

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT:

GEORGE MELENDEZ WRIGHT INITIATIVE FOR YOUNG LEADERS IN CLIMATE CHANGE

The National Park Service (NPS) is pleased to announce the *George Melendez Wright Initiative for Young Leaders in Climate Change* (YLCC) to provide a pathway for exemplary students in higher education (graduate students and advanced undergraduate 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 the NPS response to climate change. Successful students may be eligible for non-competitive hire into federal positions for which they qualify following completion of all academic requirements.

Changing Climate, Changing Policy: Subsistence use and wilderness values in Arctic Alaska

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve
Cultural Resource Program
Fairbanks, AK

INTERNSHIP PROJECT BACKGROUND

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve (GAAR) is directed by enabling legislation to “maintain the wild and undeveloped character of the area” as well as provide for subsistence use by local residents, who continue a tradition of living off the land that has been present continuously for more than 10,000 years. Traditional ecological knowledge holders and scientists agree that changing temperature and precipitation patterns in Alaska are inducing cascading ecological effects on northern ecosystems. These changes are not only a concern for plants and animals, but also for the Native Alaskans who rely on these resources for cultural and economic stability. Few studies have been conducted to address this increasing threat to traditional lifeways.

Access for subsistence and wilderness values are priorities for park management, but the challenges wrought by climate change necessitate reevaluation of park policy in regards to these topics and their intersection. To this end, a study of local residents’ ecological observations and experiences of alterations of their subsistence use due to changing climate patterns is needed to inform policy decisions made by park administration.

INTERNSHIP PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The goal of this project is to gauge current and potential effects of climate change as experienced by community members of Anaktuvuk Pass, an Alaskan Native village wholly within the boundaries of Gates of the Arctic National Park. Information sought will cover topics such as local climate, ecology, and landscape use. Park staff will use the findings of this project to identify regulations and policies that are or may become outdated with regard to subsistence practices within the park.

A successful project will rely on knowledge across multiple disciplines, including anthropology, geography, climate science, and ecology to integrate knowledge of both local residents and resource managers and synthesize findings into management recommendations. Successful efforts will require working with content specialists within park staff as well as local residents and community stakeholders.

The YLCC intern will:

- Engage with community members to collect local ecological and land use information and participatory risk analysis as well as investigate values and perceptions related to the Park as an economic base, home, and formally protected landscape. This could include focus groups, individual level interviews, and participant observation in local communities and in the field.
- Produce a report of the work accomplished during the internship and present findings to the Park Leadership Team.
- Develop a poster or presentation to be delivered at a professional scientific meeting.

Additional deliverables will include the creation of interpretive multimedia such as photography or videography that can be incorporated into public presentations, websites, and/or social media. Media summarizing the results of this work to be shared with the community will be encouraged. Depending on the results of the analysis the team may also pursue the development of a manuscript for submission to a peer-reviewed academic journal.

QUALIFICATIONS

A successful applicant will be able to work under supervision, autonomously, as well as part of a team. The intern will participate in community outreach efforts involved with designing the project and have a role sharing the results of the study to both agency and community stakeholders.

Applicants should be enrolled in a graduate degree program in environmental policy, anthropology, geography, or another closely related field. Experience with ethnographic interviews and qualitative data collection and analysis is highly desired.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The intern will lead a substantial portion of a project that integrates park policy, climate science, and field interviews with local communities. The senior project PI will mentor the intern and oversee their integration with a team of specialists who have knowledge of this project and a range of expertise. Weekly meetings between the intern and the senior PI will provide opportunities to evaluate progress on tasks and products.

GAAR staff have laid necessary groundwork with stakeholders in rural communities close to the project area and the intern will participate in community engagement through the project. Knowledgeable local residents—in this case, Nunamiut Eskimo elders and other community members—will ideally shape the study design and review draft products. Travel to the rural community of Anaktuvuk Pass for face-to-face discussions will be part of the intern's experience. The intern will work with the senior PI to develop logistical plans for field research.

DATES OF POSITION

The dates of the position are flexible. Ideally the intern will work 480 hours between June 1 and September 30. However, earlier and later start and end dates can be arranged

COMPENSATION

This initiative supports one student at \$15/hour for 12 weeks, or 480 hours.

HOUSING

Park housing is not available in Fairbanks. However, the YLCC may provide a housing stipend to partially or fully cover the cost of dorm housing or cabin rental. The University of Alaska Fairbanks provides summer guest housing at \$37/night. Campus is located directly across from the GAAR office site, and can be reached by walking, bike, or public bus. Rental units (apartments and cabins) can also be found nearby on public transportation and/or bike routes. Additional information can be provided by the YLCC administrators and intern supervisor. Housing in Anaktuvuk Pass will be provided.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The work will be office-based with opportunities to travel to Anaktuvuk Pass for community engagement and data collection. Travel there will require transportation by small fixed wing aircraft. Training in aviation safety will be provided. The park maintains a staff bunkhouse in the community where the intern will be housed. Work will primarily be conducted at the Fairbanks Administrative Center (FAC), which houses most Gates of the Arctic staff. This will provide the intern ready access to their supervisor as well as other park science and resource management staff.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Park Service Supervisor:

Adam Freeburg

adam_freeburg@nps.gov, (907)455-0685

Project Advisor:

Jeff Rasic

jeff_rasic@nps.gov, (907)455-0632