

What is Teacher-Ranger-Teacher?

National parks enrich the lives of many in this nation. They provide access to the powerful ideas, values, and meanings associated with the remarkable cultural, natural, and recreational heritage of the United States. The National Park Service (NPS) strives to provide opportunities for all Americans to connect to their national heritage through the national parks. However, these opportunities are lacking for some - often due to a variety of social and economic factors.



Teacher Ranger Will Watkins, on duty at Big Thicket National Preserve.

The Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) Program offers a solution, by linking National Park units with teachers from **under-served (Title 1)** urban and rural school districts.

Under this program, selected teachers spend the summer working as park rangers, often living in the park. They perform various duties depending on their interests and the needs of the park, including developing and presenting interpretive programs for the general public, staffing the visitor center desk, developing curriculum-



based materials for the park, or taking on special projects.

Then, during the school year, these teacher-rangers bring the parks into the classroom by developing and presenting curriculum-based lesson plans that draw on their summer's experience. In April, during National Park Week, teacher-rangers wear their NPS uniforms to school, discuss their summer as a park ranger, and engage students and other teachers in activities that relate to America's national parks.

For general information contact Linda Lutz-Ryan, 303-969-2638 or Diana Truman Wiggam 303-969-2404.



Be a TRT in 2008!

What would you think about working in a National Park this summer? Whether you are new to TRT or a returning TRT please take a minute and check out the website for summer employment in 2008. The season runs about eight to ten weeks. If teachers can participate in start-up seasonal training with the other interpretive rangers, your season will get off to a great start.

How does it work?

If selected for the program your pay, of about \$300 per week, is provided through an Inter-governmental Personnel Agreement (IPA). The IPA creates a link between the National Park Service (NPS) and the school district where you are currently employed. The details and process of getting an IPA in place will be handled initially by your upcoming NPS supervisor with assistance from the regional office in Denver. Some districts already have current IPAs. Basically, the IPA allows you to be detailed to the NPS, to learn and work as a ranger, all while remaining an employee of your school district.

During your time duty stationed at the park you will experience the thrill of **connecting visitors to natural and cultural resources** which are part of America's heritage. Your supervisor will work with you to identify a curriculum based-product which will **connect students in your school district to the resources of "your" national park**. Time for research and development will be part of your summer schedule at the national park service unit.

When you return to the classroom in the fall, there will be many opportunities and teachable moments where your NPS experience will suggest an example or answer a question facing your students. During National Park Week April 19-27, 2008 you will once again put on your NPS uniform and present programs about your park and the values of the National Park System. Statistics recording your number of contacts and grade level/ages of the school audience are sent to the NPS office in Denver. We will use the data

and your comments about the TRT program to update and improve the program while also creating the groundwork for funding requests or grant applications.

The TRT Website provides job listings.

The NPS website at <http://www.nps.gov/wupa/forteachers/trt.htm> is the clearinghouse for information on how to apply for TRT jobs in National Parks next summer. This is the website where positions for interested teachers will be posted through the end of March. Each posting



will describe the position, the housing available, park location and the contact for further details. Please contact the park directly at either the phone number or email provided. Here is a sample TRT ad:

Park name: Fort Davis National Historic Site

Name of contact: John Heiner

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1379 Fort Davis, TX 79734

Email Address: XXX_XXX@nps.gov

Phone Number: (432) 426-3224 ext. 23

Projected Dates of Detail: 8 weeks June – August 2008, exact dates may be flexible

Housing: shared housing may be available

Additional Information: One position; strong interest in history desirable; operate Visitor Center; do informal living history interpretation; present professional quality interpretive activities; help develop curriculum-based education materials; assist with cultural and/or natural projects, including field work.

At the bottom of the main TRT web page you will find a link to a printable "Color Brochure" which can be used to communicate with your family, school district, principal, and coworkers about participation in this program. Please spread the word.

Consider TRT for your summer of 08 and do not hesitate to contact me with questions: Diana Wiggam 303-969-2404 or diana_wiggam@nps.gov Teacher Coordinator.



Teacher discovers Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

by Jenna Marvin, Tucson School District

This summer I had the opportunity to live one of my dreams, being a national park ranger. So often the public thinks of just the big parks: Yosemite, Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon. But I worked at a smaller site that gave me big opportunities and lots of fun: Lees Ferry, part of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Visitors were often surprised at how much they could learn from a small site. I was able to provide interpretive experiences in the geology, history, diverse cultures and recreation of the Colorado River, Lees Ferry, Glen Canyon and Navajo Bridge. Of course, every time the California condors showed up my talk quickly changed to the comeback of this great endangered species. Every day was exciting as I explored the historic districts in Lees Ferry, studied the impact of



Navajo Bridge on the people of Northern Arizona and Utah, or hiked through layers of geologic time from the Glen Canyon formations down to the Kaibab formations in Marble Canyon.

