



GUIDE

# **Resources for Starting an Outdoor Career**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction .....	3
2. How to build a resume .....	3
3. The cover letter .....	5
4. Interviewing techniques and tips .....	5
5. Follow up.....	6
6. Networking and relationship building.....	6
7. Appendix.....	8
7.1 Appendix A: Sample combined resume.....	8
7.2 Appendix B: Sample cover letter .....	9
7.3 Appendix C: Sample Letter Requesting an Informational Interview .....	10
7.4 Appendix D: Sample Thank-You Letter for an Informational Interview.....	11
7.5 Appendix E: Sample Resume switching for-profit to nonprofit career .....	12

# 1. Introduction

This Guide is part of a series of resources created to help you in a step-by-step approach to start an outdoor focused career. Here you will find resources to help you create the tools and skills needed to get a job including creating a resume, writing a cover letter, networking and interviewing.

## 2. How to build a resume

As an applicant, you must tailor your resume to the job that you are applying for. What does this mean? It means that you can't take your resume that you used to apply for the outreach assistant position at a nonprofit and use it to apply for a sales job at an outdoor gear company or as a guide for an outfitter. You can certainly use pieces from your old resume and use it as a menu to select information from, but you still have work ahead of you to make sure that your resume best matches the job you are applying for. The number one purpose of your resume is to get you an interview!

### Step 1: Create Your Resume



List all of your past jobs, education, classes, and volunteer positions on a piece of paper. Then, under each past experience, list all of the projects or responsibilities you had. For each project/responsibility, list the role you played, the budget, partners, challenges you faced and accomplishments made. Use power words... strong active verbs that really describe your work.

To help you, look through old files, talk to current and former coworkers, and collect documents that may remind you of the variety of work you have done. Review all these items and make sure they are reflected on your resume.

Next, you will want to match your skills and achievements to those listed in job descriptions you are interested in.

### Step 2: Format Your Resume

We suggest creating your resume in a word processing program so that you can use the spell-check and other functionality of the program as well as save your work for future applications. You will probably find yourself reformatting your resume depending on the job you are applying for to make sure the most relevant information is at the top. Always save each version of your resume that you create.

In general resumes include the following:

- Name & Address / Contact Info
- Summary: Compelling reason why you are the right candidate for the job and should be hired.
- Qualifications / Accomplishments
- Job History / Experience
- Education
- Awards (optional)
- Interests / Hobbies (optional)
- References available upon request (optional)



## TIP

*Be mindful of the address you include. College students tend to move often, so include a permanent address, such as your parent's address. Take care with your e-mail address too. Make your user ID related to your name, not any nickname attributions. If you want to appear professional and if your personal e-mail address is not appropriate, set up a new account just for job searches.*

Depending on the job you are applying for you might want to change the format of your resume, traditional resume formats are always safe but if you are applying for a creative type job you may be able to also get creative with your resume. In general there are 3 basic types of resume formats.

- **Chronological:** The style resume lists your past jobs by date. Chronological resumes are considered a traditional style of resume and is great if you career path is focused on a particular field or type of work.
- **Functional:** A functional resume highlights your major skills and accomplishments with the job information listed below. This is a great way to focus on why your skills are a great match for the job/career you want and less focused on who you worked for or where.
- **Combined:** While you might lead with skills and accomplishments, these are followed by a job history in chronological order. These resumes can get a bit long but are comprehensive.

This online article, [How to Write a Masterpiece of a Resume](#), provides good advice and a comprehensive look at what should go into each part of your resume!

### **ALSO: Your academic and volunteer experience is relevant:**

Don't think that your education means nothing to an employer. Your computer skills will be particularly attractive and should be highlighted. You can also demonstrate your aptitude and strengths by project-specific examples of class work you have done. For example, if journalism was your major in college, tell the employer about major articles you wrote and the legwork you did to complete those projects. Also, consider your volunteer and extracurricular experience. If you held an officer position in a club or fraternity/sorority, were an athlete, volunteered or took a leadership role in any other extracurricular organization, you have valuable experience to list.

