

ECO AmeriCorps

2024-2025



Lands, Trails, and Education Coordinator

Middlebury Area Land Trust, 298 Maple Street Suite 1B, Middlebury, VT 05753

MALT works with our community to conserve natural and productive landscapes, and to enhance scenic, recreational, and educational opportunities.

Position Supervisor: Rachel Klatzker, Education Manager

Rachel oversees MALT's education programs, including after-school, vacation camps, summer camps, and public programming. She also coordinates MALT's membership and charitable giving program (donors up to \$250). She manages MALT's AmeriCorps members; this involves applying for multiple AmeriCorps placements with ECO and VHCB, onboarding members, and providing ongoing supervision, mentorship, and support. MALT is a small organization, so she also helps with other duties, such as strategic planning, advertising and publications, and even trail maintenance and land stewardship.

The Role:

In recent years, MALT has created a unique format for recruiting and engaging a quarter-time ECO AmeriCorps Member. We work closely with the environmentally oriented departments at Middlebury College to recruit a current student who serves 6-8 hours/week during the academic year, plus four weeks of full-time service during their "J-term", or winter semester taking place in January.

MALT's AmeriCorps Member will bolster opportunities for Addison County residents to connect with the lands MALT protects. They will recruit, engage, and coordinate volunteers to serve on MALT's lands and trails. They will build more connections, of deeper quality, between the human community and MALT's natural spaces through youth and adult education programs.

Our 2024-2025 ECOAmeriCorps Member will primarily focus on stewardship of lands and trails while growing MALT's volunteer recruitment and management efforts in these areas. A secondary role will be as a support teacher in our youth education programs on MALT's conserved lands and trails.

There is great flexibility to incorporate the interests of the member. The ECO AmeriCorps member may engage in the following activities with exact responsibilities being shaped by the member's interests and MALT's greatest needs.

IMPROVE LANDS, TRAILS, and EDUCATION by:

1) Helping MALT coordinate our growing body of volunteers. In past years, MALT engaged about 150 annual volunteers in environmental education, maintenance and improvement over 30+ miles of trail, and stewardship of 3,700+ acres of conserved land. With the recent hiring of our first full-time Trails & Volunteer Manager, MALT is growing our team of volunteers, and we estimate that number to now be over 200. In a growing volunteer program, our full-time staff and recent ECO and VHCBA AmeriCorps members have maintained more miles of trail, with a higher quality, than ever in our organization's history. Volunteers now help us monitor conserved lands, and support youth and adult education programs. The ECO AmeriCorps member will help create and shape systems of recruiting, organizing, and serving alongside our growing volunteer program.

2) Monitoring, maintaining, and improving at least eight miles of MALT-owned trails adjacent to Otter Creek, a tributary of Lake Champlain, in conjunction with the Trails & Volunteer Manager. Focus will be on increasing lifespan of popular trails, replacing aging trail infrastructure, engaging volunteers in trail maintenance, and managing wildlife impacts such as Addison County's growing beaver population.

3) Facilitate MALT Community Science Monitoring Program alongside MALT's Lands & Grants Manager. This program, piloted in 2021, engages five community scientists in monitoring MALT's conserved lands. This increases MALT's capacity to adequately monitor property for appropriate usage and deepens the community's engagement in hands-on land conservation. The ECO AmeriCorps member may focus on growing this program's capacity, with a goal of engaging up to three additional community scientists to monitor MALT lands.

4) As a part of a trail-building team, finish three miles of new trail at Salisbury Mills. MALT is engaged in a campaign to improve access to this conserved landscape. In 2023, we increased parking availability. With the ensuing increase in use, we intend to finish construction of three miles of trail and install 12 interpretive signs to help visitors enjoy this incredible natural and industrial landscape.

5) Assist in the planning, coordination, and delivery of MALT education programs, including: two days/week of afterschool programming during the school year and school vacation camps.

