Position Description: Seasonal Field 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

This field educator position at Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions (CGE) works with a small staff team to implement outdoor educational programs aligned with CGE's mission. 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 9-18 year olds. This totals about 10,000 field days each year, a thriving Gulch Community, and hundreds of lives impacted for the better.

Our Seasonal Field Educators collaborate to implement educational curriculum tailored to the specific destinations of the expedition and interests of the partners as groups travel around the Southwest and to our Basecamp in Thoreau, NM. We are looking for outdoor adventurers, scientists, artists, culturalists, cooks and others who are excited to share their knowledge and inspire young people to connect with the outdoors. In addition, Field Educators manage the packing and organization of gear for their designated expeditions. Seasonal Field Educators with a background or interest in cooking will manage meals and nutrition for trekkers, staff, and partners while on trek.

Reports To: School and Community Programs Director (in the spring and fall) and the Summer Programs Director (in the summer).

Job Duties

Responsibilities specific to this role

- Use your unique set of skills and knowledge in outdoor adventure, science, art, culture, food or another field related to our mission to inspire trekkers in their personal growth and group development.
- Use CGE educational resources, training, and previous experience to prepare place-based programming to educate, impart new ideas, and inspire trekkers to learn about the specific areas where the group is traveling.
- Plan for and execute activities, games, reflections, and debriefs during down times and campfires; plan itinerary-specific activities in collaboration with the staff team.
- Use systems for storing, packing, issuing, managing and repairing group gear and personal gear.
- Camp outdoors and teach trekkers outdoor skills such as campsite selection and setup, navigation, fire building, safety, etc.
- Plan, prepare, or assist with cooking meals for large group sizes both assisting in a commercial kitchen at our Basecamp and on the road with a road kitchen setup.
- Work with the staff team to manage risk in the field.
- Support and lead experiential place-based activities when at Basecamp.

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 Leave No Trace 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 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 Directors 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. 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 and ability to learn the Google suite.

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:

Staff may work multiple seasons. Contract dates by season are as follows: March 1st to May 31st for spring 2027 season; June 1st to August 8th for summer 2027; August 16th-October 29th for fall season, with the possibility of additional per diem work in the winter and beyond. Preference will be given to applicants able to work multiple seasons. Those working multiple seasons won't have gaps between seasons.

Work Location & Schedule

Albuquerque, NM and 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 camping for several days at a time, while others are out for only a day. Staff working only spring have approximately one-third of their days off each month, although schedules can vary.