

Mountain Trail Outdoor School Instructor and Intern Positions

DESCRIPTION

The Mountain Trail Outdoor School (MTOS) is a residential, environmental and adventure education program located in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina. MTOS offers day, multi-day, or weeklong programs to school groups, youth groups, clubs, businesses, and other organizations. MTOS's curriculum combines natural science study, community building activities, and opportunities for participants to increase their self confidence through adventure based activities. Our goal is to provide participants with a positive and fun experience while expanding their understanding of the natural world and learning more about themselves. Our primary means of education is through experiential learning. Students explore and discover on their own, guided by MTOS instructors. Groups can participate in courses that focus on the natural sciences such as wildlife biology and aquatic ecology or adventure based activities such as the cooperation course and rock climbing.

LOCATION

MTOS is sponsored by Kanuga Conferences and uses the 1,400 acres of mostly undeveloped property, which includes several lakes, ponds, streams, abundant wildlife, plants, forests, and wonderful mountain views. The wooded area ranges in elevation from 2,300 feet at Kanuga Lake to 2,860 feet on top of Wolf Mountain. MTOS is located in Hendersonville, North Carolina about 30 miles south of Asheville, NC and 40 miles north of Greenville, South Carolina. Pisgah National Forest is a 30 minute drive and offers miles of hiking and biking trails for day or overnight trips. Looking Glass Rock located in the heart of Pisgah is popular with the rock climbing community. There are also several rivers within a few hours drive which are perfect for whitewater canoeing, kayaking, or rafting.

HISTORY

The Kanuga Lake Club opened in 1909 as a summer vacation colony. After several seasons of varying success, the facilities were turned over to the Episcopal Dioceses of North and South Carolina. In 1928, Kanuga Conferences, Inc. an Episcopal Retreat and Conference Center was established. The Conference Center operates year round hosting a variety of events. MTOS began in 1991, in response to a growing concern for environmental awareness. Starting out with a few pilot programs with local Henderson County school groups and growing to service more than 5,000 students a year, MTOS has become an established and respected outdoor education program, with a reputation for quality programs, facilities and staff. In 1998, MTOS moved to its own facility on the west side of the property, to the winterized and renovated Bob Campbell Youth Campus.

NATURAL SETTING

The 1,400 acres supports a variety of ecosystems from the mixed hardwood forest to the threatened mountain bog. The forested areas are dominated by white pine, red maple, tulip poplar, sweet birch, fraser magnolia, mockernut hickory, and white oak as canopy trees and rhododendron, mountain laurel, american holly, and dogwood in the understory. A large diversity of herbaceous plants can be found on the forest floor throughout the growing season such as pink ladyslipper, trout lily, goldenrod, queen anne's lace, cinnamon fern, dwarf iris, indian pipes, and the mountain sweet pitcher plant, an endangered species. Animal species include red fox, black bear, red-tailed hawk, barred owl, red spotted newt, spring peepers, white tailed deer, king snake, and ground hogs.

STAFF

MTOS employs 12 seasonal employees and two full-time administrative staff. The Director, one of the full-time administrators, oversees all of the outdoor education programs and the daily operation of MTOS. Kanuga's Adventure Programs Manager, the second full time administrator, coordinates and oversees rock climbing, high ropes and wilderness backpacking programs. The seasonal instructors are college graduates with a degree in Biology, Education, Recreation or a related field or are interning with the program to complete a Bachelor's degree. Qualified staff has experience working with young people and have knowledge of or are willing to learn the following: hands-on activities in natural science topics relevant to the Southern Appalachian Mountains, outdoor living skills, new games, safe facilitation of initiatives and low ropes course elements, high ropes course, rock climbing, basic first aid, and wilderness expeditions. Instructors are responsible for teaching day classes and evening programs, program development, maintaining the facilities and equipment, and continuing their own professional development. All staff members participate in thorough staff training at the beginning of each season. Most staff work multiple seasons for the program. Staff involved with leading off property backpacking and rock climbing expeditions are required to be certified in wilderness first aid or wilderness first responder.

FACILITIES

MTOS facilities include all of Kanuga's acreage, with over 20 miles of hiking trails, one large lake, and several small ponds. We have two high and low ropes courses, a rock quarry, climbing tower, and indoor climbing wall. Our main campus and adjacent buildings house around 160 people (135 participants + chaperones). We eat family style in Andrew's Hall. The adjacent conference center facilities can house over 400 guests and includes 2 tennis courts, a gymnasium, laundry facilities, library, and meeting spaces.

MTOS PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Mountain Trail Outdoor School uses environmental and outdoor/adventure education to teach and inspire youth and adults to care for the environment around them, both the natural and human resources. MTOS offers programs which provide youth and adults the chance to experience positive community, to grow physically and mentally, improve self confidence, and increase awareness and stewardship of our natural environment.

