

## **Proposal for Nevada Park Service Seasonal Employee Training Program**

Kat Beasley, Joelle Chase, James Hardaway, Thomas Hinkle, and Meredith Leonard

College of Education, NC State University

ECI 511: Introduction to Learning Design & Technology

Dr. McKeown

July 25, 2021

## **Proposal for Nevada Park Service Seasonal Employee Training Program**

### **Training Problem**

The Nevada Division of State Parks manages 27 different facilities and wildlife areas that provide recreation to over 3.5 million visitors annually (Mergell, 2019). To keep the parks safe and enjoyable, Nevada employs close to 270 rangers and staff, which includes approximately 145 seasonal workers (Mergell, 2019). Seasonal park staff execute a variety of duties that may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Maintenance of park grounds/facilities
  - Custodial duties
  - Grounds inspection
  - Collection of park fees
  - Presentation of educational programs
  - Operation of visitor center
  - Dissemination of information regarding park rules
  - Park patrols to spot and report violations
  - Emergency medical assistance
  - Help train volunteers
  - Assist visitors as needed
- (ParkRangerEdu.org, 2021)

Additionally, seasonal staff may be assigned to work full-time in the entry booth collecting fees/distributing park maps or assisting with park-specific conservation programs. Seasonal staff work for various periods of time, like three months over the summer. However, they never work more than nine months of the year (ParkRangerEdu.org, 2021).

Dozens of these seasonal hires are new to the park service each year, leading to a large portion of the training budget being spent on increasing the knowledge of inexperienced staff. This high annual turnover has the potential to increase the number of safety and legal incidents while degrading the public's visitor experience in the parks. To develop employees who are better informed in public safety and federal regulations, the state park service decided that an improved education and training program is the path to a stronger, more professional, workforce. A program designed to build a community of public servants is likely to develop employees who stay in their positions for an entire season, and who will be more valuable when returning as experienced senior employees, ready to lead and mentor other staff.

By the end of this training program, prospective employees will be knowledgeable on available job opportunities within the Nevada State Park systems and familiar with their potential duties and responsibilities. Newly hired employees will develop a clear understanding of their specific duties and responsibilities while expanding their practical knowledge of critical employment policies such as payroll, benefits, code of conduct, and professionalism. All returning employees will be comfortable assuming roles to lead and mentor other staff members while also developing training exercises to build cohesion within their teams.

### **Training Strategy/Design Model**

Our training strategy is based and structured in Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction (Chyung, 2008).

1. Gain Student Attention:

- a. Stories, experiences, and employee guidelines will be shared through video clips, while narratives and scenarios will grab the prospective, returning and new hires attention.
  - b. The use of former and current employees or hired actors will keep the videos consistent, interesting and also reflect an inclusive atmosphere.
- 2. Inform Learner of Objectives:
  - a. The app based learning module will resemble a leather bound field notebook, broken into sections and chapters, specifically designed for each category of hire and learning objective.
  - b. Closed captions and language software built into the LMS will be provided for learners with learning and language differences.
  - c. The leather bound field book will be broken into three sections: prospective hires, new hires and returning employees.
  - d. Each section will provide the proper links, readings, questionnaires, activities and information for each specified position and group of hires.
  - e. Clear learning objectives and activities will be listed for each opportunity at the beginning of the chapters and reiterated in the description videos at the beginning of each chapter.
  - f. Objectives will guide and inform the learner of lesson objectives.
- 3. Stimulate Recall of Prior Knowledge:
  - a. Small quiz forms, activities and surveys implanted in the beginning of training for each type of hire will stimulate recall of any prior knowledge pertaining to module subject matter and objectives.
- 4. Present New Content:
  - a. Videos, photos, “what-if” scenarios, stories and case studies in the chapters will include scenarios relevant to the learner’s training.
  - b. Because many employees are returning, shorter recap chapters with new information regarding equipment, changes and updates will be included to watch and review.
  - c. Badges will be awarded for these shorter review activities as the reviewer explores the content and completes smaller activities to check their knowledge.
  - d. Within the Nevada Parks system there are 20 different amenities (Parks.nv.gov, 2021) that are offered in different permutations across all of the parks. For training purposes we created groups for these amenities (see Table 1) that we feel represent the amount of time necessary for completing the training modules.
    - i. The Low group are simple, low risk offerings that may not need a video learning component.
    - ii. Medium level amenities need some level of training as well as some safety/ background information.
    - iii. The High level amenities have safety as well as regulatory compliance components and will therefore take the most effort to complete.
- 5. Provide Learning Guidance:
  - a. Activities which support the content and objectives will be provided in each module.
  - b. Clear expectations and rubrics will be provided for each activity to guide the learner during each exercise.
  - c. Online collaboration through web blog style forums will be available and implanted within the app based learning module.
- 6. Elicit Performance:
  - a. Forms and questionnaires will be designed from chapter objectives and will include decision making scenarios while also integrating real world scenarios.

