

National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior

Valley Forge National Historical Park
King of Prussia, Pa



Teacher
— TO —
Ranger
— TO —
Teacher



*Connecting our Public School System and
our National Park System*

Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Background

The challenge for the National Park Service (NPS) is to provide opportunities for all audiences to connect to their national heritage as embodied by national parks. The Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) program focuses on the education community and engages teachers from schools that are not currently being reached with park programs, paying particular attention to areas with large, ethnically diverse populations.

Teachers are detailed to parks as park rangers through an Inter-governmental Personnel Act agreement between their school district and the NPS. Teachers spend their summer working and often also living in their park. The parks provide a uniform, housing, and a supplementary payment for the teachers. They perform various duties depending on the professional development needs and interests of the teacher as well as the needs of their park. Specific duties may include developing and reviewing curriculum-based park materials, developing and presenting interpretive programs for the general public, assisting resource management, and working with teacher institutes.

During the school year teacher-rangers bring the parks into classrooms by developing and presenting curriculum-based lesson plans that draw on their summer's experience. In April, during National Park Week, teacher-rangers will wear their NPS uniforms to school, discuss their summer experience, and engage students and other teachers in activities that relate to America's national parks.

Valley Forge National Historical Park Opportunities

Valley Forge National Historical Park (NHP) is located 18 miles northwest of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Established as a unit of the National Park System in 1976, the park is nationally significant as the 1777-1778 site of the winter encampment of George Washington and the Continental Army. Over time, the park has also become important as a regional bio-refuge, a place of outstanding scenic beauty, and a destination for renewal and recreation.

Education is a core part of the park mission. School programs related to park history were successfully delivered to over 3,500 students last year. However, this is only a fraction of the approximately 5 million school children who live within field trip reach of the park.

Join us in summer 2008 and become a teacher-ranger at Valley Forge NHP. TRT opportunities are available in both history and science. Teachers receive \$300/week, a uniform, and housing at the park (if needed).



*Ranger Bill Troppman educates students on the life of a
soldier during the encampment.*



Students collect data on forest health within the park.

Concepts Learned and Incorporated into the Classroom

Teacher-rangers who work in parks with significant natural resources increase their understanding of scientific research and how that research is applied to management and interpretation. Through this experience they also acquire an appreciation of complex issues that face parks on a daily basis. For example, teacher-rangers learn how:

- adjacent lands that may or may not have compatible resource management philosophies affect park project outcomes;
- universities who are assisting with research add new dimensions and insights to park project work;
- science in parks relates to urban areas and issues;
- the public becomes involved in the decision-making process.

Teacher-rangers who work in parks with significant cultural and historic resources learn about the complexities of interpreting and researching human history and current ethnographic matters in park today. For example, teacher-rangers can learn how:

- parks research and interpret the events surrounding the American Revolution and regularly consult with historians and others who have a relationship with the park and its resources;
- a variety of resources can be used for research, and how these resources will be used to tell complex stories from a variety of viewpoints;
- working with other divisions within the park affects a project.

Program Benefits

Benefits for Teacher-Rangers

- √ Participating teacher-rangers have the opportunity to develop a personal connection with national parks.
- √ Teacher-rangers develop a wide array of teaching examples based on real life experience in parks and create “curricula enhancers” that highlight issues surrounding heritage conservation.
- √ Teacher-rangers become life-long friends of the National Park Service and begin teaching an ethic of heritage conservation in the schools where much of America’s future resides.

√ Teacher-rangers obtain a wide range of knowledge and skills by working with personnel of other park divisions.

Benefits to the School District

- √ Other educators exposed to a teacher-ranger in their schools benefit from “curricula enhancers” and other resources. They also gain access to a wide array of resources and teaching tools.
- √ Teacher-rangers join a network of resource specialists, scientists, historians, curators, and the teaching programs and resources of the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior.



Living history interpreters provide a connection to the stories of the people of Valley Forge.

√ School districts profit from having teacher-rangers who have been exposed to current resource-based issues and teaching activities.

Benefits to Urban School Children

- √ This program provides the opportunity for students to connect to the nation’s heritage through the experiences of their teacher-rangers.
- √ A variety of resource issues, based on the teacher’s summer experience, are discussed in class. These might include historic preservation, deer populations and forest health, exotic species, and water issues.
- √ Students learn about opportunities for summer and permanent employment with the National Park Service.

√ Students share the enthusiasm of a teacher who has had the opportunity to be a National Park Ranger.

Contacts

For specific program details and information on how to apply please contact:

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For additional information on the park please visit our website at:
www.nps.gov/vafo