### **Step 3: Edit Your Resume**

If possible, allow your resume to sit for a few days after you are finished. Then, come back to it with fresh eyes and review it. Did you forget anything? Should you take anything out? Be sure to double and triple check the spelling.... If you send a resume with spelling errors when you are trying to get hired for a job... it sends a signal that you may not really care or pay attention to detail.

Finally, have a friend, family member or colleague look over your resume and application before you hit submit for any spelling errors or unclear sentences you may have missed.



- *Keep it brief - usually two pages maximum.*
- *Avoid unnecessary personal detail such as age, religion and sex*
- *Don't write in the first person – start sentences with verbs. Use strong action verbs like created, developed, organized, motivated, and produced all say much more than "did."*
- *List your career history in reverse chronological order. Don't forget to include a short note to explain any gaps.*
- *Use bullet points for achievements and responsibilities – include more detail on recent roles and less on older ones, unless they are particularly relevant to the job you are applying for.*
- *List educational institutions and qualifications in reverse chronological order.*
- *Include computer skills, language skills and any relevant training.*
- *Keep your hobbies and interest section short.*
- *References can be provided on request – you don't need to include their contact details on your resume.*

### 3. The cover letter



The cover letter is usually the first part of your application that is reviewed and therefore is a very important part of your application.

Cover letters can be a great compliment to your resume, allowing you to more fully explain any gaps in your resume, highlight special skills or accomplishment and demonstrate your writing style.

Definitely plan on including a cover letter with your resume. You have already put a ton of work into your application – in making your resume shine, gathering transcripts if needed, and other required documents. If you've come this far, we say, go all the way! Expect that you will have such a strong application that you are going to get interview for sure.

### 4. Interviewing techniques and tips

**Be prepared!** Sometimes you only have this one chance to make a good impression. Think about what you are going to wear, always dress on professionally, bring a notebook or something to take notes on, be prepared to answer a lot of questions about yourself and your work history – it is an interview after all – but also come prepared with questions for the interviewer.



**Be yourself.** If you are trying hard to be something or someone you are not to get a job, then maybe it is not the right job for you. Also, be honest. Do not lie about your qualifications or experience, but be prepared to tell them what you would do to learn the required skill or share similar experience that is related. You want them to hire you for who you are.

**Be positive.** Remember that challenges are often opportunities and learning opportunities. People want to know that when things get tough you are going to be a problem solver and work towards a solution. Have examples of how you have made lemonade out of lemons or have gone the extra mile to make something work or learn a new skill. This will go a long way for a future employer. Never speak negatively of a past job experience or employer.



**Practice.** Have someone mock interview you. Take it seriously, practice your answers and ask for honest feedback. There are many online resources to help you prepare for an interview, but here is a comprehensive list of questions and tips for the following:

Most frequently Asked Interview Questions:

- Questions About You
- Questions About Leaving Your Job
- Questions About Salary
- Questions About Qualifications
- Questions About Job Performance
- Questions About Your Work History
- Questions About Management and Teamwork
- Questions About Why You Should Be Hired
- Questions About the New Job and Company
- Questions About Your Future

You can find detailed advice and information on all of these points at <https://www.thebalance.com/job-interview-questions-and-answers-2061204>

## 5. Follow up

A timely thank you sent within a few days after an interview or meeting can really make you stand out from the crowd. Send a note to the person(s) who interviewed you, thank them for their time, share with them why you are still excited about the job you discussed, remind them of a few key reasons why you would be the right person for the job, and that you look forward to hearing from them. While a handwritten note might really surprise and delight them, an email thank you will work too.

Even if you don't get the job you applied for, this could leave a good impression and help them remember you for future opportunities.

