



BALD HEAD ISLAND CONSERVANCY, INC. *Environmental Education/Kayak Guide Internship*

Summary:

The Bald Head Island Conservancy Intern Program is open to rising juniors, seniors or recent graduates from any accredited college or university, with majors in biology, marine biology, environmental science, education, or a related course of study.

Bald Head Island is part of a 12,000-acre island complex (Smith Island Complex) located at the mouth of the Cape Fear River in southeastern North Carolina, and consists of three forested peninsulas interconnected by a continuous beach strand: Bluff, Middle and Bald Head Islands. Bald Head Island features an upscale residential community of approximately 1,100 homes, with approximately 200 permanent year-round residents. The southern tip of the complex is Cape Fear, and includes ten miles of ocean beach. The island is accessible by a private passenger ferry from Southport, NC.

Funding for this internship is provided by Bald Head Island Conservancy, Inc. (*the Conservancy*), a non-profit organization formed in 1983. The Conservancy's mission is three-fold: conserving and preserving the natural resources of the Smith Island Complex and surrounding waters; providing quality environmental education for island residents and visitors; facilitating scientific research of benefit to the environmental resources of the area. As a part of this mission, the Conservancy operates a nationally recognized *Sea Turtle Protection Program*, and is the only non-governmental agency in North Carolina allowed to conduct flipper tagging of sea turtles. Because of the Conservancy's long-standing commitment to this conservation program, Bald Head Island is used by U.S. Fish and Wildlife as an index beach for sea turtle nesting activity.

In addition, the Conservancy provides diverse educational programs and activities for the island community, and serves as an environmental monitor for the island ecosystems. Within a campus at the east end of the island, the Conservancy's facilities include a modern four bedroom "dorm" (used to house the naturalist, summer interns, and visiting researchers), the Barrier Island Study Center, an education center, and the gift shop *Turtle Central*, which underwrites much of the Conservancy's operation. In addition, the Conservancy owns a 21-acre nature preserve on Middle Island, and employs a permanent staff of 9 and a part time staff of 2. This internship is intended to give undergraduates/recent graduates not only environmental education experience, but also experience in working at a small non-profit organization. While the majority of the summer will be spent leading kayak trips through the salt marsh and assisting with camps and various educational programs, interns will also work at the Turtle Central Gift Shop, staff

BHIC's information center, and help with other various office-oriented projects (such as mail pickup and envelope stuffing).

Interns will also conduct individual research projects that match their interests. Little scientific research has been conducted on the island apart from that focused on sea turtles. The research projects will not only benefit the student, but also provide the island, residents and researchers with invaluable knowledge of the island and its inhabitants. Students will be expected to complete the research project and present the results to the community at the end of the summer. In addition students are encouraged to write a proposal for future research in the format of the NSF's Graduate Research Fellowship.

The work of the environmental education/kayak guide intern is supervised by the Conservancy's *Director of Education*. As the primary educator of the Bald Head Island Conservancy, the Director of Education is responsible for the development, implementation and coordination of its education programs.

Position Responsibilities

The environmental education/kayak guide intern performs their duties on the island at the direction of the Conservancy's Executive Director and Director of Education. Day-to-day supervision and coordination of the intern shall be the responsibility of the Director of Education. The Executive Director is the chief executive officer of the Conservancy, and has overall responsibility for management of the organization.

The environmental education/kayak guide intern must assume the following responsibilities:

1. Lead kayak trips through the salt marshes of Bald Head Island, educating the group about the salt marsh environment and its importance to the overall ecosystem; multiple trips a day may be required; must be able to perform all physical aspects of leading a kayak trip, including unloading/loading kayaks, towing exhausted paddlers, paddling (2) 2-hour trips in one day; be able to handle a physically challenging environment including intense heat & humidity and bugs (mosquitoes and no-see-ums) while maintaining an upbeat personality for participants.
2. Assist the Education staff with a variety of environmentally oriented programs for the public, including but not limited to, children's camps, nature hikes and short lectures on island wildlife.
3. Assist the Education staff with the care and maintenance of tanks, displays and classroom space.
4. Assist with other duties as necessary, including working in the Turtle Central Gift Shop, the Information Center, and the Conservancy Office.
5. Develop, execute and present an individual research project.

6. Promote and practice stewardship of the Conservancy's facilities, properties, and research equipment.
7. Participate as needed in special events of the Conservancy during his/her tenure on the island.
8. Live in the Conservancy's dormitory during their service period, generally mid-May through mid-August with 13 other interns and the Sea Turtle Program Coordinator.
9. Understand and agree to the documents *Guidelines for Naturalist and Summer Interns*, and *Dormitory Regulations and Advice* prepared by the Conservancy.
10. Must possess a valid Driver's License.

Student selected for the environmental education/kayak guide internship may wish to explore the possibility of planning a Directed Individual Study with an academic advisor from their school, in order to receive credit for activities conducted under this program.

Selection Process

A selection advisory committee is composed of the Director of Education, Environmental Educator, Sea Turtle Program Coordinator and Director of Conservation. Currently, the Environmental Educator is responsible for announcing the availability of education summer internships and receiving applications. The advisory committee is responsible for interviewing candidates and ranking applications in accordance with the *Application Protocol for Research Assistantships*. **All candidates selected for the internship must undergo a background check at the expense of the Conservancy.**

Selection Criteria

Selection criteria for the environmental education/kayak guide internship is as follows:

1. Outstanding undergraduate (rising junior or senior) student or recent graduate at an institution of higher learning.
2. Candidates for the internship will be judged on:
 - Education and academic potential
 - Character and leadership
 - Ability to be a team player
 - Experience in kayaking and being a guide for amateur paddlers; some kayak training (including rescue) preferred

- Knowledge of marine/salt marsh environments preferred
- Public relations and communication skills: outgoing, helpful and positive personality; ability to work well with children and adults; comfortable/experience in a public speaking role; maturity and leadership abilities; the ability to handle sensitive situations in a tactful and diplomatic manner.
- An expressed interest or background in environmental education/kayaking, and a willingness to work in a field environment that can be physically challenging.

Term

The term of the environmental education/kayak guide intern is for a period of three months: from mid-May to mid-August, subject to undergraduate academic schedules. **Interns should be able to arrive on BHI on the weekend of May 12/13, though a day or two of flexibility may be allowed depending on academic exam schedules and be able to stay until August 13, give or take a day.** Applicants who have graduated may have the chance to extend their stay through the fall as we typically keep one intern on for the fall months. Arrival in mid-May provides for a training period of approximately two weeks prior to the start of actual educational duties on the island. The education/kayak guide intern serves at the will of the Conservancy, and the positions may be terminated by the Conservancy at any time.

Funding

The stipend to be paid for the recipient of the Bald Head Island Conservancy Environmental Education/Kayak Guide Interns shall be \$1,200 per summer, paid monthly; this amount is pre-taxes. In addition to the stipend, living quarters in the Conservancy dorm are provided, as well as weekly ferry tickets for trips between the island and the mainland, and parking for a vehicle at the mainland ferry terminal. Please note that males and females will have separate bedrooms.

Assessment

The environmental education/kayak guide intern's in-service performance shall be assessed by the Director of Education/Senior Naturalist and the Executive Director, and shall be forwarded to appropriate academic sponsor, if applicable.

Application Deadline

The deadline to receive applications for 2012 summer internships is February 10, 2012. Follow application directions very carefully, as incomplete applications will not be considered. Please *mail* your application to the address below; email is NOT preferable.

*If you desire more information about the
Environmental Education/Kayak Guide Internship,
please contact:*

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