time at camp

*Free time:* Every day, campers have approximately an hour of Free Time. Campers may play games on the field, swim in the pond, do the zip line into the pond, read in Hammockville, fly fish, play board games, or visit the camp store. All staff are responsible for supervising this vitally important “unstructured” time.

### **Evening Program:**

We have a handful of evening programs that we do every session from council fires (campfires with storytelling and music), Capture the Flag, Predator Prey (a campwide game of tag that simulates the food chain), a contra dance, a variety show (it’s better than a talent show!), and many more. It is the responsibility of the counselors to primarily play alongside their campers, mediate when necessary, and ensure every camper is having fun and following the rules. There are also opportunities for counselors to take on leader/facilitator roles for many evening programs.

### **Special Programs:**

The following programs only occur during the two and three week sessions:

**Group Learning Projects (or GLPs):** GLPs are day-long intensive studies of some subject or activity area. GLPs are used to go more in depth with skills and activities that have been introduced during the camp session. GLPs are typically organized and led by the Mentors and Activity Coordinators. As a counselor, you will be assigned a GLP on each of the GLP days to assist and participate alongside the campers. GLPs range in topic and some examples include the following: Making leather crafts, painting murals, building camp installations or artwork, an extra long hike to a place that campers do not get to visit with daily mentor hikes, geocaching, fly fishing, theatre, music, or working and cooking at the farm.

**Campout:** Campout is a three-day, two-night backpacking trip on the Preserve. The Campout group is made up of two cabins of campers (a male cabin and a female cabin of the same age group) and four cabin counselors. A mentor will also assist with 24 hours of the Campout. Counselors are responsible for planning an age-appropriate Campout, leading the hikes to the Campout sites, facilitating games and activities at the campsites and on the trail, leading a night hike, actively participating. Counselors are also responsible for overseeing food preparation, bear bag hanging, water collection and treatment, dish washing. Counselors are responsible for teaching campers proper Leave No Trace methods. This includes teaching campers (and yourself) how to use the bathroom in the woods and dispose of dish water and food scraps properly.

Each Campout site contains a shelter (to be used only during inclement weather) and a shelter bin (with a few supplemental materials for the specific campsite).

### **What am I going to eat?**

Three meals a day are included in your position as a resident staff member during the summer.

#### Breakfasts:

- Some common entrees: pancakes & bacon, french toast & sausage, waffles & fruit, biscuits/eggs/sausage/jelly,
- Available every breakfast: oatmeal or grits, cereal, fruit & yogurt

#### Lunches:

- Some common entrees: tacos, pizza, chicken fingers, Philly cheese steaks, chicken gyros, mac n' cheese, hot dogs, grilled cheese, sub sandwiches,
- Available every lunch: salad bar, fruit (apples, oranges), soup

#### Dinner:

- Some common entrees: fried chicken, spaghetti, pork tenderloin, sweet and sour chicken, BBQ, fettucine alfredo, thanksgiving dinner (that's always the final dinner!)
- Available every dinner: salad bar, fruit (apples, oranges), rice & beans

A vegetarian option is available at all meals and reasonable accommodations may be made for employees with food allergies. Employees who have other dietary restrictions should plan to supplement meals with personal food. Personal food must be stored in the staff lounge or mentor lodge (refrigeration is available). Due to the number of children with severe nut allergies, Green River Preserve strives to be a nut-free community. **Products containing peanuts or tree nuts are not allowed in the Dining Lodge.**

#### **Other Benefits:**

A resident position at Green River Preserve includes room and board and laundry service. Green River Preserve also provides staff training throughout the summer to continually refill your toolbox and address challenges or conflicts that arise. Staff regularly participate in staff meetings to receive feedback as well as to provide feedback to administration.

All staff also experience one-on-one sessions at least three times during the summer with camp administrators to review work performance and discuss goals and strengths and areas for improvement. It is GRP's belief that a strong and supported staff is the key to a successful summer and the camp administration works daily to be accessible, approachable, and supportive of frontline staff members.

#### **Commitment:**

##### Employment Dates for Summer 2016

Counselors: **June 1 – August 12**

All staff are expected to be certified in First Aid and CPR through a recognized provider. GRP does offer a class but prefers staff to come to camp with the certification complete. *\*Please note any staff taking CPR/FA through GRP will be charged a \$35 course fee.*

##### Time off:

During a two-week base camp session, cabin counselors have one morning off (8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) and one long night off (6:30 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. the following day). Additionally, there are 24 hour breaks between camp sessions. Camp staff must

report back to camp by 5:00 p.m. the day prior to the camp session opening. The session dates are listed here: <http://www.greenriverpreserve.org/summer-camp/dates-rates>

### Woodcraft Laws:

The Woodcraft Laws, **love, truth, beauty, and fortitude**, provide a basis for a code of living at Green River Preserve. In summation, all four laws add up to respect; respect for yourself, for each other, and for all living things. Ernest Thompson Seaton, one of the founders of the Boy Scouts of America, wrote the Woodcraft Laws at the turn of the century. He claimed these laws were rooted in Native American philosophy. Green River Preserve uses an adapted version of Seaton's original.

