An Interview with the City of Billings Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Department

Edited by Emily Pritchard

Hannah Cole, Recreation Specialist with the City of Billings Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Department, talks about the role of UM interns and the variety of ways students can get involved with their office. “Our division is always looking for ways to advance our service or improve upon what already exists. We take pride in our ability to connect and serve the community in which we live in.”

What does the Billings Parks & Recreation program offer the public?

“In the Recreation division, we offer special interest, sports, fitness and outdoor recreation programs for infant to active senior adults. May through September seems to be our busiest time of year with ample programs utilizing the great Montana outdoors! From overnight camping with 8-15 year olds, to senior day hikes, Billings Parks and Recreation has something for everyone and strives to provide the highest quality recreation programs!”

Why are UM interns important for your department?

“In seasonal recreation positions, there’s always a roll over in staffing. Utilizing a UM intern increases the quality of our programs, offers hand’s on experience for the intern and provides the City of Billings with staff that have a background in a related field.”

Do you offer a flexible work schedule for interns?

“One of the greatest perks of our seasonal positions is the flexibility within the position. A student intern, or any seasonal employee, can work up to 40 hours per week and around any of their other obligations.”

Are the internships paid? What kind of majors are you looking for?

“The internship positions ARE PAID [and] Education and Recreation Leadership (or related field) are the most successful majors in our department.”
What is the work environment like for a student intern?

“Due to the nature of all our programs, the work environment here at the City of Billings Parks and Recreation is very self-directed. Staff needs to be reliable and responsible. Our culture focuses on safety first, fun second.”

Do you offer additional opportunities outside of a summer internship?

“Throughout the year the recreation division is constantly looking to hire coaches, gym supervisors, program leads, office assistants and child care specialists. Upon completion of the internship, there’s always another position becoming available to the staff.”

Does your company provide other experiences for students, i.e., research, civic engagement, global experiences, and/or professional development?

“At any time a student wishes to invest their internship hours into research, civic engagement or global experiences, our office is able to make that happen within the Billings area. Our division is always looking for ways to advance our service or improve upon what already exists. We take pride in our ability to connect and serve the community in which we live in. In order to do that, we do conduct research and immerse ourselves into the Billings community.”

“Billings Parks and Recreation does offer in-house American Red Cross classes for those interested in obtaining certifications. There is also ample exposure to aquatics, rope climbing, white water rafting, camping, first aid and much, much more!”

Are there any possible job/internship opportunities available now or in the future?

“Heading into Fall 2014, we have job opportunities for coaches, counselors, child care instructors, sports specific skill instructors, large event supervisors and more! All positions are listed as Seasonal Part-Time positions.” (Check Griz eRecruiting or contact Hannah directly to find out about the latest listings!)
Do you have any advice for students looking to get an internship with your office?

“My advice for students applying for any position with the City of Billings Parks and Recreation is to be completely honest about your skillset and desired outcomes from obtaining any position. Communication is key if you wish to gain anything from this experience.”

For more information about this employer, visit BillingsParks.org or contact Hannah Cole directly at 406-657-8493.