

Summer Seasonal Park Rangers Are True Assets to Our Missions

Photo and story by Jason Tremblay Project Manager, Edward MacDowell Lake
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As Park Ranger and Natural Resources Specialists in the New England District, we have many disciplines to manage. They include our primary mission of operating and maintaining our flood control dams to our other missions such as recreation management of the parks. Environmental stewardship encompasses our environmental regulations -- in particular our natural resource management of wildlife, forestry, fisheries and cultural resources. Other disciplines are interpretive services, visitor assistance (rules and regulations enforced under Title 36), and the administrative work of time keeping, credit card procurement, contract administration, data calls, reports, etc. Needless to say we are multifaceted professionals within our duties and responsibilities.

Before the larger influx of the public arrive at our parks, New England District's Human Resource Specialists assist us with hiring our temporary full-time Park Rangers. Those temporary Park Rangers help us manage the additional work load during some busy times where we typically see construction and engineering projects in full swing. They come to our parks to help us and are tremendous assets to our programs and reflect positively for our agency as a whole. They are the familiar face to the public that come and visit our civil works projects, the flood control dams and our parks. The Park Rangers' time at the parks -- typically three months -- and contributions to our staff allow us to continue working on the various other high priority duties that we manage, and this allows us to meet our mission objectives. I think it is very important to recognize the contributions that our summer staff members make and also remember that they can also be our future leaders of tomorrow.

Our summer seasonal Park Ranger, Emily Acone, is a Biology major at Syracuse University. She has been a tremendous help to us here at Edward MacDowell Lake with our recreation management and natural resources management programs. In addition to her other duties, she monitors and observes the turtle nesting area and records field notes. She manages the Blue Bird Nesting Box Program and collects data from the boxes. She also assists with monitoring aquatic and terrestrial invasive plants in the park. The natural resource work that Emily is helping us with goes a long way with meeting our environmental stewardship goals and it reflects positively with the public. As budgets tighten, it is important not to overlook the natural resource management objectives.

In addition, Emily is picking up valuable experience on the job that will help her with her career aspirations in the field of Biology. Without our summer Park Ranger, we would have fallen short on meeting and accomplishing the work we set out to do for our mission objectives.

So many may ask, what do the full time temporary Park Rangers do? In most respects, they have many of the same duties that full-time permanent Park Rangers. They operate and maintain recreation facilities to provide for the safe and healthful enjoyment of public land by present and future generations. Summer Rangers prepare and present interpretive programs for either on-site or off-site locations. They update bulletin boards, interpretive displays, and websites. The Summer Park Rangers ensure guests comply with all rules and regulations. If necessary, they are also able to provide first aid and CPR.

At their assigned recreational facility, Summer Park Rangers manage the lands, waters, plants and animals to conserve, preserve and protect those resources now and for the future. Other duties can include monitoring both plant and animal pests, protecting known cultural resource sites; and complies with all the safety rules and regulations to keep themselves and their co-workers safe.

New England District's Summer Park Rangers support the mission of the Corps at all levels. Whenever possible they tell the Corps story using articles, web sites, and public speaking. They also form partnerships internally and externally to promote the Corps and Project Missions.

Emily is just one, excellent example of a New England District Summer Park Ranger. If you look around at the other projects, there is more young talent that is out there making a difference for us here in New England District. The Pathways program and Temporary hire registry do make a difference to our success. In some cases, these programs have given opportunity to hard working and talented individuals to be hired on by our agency on a full time permanent basis to make additional contributions for the long term.