6) The member may choose to participate in any of the ongoing projects of our four board committees. At MALT, staff and AmeriCorps members serve hand-in-hand with our board to advance strategic priorities. Based on their interests, the member may collaborate with our Lands, Trails, Education, or Finance Committees.

7) Coordinate a cohort of ten to eighteen trail stewards and ten kiosk stewards. Stewards monitor the Trail Around Middlebury (TAM), report maintenance issues, and keep our kiosks in tip-top shape with

information about upcoming events and activities. The ECO AmeriCorps member will join each steward for one walk and help troubleshoot maintenance issues as they arise.

DEEPEN ADDISON COUNTY'S CONNECTION with MALT's 30 miles of trail and 830+ acres of public lands. This will be accomplished by:

1) Designing, leading, and improving nature-based, environmentally-themed programs for about 100 youth, ages Pre-K through 13. Themes include wilderness skills, nature connection, local ecology, and nature art. NEW IN 2024-2025: a service-based, weekly afterschool program for 10 middle school students will focus on building construction skills and learning about conservation-based recreation. Participation is grant-funded and free to participants.

2) Design and deliver public programs to engage 40 participants. In the past, programs have included a "root roast" campfire, star gazing in collaboration with amateur astronomers, and snowshoe hikes, among many other experiences. The ECO AmeriCorps member will have the opportunity to design and deliver their own public program in alignment with MALT's mission and values. The member may help plan, advertise, execute, and evaluate these popular programs in 2024-2025.

3) Plan and execute an annual celebration for all volunteers involved in stewarding MALT lands and trails. This activity will help cultivate a more closely knit community of volunteers.

The unique circumstance of this QT member being actively enrolled at Middlebury College provides MALT with many opportunities that would otherwise not be available. This position not only provides us with part time help throughout the academic year, but this position also serves FT for the month of January, for Middlebury College's "J-Term". This "J-term" service is very beneficial to both MALT and the member by allowing them to pursue a larger project in their interest area, that MALT would not otherwise have the capacity or expertise to complete. Our current ECO member is a perfect example of this relationship working in this way. Our current member, Jack Lundgren, took on as his "J-term" project an update to the Wright Park Management plan, which had not been updated since its inception in 2004. Thanks to Jack's enrollment at Middlebury College, he was able to work with one of his professors, drawing on ecological and environmental expertise that is not present to such a high level in the MALT staff.

Essential Functions:

There are many ways an AmeriCorps member can serve at MALT. Please note, that due to the quarter-time nature of this position, the servicemember will engage in a subset of the activities listed below. The servicemember will collaborate with their supervisor to identify projects that meet both MALT's needs and the member's interests and learning goals.

- IMPROVE LANDS, TRAILS, and EDUCATION by:

1) Continuing to engage MALT's 200+ annual volunteers in environmental education, maintenance and improvement over 30+ miles of trail on MALT-conserved and other public lands, and stewardship and of 3,700+ acres of conserved land. 2) Monitoring, maintaining, and improving at least one mile of MALT-owned trails adjacent to Otter Creek, a tributary of Lake Champlain, in conjunction with the Trails and Volunteer Coordinator. Focus will be on invasive species management, erosion control to protect natural characteristics of the trail, and increasing lifespan of popular trails. 3) Assist the Trails & Volunteer Manager to engage new volunteers in an expanded land stewardship program. 4) Assist in

the planning, coordination, and delivery of MALT education programs, consisting of two-three days/week of afterschool programming during the school year serving 120 learners annually, and public programs roughly 1-2 days per month. Themes include wilderness skills, nature connection, local ecology, and nature art. Service projects on MALT trails and lands will be included in youth programs. 5) Support MALT's conservation work by coordinating three community science monitoring volunteers, recruiting additional volunteers to expand easement monitoring activities, and conducting monthly meetings with landowners to steward ongoing relationships.

