Position Description: Basecamp Specialist Educator

About Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions

Our mission is to create transformative outdoor experiences that foster personal growth, build community, and inspire a lifelong connection to 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. We use the outdoors as our classroom to explore science, culture, history, art, and adventure in New Mexico and surrounding states, all with the goal of inspiring personal growth and a strong community. We steward an active alumni base, who represent multi-generational connections to CGE.

About This Position

The Basecamp Specialists at Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions (CGE) work as a small staff team to implement outdoor educational programs aligned with CGE's mission. During the summer, we run multi-week expeditions for 9-18 year olds. The Basecamp Specialist team provides specialty-focused activities at and around our basecamp for trekkers from all age groups. This is a full-time, 24/7 residential position throughout the summer.

The **Resident Naturalist** will focus on providing high-quality science education programming including, but not limited to: ecology, biology, geology, astronomy, and ornithology to trekkers. We do not expect any one person to have expertise in each of these fields, but should have knowledge in some or most of them, and be willing to engage trekkers in topics that pique their interest. Activities and projects facilitated by this person should lead trekkers to understand contemporary issues such as fire ecology, riparian and stream health, native vs. non-native species, impacts of grazing and logging, light pollution, mining, climate change, etc.

The **Resident Culturalist** will have expertise in one or more of the cultures in the Southwestern U.S. through personal experience, archaeology, or traditional knowledge, and be willing to share that expertise with our trekkers. Activities and projects facilitated by this person should lead trekkers to understand the cultures of the Southwest on a deeper level. Potential projects could include surface archaeology, artifact analysis and curation, mapping, hands-on skills like flint knapping, or visits to important sites and communities. Many of our programs focus on experiential learning with a focus on understanding cultures and traditions of the Southwest.

The **Resident Art Specialist** provides exceptional arts and cultural education to our summer trekkers. This position plans and facilitates activities in the basecamp Nature Arts Workshop (NAW)

(without electricity) to trekkers. The studio is equipped for metalwork/silversmithing, pit-fired pottery, weaving, leather work, beading, printmaking, and a variety of other visual arts. This person should be ready to lead Southwestern-focused art activities, participate in the artistic process with a variety of trekkers, and exhibit passion for both traditional and contemporary art of the Southwest, engaging community artists for expertise in areas they do not have experience.

The **Adventure Specialist** provides exceptional adventure education to our summer trekkers. The Adventure Specialist has expertise in Climbing or Mountain Biking or a combination of both.

- The Climbing Adventure Specialist facilitates top rope rock climbing, bouldering at the Basecamp bouldering wall, rappelling, roped tree climbing, team building initiatives, orienteering, and low ropes course elements. We follow the AMGA Single Pitch Instructor guidelines for facilitating rock climbing. This position would also be responsible for tracking the use of and appropriately maintaining the gear used for climbing.
- Following the BICP Level 1 Pre-Ride Assessment and Ride Guide recommendations, the Mountain Biking Specialist introduces new mountain bakers to the sport using CGE's fleet of mountain bikes. Once on the trail, our focus is teaching mountain bike skills, IMBA Trail Etiquette, and fun. We also expect our bike specialists to perform essential repairs and maintenance, and to include trekkers in those repairs. The mountain bike specialist can also participate in trail design and development at our Basecamp. Our mountain bike fleet is housed in a trailer that can be used at our Basecamp or at a variety of trails throughout the region.

The **Resident Farmer** provides high-quality farm education programming while also producing vegetables from a ¼-acre farm for use in our programs. Our Basecamp is located at about 7500' in a very dry climate and Southwestern farming techniques are essential to the success of the farm. The farmer is also responsible for caring for a flock of laying hens and chicks including educating our trekkers about chicken care.

Reports To: Summer Programs Director

Job Duties

Responsibilities specific to this roles:

- Lead multi-hour topic-specific education sessions, called "Cottonwoods", at our Basecamp twice daily throughout the summer to trekkers ranging in age from ages 9-18.
- **Resident Naturalist** will:
  - Lead interpretive hikes throughout our 550-acre Basecamp property and surrounding areas.
  - Engage trekkers in land management strategies such as invasive species removal and erosion mitigation.
  - Create interpretive works with trekkers such as field guides, water quality indices, dendrochronology displays, etc.