- b. The option to repeat the content will be provided to the learner until the learner's performance resembles the quality and performance expected by the Nevada Division of State Parks.
- 7. Provide Feedback:
  - a. Feedback will be offered to learners as they complete their embedded assessments.
  - b. Immediate feedback will highlight areas the learner needs to review.
  - c. Feedback from the prospective hire survey will provide information on where prospective hires could best be suited in the Nevada Parks system.
- 8. Assess Performance
  - a. As stated above in number three, modules will contain activities, pre-assessments, surveys, assignments.
  - b. Post assessments and assignments, to test retention and ability to perform tasks are included at the end of each training module for new hires and returning employees.
  - c. Badging systems will keep track of learners' progress in their field notes.
  - d. Because the National Park System brand is known for their patches, the badges will appear as such and placed on the front of their field notebook as they progress through the training.
  - e. Cumulative post assessment will be provided at the end of the full training for new hires.
- 9. Enhance Retention and Learning Transfer:
  - a. videos, activities and “what-if” scenarios will be embedded into post assessment to strengthen the application to real life, on the job activities.

Table 1

*Types of Park Amenities Organized by Complexity (Parks.nv.gov, 2021)*

Low	Medium	High
Bike Trails	Cabins/Yurts	ADA Campsites
Bird Watching	Campsites	Boat Launch
Drinking Water	Canoeing/Water Sports	Fishing
Gift Shop	Equestrian	RV Dump Station
Hiking	Historic Site	RV Hookups
Picnic Sites	Pets Okay	

Visitor Center	Restrooms	
	Showers	

Figure 1

*Training Complexity Per Park (Parks.nv.gov, 2021)*



### Instructional Technology

In evaluating the technology requirements of the Nevada State Park system we considered the following factors:

1. Learners will be spread out across the state of Nevada due to the parks being spread out across the state.
2. The educational program must accommodate -
  - a. Prospective employees
  - b. New employees
  - c. Returning employees
3. Educational needs will vary greatly among parks due to a wide variety of amenities offered.
4. Need a system that can track progress/outcomes.
5. Need a system that is accessible to learners spread out across the state.
6. System needs to be easily accessible remotely as well as centrally updatable.
7. The Bridge LMS allows for Close Captioning access as well as up to 24 different languages.

8. Google Forms will be integrated into the LMS for assessment purposes.

Based on the diversity of educational needs as well as the geographic dispersion of the parks, our proposal is recommending a solution that is primarily based on high quality eLearning. We will develop video training that will be a combination of field-based instruction from seasoned Rangers and experts in addition to somewhat traditional presentation-based information to communicate and reinforce rules and regulations. We will utilize mobile technology to record the field-based work. We will then utilize Camtasia studio, Snagit, and YouTube studio to produce the finished videos. In addition to relevant educational videos, we will provide quick reference guides, and a weblog style forum so that Nevada's state park employees can add in personal experience and thoughts as they relate to the parks and the topics they are learning about.

