

2010 NPLSF Grant for Grand Portage National Monument

Grant Description:

This funding supported having the services of the Student Conservation Association to advertise for, recruit and place a summer intern with the Division of Interpretation for twelve weeks during the summer of 2010.

Grant Details:

The Grand Portage National Monument has a very active Volunteer in Parks program. Volunteers assist in literally every aspect of our operations. Civilians with interests and/or expertise in our subject area volunteer their time and talent to provide park support and visitor services.

A very successful and integral part of our program is our affiliation/partnership with the Student Conservation Association (SCA). We have worked with the SCA annually for the past fifteen years to recruit and place well qualified and motivated college-level volunteers in meaningful internships.

Interns work in multi-divisional environments while in the park to learn valuable skills in visitor services, interpretation, resource management, conservation, and museum services. The skills they gain here have been valuable to our interns in advancing their interests in careers with the NPS. The NPS also benefits by reaching and nurturing potential employees with an ethic for conservation and resource stewardship.

In the past twelve years, ten of the park's SCA interns have gone on to successfully gain employment with the National Park Service in both seasonal and permanent ranks; six of them returned to Grand Portage to accept seasonal ranger positions in the year following their SCA internship. However, funding for this program was redirected to new NPS youth initiatives and was unavailable to Grand Portage National Monument for the purposes of funding SCA interns this year.

This summer, through the generosity and support of the NPLSF via a grant of \$3,000.00, Grand Portage National Monument was able to continue our successful partnership with the Student Conservation Association. We selected Miss Laurel Sanders from North Carolina to work with us as an SCA Resource Intern for the summer. Laurel served her internship in the division of interpretation and visitor services. She enjoyed a variety of challenges and wrote this about her experience:

“The NPLSF made it possible for me to spend three excellent months this summer as a Student Conservation Association intern at Grand Portage National Monument. It's a park on the shore of Lake Superior preserving a short land route that was once the hub of an economy that tied Canadian fur traders to native peoples, including the Ojibwe. I worked as a living history interpreter in the

reconstructed Great Hall, the dining and meeting area for the company, the kitchen, a warehouse full of birchbark canoes, and an Ojibwe Village area. I had never heard of the park before seeing the internship description online, but when I read it I was immediately interested in the cross-cultural history of the site and in the chance to gain experience working with the public. Grand Portage didn't disappoint me. I collected all sorts of experiences I doubt I could have had elsewhere.” These stories of roundabout routes to Grand Portage interested me partly because my own was such a long trip; I came halfway across the country, from the mountains of North Carolina, to spend the summer by Lake Superior. It was certainly worth the travel, though, and I am extremely grateful to have had the experience.” “Thank you.”