

Introduction Podcast Transcript

Addison: Hello, my name is Addison Fisher and I am here with ...

Peter: Peter Ostroskie, Interpreter I at Prairie City State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA)

Addison: I'd like to welcome you to our first inaugural podcast. So, Peter can you explain what exactly it is you do for Prairie City.

P: Sure, my job with Prairie City is based with education, outreach and helping people to go and be inspired about their parks. How we do that is through various messages and themes of safety along with activities that we put on for kids around the parks and with the SVRA's it's a very interesting spot to be in.

A: So, what type of activities do you do for the kids here or adults also?

P: For the adults, we'll start there. We do have trainings for the adults to teach them how to use their equipment. We provide ATV safety classes we also have a motorcycle safety class and we even have one that is for Recreational Off-Highway Vehicles which are called ROV's or Side by Sides they come by different names. For the kids, we do a lot of things like setting up a pop-up talking about the animals here in the park. We also have the R/C cars that teach kids about 4x4's and getting them use to being able to maneuver and pick lines and things like that so we keep with our message of safety and recreation but we also keep with our message of protecting the natural and cultural resources found here in the park.

A: Why don't you tell me a little bit about yourself Peter, how did you come into this position what made you want to become an Interpreter?

P: So, everything was in college. I had a professor who brought to light what we were doing earning our degrees, my degree is in history. So, our professor had us raise our hands in class basically saying who wants to be a teacher raise your hand, who wants to be a professor raise your hand and he saw most of the class raise their hands and he said I guarantee you about 5 of you will become teachers or professors in history. That's when I knew I had to pick a different avenue, so I found a class called public history and that introduced me to other ways to use my history degree in fields like Parks and Recreation or Nonprofits and so that started me down my path. My first job in Interpretation was in San Jose it was at History San Jose we were doing a lot of the school programs teaching kids about the Mexican Period of California (1822-1846) the Victorian era of California (1840-1890) we also did Westward expansion (1840-1860) of California as well. Then I had a friend she works out at Angel Island State Park who helped me get my first Parks job as a Park Aide at Angel Island then from there on I just continued down the path of doing Interpretation with the parks. That's how I got my start. I finally got a position as an Interpreter I here at Prairie City where, an Interpreter is a permanent position and where a lot of people are trying to get after because it kind of is a lot of fun to do.

A: Yea, so what would you say is your favorite thing about this job?

P: My favorite thing about this job is meeting the visitors. It's because our visitors are so passionate. They're passionate in the way that they really want to protect their parks and places where they come and recreate. In non-OHV parks, it's about protecting and conserving

the resources. With OHV parks it's about conserving places where they ride being able to have land so that their kids can come and ride, so for me it's meeting the visitors the other fun part is being trained on Off-Highway Vehicles and having that as a tool in your tool belt.

A: For sure, defiantly, so if someone wanted your position how would they go about it?

P: Trying to get an Interpreter I position, first thing you need to do is go to college and get the degree. The degree can be in History, Social Sciences, Parks and Rec specialists' things like that. Things you can do now are start working with your parks, start working as a volunteer, move into seasonal positions like Park Aides those are the men and women who run the gates and collect fees, you can work in maintenance or anything else like that then slowly figuring out if Interpretation is right for you by talking to the Interpreter and talking to folks. Maybe try your hand at doing a program or helping out with a program and so if that is the way you want to go then you have to apply with the state take a test, get on a list, then from that list you get selected by the parks that you go and interview at. That's how you get your start and hopefully someone gives you a break so that you can get in and get a position.

A: Sounds like it's a very long process.

P: It is!

A: So how long have you been here at Prairie City?

P: I've only been here since about March of 2016. So, what is that? March, April, May, June, July...

A: So about 3 months

P: 4 or 5 months. About that long.

A: What are your plans for Prairie City Interpretive wise?

P: So, Interpretive wise one of the main things we've been looking at doing and we already started doing it is getting bigger into the social media scenes. Especially during the summer months when we don't have high visitation. The other thing we are looking at doing is keeping with our Special Event days: Visitor Appreciation also with our Headlight Festival. Then also trying to work it so that we can do a couple different programs in the park, since I am the only Interpreter here I'm looking at doing a lot of self-guided things that people can go ahead and do it then also turning it so that it is meaningful to people. Then in another year or two convince my boss to hire on a seasonal or two to come help me then we can grow from there. But, that's the start for this year.

A: Alright well that sounds very exciting. So, once again my name is Addison and this is Peter and for the rest of this Podcast series we will be cohosts with various different people coming in talking about different features of the park and what the park itself has to offer. So, if you're interested in any of this feel free to listen to the next few podcasts and if you have any questions you would like us to answer on some of the podcasts or any future podcasts feel free to visit and message us on our Facebook: Prairie City OHV Park (Prairie City State Vehicular Recreation Area).