All the above will be organized in a mobile accessible Learning Management System (LMS). For this project we have selected the Bridge LMS. In evaluating the LMS, we considered the following factors:

1. Allows you to have a mobile app.
2. Allows customization to mobile app.
3. Allows you to insert assessments into our training.
4. Provides technical support.
5. Allows video lessons to be a part of the process
6. Allows weblog (blog) posts and forums.
7. Allows a badging/certification system.
8. Has a reasonable price point.

We evaluated a few LMS systems including Canvas, Moodle and Bridge. While all 3 had similar capabilities, we felt that the Bridge offering had the best app experience. We also felt that Bridge's included 24/7/365 technical support was a great option. Bridge will guide associates to the learning paths that are relevant to their park and position. The LMS system will also enable the training program managers to monitor progress and administer knowledge checks. Bridge will also allow us to implement a certification/badging system so that we can measure participation in the program. Finally Bridge has a very straightforward pricing system that allows for flexibility as seasonal employees come on and off the payroll. \$9 per month per person makes the cost straightforward and easy to predict.

### **Project Timeline**

2 months - Development of the instructional videos to add into the LMS. There will be videos for prospective employees, newly hired employees, and returning employees.

2 months - LMS creation to include the design of the interface of the leather bound field notebook look and include all the information through a chapter breakdown. These chapters will include learning objectives and a video with the information.

1 month - Form the assessments for employees to complete throughout the training at the end of each chapter.

3 weeks - Develop the evaluations for prospective employees through the use of Google forms to be placed in the LMS.

3 weeks - Develop the evaluations for newly hired employees through the use of Google forms to be placed in the LMS.

3 weeks - Develop the evaluations for returning employees through the use of Google forms to be placed in the LMS.

2 weeks - Develop badge system for the training. These badges will be awarded at the end of each chapter.

2 weeks - Train instructors on how to use the app system for education and training.

### **Program Evaluation Plan**

In order to ensure that our training program is as successful as possible, we will closely monitor data that is collected through both Google Forms and our LMS, Bridge. This data will be used to determine whether or not employee training is successful or if specific areas need to be improved and modified to ensure employees have the most up-to-date knowledge and information pertaining to state park safety, public service, and legal and compliance concerns. Newly hired employees and returning employees will also be given a survey at the end of their formal training. This survey will ask them their professional opinion on how the online training prepared them for their hands-on training. The survey will allow those who take it to rate each training chapter on a scale of 1-5, where 1 would mean the training did not prepare them and 5 meaning the training went well and prepared them for their duties. The goal of this survey is to gauge how well the training prepared employees and provide them with the opportunity to give feedback.

### ***Prospective Employees***

The program evaluation plan for prospective employees would include a short, optional, questionnaire that would be found on our main website; this survey would be located with the application link. Responses from potential employees could be gathered through a free survey collection resource, similar to Google Forms. This would allow us to gather information on what prospective employees are already knowledgeable about, what areas they would likely improve upon, and lastly what areas they desire to work in; directors can use this data to determine what areas and specific jobs that prospective employees may do well in. This data would be especially useful when prospective employees turn into newly hired employees and begin their training.

### ***Newly Hired Employees***

All newly hired employees will begin their training by taking a pre-assessment on park safety, public service, and legal concerns related to state parks. The pre-assessment will also be completed using Google Forms because this is an open-source website that provides all of the components needed to collect data while also being free to use with many people. The Google Form document will be built into Bridge and newly hired employees will first take this assessment before beginning their training. This data will be used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of employees prior to their official training beginning. Once employees begin their online training and enroll in their Bridge course, they will complete a short assessment at the end of each chapter. It will be expected that the employees will do significantly better than their pre-assessment and their knowledge on all of the areas tested will have improved. Data from their Bridge assessments can be compared to that of the pre-assessment to determine growth in all areas.

The data collected from the newly hired employees' training will help directors when making decisions on assigning employees to specific positions and locations within the park. Their scores, feedback, and personal preference will all be considered when placing employees in specific areas within the park and with specific teams. We want to ensure that teams work well together to maintain the effectiveness of the team. Data will also be used to

determine which areas newly hired employees will need more support or training on. For example, if data shows that employees' test scores in the area of safety are only increasing a small percentage after completing their training, we will revisit our training on this topic and work to ensure a stronger training program.

