

# Boojum Institute for Experiential Education

## Information for Prospective Field Staff

### Who we are and what we do:

The Boojum Institute for Experiential Education offers outdoor programs that provide the opportunity for personal growth, leadership development and environmental education in a variety of wilderness and basecamp settings throughout California and the Southwest.

Participants on Boojum programs are challenged to develop personal skills in leadership, communication, team building and self-confidence through facilitated adventure experiences. The environmental education component of Boojum programs explores natural history through hands-on investigation, allowing the participant to develop a relationship with the environment and providing insight into responsible environmental behavior and the role humans play in the natural world. The Institute is dedicated to personal and organizational development through unlocking potential, promoting self-discovery and inspiring growth.



The Boojum Institute offers three major types of programs:

- Experiential outdoor education courses for public and independent school students
- Leadership development and organizational development programs
- Adventure Challenge Programs for urban and rural youth at-risk populations

Since its founding in 1975, over 80,000 youth and young adults have participated in its base camp, rock climbing, challenge course (ropes course), canoeing, sea kayaking and backpacking programs in locations such as Joshua Tree National Park; Idyllwild; Point Reyes National Seashore; Channel Islands National Park; Yosemite National Park; the lower Colorado River and Lake Mead; Baja California; and the Sierra Nevada, San Bernardino, Santa Cruz and San Jacinto Mountains.

The Boojum Institute is based in the town of Anza in southern California, about 100 miles east of Los Angeles. Boojum administrative office, logistics base, and staff housing are all at the headquarters campus. Planning and course prep work are done there for Course Directors and logisticians, and all equipment is issued from there as well. The majority of our courses are field-based, and Instructors would begin their course at a campground or trailhead near the course area. Boojum also uses a number of residential camp facilities throughout California on a part-time basis for conducting basecamp programs. Depending on the season we employ up to six full time staff, 45 seasonal field and logistical staff and eight interns.

### The Boojum Institute Mission:

To unlock potential,  
Promote self discovery and  
Inspire growth.



### Boojum Programs:

Boojum Programs visit and include studies of the three major ecosystems (mountain, desert and ocean) in the state of California. Course areas include Joshua Tree National Park; Sequoia and Kings Canyon

National Park; Yosemite National Park; Point Reyes National Seashore; Channel Islands National Park; the Sierra Nevada, Santa Cruz, San Bernardino and San Jacinto mountains, and Lake Mead and the lower Colorado River. Boojum program course settings are selected based on the age of the participants and the goals of the program. These settings include residential camping programs, basecamp camping programs and expedition-style courses. Each setting provides the appropriate level of physical and developmental challenge for the group of participants. Each Boojum program includes curriculum components in outdoor skills development, environmental education, group facilitation, and team-building. Our typical Outdoor Education programs are with 4<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders from private and public schools in Los Angeles and throughout southern California. Trips commonly last from two to five days. Backcountry courses run with approximately 10 to 12 participants, a school chaperone, a lead Instructor, and an intern/assistant instructor. Residential and frontcountry programs run with 10-15 participants, a school chaperone, and a single lead Instructor. Challenge course programs run from one half to four days in length, with youth, college, corporate and other adult populations. Our primary field seasons are the spring and fall.

### Who we are looking for:

Boojum Instructors provide facilitation and instruction in outdoor skills, natural history, environmental awareness, challenge course activities, and life skills in order to *unlock potential, promote self-discovery and inspire growth* in our students. The Boojum Instructor is a role model, skills trainer, facilitator, teacher, risk manager, counselor and wilderness leader.

Boojum Instructors should have balanced proficiency in communication and technical skills. Technical skills include: minimum impact techniques, rock climbing, canoeing, sea kayaking, backpacking, backcountry travel and navigation, time management, organization, leadership, judgment, and planning. Communication skills encompass such abilities as: interpreting group dynamics, listening and giving feedback, facilitation, teaching, role modeling, choosing proper debrief techniques and modifying them when appropriate. Qualified staff will also have skills in curriculum and lesson plan development and implementation, course logistics operations, and field risk management.

We seek both full-time and part-time staff for our seasonal field positions.

Instructor qualifications include: Minimum 21 years of age. Basic First Aid and CPR for some residential program instructors and for Challenge Course facilitators. For front- and back-country programs, current Wilderness Advanced First Aid (Wilderness First Responder certification strongly preferred), preferably from WMA, WMI, or SOLO. Proof of completion of a CPR course including adult, child, and two-person CPR. Outdoor teaching experience with adults and youth. Skills in: backcountry travel, rock climbing, flatwater canoeing, sea kayaking, LNT, team-building initiatives, environmental education and interpretation, and/or ropes course facilitation. Understanding of California and Southwest ecology and natural history preferred. Bachelor's degree in outdoor education or related field preferred. Excellent communication, leadership and teamwork skills. Proven ability to safely manage groups in the field.

AMGA Top Rope Site Manager certification, British Canoe Union/American Canoeing Association certification, teaching credentials and higher education degrees are desired. Previous professional experience in outdoor education is required.

### What you can expect:

Upon your arrival at Boojum you will go through our seasonal staff training with other Boojum staff members. The purpose of our staff training is to provide insight into the upcoming programs for new and returning staff, begin to develop a community of instructors and staff who shall be working closely during the season, and to introduce staff to the mission, philosophies and operations of the Boojum Institute. Training is unpaid and without charge; it typically is a week long.



Objectives for staff training include familiarization with team challenge courses, experiential education techniques, natural history overviews, group process and facilitation skills training, review of Boojum policies and procedures and administrative and logistical operations. There will be fun to be had as well!

Pay for Field Instructors is \$80-\$160 per diem. Food and housing are provided while on course. Limited staff housing may be available for out-of-area staff between courses. Boojum offers a 403(b) retirement plan and extensive professional purchase program where staff may acquire outdoor equipment at a steeply discounted cost.

Boojum offers a wide variety of programs. Staff who are competent in multiple skills or modes of travel—climbing, sea kayaking, challenge course facilitation, backpacking, expeditionary flatwater canoeing—can expect to have a wide variety of courses available to them. A typical season might see six weeks of work interspersed over two or three months, with time off between courses for recreation, relaxation, and other pursuits.

### How to apply:

If you are interested in a field staff position at the Boojum Institute, we would love to hear from you. Submit a full cover letter, resume, backcountry resume, copies of wilderness medicine and CPR certifications, a completed application, and two to three references from past employers or teachers. Letters of reference are acceptable as long as they are applicable to the position. We cannot process applications until all materials have been received at our office. Send application packets to the Boojum office. The application and reference forms can be downloaded in Adobe Acrobat form at [www.boojum.org](http://www.boojum.org).

### Important dates:

Our primary seasons are the fall and spring. Fall season typically starts with staff training in mid to late August; courses run August through early November. The spring season starts with staff training in late February or early March; the season ends at the beginning of June. While we accept applications on a rolling basis, we begin the fall hiring in June and spring hiring in January, so applications received by June (for fall) and January (for spring) are most likely to be successful.

Thank you for your interest in the Boojum Institute. We look forward to hearing from you!