## 6. Networking and relationship building



Even through the job application process can at times feel rigid and tries to take personal relationships out of the evaluation process, networking can still help you get a job. For many of us, the term “networking” seems daunting and maybe a little out of our comfort zone. You may think that this is one area you can skip. Don't skip out on these opportunities! Even if you are shy, push yourself to get connected with the community that you want to work with. Networking can even be fun! You will be surprised who you will meet and where your conversations will take you. So be bold! Here are some ways to get started.

**Get Educated** - The first thing you want to do is to get educated about the agencies, organizations and companies you are interested in – find out about their mission, the work they do and the types of people that work there. Go beyond their website and search for news related to their work. Next, see if you can make a contact there and ask for an informal interview. This will help you further learn about the agency, understand the roles of the staff, get an honest perspective on the availability of jobs, and how to get the training or education you need to get there. During your informal interview, you may also be introduced to others in the office, furthering your network. Show them that you are passionate about their work by highlighting bits of information you learned from their website and news stories that particularly interested you. Although they may not be hiring at the time, these personnel connections will help you be informed of future job openings as they develop.

**Volunteer/Intern** - Another great way to build connections is through volunteering with an organization or company that interests you. Volunteer positions help you make new contacts and acquire skills. They can also serve to avoid holes in your work history.

Many companies and organizations also conduct summer and year-round unpaid internship programs for high school students, undergrads, grad students, and recent grads. Contact the main office to see what may be available for you.

**Join a Professional Society or Organization** - Have you heard of the Ecological Society of America? How about the Wildlife Society, Geological Society of America, Society for Conservation Biology or Society of American Foresters? These are just a few examples of professional societies that current staff in your field may belong to. Joining a professional society often has an annual cost but if you can afford it, there are significant benefits including meeting people in your field, networking events, mentorship, a jobs board, and professional development opportunities. Joining a professional organization also helps join you to the community in your field and looks good on your resume.

**Attend a Job Fair** - Some agencies and organizations use job fairs to fill high-priority jobs or internships by fast-tracking the application process.

They may even make on-the-spot offers. Find a fair by conducting an online search using the name of each of your target agencies or industry along with keywords such as “job fairs” and “career fairs” and the name of your location. If you are a current student, visit your department’s career office to see if your school or program hosts any annual or semi-annual job fairs.



- *Think about your immediate network – your family and friends. Then, brainstorm with them about their networks.*
- *Tap into your school’s alumni network.*
- *Use social media – Use Facebook, Linked- In and Twitter to make contacts and show your enthusiasm for what you want to do .*
- *Stay in contact with the people you meet at conferences, by email, phone, through informational interviews, etc.*
- *Don’t overlook networking with the agency’s support staff, including secretaries and assistants. Sometimes they have more influence than you think.*
- *Don’t tire your contacts out! Think of networking as a give-and-take.*

## 7. Appendix

### 7.1 Appendix A: Sample combined resume

**Jennifer Halloway**

123 Main Street, San Francisco, CA 94122

Home: 000-000-0000 | Cell: 000-000-0000

email@example.com

#### Professional Summary

Experienced Outdoor Teacher with tremendous passion for the environment conservation adventure and outdoor activities looking to obtain a teaching position with an organization in need.

#### Core Qualifications

- Exceptional teaching capabilities for students of all ages
- Experience in all outdoor sports and adventures both enjoying and leading
- Great organization and management of time to ensure fulfillment of all curriculum requirements
- Ability to make learning fun while still demanding hard work
- Extensive knowledge of environmental and conservational concerns
- Understanding and former use of survival skills
- Trained in CPR and first aid in case of emergency
- Capable of working independently

#### Experience

**Outdoor Education Teacher**  
**Wilton Learning Center**

**4/1/2011 - Present**  
**Naysmith, WI**

- Work with high-school level students who wish to learn discover and implement environmental standards
- Develop curriculum that includes both hands-on and classroom learning for elementary and high school level
- Trained students in the way of testing water plants etc. to ensure they are safe for human consumption
- Look for any opportunity to teach even on outdoor activities such as hikes or rafts
- Assist new teachers in the proper techniques and strategies of teaching