DEEPEN ADDISON COUNTY'S CONNECTION with MALT's 30 miles of trail and 830+ acres of public lands. This will be accomplished by: 1) Collaborate with MALT's Education Manager and VHCB AmeriCorps Member to develop and deliver adult and family programs. The member will help plan, advertise, execute, and evaluate these popular programs in 2022-2023. 2) Assist the Executive Director and Trails & Volunteer Manager to plan and execute an annual celebration for all volunteers involved in stewarding MALT lands and trails. This activity will help cultivate a more closely knit community of volunteers .

Secondary Functions:

- Interacting with MALT's mapping files to improve conservation processes and records
- Publicize MALT's activities via social media, website, newsletters, flyers, and blogs.
- Assist with special events as an educator (e.g. Middlebury Green Up Day, the TAM Trek – an annual trail race and celebration, etc.)

Desired Qualifications:

- Progressing towards a degree in an environmental field such as environmental sciences, natural resources, recreation, conservation, or related field
- At least three months of teaching experience (camp counselor, tutor, teaching assistant, etc.)
- Knowledge of, or interest in learning, the use of simple hand tools and power tools such as drills, saws, weed whackers, pick-mattocks, loppers etc.
- Comfort speaking in front of, and leading large groups of youth
- Demonstrated passion for serving with youth, ages Pre-K to 18
- Ability to serve independently for long periods of time, and also enjoy being a part of a team
- A strong conservation and environmental ethic that can be communicated to the public through education events, volunteer coordinating, written publications, and everyday interaction with the public
- Experience in Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher, and Social Media platforms
- Highly organized with astute attention to detail
- Enthusiasm to serve with a fast-paced, passionate, environmental non-profit
- A can-do attitude and willingness to be a problem solver in independent and team settings

DEIJ

MALT's early exploration of this topic was born in our youth education programs. In the past three program seasons we've gathered data on demographics of program participants and volunteer engagement. We've presented this data to our strategic planning circle, which includes board members, staff, AmeriCorps members, and key volunteers. MALT's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan includes an action agenda for DEI. Our work in this area includes, but is not limited to:

- Redesigning our registration systems in 2022, moving away from a "first-come-first-serve" system that benefitted families with faster broadband, the resources to pay for early access, and the ability to sit and wait to registration, to a "lottery + ranked choice" system that aims to distribute program placements more equitably.
- Partnering with donors and schools to grow our scholarship systems and offer financial support without means-testing. Last year MALT collaborated with school administrators in Lincoln to offer two fee-free spots in our summer camp programs. Interest in this program has increased, and we hope to offer 10-20 reduced-fee and fee-free spots in MALT summer camps.
- Starting in the Fall of 2024, MALT will be introducing a new afterschool program, free of charge, for middle school aged students. This new program will focus on combining hands on environmental stewardship with environmental education. This program will fill a currently unmet need in the community for engaging and productive afterschool programs for this age group.
- Reviewing program materials to ensure we offer a diversity of perspectives and content from a variety of cultures, and training educators in practices for creating a safe and welcoming space for learners of all identities.
- Offering programming in historically underserved geographic locations and Title I schools. MALT has collaborated with Shoreham Elementary School to offer school-time field trips. We will also be hosting our first summer camp in Salisbury, another community with a Title I school. This work extends beyond our education programs. The 2024-2025 ECOAmeriCorps member will help develop tools to prioritize conservation activities in Addison County. One lens that will be applied in the creation of these tools is equity; how can we prioritize conservation projects to expand access to protected spaces for all people? MALT does not take part in lobbying activities for environmental justice issues, however we have land conservation and stewardship policies that include criteria for improving access to and quality of natural spaces. MALT works with communities outside of Middlebury - including Weybridge, Lincoln, and Salisbury - to bolster conservation efforts at the local level.

