

MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAM

By Sam Maslow

A few summers ago I completed my first Junior Ranger program at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (MO) and since I've been participating in Junior Ranger National Park Service sites building a large collection of Junior Ranger badges and patches. My family plans trips so I can earn badges and patches at parks we haven't visited yet.

Because I like the Junior Ranger program so much, I decided to create my own Web site about it: www.juniorranger.info where I display my badges and patches.

The Junior Ranger activity booklets are great at teaching me interesting stuff I never knew before.

At Saguaro National Park (AZ), the Junior Ranger program taught me about American deserts and desert animals. For example, I learned that the jackrabbit has tall ears to reflect the sun; Saguaro Cactus grow from tiny seeds up to about 40 feet living to be 150 or 200 years old.

Fascinated with the Civil War, I enjoyed Petersburg National Battlefield (VA) while learning about Ulysses Grant's army, military



strategy, soldiers' clothes, guns, and flag signaling. I pretended that I was a soldier and wrote a letter home.

Right now, I have more than 250 badges and patches with plans to keep visiting and collecting until I get one from every National Park.



WebRangers

Stuck at home on a rainy day? You can still be a part of the National Park Junior Ranger Program through WebRangers – the online junior ranger program. Visit the site, and become a member of a quickly growing community of young people interested in the world around them and involved with their nation's natural, cultural and historical resources – WebRangers!

Just visit www.nps.gov/webrangers to play games and learn about the National Parks. The real fun begins when you sign up to become a WebRanger. Print out a personalized membership card, select your own ranger station (even pick the view from your window!) to your base of operations. Use the tools in the ranger station to search for activities, send postcards to your friends, and share your own park photos and stories with other WebRangers.

As you complete activities, your ranger station allows you to track your achievements and earn rewards.

You can:

- * Help a baby turtle reach the sea
- * Be a spy during the Revolutionary War
- * Build a train and travel through time and space to solve National Park mysteries
- * Or even, experience life as a puma.