### **Returning Employees**

Returning employees will be required to complete a short training session through Bridge. This training will not be as long or as intense as their initial training, but will serve as a refresher for returning employees. They will also be expected to complete and pass an assessment that will evaluate their knowledge on all areas taught in the initial training. This assessment will be completed in Google Forms, so employees will receive their scores immediately after completing. Google Forms will be utilized because it provides a free and easy-to-use program for employees to use and for director's to quickly receive feedback. Using Google Forms for newly hired employees and returning employees will also allow director's to easily compare assessment scores and all data will be stored in one Google Drive account.

The program for returning employees will be slightly different from that of newly hired employees. Returning employees will complete the same assessment, but new questions will be incorporated into the test; these new questions will assess their ability to lead and mentor the newly hired employees. Returning employees will be asked specific situational questions about new hires and it will be expected that they have the knowledge and leadership skills to assist new hires. This assessment will be used to determine if the training and experiences that employees are receiving is providing long-term knowledge and skills.

The decision of placement for returning employees will differ from that of newly hired employees. Returning employees will have received basic training across all areas within the park and will have had experience within at least one area, so the decisions around where they will be placed will require more discussions among directors. Returning employees are expected to take on a small leadership role within the area that they are returning to, but directors within the park will decide what areas they may excel in based on their prior performance. Returning employees who demonstrated leadership skills, high assessment scores, and an understanding of their assigned area will be given the opportunity to advance to another position and take on more responsibility if they desire to. It will be the directors' responsibility to assign newly hired employees to work alongside experienced and independent returning employees so they can train and work together.

If, for any reason, a returning employee does not pass their assessment, their scores will be closely evaluated and their areas of need will be determined by which parts of the test they scored low in. For example, if a returning employee failed their assessment and most missed questions were in the area of safety, then this will be the area they must complete again in their online training. Data from returning employees who fail their assessment will be used to determine what areas within the initial training may need to be revisited and revised.

### **Proposed Budget**

The cost of the contract for this Nevada Park Service Training Program is \$46,620 for initial development and evaluation and \$70,390 for annual support and maintenance.

Resources Needed	Cost
1 Subject Matter Expert Support	60-day contract   \$20/hour   \$6,400 (ParkRangerEdu.org, 2021). A subject matter expert (SME), from the Nevada Park Service, will work with the T&D Specialist to ensure relevancy of the content.



	<p>A subject matter expert brings their own training and years of experience to the creation of the training that also ensures accuracy. The SME will give the T&amp;D Specialist feedback on the overall structure of the course from the staff member end as well as the general public user-end. The SME will work in tandem with the Course Designer. Since T&amp;D Specialists design for all disciplines, it is not expected they would have specific Park Service training or knowledge so the SME from the field is imperative to sound training.</p>
1 Training & Development Specialist	<p>120-day contract   \$31/hour   \$19,840 (OnetOnline.org, 2021). A Training &amp; Development (T&amp;D) Specialist will work with the SME and be responsible to determine the overall structure of the Nevada Park Service Training Program, determine what skills to cover and what technology and tools to utilize that will specifically address the clients' needs and best deliver the training content. The T&amp;D Specialist will also collect the data from the feedback and surveys and use such to make improvements or adjustments to the course design or content. The T&amp;D Specialist will also maintain and update the educational articles and content on the Training Home Page for leisure reading and more information.</p>
1 Videographer	<p>60-day contract   \$33/hour   \$10,560 (OnetOnline.org, 2021). A Videographer will shoot the videos for each of the training modules. The Videographer will work with the SME and T&amp;D Specialist to organize images for final production of the training material for upload to the website.</p>
1 Graphic Designer	<p>60-day contract   \$26/hour   \$8,320 (OnetOnline.org, 2021). A Graphic Designer will develop designs for a badging system. The Graphic Designer will work with the SME and T&amp;D Specialist to organize badging graphics for final production of the training material for upload to the website.</p>
1 Training Website Home Page	<p>(Google Sites) \$0 per year  The Training Website Home Page will be the location that Park Employees log in to complete the online portion of the Nevada Park Service Training Program. This Training Site Home Page will also offer current events and information/educational material for both Employees and Public users to browse.  When a Park Employee visits the Training Website Home Page, the employee will select the Staff button to access the training available only for Park Employees and it will redirect them to our Canvas</p>