Climate Resiliency

MALT is primarily a Land Conservation organization, and as such, many of our stewarded lands have protected forest habitats. These environments keep our air clean and store a large amount of carbon, slowing climate change. In addition, MALT has begun adapting our trail system for climate resiliency, which includes updating trail infrastructure to accommodate more frequent and heavier rainfalls, strengthening the streambank of Otter Creek by planting native species, and rerouting/resurfacing trails to more have resilient surfaces. By doing this, MALT is ensuring a community resource for outdoor recreation will remain accessible in Vermont's rapidly changing climate.

Networking:

MALT's work is deeply embedded in the community. The AmeriCorps servicemember will have the chance to connect and collaborate with multiple organizations, including: Otter Creek Audubon Society, Vermont Audubon, the Vermont Land Trust, various regional conservation commissions, the Addison County River Watch Collaborative, the Patricia Hannaford Career Center, Shelburne Farms, and many more. The servicemember may also attend any of a number of regional gatherings relevant to their work. Past members have attended the NOFA-VT conference, In Bloom for early childhood nature-based education, and Summerama by the VT Parks & Rec Dept. MALT is committed to flexible scheduling so that members may attend professional development opportunities that best fit their interests and needs.

Misc.

AmeriCorps Members bring MALT's mission to life, allowing us to reach people, lands, and trails in ways we could not otherwise with our staff of four. MALT serves as a small, local land trust with nearly 40 years of conservation success. Over time, MALT has built intimate connections with the community by creating and protecting unparalleled access to recreation opportunities. MALT's Trail Around Middlebury is an exemplar of our grassroots conservation efforts. The 19-mile TAM is a textbook network of conserved lands, creating an "emerald necklace" around Middlebury. The TAM parallels about seven miles of Otter Creek, a major tributary of Lake Champlain. The trail is maintained for walking, running, biking, snowmobiling, skiing, and snowshoeing. It connects Weybridge, New Haven, Cornwall, and Middlebury and includes 15 locations with parking access and several on-foot access points throughout local neighborhoods. Users include local residents, Middlebury College students, families, and staff, and seasonal tourists. Recently, MALT has grown to provide nature education and connection to nearly 400 annual youth program participants and an estimated 10,000 unique users of our 30-mile trail network. With that said, there is a compelling need for MALT to do more. As the TAM hits 36 years-old, trail infrastructure is in need of significant maintenance and repair. Providing adequate care for the TAM is crucial to provide recreational opportunities for thousands of visitors and to ensure the trail can continue to be enjoyed safely. The ECO AmeriCorps member plays a critical role in increasing MALT's capacity to provide out-of-schooltime care. In 2022, families registered for 393 spots in MALT Summer Camp, and we were able to meet roughly half of that demand (203 enrolled spots). The same is true for after-school programming; families applied for 104 spots, and MALT enrolled 63. Time and time again the demand our registration numbers demonstrate the need for outdoor educational programming, and we are only meeting about 50%-60% of that need. Hosting an ECO AmeriCorps member allows MALT to offer more placements in high-quality outdoor education programs at a reasonable cost for families.

With 15 years of collective experience in AmeriCorps service and host site supervision, MALT is passionate about mentoring AmeriCorps members as they grow and thrive in service-oriented roles. Since 2018, MALT has hosted 13 AmeriCorps members, bringing an immense amount of energy, creativity, and service ethic to Addison County. We are ecstatic to apply as a partner and host site in 2024-2025. Jamie Jo Horton served as the ECO AmeriCorps host site supervisor during the 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 service years and has previously supervised three AmeriCorps programs at three separate non-profits where she hosted a combined 30+ members. Liam Hickey served as MALT's host site supervisor in 2023-2024 and has previously supervised multiple cohorts of AmeriCorps Parks Corps Trail Stewards during their time working for New York State. Rachel Klatzker will serve as the AmeriCorps supervisor in 2024-2025 and has experience working directly with AmeriCorps members as well as coordinating and training others through previous work with several National and State Parks. During Rachel's 7 years working in Parks, Rachel spent most of that time running Nature Centers and delivering programs to communities in Arizona and Vermont. She has developed a deep appreciation for the AmeriCorps members who she worked side by side with to design and implement diverse education. She believes in the program's mission and understands the important role an AmeriCorps member can serve in an organization. Rachel looks forward to supporting new members as a site supervisor.

