



Yosemite Leadership Program: Summer Internship Descriptions 2026



POSITION: BEAR DIET RESEARCHER- independent study of key wild fruits of bears' diet

Bears are flexible foragers and utilize a wide variety of foods. Recent research indicates that one of the driving factors of human-bear conflict is the availability of natural food. Precipitation is generally used as a proxy for natural food abundance. Yosemite also has a long-running acorn mast dataset, thanks to Walt Koenig of Cornell University. Researchers have used this data to fine-tune bear foraging habits. While acorn data can be a good indicator of the abundance of other natural foods, oak tree fruit production occurs in the fall and fails to capture the whole scope of natural fruit available to bears at different times of the year. Therefore, a unique opportunity exists to work alongside Yosemite bear biologists to create a protocol to document natural food resources available to bears throughout the summer. This work would help create a more complete picture of natural food abundance and further knowledge of bear behavior. Work would include research and review of current literature, developing standardized methods and forms for fruit counts, travelling to various sites to perform and refine techniques, implementing record-keeping procedures, and eventually teaching other staff how to perform fruit counts.



What Will I Do?

- Work alongside biologists to learn about bear management in Yosemite.
- Learn about current and past bear diet research in the area.
- Discover and document fruiting plants.
- Research and develop a standardized methodology for wild fruit counts.
- Teach others how to implement and follow methods.
- Create year one of the annual fruit count dataset for Yosemite wildlife managers

Qualities Supervisors Are Looking For:

- Valid driver's license and clean driving record.
- Background in wildlife, zoology, or biology is preferred, but not required.
- Ability to work in a team environment and independently on assigned work.
- Be able to negotiate rough mountainous terrain and lift heavy loads.
- Have experience hiking and navigating on and off trails.
- Strong communication skills.
- Understanding or willingness to learn about wildlife management.
- Dedication to public service and helping visitors.
- Flexibility and resourcefulness to tackle obstacles.

What Will I Learn?

Through this opportunity, the intern will learn to develop a protocol to collect and manage data while working in a wildlife management setting in a busy national park. They will receive training and development in professional communication, procedures for tracking and handling various wildlife, assist with bear captures, participate in crew briefings and training, and assist with other wildlife activities as time and interest allow.



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POSITION: YOSEMETE MEDICAL CLINIC CENTENNIAL HISTORIAN INTERN

The Yosemite Medical Clinic Centennial Historian Intern will work with both the Yosemite Medical Clinic team and the Yosemite National Park Archives staff to research and document the history of the Yosemite Medical Clinic (originally Lewis Memorial Hospital). Opened in 1929, the clinic is the first medical clinic established in a national park and one of only three such clinics still in existence today. Over the summer internship, the intern will use primary sources and archival collections to develop a focused historical narrative that can inform preservation, planning, and interpretation as the park prepares for the clinic's 100th anniversary in 2029. This project aligns with the NPS mission and the National Historic Preservation Act mandate to identify and preserve historic resources on federal lands. The internship will culminate in one clear work product: a written report documenting the clinic's history (building and site overview, key milestones, and a source-based narrative supported by citations).



What Will I Do?

- Orient with clinic operations and the park archives to understand how historic resources support current and future work
- Locate, review, and organize primary sources (archival records, photographs, historic maps, and park documents) relevant to Lewis Memorial Hospital / Yosemite Medical Clinic
- Develop a simple timeline of key clinic milestones (1929–present) to guide the project and report structure
- Conduct targeted background research to fill gaps and verify facts (with supervisor guidance)
- Draft, revise, and finalize the clinic history report in collaboration with clinic and archives mentors

Qualities Supervisors Are Looking For:

- Interest in history, archives, public history, cultural resources, or historic preservation
- Interest in medicine, public health, or health systems in public-service settings
- Strong writing skills and ability to synthesize information clearly and accurately
- Detail-oriented and organized with good file management habits
- Professional judgment and discretion when working with sensitive materials
- Curiosity, initiative, and the ability to self-start/work independently
- Collaborative team player with effective communication skills

What Will I Learn?

Through this opportunity, the intern will develop skills and understanding, as well as have personal/professional development experiences in: historical research using primary sources; archival methods and citation practices; technical and historical writing; project planning and time management; and interdisciplinary collaboration across clinic operations, archives, and cultural resource stewardship. The intern will also gain insight into how history and documentation support preservation, interpretation, and public decision-making in the National Park Service.