	LMS. The General Public will then select the Public Education button to access the general education and it will redirect them to the Google Sites Training Page to gain access to the Nevada Park Service Training Program. <i>(This will also offer them a certificate of completion that the user may save/print to submit with their camping reservation at the National Parks)</i>
Survey Collection Website	Google Forms \$0 per year
Bridge LMS License (Learning + Performance)	\$9/month per user   \$16,200 for 150 users/year (GetBridge.com, 2021). Bridge is the Learning Management System (LMS) that Park Employees will use for completing the Nevada Park Service Training Program. Only the Park Employees will utilize Bridge as it will also house the online training modules. Inside the portal/app, the Employees will find their content training, testing, and surveys that must be completed before the LMS will unlock their certificates. This LMS has an app as part of the online package. <b>[This tier of license includes 24/7 tech support, which could significantly reduce IT support costs.]</b>
1 IT Support Personnel	IT support   \$52,690 per year (OnetOnline.org, 2021). The Tech Support specialist will be available to assist both Park Employees and General Public with login and account set up as well as troubleshoot any challenges encountered. Our IT Tech Support will be available 5 Days/Week 8 AM - 5 PM Mountain time. LMS tech support is available 24/7, so we expect the Park Service IT specialist to be available only during the standard workday. Our IT Support Personnel will share challenges and issues with the T&D Specialist which will also be beneficial as they continue to evaluate the Nevada Park Service Training Program, incorporating training and development feedback. <b>[If NV State Parks already employs IT support, this may be reduced.]</b>
Equipment (1 Laptop, 1 telephone line, 1 internet connection)	\$3,000 per person per year for 1 complete workstation. Administrative Equipment is needed to serve the Nevada Park Service Training Program. Since our IT Personnel are working remotely (no home office expense), each IT person will need a laptop, telephone line and internet access for the year. Laptop \$1500, Internet access (one year) \$720, Telephone line (one year) \$680 = \$3,000 per IT Person per year. <b>[As the Nevada Park Service Training Program continues to grow in users, it may be necessary to</b>

	increase the number of IT Support Personnel in the years to follow.]
--	--

## References

- Bridge LMS Pricing: Learning + Engagement: Performance Management*. Bridge. (2021, January 7). <https://www.getbridge.com/lms-pricing/>.
- Chyung, S. Y. (2008). Systematic Instructional Design. In *Foundations of Instructional and Performance Technology* (pp. 46-48). Amherst, MA: Human Resource Development Press.
- Find Your Next Adventure*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 18, 2021, from <http://parks.nv.gov/about/employment>
- Mergell, R. (2019, March 22). *Division of State Parks - Budget Account 4162* (Issue Brief). Retrieved July 18, 2021, from <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019/ExhibitDocument/OpenExhibitDocument?exhibitId=38464&fileDownloadName=Conservation%20and%20Natural%20Resources%20Division%20of%20State%20Parks%20Budget%20Presentation%20Robert%20Mergell.pdf>
- Park Ranger Jobs in Nevada: How to Become a Park Ranger in NV*. How to Become a Park Ranger | State and Federal Park Ranger Education. (2021, March 25). <https://www.parkrangeredu.org/nevada/#salary/>.
- Summary Report for: 13-1151.00 - Training and Development Specialists*. O\*NET OnLine. (2020). <https://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/13-1151.00>.
- Summary Report for: 15-1232.00 - Computer User Support Specialists*. O\*NET OnLine. (2020). <https://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/15-1232.00>.
- Summary Report for: 27-401024.00 - Graphic Designers*. O\*NET OnLine. (2020). <https://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/27-1024.00>.
- Summary Report for: 27-4032.00 - Film and Video Editors*. O\*NET OnLine. (2020). <https://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/27-4032.00>.