With Rachel as the point person, MALT's team of full-time staff will collaborate to support our member in projects and throughout their service experience.

MALT has seen AmeriCorps members thrive in this area, and others struggle. We feel it's the responsibility of the host site to lay the groundwork for a member's success in finding community, and it's a member's responsibility to proactively take advantage of those opportunities. MALT will:

1. Accommodate and encourage servicemembers attendance at ECOAmeriCorps and statewide AmeriCorps events. This means finding support staff to step in for education programs, reminding the servicemember of these opportunities, and helping them step away from their other responsibilities so that they may attend.
2. Have a list of support resources on-hand. After attending the mental health first aid training, I've compiled a list of support resources that can be offered to servicemembers as-needed.
3. Create opportunities to connect with other local servicemembers, including those within MALT. A great advantage of having multiple servicemembers at MALT is that they connect with each other. MALT servicemembers have met up to rock climb, ski, and hike. Having multiple servicemembers helps folks find their peers and feel like they are a part of a local cohort, as well as the ECO cohort.

To Bring:

Waterproof hiking boots or other appropriate footwear, for outdoor activity in rough terrain under cold/snowy/wet conditions. Also,

- Rain gear
- Winter gear such as snow pants, coat, hat, neck warmers, gloves/mittens
- Access to a personal vehicle (MALT will reimburse for out-of-town mileage)
- Comfortable, puncture resistant work gloves
- Reliable Vehicle

Goals of the Position:

- As a part of the education team, engage 120 learners in after-school outdoor educational experiences.
- In conjunction with the Trails & Volunteer Manager, care for 30 miles of trail, including the 19-mile Trail Around Middlebury (TAM), by conducting regular monitoring and maintenance, as seasonally appropriate
- Monitor up to 150 acres of MALT-conserved land to ensure ecological integrity and compliance with easement and deed restrictions.
- Coordinate up to 150 volunteers to assist with trail maintenance
- Coordinate up to six volunteers as a part of MALT's Community Science monitoring program; these volunteers assist in monitoring MALT-conserved land.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Be a US citizen, a national, or legal permanent resident alien of the U.S.;
- Be at least 18 years of age upon entering the Pre-Service Orientation (there is no upper age limit);
- Be a high school graduate or have a GED certificate or be willing to work towards their GED as part of their service-year successful completion requirement. A member cannot have dropped out of high school to join AmeriCorps. If a member has a documented medical reason/professional opinion why they cannot finish high school, they might be eligible; call in this case;
- Has not been convicted of murder or sexual assault and is willing to undergo a National Service Criminal History Check;

- Must submit to Agency of Human Services checks, i.e. Adult Abuse and Child Abuse Prevention;
- Be committed to the ECO AmeriCorps program, and its ethic of service and personal and professional development of its participants;
- Have the ability and enthusiasm to drive to, attend, and participate in required trainings and events, and be prepared to drive up to 2-3 hours each way

Service Conditions:

Service is conducted in both indoors and outdoors environments. The servicemember will be provided with office space. Outdoor service is conducted throughout the year in all weather conditions, and may include educating students, conducting trail work, and monitoring properties or trails. The servicemember needs to be able to spend time outdoors and move quickly over uneven and steep terrain, carrying up to 30 lbs.

Apply Here: [My AmeriCorps - Home Page](#)

Position begins September 2024 and ends May 2025 (450 total hours)

The State of Vermont is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Positions are open to all applicants without regard to race, color, national origin, ethnicity, disability, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, political affiliation, veteran's status, religion or creed.



AmeriCorps