TEACHING

Instructors will teach at least five days a week and occasionally on weekends. There are two classes each day lasting 3 hours each-(see schedule). Staff members generally have responsibilities two evenings a week. We typically teach Monday afternoon through Friday morning with staff meetings or enrichment at the beginning and end of each week. Instructors average 2 days off each week. Most of the schools that attend the outdoor school are middle school age (5th to 8th grade). The activity groups consist of around 12 students, 1-2 adult chaperones, and 1 instructor for environmental classes or 2 instructors for high adventure activities.

Sample Schedule

8:00-8:45	Breakfast
9:00-12:00	Class
12:30-1:15	Lunch
2:00-5:00	Class
5:00-6:00	Free time
6:00-6:45	Supper
7:30-9:00	Evening Program

STAFF HOUSING

Staff live in one of four staff houses. The houses have anywhere from 2-4 bedrooms with private or shared bathrooms and a common porch or living room. We make every effort to see the each staff member has a private bedroom, but most will share bath facilities. The bedrooms contain a single bed, dresser, lamp, table, and chair. Linens can be provided on request. The dining hall kitchen is available for staff to use during their time off for cooking or storage of food. Staff have access to computers and the internet in the main administrative building for program and personal use. Free laundry facilities are also available.

BENEFITS

Instructor compensation ranges between \$220/week-\$275/week. Lead Instructor pay ranges between \$280/week-\$310/week. Program Coordinator compensation ranges between \$315/week and \$345/week. Room and board are provided for the contracted period as well as limited medical benefits. Comprehensive training and evaluation in teaching environmental education classes, facilitation of high adventure activities, opportunities to become primary instructors, and developing personal experience are benefits to being an instructor with the program. A curriculum guide and staff manual will be provided to each staff member. We also cooperate with interns wishing to receive college credit while working for the outdoor school. Instructors not current in CPR and Basic First Aid will have the opportunity to complete those certifications.

RESTRICTIONS: No pets or smokers, please.

LOCAL INFORMATION (driving times from campus):

Asheville, NC - 45 minutes; Greenville/Spartanburg, SC - 55 minutes
Charlotte, NC - 2 hours; Downtown Hendersonville - 15 minutes.

All the basic shops are found in Hendersonville: grocery stores, Wal-Mart/K-mart, fast food, specialty shops, banks, restaurants, local food Co-op, movie theatres, etc. Asheville, NC and Greenville, SC are larger cities and have more diverse attractions.

SEASON

Spring: MID-FEBRUARY through MAY

and Fall: MID-AUGUST to MID-DECEMBER

A limited number of staff members are hired for 9 month contracts (Mid- August to May)., preference is given to applicants with previous experience at MTOS. Those contracted through the winter work a combination of project time for MTOS, with other departments at Kanuga, and a short unpaid winter break.

SUMMER EMPLOYMENT

There are many opportunities for summer employment at Kanuga. Please contact the individual listed with each program for more information.

CAMP BOB: A free summer camp for underprivileged, at-risk, and homeless children. Counselors must be enthusiastic, flexible, hardworking people who want to make a real difference in the world!

Contact: David Griffin at david.griffin@kanuga.org
CAMP KANUGA: A traditional co-ed summer camp for youth ages 7 to 15. Contact: Brad Thompson at brad.thompson@kanuga.org

TRAILBLAZER ADVENTURE: A wilderness backpacking program for 15 and 16 year olds. Sessions include 50 mile backpacking treks, rock climbing, high ropes, service project, LNT skills, and whitewater rafting. Contact: Jim Buckalew at jim.buckalew@kanuga.org

CONFERENCE CENTER: Kanuga offers many different job opportunities ranging from guest services, youth programs, waterfront attendants, maintenance, housekeeping, wait staff, and dish crew. Contact: Chip Redfern at chip.redfern@kanuga.org

TO APPLY

Submit a letter and resume along with your completed application, 3 reference forms, and consent for information release to be considered for a position. If you have questions, contact LeeAnne Martin, Director. Application deadline is one month before the season starts, but applications will be accepted until all positions are filled.

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Programs:

Environmental Education

Animals and Their World: (Wildlife Ecology)

This course focuses on the wildlife of the area and the importance of a healthy habitat. Students learn about the ecological niches of local mammals, invertebrates, birds, reptiles and amphibians. Participants explore and observe the area for wildlife and evidence of animal activity. Key concepts/vocabulary: adaptations, ecosystem, habitat, niche, competition, predator/prey, food web, and classification.

