

1. Current hometown (where you are currently living):

Bar Harbor, Maine

2. Job and employer (your title and which park or NPS unit you work at):

Acadia National Park, Blackwoods Campground 1987 – 1996, Acadia National Park, Interpretation 1997, Acadia National Park, Volunteer Coordinator 1998 - 2015

3. Share more about your work – what it entails, aspects that are especially challenging or enjoyable:

Campground work entailed a wide variety of tasks from making rounds to checking in campers and using the cash register to answering questions about the park to cleaning out firepits to looking at Junior Rangers' workbooks. With such varied tasks one never got bored. Interpretation drew more on my knowledge of the park and ways to present the information but it was also highly structured (Don't talk about the bald eagle flying overhead if you are leading a tree walk.) and so not to my liking. As volunteer coordinator I dealt with a variety of people from local Daisy Scouts to international college students to retirees. Finding meaningful work for all of them required creative thinking, knowledge of the needs of the park and how it works, diplomacy and a sense of humor.

4. Community work, family – other projects you're involved in outside of your job:

Volunteering with various local non-profits. See also number 12 below.

5. Graduate School:

none

6. COA senior project:

7. COA internship:

8. Human ecology in action – in what ways does your background in human ecology influence your work with the Park Service?

Understanding the interrelatedness of all park activities and being able to share that with park visitors was vital to my success.

9. What classes, internships, or experiences at COA helped prepare you for or sparked your interest in working in national parks?

The proximity of Acadia to COA was a major factor in my employment.

10. A COA experience that was particularly significant or memorable – this could be a course, an adventure, an aspect of life in the COA or MDI community, etc.

As alumni my wife and I hosted several international students. Providing students with some off-campus time and contact with people on the island but not associated with the Collee on a day-to-day basis, seemed enjoyable to them. For us, keeping in touch with the COA community in this way was very rewarding. As was visiting “our” former students in Europe.

11. Considerations for prospective students – what do you think a student who might apply to COA should know?

The proximity of a national park and the way Acadia is used by classes should be a major draw.

12. Considerations for current students – what do you think a student who might want to work for the National Park Service should know?

Students should consider seasonal work (either paid or volunteer) before setting their sights on full time employment. Students should be prepared for a lengthy application process and should reapply in subsequent years if they are not hired the first time around. Seasonal positions such a trail worker or “visitor use assistant” in the campgrounds, entrance station or visitor center are good entry level positions.

Another way to work “for” the Park without being an official government employee is to work for Friends of Acadia. FOA has both seasonal and year-round positions which work side-by-side with Park employees.