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National Geographic  
PO Box 11111  
Washington DC 12321

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to apply for the position of summer photographer's assistant as listed on the National Geographic website (position number 5234). I have been interested in seeing the world through a lens for as long as I can remember, from participating in a photography camp for children when I was eight to now. I am currently working toward a double major in environmental science and studio art with a focus on photography, and I am on track to graduate in May of 2017. As a rising senior, I have taken a variety of classes that make me uniquely prepared for this position: The Biological Effects of Climate Change, Experimental Photography, Landscape Photography, and Conservation Biology, to name a few. I also completed a study abroad trip to Kenya, where I studied the interactions between people and the environment, as well as the positive and negative effects of safaris and tourism on the environment.

Since my freshman year at Vanderbilt University, I have been intimately involved with the campus newsletter, *The Vanderbilt Flyer*, a bimonthly publication run solely by students. I have worked my way up from contributing photographer to lead photographer, and have published images in over three dozen editions. While I enjoy taking photographs of team sports and university events, I find it even more thrilling to highlight little-explored locations on campus, students hard at work in a lab, or a wildflower bloom in spring. Being on a college campus also generally means that my audience is all of a similar mindset; few college students deny the importance of conservation. Working for a larger organization ensures that I would reach a wider and more diverse audience with my images.

I believe that photography provides a way to send a message to the masses since social media is so prevalent in today's society. Every National Geographic Instagram post reaches 11 million viewers from around the world, sharing the beauty of the natural world and a diverse array of cultures with people who might not otherwise interact with the wild or with people outside of their own towns. Each photo elicits different emotions and sends a different message: peace, conservation, unity, or simply the pure beauty that surrounds us every day. I would like to gain experience alongside a trained photographer in the hopes that one day I too will be able to spread the same messages and use photography to educate and expose everyday people to everyday occurrences that are not often enough the focus of the media. This position will help me achieve that goal.

Sincerely,

Marlene Thomas