

Madeleine Smith

msmith2886@gmail.com

196 Carlisle Way
Benicia, CA

(707) 853-6011

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Arin Trook
Mentor Teacher
NatureBridge Yosemite
P.O. Box 487
Yosemite, CA 95389

Dear Arin:

My earliest memories of exploring the outdoors took place in Yosemite National Park. Every summer my family would rent a tent cabin in Curry Village and we would spend the week swimming in water holes, attending campfire programs and hiking around the valley. As I learn more about NatureBridge Yosemite, I realize that this organization is giving hundreds of kids the same opportunity I had to appreciate this special place. It seems as though this outdoor school would be the perfect fit to allow me to share my passion for nature with kids.

I find myself quite at home in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. I've worked in South Lake Tahoe for the Forest Service as an interpreter and as a Naturalist on the East Shore at Great Basin Outdoor School. I've also spent the 2010-2011 school year at Sierra Outdoor School where I taught natural history, but specialized in the cultural history of the area. I researched and developed a script focusing on what a woman who lived in this historic town of Columbia might say about her life during the time of the Gold Rush. I also presented a class centered on Miwok culture and their traditions. In elementary school, any mention of life in "the old days" would improve my listening skills greatly. So, I especially like sharing this information with others.

In the summers, I can be found in Southeast Alaska working as a Forest Service interpreter for the community of Wrangell. The majority of summer programs are directed towards teaching local children about the flora and fauna right in their own backyard. This fall I designed and presented several conservation education programs for elementary classrooms of the Wrangell Unified School District. These were unique programs based on the grade level and state standards. I am constantly choosing different topics and taking new spins on old ideas in my summer and school programs, because many of the same kids attend. I enjoy being involved in the community of Wrangell and feeling as though I make a difference to the kids as I watch them grow year after year.

The several years I've been involved in the field of conservation education have reaffirmed that I want a career in environmental education. I believe NatureBridge Yosemite could help me expand my skills. In turn, I believe I could contribute my experience in this field and the flexibility I use in educating to help further the mission of NatureBridge Yosemite. It would be amazing to come full circle from my beginning memories at Yosemite, to be able to share them with kids and spark an appreciation in the place that first affected me. I look forward to learning more about a possible job opportunity. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Madeleine Smith

"Unless. Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." –The Lorax