



**INFORMATION PACKAGE
APPLICANTS FOR INTERNSHIPS**

**ST EUSTATIUS NATIONAL PARKS
FOUNDATION**

**STATIA MARINE PARK INTERNSHIP
QUILL NATIONAL PARK INTERNSHIP
BOTANICAL GARDEN INTERNSHIP**

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Island Details:

The work is based on the island of St. Eustatius, Netherlands Antilles, Caribbean. The island is only 8 km long and 3 km wide with a population of approximately 3300 people. The island is known for its amazing diving and snorkeling opportunities, as well as for its hiking trails in the National Parks, and for its old Dutch colonial buildings and forts.

STENAPA (St. Eustatius National Parks Foundation) manages both the Quill National Park, which consists of the dormant volcano, the Quill and the limestone foundation, the White Wall; the Boven Hills National Park; as well as the St. Eustatius Marine Park (SEMP). Interns stay in shared bedrooms in a house with basic amenities in the Miriam Schmidt Botanical Garden, which is also managed by the St. Eustatius National Parks Foundation (STENAPA). For further information and a background on STENAPA, please visit our website at: www.statiapark.org

There are usually three interns at any one time heading day to day activities on the three main programmes of STENAPA: the Quill/Boven National Parks, the Marine Park and the Botanical Gardens. The interns share the house at the botanical gardens. Interns usually stay for 4-6 months, or longer at their request. Interns have a fair amount of responsibility for their programme area and also report directly to the Manager with weekly reporting meetings. These meetings provide an opportunity to learn more about the different areas of activities of the National Parks.

There is a separate team of approximately 8 volunteers who come through the organization *Working Abroad* (visit their website www.workingabroad.com for more information) who assist on the three areas of the Park, and who work alongside interns (and guided by the interns in their respective areas). The volunteers camp at the botanical gardens and use the same kitchen and bathroom facilities as the interns. The facilities are basic with a kitchen, 1 toilet and 1 shower. There is usually a problem with water supply as all water at the gardens is rainwater and interns are often requested to shower at the national park office in town.

The work of interns centers upon the three main areas:

1. **National Park Intern** is responsible for maintenance of trails in the Quill National Park. There is a network of six trails, some of which are maintained more regularly than others due to visitor demand. One of the latest trails to be completed was the crater trail. The intern and team of volunteers started this trail in January 2003. They completed the steps and boardwalk across steep and unstable slopes near the rim of the crater and leading down to rainforest inside the crater. They have also been preparing signs to guide walkers. The crater trail is now complete, safe, and inviting for tourists, and was officially opened in June. Another new trail completed recently is the Bird Observation trail at the Botanical Garden. The trail maintenance group is now working on the Lower Quill trail. This trail originates at the trail head near the highest houses out of town, and meanders up the outside of the crater until it reaches the lowest point of the crater rim. The trail has been washed out and eroded, and many natural steps, benches and rainwater gulleys will be built in order to extend the life of the trail and make it safer for hikers. We try to build steps and reinforce slopes with natural stones and dead wood as much as possible, rather than use imported materials.

Trail work is conducted on 3-4 days per week and a number of volunteers from the *Working Abroad* programme usually assist the intern in the morning hours. During afternoons or days without assistance from other volunteers, the intern usually

prepares interpretation boards, signage and works on particular projects during the rest of the week. Assistance is also provided from the Assistant Manager of STENAPA and a number of resident island volunteers. Besides the trails, the Intern is asked to staff the office 1 weekend morning and also assist the staff in the junior ranger programme (when on trails), educational visits to the Gardens and the schools educational programme

The majority of the work in this position involves lots of physical activity in the hot sun. Applicants will therefore need to be physically fit. Preference is given to applicants with experience in trail maintenance and team leadership. Additional skills like carpentry, chain saw operation and/or small engine maintenance would be an advantage.

- 2. Botanical Garden Intern** – work is underway to complete Phase 1 of the Botanical Gardens and it is hoped that this will be complete by end 2004. Interns contribute towards making the mission of the Miriam Schmidt Botanical Garden (conservation, education, and preservation) possible. Phase I completion will include expanding the greenhouse to propagate more endangered and native species, and planting them out to the gardens during the rainy season; creation of a palm garden; maintenance and improvement of a look out garden; removal of invasive exotic species which choke and kill young plants; landscaping of gardens; maintenance of the three wind breaks; and preparation of a path/planting of cacti to maintain the perimeter fence and ensure that free roaming livestock cannot enter the gardens. Daily activities include watering and weeding.

The intern is responsible for coordination of Phase I activities, planning and application for the next phase and reports to the Manager. There is also an Advisory Committee from the Board of STENAPA who meets with the manager once per month and the intern usually attends part of that meeting. A team of 2-4 volunteers from *Working Abroad* usually assist the intern each weekday morning with projects in the Gardens. Besides the Gardens, the Intern is asked to staff the office in the afternoons and 1 weekend morning and also assist the staff in the junior ranger programme (when at Botanical Gardens), educational visits to the Gardens and the schools educational programme.

