

Position Description: Summer Road Cook

This educator and cook position at Cottonwood Gulch works with a small staff team to implement outdoor educational programs and the mission of Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions (CGE). Our mission is to provide outdoor learning adventures to youth of all backgrounds that foster personal growth, strengthen community, and inspire stewardship of the natural world. We have been leading outdoor expeditions since 1926, and currently work with hundreds of students (or “trekkers,” as we call them) each year. We use the outdoors as our classroom to explore science, culture, history, art, and adventure in New Mexico and surrounding states, all with the goal of inspiring personal growth and a strong community. During the school year, we partner with more than 30 schools and nonprofits, primarily serving New Mexico students in grades 1-12 on trips ranging from one day to two weeks. During the summer, we run multi-week expeditions for 8-18 year olds. All this totals about 10,000 field days each year, a thriving “Gulch Community,” and hundreds of lives impacted for the better.



Job Objective: The Road Cook is the member of the group staff team who designs, purchases, cooks and adheres to the food budget for their designated Expedition. Road cooks are tasked with a big job and work with the staff team to create a menu which takes into account nutrition, caloric needs of trekkers, dietary restrictions, time restraints, and logistical realities of backcountry cooking. They accompany a group on their travels around the Southwest. It is a full-time, 24/7 residential position throughout the summer. All road cooks should plan to find ways to involve trekkers as part of their regular routine.

Responsibilities:

Responsibilities specific to this role:

- Educate, impart new ideas, and inspire trekkers to learn to cook
- Design an expedition menu during staff training; follow all CGE food safety guidelines and specifications
- Collaborate with Basecamp cooks and Leadership Staff to make appropriate food orders
- Manage a food budget in collaboration with the Group Leader
- Cook food for groups of 10-20 people in an outdoor kitchen with a camp stove
- Coordinate to find appropriate times to resupply for fresh food
- Develop an organized system to store, pack, manage leftovers, keep food cold, etc.
- Assist in preparing/cooking/dehydrating meals for backcountry settings
- Work within the scope of dietary restrictions, nutrition, and budget to achieve the highest quality possible

Responsibilities of all Gulch staff:

- Plan and execute effective outdoor programming in the field and at CGE’s Basecamp. Actively seek out and participate in opportunistic learning opportunities
- Provide leadership and support to outdoor education expeditions across the American Southwest, including in frontcountry and backcountry settings (depending on the group), and at CGE’s Basecamp
- Manage risk in line with CGE’s practices and policies; provide medical care within trained scope of practice
- Participate in the maintenance and repair of our gear fleet
- Teach LNT principles and environmental ethics to groups of youth
- Drive large vehicles (pickup trucks, 15-passenger vans) on a variety of roads
- Regularly attend, support, and assist with meals, nightly campfires, games on the field, staff meetings
- Collaborate to create a positive environment conducive to learning, growth, and fun
- Maintain professional relationships with CGE partners & community members including land managers

Qualifications:

- Applicants must be at least 21 years of age by the position start date and possess a valid driver's license. Must have a clean driving history and be able to meet the criteria for CGE vehicle insurance coverage.
- Experience as an educator, leader, risk manager, group cook, artist, scientist, and/or adventurer.
- Wilderness First Aid (WFA); WFR/WEMT preferred. If hired, the CGE will provide WFA certification
- Strong organizational skills; experience with Google Drive preferred.
- During the summer, must be able to live at our Basecamp near Thoreau, NM, or travel with a group. Work hours are frequently outside of traditional office hours.
- Ability to communicate effectively and professionally with a wide range of audiences (fellow staff, community members, students, etc.).
- We believe outdoor education takes many different forms; your unique skills and experiences will be considered and valued!

Starting Date: Staff training begins June 1st. Must be available June 2 - August 10.

Work Location and Schedule: Thoreau, NM, with travel throughout the state and southwest US, including periods of time camping in frontcountry and backcountry settings. Each expedition has a different schedule. Some groups will be out on the road for up to five weeks at a time, while others are out for only 4 days. Time off will be scheduled while the expedition is in Basecamp.

Criminal Background Check: CGE requires criminal background checks from all employees.

Physical Requirements: Ability to hike up to 10 miles a day on uneven surfaces and carry a pack up to 50 pounds, sleep in a tent or open-air cabin accessed by stairs, work at a desk, talk on the phone, and use a computer.

Compensation: Salary ranges from \$1850-\$2500/month, depending on experience, education, and certifications. Room and board provided at Thoreau Basecamp throughout the summer. \$250 travel stipend available if traveling more than 500 miles. Various Pro Deals available to all staff.

Inclusive and Welcoming Environment

CGE is an equal opportunity employer and does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender identity or expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation, mental or physical handicap, serious medical condition, or military status in any of its activities or operations. Moreover, Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions believes in the learning, growth and healing that can take place in the outdoors. We also recognize that access to programs like ours—along with access to any green space, clean air and water, and healthy food—continues to be a privilege rather than a right. CGE recognizes that in outdoor spaces, the voices and work of people of color, people from working class backgrounds, Indigenous people, women, and LGBTQ+ individuals have been often overlooked and marginalized. Therefore, we encourage applications from people in these groups, and all people, regardless of background.