



Position Description: Summer Field Educator

This field educator position at Cottonwood Gulch works with a small staff team to implement outdoor educational programs and the mission of Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions (CGE). Our mission is to provide outdoor learning adventures to youth of all backgrounds that foster personal growth, strengthen community, and inspire stewardship of the natural world. We have been leading outdoor expeditions since 1926, and currently work with hundreds of students (or “trekkers,” as we call them) each year. Using the outdoors as our classroom to explore science, culture, history, art, and adventure in New Mexico and surrounding states, we aim to inspire personal growth and build strong community. During the school year, we partner with more than 30 schools and nonprofits, primarily serving New Mexico students in grades 1-12 on trips ranging from one day to two weeks. These treks vary between classroom visits, day trips, overnight multiple day road-loops or Basecamp stays, and backcountry experiences. During the summer, we run multi-week expeditions for 8-18 year olds. This totals about 10,000 field days each year, a thriving Gulch Community, and hundreds of lives impacted for the better.

Job Objective: The field educators work in tandem as a group staff team during the summer and are responsible for key elements of a group expedition. The Group Leader is the member of the group staff team who is primarily responsible for key elements of a group expedition including risk management, logistics, community, culture, and learning. The Program Staff is the member of the group staff team who supports the creation of a curriculum tailored to the specific destinations of the expedition and interests of the trekkers. People who are successful in this position are excited to share their own areas of passion with their group and also excited to follow where the trekkers’ interests lead them. In addition, they manage the packing and organization of gear for their designated expedition. The Road Cook is the member of the group staff team who designs, purchases, cooks and adheres to the food budget for their designated expedition. Road cooks work with the staff team to create a menu which takes into account nutrition, caloric needs of trekkers, dietary restrictions, time restraints, and logistical realities of backcountry cooking. Together, they lead a group on their travels around the Southwest, each utilizing expeditionary learning skills to inspire growth in their trekkers. This is a full-time, 24/7 residential position throughout the summer.

Responsibilities:

Responsibilities specific to this role:

- Guide one or more of our summer expedition teams of trekkers across the Southwest
- Group leaders will:
 - Collaborate to create an environment conducive to learning, growth, and fun
 - Assist Program Directors in management and mentorship of staff team; serve as supervisor to staff team while in the field with a group of 10-25 staff and trekkers.
 - Help to plan and finalize details of an expedition itinerary in accordance with CGE guidelines
 - Manage the logistics of a group expedition, including itinerary building
 - Communicate with families to verify participant paperwork
 - Communicate with families of trekkers prior to the start of the expedition, and when challenging situations arise, in consultation with the Summer Director.
 - Facilitate thoughtful post-trek communication for trekkers and staff including written feedback, and summary letters
- Program Staff will:



- Utilize existing systems to store, pack, issue, manage, and repair gear as necessary throughout the expedition; this includes camping gear (such as tents, backpacks, handwashing supplies, water, etc), programming materials (such as science, art, and place-based learning materials), and road kitchen gear as requested for the cook.
- Work with trekkers to determine areas of interest and guide projects and learning from those areas
- Plan for and execute activities, games, reflections, and debriefs during down times and campfires; plan itinerary-specific activities in collaboration with their staff team
- Educate, impart new ideas, and inspire trekkers to learn about the specific areas that the group is traveling through
- Assist in teaching trekkers outdoor skills such as campsite selection and setup, navigation, fire building and safety, etc.
- Work with staff team to manage risk in the field
- Design, facilitate and/or support 2-3 hour activities when at basecamp
- Road Cooks will:
 - Design expedition menus with the consideration of itineraries, dietary restrictions and budget
 - Collaborate with Basecamp cooks and trek team needs to make appropriate food orders to achieve the highest quality meals possible
 - Manage a food budget in collaboration with the Group Leader
 - Cook food for groups of 10-30 people in an outdoor kitchen with a propane camp stove
 - Coordinate to find appropriate times to resupply for fresh food
 - Develop an organized system to store, pack, manage leftovers, keep food cold, etc. within food handlers' guidelines
 - Educate, impart new ideas, and inspire trekkers to learn to cook
 - Assist in preparing/cooking/dehydrating meals for backcountry settings
 - Follow all CGE food safety guidelines and specifications based on Food Handlers Certification

