Camp UniStar

Belonging at Camp, Cherishing the Island, Inspiring Action in the World.

Position: Naturalist Program Lead
Reports to: Camp Director

Purpose:

- To contribute to a safe camp environment, a positive experience for all campers and healthy supportive relationships among staff.
- To provide campers with the resources and programming needed to gather a deeper understanding, appreciation, and satisfaction with the natural setting on Star Island.

Goals and Responsibilities:

As reflected in the staff compensation scales, this job involves "additional responsibilities" to support and lead activities that enrich the camper experience, and contribute to camp's smooth operation.

The Naturalist Program Lead is responsible for being a primary resource for campers regarding the island's flora, fauna, and wildlife. The Naturalist is in charge of camp's "nature nook," keeping it interesting and useful to campers. It is the Naturalist's responsibility to be well informed about local environmental risks and to inform campers about these risks as well as leave-no-trace principles during orientations. In addition, the Naturalist is expected to offer weekly nature-oriented programming, such as hikes, fishing trips or other group activities.

The Naturalist Program Lead is expected to take on a leadership and program development role as well. Additional responsibilities may include providing training and resources for other interested staff members in naturalist activities, assisting the Camp Director in helping coordinate external naturalists for additional programming and activities, leading interactive hikes for the youth or children's program, organizing themed hikes or events, or creating signage for plant identification on camp land. Creativity is encouraged to expand nature activities offered within reason.

Essential Functions:

1. Knowledgeable about local flora, fauna, and wildlife
    a. The Naturalist is expected to have a basic knowledge of plants, animals, and earth's processes as well as some more specific knowledge of the specific natural resources found on Star Island.
    b. Recognizing the challenge in knowing everything about the local environment, the Naturalist is expected to be willing to always learn more and seek answers to camper questions they do not have answers to.
2. Trail Expert
    a. The Naturalist is expected to know the trails near camp very well, and be familiar with the trails around the greater island.

    b. The Naturalist is expected to make copies of the island and trail system available to campers as needed.
    c. The Naturalist is also expected to know the times it takes to traverse common trails, and be able to be a resource for campers in that regard.
3. Environmental Safety Risks
    a. The Naturalist is expected to be familiar with local environmental risks including poison ivy, ticks, insect stings and bites, and allergens.
    b. The Naturalist is expected to be the voice of caution during orientation and alert people to the risks they face.
    c. It is helpful for the Naturalist also to be aware of treatments for basic environmental hazards, should prevention efforts fail.
4. Nature programming
    a. The Naturalist is expected to offer some nature-oriented programming as time allows each week.
    b. Programming can include leading hikes, working with CP to teach kids about a topic of interests, holding sessions/discussions about relevant nature topics.
    c. The Naturalist is welcome to enlist the services and knowledge of other staff members and campers in coordinating potential activities.
5. Nature Nook
    a. The Naturalist is charged with keeping the nature nook organized.
    b. The Naturalist also has control of the bulletin board near the lodge staircase for nature-related displays.
    c. The Naturalist should serve as the primary caretaker of the science equipment on the island, such as the telescope and other fragile equipment available to campers. They should acquire basic working knowledge of equipment and serve as a resource for assisting campers.
        i. Inventory of equipment should be taken at the beginning and end of season and wear and tear should be recorded.
6. Wilderness survival skills and leave no trace principles
    a. The Naturalist is expected to have a good understanding of basic wilderness survival skills (i.e. starting a fire with birch bark, how to find clean water) and leave no trace principles.
    b. The Naturalist is responsible for teaching these principles to youth each week before their overnight.
7. Other
    a. The Naturalist is encouraged to share with campers other specialized skills or knowledge, such as astronomy, meteorology, or geology.
    b. The Naturalist has primary responsibility for recognizing and mitigating any noxious weeds or undesired invasive species on camp property.
    c. If not maintained by an interested kitchen staff, the Naturalist is responsible for tending to the camp garden and ensuring it receives adequate water and weeding.
    d. If not taken up by other staff, the Naturalist is in charge of collecting and maintaining camp compost.

Additional Duties:

The Naturalist is also responsible for a range of other duties as assigned by the Camp Director, including working shifts in the kitchen, on the waterfront, with volunteers, youth, and children's programs.

Qualifications:

- 18 years of age or older
- Valid driver's license
- Valid Minnesota Watercraft Operator's permit
- CPR, First Aid, Lifeguarding and AED certifications preferred
- Certified as a Master Naturalist
- Comfortable in a rustic setting
- Experience in supervising others, especially peers, is desirable
- Have lived independently for at least 8 months, or can show independent living skills
- Knowledgeable about the environment
- Knowledgeable about island trails
- Commitment to providing a positive and healthy family camping experience
- Flexible in regards to working hours and a shared living space
- Responsible, self-starter/self-motivated, hard-working, team player
- Good verbal and written communications skills – Able to communicate effectively with staff, volunteers and campers of all ages
- Experience driving boats preferred

Physical Requirements:

Must be able to do the following for up to five hours at a time: standing, walking, carrying, balancing, pushing/pulling, reaching, and performing fine motor skills. Must be able to do the following for at least one-third of a shift: move/lift up to 40 pounds, reach overhead and below knees, twisting/turning, climbing (step stools, stairs, loading/unloading items), and squatting (to reach for items). Requires normal range of hearing and eyesight. Must be able to work outside daily in a variety of weather conditions.

Compensation:

Commensurate with experience, includes room and board at camp, one day off weekly, additional two personal days per season. Paid sick leave is determined by the Camp Director. All staff provide their own health insurance.