As an educator my head was spinning with ideas I could bring back to my middle school. In the library I teach almost all the subjects. Since returning to school I worked with a 7th grade language arts teacher where students studied the national parks within a state assigned to them. They then created a brochure called the National Parks of (insert state). I also wore my uniform and did a presentation on Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. The students love the hat. I have been preparing a unit on bridges with Navajo Bridge as the center piece. During book talks I have been presenting books to students with the national parks as part of the theme. I am also working with a science class to develop a presentation on the endangered California condor. And the list goes on.

My time at Lees Ferry may have been a short summer, but the effects will be long lasting as I draw upon my experiences in the coming years to teach lessons and promote one of our greatest treasures to our youngest citizens. I would highly recommend the Teacher to Ranger to Teacher program to any park that wants to expand its impact to school children or a teacher with the dream of being a park ranger.



Interview with TRT Rick Keith

Fort Davis National Historic Site was fortunate to have a Teacher-to-Ranger-to-Teacher (TRT) for two summers. Rick Keith who teaches history, economics, and government and who coaches track/cross country at Alpine High School, Texas, was a TRT at Fort Davis National Historic Site in summer 2006 and 2007. With high standards of excellence, he inspired park visitors and staff alike.

Keith loves history! Before becoming a TRT, he served for five years as a living history volunteer at Fort Davis NHS, portraying the role of a 19-

century cavalryman and helping with special events such as artillery demonstrations, military ceremonies, community parades, as well as camp-fire programs at the nearby state park.

Below, Keith tells about his TRT experience:

What advice does he have for prospective TRTs? “First and foremost, a knowledge of the park is essential.”

What was his TRT job like? “I saw my primary job as enhancing the appreciation of our visitors for the park and the history it preserves. I can see a number of ways that the mission of the NPS could be made more meaningful to my students.”

Where did his love for the national parks begin? “My father made the National Parks a meaningful part of my upbringing through yearly visits to NPS units throughout the West during my boyhood, and I have held a certain reverence for the National Park system ever since.”

What did being a TRT mean to him? “I was proud to wear the grey and green uniform and to represent the NPS, and grateful to the TRT program for the opportunity it gave me to learn the job of a Ranger.”

What was his most enjoyable experience as a TRT at Fort Davis NHS? “I suppose I am by nature a teacher, and thus the chance to perform living history interpretation in a subject and environment I love was enormously enjoyable. I have had a lifelong fascination for precisely the history that is preserved at Fort Davis. . .and I enjoyed immensely the opportunity to share an appreciation for these subjects with park visitors.”

How would he summarize his TRT job? “My summer work at Fort Davis NHS was one of the best things I have ever done.”

As a TRT, Keith wore the uniform—both NPS and living history—very neatly and professionally. In many ways, he set high standards for future TRT’s.



Ranger Rick Keith (above) interacts with park visitors while in the uniform of an 1880’s cavalryman at Fort Davis National Historic Site. During National Park Week, Teacher Rick Keith (below) brings park themes and history to his classroom students in Alpine Texas.



TRT Alumni: Maps for the Classroom!

Thanks for all your hard work in the parks during the summer of 2007. As a “gift” the NPS has prepared 40 copies of the NPS System map which shows the locations of our 390+ units across the United States. This would be a super item to post in the classroom for reference during a multitude of activities. You can use the map in Social Studies, Math, Science, and more!

The map is full color, 24" x 32" and is laminated for durability. We will ship using US Post Office. To obtain your map please fax the following information to Diana Wiggam at the Intermountain Regional Office. The fax number is 303-987-6676. Delivery will take about 2 weeks.



Your name:

Classroom:

School name:

Mailing Address:

Name of Park where you were TRT:

Cool things to do with your new NPS map.

◆ Mark the park where you worked last summer.

◆ Locate and learn about parks associated with a curriculum study area such as Native American cultures, Hispanic history, slavery.

◆ Use colored pins can mark study areas for different student teams.

◆ Let students use the map to find parks which they would like to learn about using the Junior Ranger web program. Allow them to mark park sites where they have completed the on-line badge.

◆ Using a park’s home website, find out about the plants and animals which live there. What parks have wolves? Or saguaro cactus?

◆ Using colored dots, mark each site where your class has earned a Junior Ranger Badge.

◆ Websites to use with your map and classroom activities.

<http://www.nps.gov/> This is the home page for the National Park Service.

<http://www.nps.gov/carto/> Site for finding and downloading more park service maps for your students.

<http://www.nps.gov/webrangers/> Location for WebRangers. Available in English and Spanish. There are 45 activity badges to learn ranging from easy to hard.