### **Additional Resume-Builders at Camp:**

#### **Media Team**

Every summer, a team of counselors and mentors serve on the Media Team, taking photos during the day and writing daily blog posts for the parents. If this is something that interests you, please let us know during your interview. Here is a sample of a blog post and photos from summer 2015: <http://www.greenriverpreserve.org/blog/life-as-a-camper>

#### **Lifeguards**

Any base camp staff members that are American Red Cross certified lifeguards, approved by the Aquatics Supervisor, and fulfill assigned lifeguarding duties will receive an additional \$10.00 per week. Lifeguards are needed for swim time during free time each afternoon from 5:10-6:00 p.m. They will also be assigned to Group Learning Projects and Mentor Hikes that entail swimming. Lifeguards also run the swim review on opening day of camp.

Lifeguards are not typically assigned guarding duties every day. Lifeguards are a critical piece of our staff to ensure we keep campers safe and remain ACA accredited. Applicants, if otherwise qualified and a good fit for GRP, certified as Lifeguards may be given priority over those who are not.

### **The Fine Print:**

You are serving in loco parentis so it is your responsibility to clean up after and comfort children when needed. This may mean, with personal protective equipment, you also will be responsible for cleaning up vomit, blood, feces, feminine products, or urine in the course of your job.

### **Essential Functions of a Position at Green River Preserve**

Read written documentation both on paper and on screen; listen to and comprehend oral communication; effectively communicate in both verbal and written communications; work several days in a row, sometimes with little rest; work with and have patience for children for up to 24 hours a day; be comfortable and work effectively in an outdoor or natural setting; hike up to five miles each day; lift and carry up to fifty (50) pounds; make decisions in high-stress situations; function and thrive in a community with very little personal space; respect and obey authority; live and work with other people up to twenty-four (24) hours a day; utilize discretion when faced with

sensitive issues; maintain personal hygiene and health (bathe, eat, use the restroom) without assistance of others

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### ***How do I keep in touch with the outside world?***

There is no cell service at camp. There is a telephone in the staff lounge that may be used to make long distance calls.

We have wi-fi in the staff lounge which may also be used to make phone calls using Google Voice, Skype, or other internet services. Technology use should be invisible to the campers (this includes iPods, phones, tablets, and laptops) and is not allowed in the camper cabins. Just as we ask the campers to unplug, working at Green River is a great opportunity to slow down and reconnect with the community and land around you.

Many cabin counselors will coordinate with their co-counselor have time to visit the staff lounge in the evening after tuck-in. Each cabin must have at least one staff member in the room with campers at night. All cabin counselors are expected to be in their cabin at night by 11:00 p.m.

### ***What if I like to go running everyday?***

We have many active staff members who are runners every year. Staff members may go running in the morning prior to breakfast as long as at least one cabin counselor is in the room with the campers. Staff members will also often run during mornings off.

### ***Will I always have a co-counselor?***

Due to fluctuations in enrollment, counselors may be assigned to be the one and only counselor for a cabin group of 5-7 campers. In this case, counselors receive additional support from their Adopt-A-Mentor.

### ***What makes the GRP staff different?***

The Green River Preserve staff is a community built on a foundation of respect and is made up of bright, curious, and creative people in all stages of adult life. The GRP staff is a family. They hold one another accountable to the high expectations of the campers and of one another. A job at Green River Preserve is not viewed as just a job; it is training for life. A position will provide life skills, character building, and an opportunity to learn an incredible amount about the natural world, how to live in a community, how to motivate other people, and about oneself.

## **More questions?**

Before interviewing, I encourage you to visit our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/greenriverpreserve>), peruse our blog posts (<http://www.greenriverpreserve.org/blog>), and watch our camp video (<http://vimeo.com/64404611>). All of these will help you understand more about who we are. If you find you have questions, please ask during the interview!

## **Tips for your interview:**

- **Time** Be ready to begin up to 15 minutes prior to your scheduled time. If we are running late or early, we will try to let you know. If you haven't heard from us 10 minutes after your interview was scheduled to begin, please call 828.698.8828.
- **Practice** Test out Skype or Google Hangouts prior to using it with us. Be sure you know how to turn on your video and unmute your mic. We understand that sometimes there are technical difficulties; however, a practice run with a friend or family member will limit these.
- **Consider your background** What are we seeing behind you and does it represent you or does it communicate something about you (good or bad)?
- **Questions?** Have two or three well-thought out questions prepared because we will likely ask if you have any questions.
- **Eye contact** Position our video on your screen towards wherever your camera is. Look in to the camera when you are answering questions. It may feel strange at first but it looks more professional that way.
- **Minimize disruptions** Try to set yourself up in a place where family, friends, roommates, etc., won't need to walk behind you.
- **Dress to impress** Don't wear your pajamas. Trust us on this one.