**Outdoor Education Teacher**  
**Brighton Camp**

**5/1/2007 - 4/1/2011**  
**Wyatt, WI**

- Organized and led water activities such as canoeing kayaking and rafting
- Showed campers basic survival skills
- Set up outdoor activities such as hikes campouts and exploration adventures
- Taught students how to set up a campsite both with and without equipment

#### Education

**Bachelor's Degree**

Outdoor Education Hadley University

Hadley, WI

**XXXX - XXXX**

Source: <https://www.livecareer.com/resume-samples/teacher-resumes/outdoor-education-teacher>



## 7.2 Appendix B: Sample cover letter

### NONPROFIT COVER LETTER

# ROCKEE T. BULL

4200 East Fowler Ave • Tampa, FL 33602 • (813) 974-2171 • rockeebull@usf.edu • www.linkedin.com

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May 29, 2013

Charlese Smith  
Head Supervisor  
RedRover  
1122 S Street  
Sacramento, CA 95811

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am applying for the Social Media Coordinator position posted on your company website. The position was referred to me by a colleague of yours, Farrah Faucet. Ms. Faucet recommended this position because of my strong interest of your organization and qualifications I can bring to the position that are reflected on my enclosed resume.

My interest in your nonprofit organization is the RedRover Responders program that allows volunteers nationwide to save animals that are in a crisis. The Responders program sends people to disaster sites to help animals that no longer have places to stay. I can use my excellent communication writing skills that I have developed through my undergraduate coursework to help spread the organizations mission. In addition, my social media experience developed in my previous internship paired with my technical writing coursework has equipped me with the knowledge to develop, maintain, and update your online content that is informative to your targeted audience. In addition, my writing courses will help with the editing of brochures and other marketing materials stated in your job description.

I am requesting an interview to discuss the position in further detail. In two weeks, I will follow-up via email regarding the status of my application. Please feel free to contact me directly 813-974-2171 or by email at rockeebull@usf.edu. Thank you for your valued time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**(Handwritten Signature)**

Rockee T. Bull

*Good sample of a networking cover letter. Individual highlights skill-sets that are applicable to the job description developed through internship and coursework.*

Source: [www.usf.edu/career-services/documents/cover-letter-nonprofit.pdf](http://www.usf.edu/career-services/documents/cover-letter-nonprofit.pdf)

## 7.3 Appendix C: Sample Letter Requesting an Informational Interview

### NONPROFIT CORRESPONDENCE *Sample Letter Requesting an Informational Interview*

2720 Euclid Drive  
Philadelphia, PA 19110  
April 15, \_\_\_\_\_

James Weston, Assistant Director  
American Association of Community Service Organizations  
7210 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 223  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Weston:

Alice White suggested that I contact you about my interest in community service organizations. She enthusiastically mentioned you as one of the best people to talk to about careers in this public service field.

I am leaving local government after three years of progressively responsible experience in community planning where I worked extensively with community service organizations. But before I decide to seek a career in this field as well as relocate, I believe I would benefit greatly from your professional experience and insights. Your advice would be very helpful at this stage in my career.

I will be in Washington during the week of April 21-25. Would it be possible for us to meet briefly to discuss my career plans? I have several concerns you might be most helpful in clarifying. I will call your office on Thursday morning, April 15, to see if your schedule would permit such a meeting.

Sincerely,

Sarah Taylor

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info@impactpublications.com

## 7.4 Appendix D: Sample Thank-You Letter for an Informational Interview

### NONPROFIT CORRESPONDENCE *Sample Thank-You Letter for an Informational Interview*

2720 Euclid Drive  
Philadelphia, PA 19110  
April 15, \_\_\_\_

James Weston, Assistant Director  
American Association of Community Service Organizations  
7210 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 223  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Weston:

Our meeting yesterday was truly informative and extremely useful in helping me clarify various concerns regarding careers with community service organizations. Your experience and knowledge of this field is most impressive.

