



Press Release

9 November 2009

Volunteer USA Environmental Project Proves Popular

A new volunteer program focussed on environmental conservation in America is striking real interest in Australians researching overseas volunteer options.

Non-profit organisation International Exchange Programs (IEP) launched their *Volunteer USA* program less than a year ago and has already seen its popularity exceed that of other volunteer programs to Peru, Costa Rica, South Africa and Cambodia.

The *Volunteer USA* program differs from other projects offered by the company as it is entirely focussed on environmental conservation such as trail maintenance, re-vegetation and protecting endangered species.

IEP's Marketing Manager, Tennille Balaz, believes it is an increasing interest in 'going Green' and making a difference, combined with the appeal of spending 12 weeks living in the United States without requiring a work visa, that has led to such strong interest in this particular volunteer program.

"Many of our other volunteer options focus on making a difference in a local community through teaching or social work, while this is a chance for Australians with a passion for the environment to get involved and work on projects with definite goals – projects where they can see the end result," Ms Balaz said.

IEP participant Travis Cameron recently joined the *Volunteer USA* program after researching different working holiday and volunteer options overseas.

Travis explained, *"Volunteering has become a fast growing part of my life. I love the fact I can help people do what might seem impossible on their own; especially for needs regarding environmental sustainability. So, when I developed the idea of travelling, I was drawn towards many student and work travel programs and agencies. It wasn't until I found the Volunteer USA program which really caught my attention,"* he said.

"America has always been a place I thought of and dreamt of visiting. The people, the society, culture, landscape and national parks. The wildlife and the weather. Growing up in a middle-class family made it unlikely that I would ever go as a child. Now I have become a young man, I make my own money and have the world to explore. I really do like to think the world is my oyster. The Volunteer USA program is making a dream of mine come to fruition."

Volunteers are required to be fit, healthy and prepared for some hard work. While working on the projects, participants will camp on location in places like Grand Canyon National Park, Yosemite National Park, Kings Canyon and Lake Mead National Park, surrounded by spectacular natural scenery. Between projects they will be based in shared accommodation in either Flagstaff, Arizona or Santa Cruz, California, with plenty of time to explore the USA on days off.

The *Volunteer USA* option is a unique, short term opportunity to experience American culture, wildlife and scenery while making a worthwhile contribution. Travis Cameron is more than ready for the challenge.

"I truly believe that it's not until you're in the heart of a country that you experience the real pleasures and diversity of that particular place," Travis explained and while he plans for his big adventure he looks forward to the day when he can say, *"I've been to America and made a difference that will benefit the future."*

Placements start at AU\$1300 for 12 weeks including a refundable \$500 deposit.

www.iep.org.au 1300 300 912

ENDS

Media Contact

Naomi Joyce-Marketing/PR Coordinator

naomi.joyce@iep.org.au

02 9299 0444

www.iep.org.au