<http://www.nps.gov/learn/juniorranger.htm> This site is for earning Junior Ranger “badges” from different national park units across the country.

<http://www.nps.gov/learn/curriculum.htm> Teachers can find curriculum based programs.

<http://www2.nature.nps.gov/air/webcams/index.cfm#cams> Map of park sites with Web Cams

More about maps in the next Teacher’s Notes!.



Teacher Ranger excels at Petrified Forest

Petrified Forest National Park tried out a new National Park Service program called the Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program this past summer with great success. Amber Struthers is a middle school teacher from central Phoenix that worked at the park to help improve the education program of the Park. “Amber Struthers, our first Teacher-Ranger-Teacher at Petrified Forest National Park, was instrumental in the initial development of a series of four Traveling Trunks that should be available for teachers in 2008,” says Acting Superintendent Brad Traver.

The Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program was developed in the National Park Service to focus programs on the education community and engage teachers from under-served schools that are not currently being reached with park programs, paying particular attention to areas with large, ethnically diverse populations. Participating teacher-rangers bring the parks into their school system and draw on their summer experience as a park ranger to develop lesson plans that will be used during the school year.

Amber Struthers wrote the following for her students to tell them about her experience, “To my students, I’m Ms. Struthers, an 8th grade science teacher at Osborn Middle School in central Phoenix. During my 8 week summer experience, as Ranger Amber, I embarked on a unique experience with Petrified Forest National Park as the Teacher-Ranger-Teacher.”



Teacher Ranger Amber Struthers at Holbrook Library Dino Days.

“The Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program places educators, like myself, in various national parks and utilizes their educational background, as well as exposing them to life as a park ranger, living and working among the national park staff. I spent my time developing educational materials for the park as well as taking on the role of a park ranger.”

“As an experienced teacher, I utilized my skills in curriculum to create Traveling Trunks, a series of by-mail lessons boxes, which includes supplies, on topics addressed in Petrified Forest National Park, such as archaeology, biology, paleontology, and human history.”



Intermountain Region TRT Thanks and Awards

The TRT awards provide a unique opportunity for us to celebrate those who have generously dedicated their efforts to securing the connection and relevance of the National Park Service areas to future generations. These are teachers who have shown creativity and diligence in linking young students to the natural and cultural resources of America.

As a “Thank You” for turning in their statistics for their TRT activities the previous year, all teachers will receive an **enameled TRT lapel pin**. The requested teacher statistics are; 1) contact numbers from your classroom activities/NPS Week programs in your schools and 2) the teacher evaluation of your experiences this NPS program. Call your park
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supervisor if you have not received requests for your stats yet.

The “**Teacher-Ranger-Teacher of the Year**” award will be given to one teacher who not only has provided all their statistics and evaluation, but also 1) created an outstanding NPS Week program, 2) an excellent curriculum product for their park and 3) developed top quality skills as an NPS ranger. Extra consideration will be given for those teachers who are arranging field trips for home town students! Since this is the first year for this award, for 2007 we will consider nominations of any teacher who has participated in the TRT program to date. After this we will limit nominations to teacher who were active the previous two years.

Awards: A wooden N arrowhead traditionally routed and engraved with the winners name will be presented to the TRT of the Year. Second through fourth place winners in this competition will receive green fleece vests, with an embroidered TRT logo.



Criteria Tidbits: The TRT “Teacher of the Year” award is open to anyone who has worked as a TRT in an Intermountain Region national park area. These parks are in the states of MT, WY, CO, UT, AZ, NM, TX and OK. The teacher being nominated must be currently teaching at a school which serves students between the kindergarten level and high school graduation.

Nominations: Anyone can make a nomination and there is no limit to the number of nominations an individual can make provided that the online form is submitted and received by midnight March 14. Nominations are accepted via the TRT Awards Coordinator Diana Wiggam at diana_wiggam@nps.gov.

Can the teacher be nominated multiple years? Yes, as long as they continue to work in the TRT program at

an IMR park and are employed subsequently at a qualified school.

Both the nominee and the nominator give all consents necessary for the NPS TRT program to produce publicity materials and products based on the nomination contents. The winner’s name, a short quote about TRT, a description of their NPS week activity, their curriculum product for the park and an appropriate photo will be posted on the NPS TRT website. <http://www.nps.gov/wupa/forteachers/trt.htm>

The decision of the judging panel is final and will be announced on the first day of National Park Week, April 19-27 2008.

The final criteria and the TRT “Teacher of the Year” nomination form will be presented in the January Teacher’s Notes and will also be posted on the TRT website.

*Teacher’s Notes
Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Program
Interpretation and Education
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Comments and suggestions welcome.