POSITION: COMMUNICATIONS INTERN

The Communications Intern will work with the Marketing and Communications team at Yosemite Conservancy, the official philanthropic partner of Yosemite National Park. The intern will help tell the stories about the work that the Conservancy is funding and supporting as well as the educational programs the Conservancy provides to the public. They'll work directly with and shadow Conservancy staff to learn how about modern marketing, communications, and storytelling techniques, including the use of various mediums — such as blogs, email, social media, and a twice-yearly magazine. This is an excellent internship for creative individuals who have a strong interest in communications, art, and/or nonprofit work.



What Will I Do?

- Learn about the history and relationship of Yosemite Conservancy with the national park
- Learn about the 60+ donor-supported projects the Conservancy is funding in 2024
- Shadow Conservancy Programs and projects with in-park staff
- Develop promotions and copy
- Learn how to draft communications for print, web, email, and social media
- Learn basic video editing skills and 508 compliance (accessibility standards for federal communications)
- Develop and present an awareness campaign for one (1) Conservancy project

Qualities Supervisors Are Looking For:

- Responsible and safe driver
- Strong communication skills
- Interest in learning about Yosemite's natural and cultural history
- Interest in creative tasks
- Feels comfortable troubleshooting technology
- Leadership skills and experience
- Strategic thinking ability
- The ability to self-start/work independently
- Comfort in spending time outside in various weather and terrain
- Bonus quality: fluent Spanish speaker interested in making Spanish language/bilingual content

What Will I Learn?

Through this opportunity, the intern will develop skills and understanding, as well as have personal/professional development experiences in: written communication skills, public speaking, research, working on a creative team, social media, networking, 508 compliance/accessibility standards, critical thinking, public outreach.



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POSITION: CULTURAL RESOURCE INTERN

The Cultural Resource Intern will be part of a team of scientists researching 10,000 years of human history in Yosemite National Park. This team provides subject matter leadership in park management, conducts scientific data collection, and innovates education and outreach opportunities to promote stewardship and heritage awareness.



What Will I Do?

- Participate in front and back country archeological field surveys by walking over the landscape and searching for things made, modified, or transported by humans.
- Record data and prepare survey records.
- Organize volunteer groups fruit picking in historic orchards.
- Use tools and equipment common to archeological and historic resource management.
- Process artifacts and specimens recovered in the field.
- Communicate information with park staff, volunteers, contractors, tribal representatives, and the public.

Qualities Supervisors Are Looking For:

- Basic understanding of California history
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Flexibility and resourcefulness
- Acute attention to detail
- Responsible and safe driver
- Enthusiasm for exploring Yosemite's rugged terrain
- Eagerness to learn

What Will I Learn?

Through this opportunity, the intern will gain skills and experience in the scientific study and management of cultural resources. They will learn archeology principles, data collection and management techniques, and technical writing and science communication skills. They will also gain leadership experience working with volunteer groups to remove fruit from historic orchards.



POSITION: INDIAN CULTURAL DEMONSTRATOR INTERN

Indian Cultural demonstrators provide contemporary demonstrations of traditional skills and provide a narrative of the Native history of the Yosemite area. They also provide insight to issues important to contemporary Native Americans. The intern will impart knowledge, increase understanding, and inspire respect of traditional beliefs and lifestyles both past and present.

What Will I Do?

- Research and learn the use and construction of the Umacha (bark house)
- Providing photos and historical context
- Developing a list of materials that will be needed for the project
- Create and present informal pop-up programs designed to engage visitors
- Collaborate with social media team to create content about the Umacha project
- Provide general park information to help guide visitors



Qualities Supervisors Are Looking For:

- Basic knowledge of California history and specific interest in native culture
- Excellent communication skills
- Flexibility and resourcefulness
- Ability to physically gather and prepare materials
- Responsible and safe driver

What Will I Learn?

Interns will learn strategies for interpreting sensitive and controversial cultural topics. They will learn how to interpret an active and living culture. Interns will learn physical construction techniques including tool use and skills in gathering materials. They will gain skills in project management and developing and interpretive production. Interns will learn about the Indian Cultural Program, as well as Yosemite Interpretation.



POSITION: MERCED RIVER ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION INTERN

The intern will work within the division of Resources Management and Science (RMS), in the branch of Vegetation and Ecological Restoration (VER). The intern will be an integral part of a large team working towards protecting, preserving, and restoring meadows, wetlands, and riverbanks.



What Will I Do?