Exploring Ponds and Streams: (Aquatic Ecology)

Students explore several aquatic ecosystems and discover first hand (and feet!!) what lives there. Students learn where aquatic animals live, what they eat and about their interactions with each other. Key concepts/vocabulary: hydrology, water cycle, metamorphosis, invertebrate, bog, pond, lake, and stream.

How the Blue Ridge Came to Be: (Geology)

Students learn how the Blue Ridge Mountains were formed and how they are still changing. Key concepts/vocabulary: formations, fault, geomorphology, geologic time, plate tectonics, metamorphic/igneous/sedimentary, and geologic processes such as volcanism and erosion.

(K)night in the Forest: (Night Hike)

Half the world is always in darkness - yet it is seldom explored! The night hike allows students to explore the forest at night with a concentration on sensory awareness. Students learn about the adaptations of nocturnal animals and humans. Owls, bats, foxfire, and basic astronomy are often part of the trip. Key concepts/vocabulary: night vision, nocturnal, raptors, fear, imagination, adaptations, rods & cones, bioluminescence, and triboluminescence

Mountain Ecology: (Bio-Regional Ecology)

This course is an exploration of the unique Southern Appalachian Mountain Ecosystem through an active hike to one of Kanuga's viewpoints. Students examine how flora and fauna communities change with exposure to the sun, elevation, and human disturbance. Key concepts/vocabulary: mixed deciduous, cove, hard wood, health, microclimate, erosion, human impact.

Web of Life: (General Ecology)

This class focuses on the interactions and dependencies of the smallest animals, such as phytoplankton, to the largest animals, or keystone species. Through discussion, activities and exploration each student will see how their everyday actions affect the world around them. Several different communities will be examined in order to see the interconnectedness between animals and their environment. Key concepts/vocabulary: food chain/web, predator/prey, consumers, producers, energy transfer, and biomagnification.

The Wonder and Mystery of Forests: (Forest Ecology)

By exploring healthy forests students learn that there is much more to a forest than just trees. They will learn how a tree works, why certain species grow where they do and why humans and animals need trees. Students also discuss forests as a system of plants, animals, and decomposers. Key concepts/vocabulary: succession, dichotomous key, habitat, erosion, photosynthesis, decomposers, deciduous/evergreen, xylem, phloem, seed dispersal, and succession.

Evening Programs

Night Hike, Campfire, Moc-Town Council debate, Cookout, Campout, Dance/Social =facilitated by MTOS instructors
Square Dance, Naturalist, Storyteller=local resources

Adventure Based Learning

Canoeing: Students learn about water safety and proper canoeing techniques. After demonstrating basic competence students are allowed to explore our lake. Life preservers are used at all times.

Challenge Hike/Property Hikes: Groups will hike on one of Kanuga's many trails to a view point. These hikes are intended to be more physically challenging than the nature hikes. Students learn the skills necessary for an enjoyable, low-impact hike. This is a good time to see wildlife because more remote trails are often used on these hikes.

Cooperation Course: (Initiatives and Problem Solving)

Students employ group decision making, communication, and cooperation skills in order to complete mental and physical challenges. This course is designed to be student centered - the instructor gives only guidance and feedback, no solutions! During a Cooperation Course, students often change their assumptions and definitions of leadership, communication, and problem solving.

High Ropes Course

The site for this activity is our Project Adventure certified ropes course. Students participate in an extensive ground school where they learn the basics about harnesses, equipment, and commands. Students then choose from several elements which are both physically and mentally challenging. Once on an element, participants will be 20-40' off the ground!

Orienteering

Students learn how to use a compass and read topographic maps. They also learn how to orient themselves without a compass! The majority of the class is spent navigating an established orienteering course.

Outdoor Living Skills

This course teaches students how to be prepared for a successful experience in the outdoors. Students will also learn techniques for having a minimum impact on the environment. For an advanced class, older students learn to use the resources they might have and how to find necessary equipment outside in order to successfully adapt to primitive or disaster situations.

Overnight Camp Out

Participants learn how to select, set up, and breakdown a functional camp site. Students learn the basics of low impact camping and what equipment is needed for a safe and successful camping experience.

Rock Climbing

Students are introduced to the terminology, equipment, commands, and techniques of rock climbing. Students are then given the opportunity to challenge themselves in a safe and controlled environment at our rock quarry or climbing tower, where they test their physical and mental strength. We have an indoor climbing wall in case of inclement weather

Off-Property/Specialty

Backpacking or Rock Climbing Expeditions

These experiences introduce students to the natural sites of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Options range from day to multi-day trips into Pisgah National Forest for hiking, climbing, or a combination of both. These experiences are designed to be physically and mentally challenging for the students.

White Water Rafting: Local rivers provide for day long rafting trips. Nantahala, Nolichucky, and French Broad Rivers