Reflections on my NPS Experience

Sitka National Historical Park

NPS Academy Summer 2012
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Legacy Project
The most valuable aspect of my experience:

Working in my first park as a seasonal protection ranger in Alaska has been an amazing adventure in so many ways. Gaining the experience as a peace officer in the National Parks has helped solidify the desire to pursue this as a career.

The picture to the right is during the annual 4\textsuperscript{th} of July parade that the NPS proudly supports along with the community.

Exploring the great outdoors and all of God’s creation up here in Alaska has been an amazing experience in itself.
The most challenging aspect of my experience:

Enforcing the laws in the park while educating people of the importance of conserving the resources and wildlife has been both a challenge and a joy. Adjusting to such a cold wet climate has also been a challenge in more than one way.

The picture to the right is me using an acoustic doppler while measuring the flow of the Indian River which runs through the middle of Sitka National Historical Park.
My Mentor Relationship:

My mentor is my co-worker, boss, and partner in fighting crime. Carin has helped coach me during this season by refreshing me in all the basics that I learned from my Ranger Academy from last year. Working in a small park with only one other LE ranger has had it’s challenges, but she has been a great coach and example of what it means to be the Law Enforcement presence in the Parks.

The picture to the right is me with Superintendent Randy Larson, Pro Ranger Arman Moreno, and Acting Chief Ranger Carin Farley.
How has your understanding of stewardship and related career opportunities broadened?

Patrolling the trails in the park is much more than just looking for people who are breaking the law. Picking up trash and beer bottles is an on going battle that seems to have no end in sight, but when I hear visitors come and say how beautiful the park is, I know I’m doing the job that I’m called to do. Preserving the natural and scenic environment means sometimes getting down and dirty every now and then.

The picture to the right is me doing some Green Crab monitoring. We set up crab traps in the tide lands to detect if any invasive green crabs have been in our park. Thankfully none have been located. I’m doing measurements on a red rock crab that we found in one of the traps.
What kind of knowledge and skills have you gained?

Working in a historical park in Alaska, I’ve learned the valuable importance that the past brings to the present. Both the native T’lingit and the Russian history has helped to broaden my understanding of the importance of preserving the diversity of both mankind and nature for present and future generations to enjoy.

The picture to the right is some interpretive training that I received in kayaks where we paddled the same route the Russian’s sailed during the battle of 1804, which historically determine if Russia was going to claim Alaska as their land or not.
Leaving my Legacy

I had the great opportunity to leave a lasting mark on the park by creating a staff tshirt for our park. Using some graphic design skills that I developed from Art School I developed a design connecting in the Russian history with the Tlingit native form line art style.

The picture to the right is the design that I created for our parks staff T-shirt.
Extra Comments:

Sitka is a small town yet full of great history set in the heart of one of the great wildernesses left in the world. As a ranger, I’m excited to have had this opportunity in discovering that this is a career that I could see myself in for many years to come.

The picture to the right is of Gina Bono the invasive plant intern for the park and me on top of Mt. Verstovia picnic rock while the city of Sitka, Ak is in the background.
Extra Videos of my time in Sitka:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wOXYOtVfY&list=UUtEbSY23ADcOGlH1KOYritg&index=9&feature=plcp

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcM1tsCnrpU&list=UUtEbSY23ADcOGlH1KOYritg&index=7&feature=plcp

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTwb60UGvYg&list=UUtEbSY23ADcOGlH1KOYritg&index=8&feature=plcp

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czEEFd8DbSo&list=UUtEbSY23ADcOGlH1KOYritg&index=2&feature=plcp