



Life After Junior Ranger



You've been a junior ranger for years. Now you're in college and wondering how to become a real ranger. Why not look into the Student Conservation Association (SCA)?

The SCA's mission is to build the next generation of conservation leaders and inspire lifelong stewardship of both our environment and local communities by engaging young people in hands-on service to the land. In fact, they have now teamed up with the National Park Service (NPS) and together they created the National Park Service Academy.

As an SCA alumnus, I was a participant in the NPS Academy. The goal is to introduce to college students to career opportunities within the NPS and was inspired by a federal initiative aimed at engaging America's youth in the great outdoors and introducing them to careers as natural and cultural resource professionals.

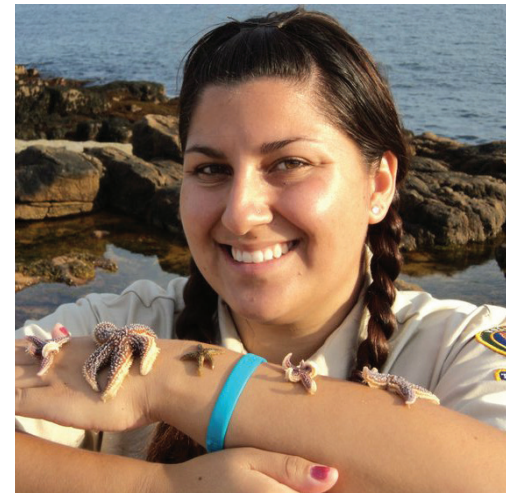
It all began when I was selected to spend a week over spring break at Grand Teton National Park. During that week, I learned how our national parks are managed. I also discovered numerous career possibilities within the NPS through

hands-on workshops and guest speakers, as well as spending time within the park snow-shoeing. After participating in this program, I was placed into a summer internship at Acadia National Park in Maine. While there, I conducted educational programs focusing on animals of the area, our night sky, and the importance of tide pools. Upon successfully completing my internship, I had a better understanding of my own career goals within the NPS. I also gained valuable experience that allowed me to work as a student-ranger at White Sands National Monument.

Many NPS employees—as many as 12%—began their careers with the National Park Service as part of the SCA. Placements have included parks such as Acadia, Great Smoky Mountains, Grand Teton, Glacier, Kenai Fjords, Wrangell St. Elias National, and White Sands National Monument. Since 1957, more than 50,000 SCA members have provided over half a billion dollars' worth of service to our nation's lands and

70% of SCA alumni are still active in conservation in their careers or communities. If you would like to know more about the SCA and the NPS Academy, visit www.thesca.org.

—Alisabeth Merlo, Student Intern



Student Intern, Alisabeth Merlo, pictured here during her time as an intern at Acadia National Park.