The majority of the work in this position involves lots of physical activity in the garden in the hot sun. Applicants will therefore need to be physically fit. Gardening experience is required and experience of leading a team of adults is preferred. A knowledge of tropical plants would be useful but is not essential. Additional skills like carpentry, plumbing, electrics and/or small engine maintenance would be an advantage.

- 3. Marine Park Intern** – is qualified to PADI Rescue level to assure competence in diving. The intern assists the Manager and Rangers in day to day Marine Park duties which include maintaining/installing dive/yacht moorings, visiting live-aboard supervision, helping on research projects, giving educational talks in schools, assisting on snorkel club and the junior ranger programme, assisting with National Park office administration, and collection of Marine Park fees. They also assist on nighttime patrols for the sea turtle conservation programme: sea turtles (leatherback) on Statia begin nesting in late April and continue until November on Statia's Zeelandia beach. Other turtles (Green, Hawksbill and Loggerhead) nest on Zeelandia beach from June. Outside of the main nesting season, daily monitoring of the beach takes place in teams of two.

Additionally, each intern is assigned a personal project, ranging from a research or monitoring project, to education/school project, and they are expected to work on this project independently (with supervision/assistance when needed) so that the project is concluded before end of the internship. Past projects have included a fishery baseline study, conch population assessment, re-design of the signage for the Quill National Park, preparation of signs for the Botanical Garden, design of the landscaping plan for the Lookout Garden, land crab population count, bird survey.

In general, interns work five days a week – 40 hours per week though this varies with turtle nesting season. Interns work from 0700-1600hrs (National Park, Botanical Garden) or 0800-1700hrs (Marine Park), and work with the team of volunteers from *Working Abroad* from 7am until 12noon from Monday until Friday. Afternoon activities are spent on National Park activities (such as a meeting, schools' visit, snorkel club, junior ranger club or guided hike), administration/office work, and individual projects. Interns can use the office internet for email purposes late afternoon time before the office closes.

Food, Lodging, & Transport:

You will be provided with a bed in the shared house (with other interns) in the botanical garden. You have a clear view of St. Kitts from the garden and miles and miles of sea all around. You will have access to all basic facilities, such as shower, running toilet, gas stove, fridge, and bottled water. The kitchen in the botanical garden is basic but is equipped with lots of plates, cutlery, pots etc. Recently, volunteers and interns have been showering at the national park office in the afternoons due to water shortage at the botanical gardens during the dry season.

STENAPA provides interns with a truck to use in evenings and at weekends (and for work) and pays for all the costs of the truck, including all fuel. STENAPA also pays for fuel for the kitchen fridge and stove, and provides interns with bottled water. Unfortunately, STENAPA doesn't have enough funding to provide food or drinks for interns. Interns also need to provide their own travel insurance. STENAPA is able to provide a small stipend (equivalent to \$75/month) due to the interns' roles in volunteer coordination.

Food costs vary with interns and their choice of food. Generally, we suggest a budget of \$50-\$75 per week but this is a very generous amount (for food and toiletries) if you cook your own food most of the time and don't drink too much alcohol. Usually the volunteers and interns pool funds into a kitty and organize their cooking together. Food can be bought in the few supermarkets on Statia, from a bakery and also at the bi-weekly meet market. There are a few restaurants on the island, one cheap hamburger bar, apart from that, its pretty quiet on the island (except during university term time when medical students are on island). One of the local bars has also established a STENAPA night with cheap dinner and beer specials for the volunteers. Interns have access to a shared Jeep which they use to get from A to B around the island, to the botanical garden, to the trail head and so on. It is up to the interns to arrange Jeep use to suit their working programme but usually the Jeep is brought to the Parks Office by the Marine Park intern for STENAPA staff to use as well.

Amenities:

There are 2 banks on the island, a telephone centre (phone cards can be obtained) and Internet access in the library and at the Computer Lab. Some cell phone networks work on island (interns and Project Managers also communicate with walkie-talkies). There is a hospital on the island, as well the St. Eustatius Medical School. The local currency is in Netherlands Antilles guilder or florin, and the exchange rate is officially fixed at 1.78 guilders to \$1. All electrical appliances are the same type as in the USA. As the Botanical Gardens

electrical supply depends on solar and wind energy, high usage appliances cannot be used there (so don't bring hair dryers etc!).

STENAPA staff:

The National Parks team of staff is currently made up of the Parks Manager, Nicole Esteban, a marine biologist from the UK, an Assistant Manager, Gershon Lopes from Statia, an Office Administrator, Violet Busby from Statia, three National Park Rangers, Walter Blair and Nadio Spanner from Statia, John de Bruin from Holland, an Assistant Ranger, Carlton van Putten from Statia and Research Officer, Emma Harrison from the UK.

