

2023 Assistant Naturalist (Intern)

Neilson Spearhead Center, about 8 miles south of Bemidji, MN

The Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society is seeking enthusiastic and engaging persons to apply for the 9-week long intern/assistant naturalist position at Neilson Spearhead Center (NSC) to start in mid-June and run through mid-August. The program will primarily be week-long nature-based day camp sessions; however some sessions will have an overnight as part of the overall experience. See www.spearheadMHAS.org for information on the Young Naturalist Program, the Neilson Spearhead Center, and the Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society.

This is a potential internship opportunity with the Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society. We will work with you to arrange the credit through your University. The position is also open to those interested in serving as assistant naturalist and not in need of academic credit. The program is located at the Neilson Spearhead Center (a lake-based natural area and Audubon nature preserve) just south of Bemidji, Mn. The intern will be an assistant to the Lead Naturalist.

Position responsibilities:

- Co-organize and run the weekly day camp sessions with the Lead Naturalist, including one to three overnights over the course of the summer;
- Coordinate with the Lead Naturalist on program and lesson planning, design and implementation with an emphasis on the Neilson Spearhead Center and Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society mission and goals;
- Be on-site from 8:00am to 4:30pm week-days, or longer if needed; be available to assist in leading the overnight sessions;
- Assist in providing day-long outdoor activities that are interactive, experiential, and accommodate a wide range of learning modes for people age 7years to adult.
- Excite the participants, building upon their natural curiosity and sense of wonder as you explore the trails, the lake, and other natural communities;
- Provide information about the local natural history and help to develop an environmental ethic and sense of stewardship in program participants; and
- Share with the Lead Naturalist the responsibility of completing the weekly lesson plans, weekly and daily activity summaries and other “paperwork” as necessary.

Qualifications:

- Safety training - First aid and CPR certification
- Swimming ability, prefer lifeguard certification or training.
- Experience canoeing.
- Ability to hike uneven terrain.
- Punctual arrival and ability to engage youth immediately upon their arrival.

- Comfort with intimate hands-on work with children in mud, muck, water, and woods.
- Able to deal with spiders, ticks, biting insects and poisonous plants.
- Must be 18 years of age or older.

Knowledge and experience:

- Experience working with children and providing integrated hands-on learning experiences.
- Familiar with the flora and fauna of the Northwoods;
- Familiar with use field guides and identification keys.
- Team player, takes initiative to address participant and program needs, and follows through to address these needs.
- Demonstrated leadership skills.

Pay per week: \$13 - \$15/hr depending upon qualifications and past experience. If in college, we will work with you and your institution for internship credits.

Interested applicants should apply via e-mail to: ynp@spearheadmhas.org. Applicants should submit a letter of interest documenting their qualifications, knowledge and experience, plus a resume and names/contact information for three references.

For further information, contact George-Ann Maxson at 218-586-3414 or at ynp@spearheadmhas.org. Applications are being accepted until the position is filled.

Proposed schedule:

June 12 to August 18, 2023:

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June 12 - 16 – Orientation for staff

June 19 - 23 – Dan’s Crew. Help the Lead Naturalist and the High School participants prepare the Neilson Spearhead Center for the summer by clearing trails, preparing the canoe landing and swimming beach, preparing the lab and other buildings for use, doing program planning, playing adventure games and working on nature survival skills.

June 26 - 30 (and July 24-28) Pines, Lakes, and Rivers. Working with Lead Naturalist, lead the youth (grades 6-8) on an exploration of the natural wonders of Neilson Spearhead Center. Explore the lake, creek, wetlands, and woods through stories, games, hikes, and water fun. Camp overnight the last night, canoeing the lake under the moon and stars and listening to the haunting tunes of the loons and owls.

July 10 – 14 (and July 31-Aug 4)) – Trees, Tails, and Trails. This week-long day camp is all about experiencing the north woods and lake at Neilson Spearhead Center. Work with Lead Naturalist and the youngest naturalists (grades 2 – 4) in the bogs, lake and stream as well as the various forested systems that make up NSC. A fast-paced week full of nature-based fun and games, while learning about the native ecosystems and their components.

July 17 - 21 (and August 7-11) – Nature Mystery. Help Dan guide the participants (grades 4 -6) as they investigate some of the puzzling mysteries of nature during this week-long day camp. Help the kids crack nature’s codes and find out “who done it.”

Aug 14 – 18 – Family week activities for all ages including parents.