

CPCESU Final Report

Fort Lewis College Internship Program at Mesa Verde National Park: 2008-2009

Colorado Historical Fund Grant 2007-02-018

Fort Lewis College Grant #44064

Internship activities for summer 2008, which were funded by the Colorado Historical Fund grant cited above, are now complete. In review, we placed eight Fort Lewis College undergraduate interns during the summer of 2008 for 10 week experiences through this grant. Matching funds were obtained for this project from Mesa Verde National Park (via our CP-CESU partnership), the Mesa Verde Museum Association, and the Fort Lewis College Foundation. The FLC Foundation match also allowed us to place an intern at Canyons of the Ancients National Monument.

Students submitted final reports to their campus mentors during the summer 2008 term, and all received high marks for their work. Most of the internships, taken for college course credit, will be counted toward graduation and major requirements within each intern's respective discipline. As a result of internship experiences, several interns have been hired under the STEP program while completing their degree programs, and some have gone on to fill temporary or permanent positions in the National Park Service and other Federal agencies following graduation.

All of our 2008 internships resulted in very positive experiences for students, as well as for their park mentors. Tasks were uniformly completed reliably and with high quality. Formal and informal evaluations by students and mentors alike revealed an overall very positive experience. The emphasis of these internship experiences, as in previous years, was to identify and complete a project with academic significance as well as service value. These were not 'summer jobs' for students, but rather structured, 10 week experiences requiring a 400 hour commitment.

The structured outcomes of these internships included the following:

Sienna Davis worked with Rose Salazar in **Interpretation and Education**. Sienna's internship included the development of educational materials and acting as assistant to ranger tour guides during the summer. Sienna was an anthropology major whose Fort Lewis College advisor for this experience was Dr. Chuck Riggs.

Kelli Ford worked with Linda Farnsworth, archaeologist at **Canyons of the Ancients National Monument** which was the location for her internship. Her project included archaeological site survey. Kelli enjoyed an internship at Mesa Verde National Park two years ago, and plans a career in archaeology. She was an anthropology major, and her advisor for this internship was Dr. Chuck Riggs.

Kayla Kerekes worked with Carolyn Landes in **Curation** at Mesa Verde, cataloging collections and updating records in the ANCS+ collections database. Kayla acquired valuable skills in handling priceless artifacts to insure their preservation and protection. Kayla was an art major, and her FLC advisor for this internship was Dr. Amy Wendland.

Kathryn Phillips worked with archaeologist Kay Barnett on site survey and documentation. Her tasks centered on **AutoCAD** documentation of the architectural record, which built on her previous classroom experience with this software. She was able to produce an impressive portfolio of completed drawings, many of which required field checks to verify accuracy. Kathryn was a physics major at FLC, and her advisor for this internship was Dr. Laurie Williams.

Heather Rietz worked with George San Miguel in park **Natural Resources**. Her projects were varied and included projects such as monitoring air and water quality, documenting old grove spruce/fir, and bat population survey. Heather was a biology major, and her FLC advisor for this internship was Dr. Erin Lehmer.

Gregory Shearer worked in **Interpretation and Education** at Mesa Verde with Rose Salazar as his mentor. Greg's ten weeks of internship were spent assisting with visitor interpretation activities including direct participation in visitor tours and children's programs. The children's programs involved designing activities such as production of pinch pots, and work with a children's "Verde Fest", a sustainable living festival with games involving recycling and making pictograph stone magnets. Greg was a business major at FLC, and his advisor for this internship was Dr. Simon Walls.

Jayson Stanley was our only Native American intern this summer. He worked with Allan Loy in **GIS** technology at the park. Jayson's work began with orientation to the park's Facility Management Software System (FMSS) and the GPS instrumentation used by park personnel (Trimble GPS hardware and software). Jayson's work in the park included mapping rare plant locations, surveying locations for potential parking lot expansion, and mapping and creating a trail inventory with data entry into FMSS via PDA. Jayson was a geosciences major and his FLC advisor for this internship was Dr. Scott White.

Gerald Swickard worked with Liz Francisco in **archaeological site documentation and stabilization** at Spruce Tree House and backcountry sites. Gerald's work first involved familiarization with MEVE backcountry architectural documentation procedures, followed by installation of protective silicone drip lines, and participation in photo documentation and inventory to investigate prehistoric community relationships in Middle Spruce Canyon as evidenced by existing architecture. Products produced by this internship included AutoCAD drawings of sites for addition to the permanent record. Gerald was an anthropology major at FLC, and his advisor for this internship was Dr. Chuck Riggs.

Evaluation of student internships was conducted in the form of an interim oral presentation mid-way through the experience, which was attended by all interns, as well as park and college mentors, and program coordinators. A final written report at the end of the 10 week period is a requirement of both the park and the college. Final reports were again presented orally with an extensive question and answer period, which allowed

us to determine the nature and quality of work completed by individual interns. Interns, park and college mentors, and coordinators were in attendance.

Each intern was required to enroll at Fort Lewis College for academic credit for the internship. Enrollment was centered in the student's academic department with a departmental faculty member as the designated advisor for the internship experience. Students received a letter grade for the internship. Academic grades were determined by the quality of the final written and oral reports, and by communication between the park mentor and the faculty member.

Obtaining the Colorado Historical Fund grant and handling the logistics of this project at Fort Lewis College were the responsibility of Dr. John Ninnemann, Dean of the School of Natural and Behavioral Sciences. Summer 2008 interns included participation of students from a variety of departments including Anthropology, Art, Physics, Business, Geosciences, and Biology.