I want to thank you again for taking the time from your busy schedule to meet with me. Your suggestions for strengthening my resume were very helpful. I am now revising the resume in light of your thoughtful advice. I will send you a copy of the revised resume next week.

Following your advice, I will contact Marilyn Plante tomorrow to see if she might have or know of any opportunities for someone with my interests and qualifications. I will give her your regards.

I hope to have a chance to meet with you again sometime.

Sincerely,

Sarah Taylor

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Manassas Park, VA 20111-5211  
(703) 361-7300; (800) 361-1055  
info@impactpublications.com

## 7.5 Appendix E: Sample Resume switching for-profit to nonprofit career



### Sample Resume 1: Jill Cook

#### Jill Cook

31 Vista Creek Lane, Ashfield, MA 01746

Home: (508) 555-2491 Cell: (508) 555-0600

jillcook99@yahoo.com

#### Summary

- Senior executive with 25 years of experience in general management, marketing, and sales.
- Strategic, results-driven leader with proven ability to create new organizations, spearhead change, and conceptualize and execute innovative, sustainable initiatives.
- A compassionate manager with excellent interpersonal and communication skills, dedicated to fostering a working environment that encourages collaboration and optimizes team performance.
- Many years of leadership roles in nonprofits and government. Elected official for town School Committee (nine years). Founded two organizations to improve local education. Proposed and worked to pass a law assisting elderly and disabled low-income Massachusetts residents, which has been adopted by six Massachusetts communities.
- An aptitude for addressing cultural diversity. Lived in England, South Africa, and Israel. Fluent in French.

#### Nonprofit Volunteer Experience

##### Tax Relief Fund for the Underserved

1998-Present

###### *Founder and Member*

- Founded town committee to identify and assist low-income elderly and disabled residents.
- Conceived and wrote, with State Rep. Janet Fitzmueller, first statewide bill establishing a tax-relief fund for elderly and disabled residents (Mass. General Law, Chapter 39, Section C).
- Named *Ashfield Monthly* (local newspaper) "Person of the Year" in 1999 for community service.

#### Nonprofit Volunteer Experience

##### Tax Relief Fund for the Underserved

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- Named *Ashfield Monthly* (local newspaper) "Person of the Year" in 1999 for community service.

##### Ashfield School Committee

1995-2004

###### *Assistant Chair (elected position)*

- Introduced strategic planning to school district, resulting in new curriculum programming, significant improvements in standardized-test scores, and an annual review process for goal-setting.
- Oversaw construction of four school buildings, chaired the Policy Subcommittee, participated in staff contract negotiations, hired two superintendents, worked with town committees to pass two tax overrides, instituted goal-based evaluation systems for administrators and teachers, and introduced programs for at-risk students resulting in a reduction of special education students.

**Massachusetts Department of Education**

**1995-1998**

***Vice Chair, Advisory Council***

- Assisted Massachusetts Department of Education in developing strategies to advance differentiated instruction in public schools, resulting in increased state funding and the creation of the Office for Gifted and Talented within the Department.

**Ashfield Education Foundation**

**1993-1997**

***Founding Board Member***

- Organized first Regional Education Foundation conference in New England in 1994 to educate communities about how to establish and grow public school education foundations.
- Helped create first capital plan to address long-term, predictable infrastructure investments.

**For-Profit Experience**

**Paper Solutions, Inc., Lakerun NH**

**2004-Present**

*\$300 million publicly held paper converter with three divisions and multiple distribution channels in North America.*

***Vice President, Marketing & Sales***

- Lead 40 sales and marketing professionals nationwide. Create and implement strategy, sales, and profit growth plans for two markets.
- Developed new-product and new-market initiatives that resulted in development of multiple new products and product lines (several already launched) that are moving the division into untapped markets with high profit potential.
- Improved profitability of a \$120 million division from losses at the beginning of 2005 to record profit month in October 2005 by introducing an innovative, margin-based sales incentive plan.
- Developed performance-based measurement tools to support account profitability improvement. Moved division's largest customer from break-even to record profitability.