    - Model a professional, scholarly, and fun approach to such topics as environmental ethics, public and private land management, ecotourism, hunting for sport and food, etc.
- **Resident Culturalist** will:
    - Engage trekkers in experiential activities in your area of expertise, such as traditional knowledge, yucca weaving, corn grinding, stone cooking, ceramics, basket making, flint knapping, atlatl throwing, and masonry.
    - Lead interpretive hikes within our 550-acre Basecamp property and surrounding areas.
    - Model a professional, scholarly, and respectful approach to the related contexts of living contemporary cultures.
    - Maintain and develop relationships with Indigenous communities throughout the Southwest.
- **Resident Art Specialist** will:
    - Lead traditional and contemporary art activities for trekkers.
        - Our focus on art activities has historically been metalwork/silversmithing, pit fired pottery, weaving, leather work, beading, and printmaking. Experience with these media (or some of them) is strongly preferred.
    - Engage trekkers in collaborative art projects.
    - Maintain organization and care of art tools in the studio.
    - Support trekkers in creation of short projects (2-3 hour session) and longer projects (2-5 days).
    - Support and supervise trekker-directed work during "down times," including clean up.
- **Adventure Specialist (Climbing)** will:
    - Facilitate top rope rock climbing at a variety of sites with trekkers ages 9-18 with a variety of experience and comfort levels with climbing.
    - Manage risk with a group of up to 20 trekkers at a climbing site.
    - Plan and execute a variety of team building activities and games with groups of 5-20 trekkers including low ropes course elements.
    - Maintain rope logs and appropriate gear management of ropes, shoes, harnesses, helmets, anchor materials, climbing holds, and crash pad.
    - Ensure that AMGA SPI protocols are being followed.
    - Teach Leave No Trace (LNT) principles while climbing.
    - Facilitate roped tree climbing, orienteering, and bouldering while at Basecamp.
- **Adventure Specialist (Mountain Biking)** will:
    - Facilitate mountain bike skill sessions and trail rides.
    - Manage risk with a group of up to 20 trekkers on mountain bike rides with support from other staff members.
    - WFR or WEMT strongly preferred.
    - Plan and execute a variety of bike-based activities for trekkers both on and off Basecamp.
    - Maintain and service a fleet of approximately 20 mountain bikes.

    - Ensure that BICP L1 pre-ride assessment and ride guide protocols are being followed.
    - Teach IMBA and LNT principles while mountain biking.
- **Resident Farmer** will:
    - Plan, plant, care for, and harvest vegetables in a ¼-acre farm and hoop house.
    - Plan and execute a variety of farm activities for trekkers such as planting, harvesting, plant identification, etc.
    - Maintain a composting system with mindfulness to local wildlife.
    - Communicate with the Basecamp kitchen staff about anticipated harvest amounts and timing.
    - Care for a flock of 5-20 egg-laying chickens.
    - Integrate Farm to Table projects to incorporate farm produce into meals.

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 learning opportunities.
- Provide leadership and support to outdoor education expeditions across the American Southwest, including in frontcountry and backcountry settings (depending on the group), and at CGE's Basecamp.
- Support Road Staff when they are at Basecamp by: spending at least 1-2 nights/week sleeping in or near trekker cabins, supporting trekkers when Road Staff are off during meals/rest time/etc, and other assistance as needed.
- 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.
- Teach LNT principles and environmental ethics to groups of youth.
- Drive large vehicles (pickup trucks, 15-passenger vans) on a variety of roads.
- Regularly attend, support, and assist with meals, nightly campfires, games on the field, staff meetings.
- Collaborate with peers to create a positive environment conducive to learning, growth, and fun.
- Maintain professional relationships with CGE partners & community members including land managers.
- Work with Program Director to order supplies and manage a budget.
- Facilitate hands-on exploration for small groups of trekkers.
- Collaborate with other specialists and staff to create engaging learning projects for trekkers.
- Support Basecamp culture by leading chores, providing supervision during "down times," and fully participating in planning and executing each day.

Required Qualifications

- Applicants must be at least 21 years of age by the position start date and possess a valid driver's license. Applicants between 19-20 years of age will be considered with significant

relevant experience. 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 First Aid, or ability to acquire within 30 days of hire; WFR/WEMT preferred.
- Strong organizational skills.
- Ability to communicate effectively and professionally with a wide range of audiences (fellow staff, community members, students, etc.).
- Google account or willingness to create one.

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

Preferred Qualifications

- Spanish, Diné, Zuni, Tiwa, Keres, Towa, Hopi, or Tewa language fluency.
- Experience backpacking.
- Experience with Google Drive.

Physical Requirements

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

Criminal Background Check

CGE requires criminal background checks and driving record checks from all employees.

Starting Date:

Contract dates for the summer are June 1st to August 8th for summer 2027 with the possibility of additional per diem work in the fall and beyond.

Work Location & Schedule

Thoreau, NM, with potential travel throughout the state, Basecamp Specialist will be based mostly out of our Thoreau Basecamp with some exceptions, including periods of time camping in frontcountry and backcountry settings.

Compensation & Benefits

Salary ranges from $1,950 to $2,900/month depending upon years of experience, seasons contracted, and applicable credentials. Room (open-air cabins), board, laundry, and access to wifi provided at Thoreau Basecamp throughout the summer. $250 travel stipend available if traveling more than 500 miles. Possible opportunities for further outdoor education certifications. 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.

To apply: Please apply through Campminder using this link on our website.