

National Parks Career Panel

Strategies for Ecology Education, Diversity,
and Sustainability



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2010 - **B.S. Biology**, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

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1994 - B.A. Geography & B.A. Environmental Studies, *University of California, Los Angeles*

1996 - M.F.S Conservation Biology, *Yale School of the Environment*

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Q & A

Use the raise hand feature or the chat to ask the panelists questions :)

Answers to audience questions

Q: Are there computer/data science careers in the National Park Service?

A: Yes! There is a growing need for computer and data scientists, whose roles are crucial for analyzing NPS data, planning and management.

Q: Applications can be daunting because of all of the requirements? What advice do you have?

A: Some tips include being able to drive, asking questions, being persistent with USA Jobs (especially since the website is not simple to navigate), if you are interested in a particular park - research their website which may have adjacent opportunities not directly in the NPS, apply quickly because some deadlines are rolling and cap at a limit/are only open for a couple weeks

Q: What is your perspective on whether the cost of living in California is manageable for people in the NPS/conservation field?

A: It's an adjustment and most entry level positions don't pay a lot, some provide housing but you should definitely ask for accommodations regarding stipends for relocation and/or commuting, it is also common to have roommates and small part time jobs to supplement your income

Answers to audience questions (continued)

Q: How can you stand out as a job applicant without research experience?

A: Emphasize your soft skills - writing, handling numbers, attention to detail, relate the skills you do have from other experiences even if they aren't directly related to environmental work, show your passion for national parks and articulate why you want to be a part of the system, generally research is most important for graduate school so emphasize your life experiences

Q: What part of your job is the most interesting/meaningful/fulfilling?

A: Doing fieldwork and science while being able to interact with park visitors, community engagement, working with mentors and learning from them, bringing people together, making connections and working with multiple agencies

Q: General advice/what you would tell your past self when applying for the job?

A: Be honest but don't downplay your skills or sell yourself short, don't trust the job description 100% - still apply even if you don't see yourself doing all of the tasks listed since these often change and are flexible, USA jobs can be scary but shoot you shot - you also learn something about the process each time so be persistent, you have to be so explicit in your resume/ cover letter - spell out how your experiences line up with the key words in the job description.

Q: What do entry level roles at cooperating organizations vs NPS look like? Is one more accessible or competitive than the other?

A: “Cooperating association jobs have a more straightforward application process. I think competitiveness depends a lot on the location and the subfield in question. For example, a wildlife job is going to be way more competitive than a vegetation tech job. A job at Yosemite is probably way more competitive than a job in Arkansas. An entry level job will typically be more boots on the ground...you’re more likely to be out doing fieldwork or working directly with the public. There is a perhaps unfortunate positive correlation between career advancement and office time.”

Resources provided by panelists

Natural resource-oriented NPS partner organizations/internship programs (Matt)

Environment for the Americas, American Conservation Experience, Student Conservation Association

USA Jobs pathways for students (Ben)

<https://www.usajobs.gov/help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/students/>

Learn more about events (Lisette)

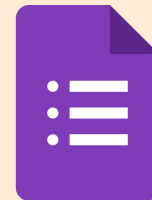
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