- Ecological restoration: collecting seed, removing informal trails, watering plants, fixing and installing fence, planting, etc.
- Restoration monitoring which includes photo points and vegetation transects
- Develop engaging material that highlights ecological restoration projects completed in Yosemite Valley
- Outreach activities related to the implementation of the Merced Wild and Scenic River Management Plan

Qualities Supervisors Are Looking For:

- Highly motivated and organized
- The ability to self-start/work independently
- Collaborative team player
- Effective oral and written communication skills
- Flexibility and resourcefulness
- Enjoys working outdoors in variable weather and terrain
- Interest in learning about restoration and Yosemite's flora

What Will I Learn?

As an intern, you'll gain hands-on experience and grow professionally while developing skills in ecological restoration, project management, and organizational strategies. You'll build confidence working both independently and collaboratively, sharpen your research and technical writing abilities, and strengthen your science communication skills, all while contributing to meaningful conservation projects and mastering data collection and management.



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Position: PLANT ECOLOGY ASSOCIATE

The Plant Ecology Associate will work with the Vegetation and Ecological Restoration branch in Resources Management and Science at Yosemite National Park. The Plant Ecology program plans for the selected applicant to work on two primary projects: post-restoration vegetation monitoring in Ackerson Meadow and long-term vegetation monitoring in Poopenaut Valley. Both projects involve intensive plant identification and using established vegetation monitoring protocols. The intern will develop plant identification skills, become familiar with line-point intercept monitoring, gain experience conducting fieldwork in remote locations, and receive mentorship from National Park Service Resource Management and Science staff.



What Will I Do?

- Learn vegetation monitoring techniques
- Develop plant identification skills
- Gain field experience in both frontcountry and backcountry settings
- Contribute to active research in Yosemite National Park
- Learn about meadow restoration and wetland ecology
- Develop curriculum to equip Park staff with knowledge of Ackerson Vegetation Monitoring and Looking Downstream Vegetation Monitoring
- Provide practical, easy-to-use tools to help engage the public

Qualities Supervisors Are Looking For:

- Interest in resource management career working with vegetation
- Strong interest in developing plant identification skills
- Excitement for being outdoors
- Willingness to conduct fieldwork in strenuous conditions and in variable weather
- Interest in data collection (curiosity in data analysis welcomed)
- Ability to follow protocols and write legibly
- Courteous and displays empathy with co-workers
- Prioritizes safety
- Willingness to participate in team discussions

What Will I Learn?

The intern will learn essential skills required of Biological Science Technicians assigned to vegetation monitoring duties, typical for entry into this resource management career field. Opportunities for learning plant identification, data collection, protocol implementation, and Leave-No-Trace principles will be provided. For their final project, the intern will focus on outreach related to the vegetation monitoring projects, including the development of key curriculum to be shared with other park divisions, specifically Interpretation and Education. This curriculum will be used for seasonal staff training as well as interpretive and educational programming. The combination of conducting fieldwork and developing related curriculum will provide the intern opportunities to develop teamwork skills as well as independent work skills.



POSITION: TRIBAL RELATIONS INTERN

The Yosemite Tribal Relations Program fosters meaningful partnerships between Yosemite National Park and Tribal Nations with ancestral ties to the region. Under the supervision of the Tribal Liaison and the Indian Cultural Program, the intern will coordinate with multiple tribal, park, and nonprofit collaborators to strengthen government-to-government partnerships, enhance visitor understandings of Indigenous cultures in Yosemite, and improve park stewardship practices through the integration of traditional ecological knowledge.



What Will I Do?

- Research cultural burning practices in Yosemite and collaborate with a team of tribal and park fire practitioners.
- Develop a list of materials needed for project.
- Create and present informal pop-up programming to educate park visitors.
- Collaborate with social media team to create content about Traditional Burning.
- Develop Tribal Relations newsletter.
- Record documentation and meeting notes from Tribal consultation meetings.

Qualities Supervisors Are Looking For:

- Interest in environmental management and/or fire ecology.
- Basic knowledge of California history and interest in Native cultures.
- Ability to work independently as well as in a team setting.
- Communication and research skills.
- Detail oriented and organized.
- Responsible driver.

What Will I Learn?

The intern will learn about cooperative approaches to co-stewardship and the integration of traditional ecological knowledge with park environmental management planning. They will build key partnerships with tribal, park, and nonprofit officials and develop life-long skills related to time management, teaching, and navigating federal environmental policy.