

# Nebraska State Parks Centennial Lesson Plan



## Activity Title:

Careers in Nebraska Parks

## Grade Level:

Upper elementary

Middle school

## Method:

During this activity students can select and research occupations available in Nebraska State Parks. Students will then write want ads for other students to respond to with letters of application.

## Materials:

Paper

Pen/pencil

Bulletin board

## State Standards:

SS 4.4.4.c; SS 6.4.5.c

## Objective:

Students will 1) research different state park jobs, 2) utilize skills needed to apply for a job.

## Background:

Nebraska is home to over 77 public areas such as State Parks, State Historic Park and State Recreation Areas. These areas can have trails, campgrounds, historic buildings or even lakes. There are several different jobs in our parks and every job plays an important role. Have you ever thought about what you want to be when you grow up? There are a lot of cool jobs out there like; teacher, doctor or YouTube host, but did you know there are some really cool jobs in our Nebraska parks? Let's explore a few of these jobs!

- The park superintendent manages the entire park. They lead the team of people that are needed to run the park. They are responsible for managing park utilities, buildings, roads, cabins, campgrounds, swimming pools, trails, events, budgets and visitors. They have important jobs in the park and sometimes even live in a house at the park.
- The maintenance, groundskeeping, and housekeeping crew is in charge of making sure the area looks and works amazingly. While visiting a park, you might see them mowing, picking up trash, pulling weeds or fixing the pool. Housekeeping also makes sure the bathrooms are squeaky clean or that the cabins are just right. They are often behind the scenes making sure everything is working correctly.
- When you get to one of our state areas, many times the first person you meet is a member of our office staff. They might sell you a park permit or take reservations for a campsite. They have knowledge of the area and can answer many of your questions. They also have a lot of information about the different permits available.

- Many of our state parks have lifeguards on staff. They make sure our visitors are safe around the pool or floating playgrounds. They have knowledge in first aid, CPR and how to properly rescue people in trouble.
- Another cool job is a wrangler. In some of our parks, we offer horse trail rides. The wranglers are in charge of taking care of the horses, getting them ready for rides and showing folks around the park on horseback. These folks have a knowledge of horses and how to take care of them.
- One of the coolest jobs in our parks is the naturalist. These people are in charge of leading programs for our guests. Naturalists may lead programs that teach about animals, outdoor skills (like archery or tomahawks), or even lead hikes. They share their love of the outdoors while teaching about Nebraska's wildlife and natural resources.

There are several different jobs in our Nebraska parks, too many to list! If you are interested in any of these super cool jobs, stop by your nearest park and have a chat. Nebraska parks have endless job possibilities, depending on what you are interested in.

Nebraska Game and Parks is passionate about the outdoors, wildlife, conservation and outdoor recreation. We are a family of passionate people who work together to connect people to the natural world and support conservation in Nebraska. The outdoors is a place of natural wonders, discovery, adventure, and reflection—the benefits of which cannot be obtained anywhere else. Experiencing Nebraska's natural resources is a positive investment of time and enhances the quality of life. As stewards of these resources, it is our unique privilege and responsibility to provide access and opportunities for those who choose to spend time outdoors. Join a team of innovative professionals with a love for the outdoors, a commitment to service and a shared excitement for the future.

Permanent jobs with Nebraska Game and Parks Commission require a Bachelor's degree in natural resources, education or related fields plus three years of related experience OR a minimum of seven years related professional experience. Education may be substituted for experience on a year for year basis. Oftentimes different positions prefer a Master's degree in natural resources, education, or related fields plus three years of related experience, preferably in outdoor/natural resource or wildlife management. Seasonal or temporary jobs have no specific education or experience, but they prefer folks having experience working in a recreational area or in a customer service setting.

### **Vocabulary:**

Want Ad: a classified advertisement in a newspaper or magazine; a small ad.

Job Application: a formal request to apply for a job

Employer: a person or organization that employs people

Employee: a person employed for wages or salary

### **Step-By-Step Instructions:**

1. Research parks jobs available within Nebraska Game and Parks. For more information visit <http://outdoornebraska.gov/careers/> or <http://outdoornebraska.gov/workinapark/>
2. Have the students write a job advertisement, making sure to use their essential job duties and skills (examples:

[https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/nebraska?department\[0\]=Game%20%26%20Parks%20Commission&sort=PostingDate%7CDescending](https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/nebraska?department[0]=Game%20%26%20Parks%20Commission&sort=PostingDate%7CDescending) ).

3. Post these job advertisements on a bulletin board.
4. Ask students to select an ad and write a cover letter for a job that appeals to them.
  - a. Some information to include in the cover letter:
    - i. Name
    - ii. Job Title
    - iii. Why do you want this job?
    - iv. What qualifications do you have for this job?
    - v. List any previous job experience.
5. Return the letters to the person who posted the job, who will schedule an interview with the applicants.
6. (Extension) Students will interview each other, asking 3-4 interview questions (can be selected from questions below or students can come with their own questions for their specific job). The focus will be on professionalism, from both the interviewer and interviewee.
  - a. Tell me a little about yourself.
  - b. Why are you interested in this job?
  - c. Do you have any experience in this position?
  - d. What is one of your hobbies?
  - e. What is your career goal?

**Focus Questions:**

1. What are things you really enjoy doing?
2. Can you find a job in a state park that shares your same interest?

**Evaluation:**

Students will be evaluated on how well the letters of application were written (correct letter writing skills, as well as complete thought, complete sentences, usage, mechanics, spelling, etc.) and whether they incorporated two or more academic skills essential for the career/job they chose.

**Example: (job advertisement)**

## Wanted: Outdoor Education Specialist!

I am in search of a passionate person to lead educational programs to diverse audiences. These programs will be about Nebraska wildlife, plants and cool outdoor skills. Must have experience presenting information to people. Applicants must have a love of the outdoors!

To apply for this position, please provide a cover letter to Amanda.

**Example: (cover letter)**

Dear Amanda,

I would like to apply for the Outdoor Education Specialist position with Nebraska Game and Parks. I love all sorts of Nebraska wildlife. I also know some pretty cool outdoor skills and can communicate with different types of audiences. Please consider me for this position.