Suggested clothing/items to bring:**Lodging:**

- Sleeping bag – thin or duvet cover which you can sleep in
- Pillowcase
- Towel
- Pillow
- Mosquito net

Clothes:

The climate on Statia is known as a tropical dry climate. It is warm year round, ranging from 25 to 35°C degrees, with a gentle ocean breeze (which can pick up in the Botanical Garden from time to time). Rainfall occurs for short spells here and there. Our suggestions:

- One light rain jacket – for the wind and for cooler nights in the botanical garden or on turtle patrol.
- Hiking boots
- Sandals – for walking around, on the beach, and for working in the heat etc.
- Some dark-coloured warmer clothes for walking on the Zeelandia beach during turtle watch at night (ie trousers, long sleeved t-shirt etc.)
- Summer clothes for every day working on the trail, i.e. shorts, t-shirts etc. – things you don't mind getting dirty or that you are about to throw away!
- Swimming costumes
- Sun hat, sun glasses
- A couple of long sleeved shirts/T-shirt for use at night (anti-mossie clothing).
- Working gloves
- Clothes to go out in at the weekend, ie bars and restaurants.

Other accessories:

- Head torch for hiking, also for nighttime, walking around the botanical garden, turtle patrol etc. Remember to bring enough batteries to replace it in case it runs out! Try to bring rechargeable batteries and these can be recharged on STENAPA equipment.
- Day-pack type rucksack.
- Camera, films, batteries for camera, books, small binoculars, own private things! (films are expensive on Statia, so bring lots with you if you intend to take lots of photos).
- Penknife, or Swiss army knife – useful in all situations.
- Water flask for hiking, camping, generally useful to have. Nalgene bottles are good!
- Musical instruments – if you play any instrument and it's not too big to carry, then bring it along!

- Any games, cards to keep yourself occupied at night! ie. twister, chess to keep yourselves entertained in the Botanical Garden!
- Seeds if you want to plant vegetables or herbs in the botanical garden kitchen area.
- Your own snorkeling mask, fins and snorkel – if you are interested in diving, getting dive certified or just snorkeling throughout your time on Statia – this is just a suggestion, and you can also obtain these (quite expensive) from the dive shops on Statia.
- A personal stereo with CD's may be a nice thing to listen to whilst living in the Botanical garden.

Medical kit:

This is entirely up to you, as it depends on what you usually like to have with you. However, here are just some suggestions:

- Sun cream/sun block.
- Mosquito repellent
- Paracetamols, panadols as general pain relievers.
- Bandages, plasters should you cut yourself or bruise or whatever, whilst working.
- Antihistamine – useful for hay fever, colds or insect bites, sprays if you are asthmatic.
- Of course, your own toiletries, shampoos, soaps etc.
- Diarrhea sachets, you never know, it can happen to anyone!
- Antiseptic cream
- Benedril cream or any other cream for bee stings.

Money:

Interns need to allow between about US\$50-75 for weekly expenses but often interns have come with a budget of US\$25 per week. It all depends on how much you go out to eat/drink.

Other things you may spend on could be obtaining your diving licence – this costs approximately \$200. If you help out at the Marine Park in your free time, you would be using their diving equipment whilst diving – BCD, tank and regulator. You may want to consider getting your own mask, snorkel and fins when you're there from the dive shops on Statia (although probably cheaper in your home town). Any other extras could involve visiting other neighbouring islands with WINAIR at weekends – return tickets range from 50 to 100 USD. Departure taxes at airports range from 6 USD for domestic flights to 12-20 USD for international flights. Otherwise, extra money for eating, drinking out if not covered by your budget – this is up to you! If you bring extra money, American Express USD travellers cheques are recommended – preferably bring smaller cuts, as you can even use them directly in some grocery stores.

Some feedback on life on Statia from Rose Strickland-Constable, an ex intern (February to July 2003) that you may find interesting:

“Statia is place that the people I've talked to either love or hate. You have to be prepared for a wholly different way of life, particularly living in a tent on the wrong side of the mountain from town. Personally, I loved it. It's a very beautiful island, and the whole atmosphere and way of life is relaxed and laid-back. There isn't a huge tourist industry, and so there are no McDonalds, no big chain stores, and no cruise ships stop there. There's great hiking, diving, snorkelling, or just sitting out on the pier in the sun; and the night life is pretty good too, as long as you're not looking for multiplex cinemas or expensive clubs. So I can see that some people would find it boring, but I'd say you just have to be open-minded.”

Important contact information and useful numbers

If you have any questions or need to contact us at any time – please contact any of us at:

Nicole Esteban
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Gallows Bay
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Netherlands Antilles

Mail can be sent to you to this address and it can take about 3 weeks to arrive. All letters that arrive afterwards will be sent on to your home address. If you need something to arrive quickly, you can use DHL or FedEx.

Nicole Esteban's contact details – tel: +599 318 2884, email: STENAPA@goldenrocknet.com (Manager) or semp@goldenrocknet.com (general office email). In case of emergency, tel: +599 318 3014 (outside office hours).

Other contacts:

WINAIR office in Statia: +599 318 2303

Statia tourist office: St. Eustatius Tourism Development Foundation, Fort Oranjestaat, Oranjestad, St. Eustatius, Netherlands Antilles. Tel & Fax: +599 3 182433. Email: euxtour@goldenrocknet.com

Suggested websites for further reading

www.statiapark.org - STENAPA website

<http://www.statiatourism.com/> - - Statia's official tourist office website

www.DCNAnature.org – web site of Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance – all terrestrial/marine parks of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba