



## Park Ranger

### **BACJ related certificates and concentrations:**

- Law Enforcement certificate/concentration

### **BACJ-related courses:**

- CRJU 4043 - Law Enforcement (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 4540 - Evidence-Based Approaches in Law Enforcement (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 3310 - Contemporary Issues in Law Enforcement (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 3320 - Police-Community Relations (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 3520 - Juvenile Justice (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 3530 - Juvenile Delinquency (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 4014 - Federal Wildlife and Fisheries Investigations (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 4410 - Criminal Law and Constitutional Procedures (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 4430 - Law and Society (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 4450 - Homeland Security (3 credit hours)
- CRJU 4600 - Special Topics (3 credit hours) - some of these topics are law enforcement related

**Complementary/recommended minors:** Biology, Ecology, Spanish, English Writing, Communication

**Recommended extracurricular activities and experiences:** Volunteering with the state parks service, Alpha Phi Sigma Criminal Justice Honor Society, study abroad, other community involvement and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) experiences such as a student association or club, volunteering in the community, or other experiences that expose you to communities and cultivate a service-minded perspective.

**Internship:** Internships with parks services are highly recommended to get your foot in the door and be a competitive candidate. Other possible avenues include starting with a seasonal or temporary position, which will make you far more competitive than not utilizing any of these opportunities.

**Duties and Responsibilities:** A Park Ranger attends to many diverse duties, but in general they are hired to provide public safety, natural resource protection, and administrative management of Federal or State park areas. Depending on a variety of factors they may engage in law enforcement, environmental education, emergency medical services, search and rescue, supervise temp/seasonal/volunteer employees, administrative duties and reports, work on trails, boating/rafting/snowmobiles, etc., and wildfires. This is not an exhaustive list of park ranger duties.

**Work Environment:** The work environment varies-however, it tends to be a more active position less likely to be found behind a desk. All ranger positions will have a writing component, however, so writing skills are an important facet of this position. A park ranger will likely spend quite a bit of their time outdoors in every type of weather. This may also be a very independent position, separate from other rangers at times, or in collaboration with other rangers depending on the position, park and circumstance.

**Work Schedule:** Depending on the park size, location and operations, the work schedule may occur in shifts covering a 24-hour/7 days a week period often resulting in longer hours but fewer work days. Overtime is common for park rangers, as a call for service or other front-line situation may keep a ranger on duty past their scheduled shift end time. Deputies are likely to work weekends and holidays. Shifts may be different at each park, and by the nature of their duties.

**Career Path/Promotion:** Generally, successful park rangers may advance to supervisory or possibly administrative positions. As there are parks maintained at all levels of government, park rangers could work at the local, state or federal level.

**Education, Training and Certification:** A Bachelor's degree is required, in any major. Competitive applicants will have degree's in biology, ecology, earth sciences, environmental science, forestry, geology, natural resource management, outdoor recreation management, or other closely related field. Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certification is required for park rangers. Park rangers typically have to pass a physical assessment, and extensive background check. Drug use may greatly inhibit an applicant's ability to pass a background check and students are encouraged to research employment disqualifiers as early as possible in their career search.

**Special Considerations:** Most law enforcement related positions require extensive background checks and/or psychological examinations as part of the hiring process. Those interested in working in law enforcement of any kind should be aware that drug use and criminal activity may greatly inhibit their ability to work in the field. Each agency has their own requirements and students are encouraged to conduct research as early as possible to better understand possible eliminating employment factors.

**Skills and Competencies:** Public speaking, communication, problem solving, attention to detail, listening skills, observation, writing, service mindset, emotional intelligence, and analytical skills.

**Colorado Salary Averages:**

Bottom 10%: \$31,947

Top 10%: \$67,198

Median: \$46,937

**Median Salary in U.S. as of 2021**

\$41,944 per year