Responsibilities of all Gulch staff:

- Plan and execute effective outdoor programming in the field and at CGE's Basecamp. Actively seek out and participate in opportunistic learning opportunities
- Provide leadership and support to outdoor education expeditions across the American Southwest, including in frontcountry and backcountry settings and at CGE's Basecamp
- Manage risk in line with CGE's practices and policies; provide medical care within trained scope of practice
- Participate in the maintenance and repair of our gear fleet
- Teach LNT principles and environmental ethics to groups of youth
- Drive large vehicles (pickup trucks, 15-passenger vans) on a variety of roads
- Attend, support, and assist with meals, nightly campfires, games on the field, staff meetings
- Collaborate to create a positive environment conducive to learning, growth, and fun
- Maintain professional relationships with CGE partners & community members including land managers

Qualifications:

- Applicants must be at least 21 years of age by the position start date and possess a valid driver's license. Must have a clean driving history and be able to meet the criteria for CGE vehicle insurance coverage.



- Experience as an educator, leader, risk manager, group cook, artist, scientist, and/or adventurer.
- Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or ability to acquire within 30 days of hire; WFR/WEMT preferred.
- Standard or waterfront lifeguard certification encouraged
- Strong organizational skills; experience with Google Drive preferred.
- During the summer, must be able to live at our Basecamp near Thoreau, NM, or travel “on the road” with a group, practicing community mindfulness.
- Ability to communicate effectively and professionally with a wide range of audiences (fellow staff, community members, students, etc.).

We believe outdoor education takes many different forms; your unique skills and experiences will be considered and valued!

Dates: Contract dates for Summer season only are from June 1st to August 15th. (Dates for Spring only are March 4th to May 24th and for Fall only are August 5th-November 1st, with the possibility of additional work in the winter and beyond) Preference will be given to staff able to work multiple seasons.

Work Location and Schedule: Thoreau, NM, with travel throughout the state, including periods of time camping in frontcountry and backcountry settings. Each expedition has a different schedule. Some groups will be out on the road for up to two weeks at a time, while others are out for only 4 days. Time off will be scheduled while the expedition is in Basecamp.

Leadership or Supervisory Duties: Group leaders will directly supervise 2-3 members of the staff team. All staff members are expected to be leaders and role models for the trekkers who attend Cottonwood Gulch.

Criminal Background Check: CGE requires criminal background checks from all employees.

Physical Requirements: Ability to hike up to 10 miles a day on uneven surfaces and carry a pack up to 50 pounds, sleep in a tent or open-air cabin accessed by stairs, work at a desk, talk on the phone, and use a computer.

Compensation: Salary ranges from \$1,650 to \$2,400/month with additional pay based on years of experience, seasons contracted, and applicable credentials. Room and board provided at Thoreau Basecamp throughout the summer. \$250 travel stipend available if traveling more than 500 miles. Various Pro Deals available to all staff.

Inclusive and Welcoming Environment

CGE is an equal opportunity employer and does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender identity or expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation, mental or physical handicap, serious medical condition, or military status in any of its activities or operations. Moreover, Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions believes in the learning, growth and healing that can take place outdoors. We also recognize that access to programs like ours—along with access to any green space, clean air and water, and healthy food—continues to be a privilege rather than a right. CGE recognizes that in outdoor spaces, the voices and work of people of color, people from working class backgrounds, Indigenous people, women, and LGBTQ+ individuals have been often overlooked and marginalized. Therefore, we encourage applications from people in these groups, and all people, regardless of background.

Please apply through Campminder using this [link](#) on our website

