

ECO AmeriCorps

2024-2025



Communications and Outreach Specialist

Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD), P.O. Box 566 / 3756 E. Warren Road Waitsfield, VT 05673

VACD's mission is to promote conservation of Vermont's natural resources by representing and assisting the state's fourteen Natural Resource Conservation Districts and by implementing state-wide technical programs.

Position Supervisor(s): Molly Varner, Communications Manager & Alli Lewis, VAWQP Coordinator

The Communications Manager oversees all communications, education and outreach on behalf of VACD and supports Vermont's 14 natural resources conservation districts (NRCDs) with communications, education, and outreach. The VAWQP Coordinator facilitates the communications and administration of the Vermont Agriculture Water Quality Partnership.

The Role

VACD seeks to engage an ECO AmeriCorps member to support both our internal and external communications and improve our organizational outreach. This member will serve directly with VACD's Communications Manager to assist with a variety of projects including improvements to the VACD website, social media presence, and newsletter; design of new outreach materials, such as brochures and displays; expanded presence at in-person events, including statewide conferences and local community events, like farmers markets; expansion of outreach around flood resiliency and climate change; and assistance in measuring effectiveness of communications strategy though help with survey design and implementation. The ECO AmeriCorps member will also support the Vermont Agriculture Water Quality Partnership (VAWQP) Coordinator in improving the VAWQP's website and outreach materials. We hope to support the ECO AmeriCorps member in building on their own

interests and skill sets, with the benefit of providing the member with an in-depth opportunity to learn more about Vermont's natural resources issues and initiatives and create a positive change by supporting expanded engagement with the public around these issues.

The ECO AmeriCorps member will assist the Communications Manager in improving and expanding both the internal and external communications of VACD and Vermont's Natural Resources Conservation Districts (NRCs), which will help these organizations meet more constituent needs in a timelier manner. Constituents include Vermont farmers, landowners, land stewards, and land users who are interested in learning more about natural resource conservation issues or implementing natural resources conservation projects. The ECO AmeriCorps member will also help improve and expand VACD's and NRCs' capacity to conduct education and outreach by assisting with one-off projects (such as outreach materials design, assisting with event planning and creating social media campaigns). As part of the communications team, the ECO AmeriCorps member will have the opportunity to provide input on VACD's communications, education, and outreach strategies as part of VACD's strategic plan. Similarly, the ECO AmeriCorps member will assist the VAWQP Coordinator in improving and expanding both the internal and external communications of the Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership, an interagency partnership committed to coordinating efforts to address water quality concerns throughout Vermont.

Essential Functions

- Produce written content for publication that is of high quality and relatively error-free, including: drafting social media posts; creating website content; designing outreach materials such as brochures, flyers, and displays
- Communicate verbally with colleagues and members of the public, including: Along with VACD staff, representing the organization at public events; attending conferences and interagency meetings.
- Implement DEIJ principles by being thoughtful and considerate of the wide range of diversity within our communities and by assisting VACD staff with DEIJ priorities.
- Overall, communicate clearly and respectfully with VACD staff and members of the public

Secondary Functions

- Communicate verbally with colleagues and members of the public, including: Presenting at public events; facilitating webinars and trainings
- Help evaluate VACD's overall communications and outreach strategy, including: Designing and implementing surveys; tracking social media and website metrics; providing feedback around use of social media, website, and other communication tools
- Produce graphic, audio, or visual materials, such as photos, videos, sound recordings, or artwork to be used in VACD outreach

Goal of Position

To improve the communication and outreach capacity of VACD and the VAWQP to meet the needs of its constituents, including Vermont's NRCs, farmers, land stewards, and land users.

Desired Qualifications

Interest in supporting Vermont's natural resources, excellent written communication skills, comfort using Microsoft and Google products. Some experience with social media management, website

design, event planning, and public presentation preferred.

DEIJ

DEIJ was identified as a priority in VACD and NRCDs most recent joint strategic planning initiative in 2022. Since then, VACD contracted a team to create an extensive organizational self-assessment tool that looks at both internal operations and external engagement. NRCDs completed a first round of assessments in 2023, and VACD is in the process of completing that assessment currently. The outcomes of the self-assessment will guide further improvements to DEIJ. In the meantime, VACD is committed to DEIJ through a variety of practices, including: expanded outreach for position recruitment, hosting DEIJ trainings, including a land acknowledgement at all statewide events, incorporating trainings around indigenous Abenaki practices into statewide events, creating space for staff to voluntarily share their own cultural identities or practices (such as holidays), and providing staff with flexible work hours to accommodate a range of DEIJ considerations (such as religious holidays and consideration for medical, physical, emotional, and psychological health).

Climate Resiliency

Vermont's natural resources conservation districts have been working on resiliency issues since 1939. Early on in our history, the main resiliency concern was around soil and water quality following the Dust Bowl. Our first mission was to conserve and protect the state's soil and water resources. Over the decades, our role has expanded to include more aspects of climate resiliency, including invasive species work; looking at carbon sequestration potential on farms and in soils across land-use types; conducting farm energy audits; supporting innovative ways to compensate for ecosystem services; supporting work to create climate-resilient local food systems; supporting the development of conservation easements; implementing stormwater projects and floodplain restoration projects; planting trees for riparian buffer installation, habitat improvement, and carbon sequestration; removing dams and installing natural wood additions to restore riverways and provide for aquatic habitat; working with the state on the new 30x30 initiative; and more. VACD is also a part of the Vermont Agriculture Water Quality Partnership (VAWQP) and supports VAWQP's mission to provide coordination and interagency cooperation around water quality work statewide.

Networking

The ECO AmeriCorps member will be stationed in the DEC office and will have opportunities to meet all VACD staff, as well as meet DEC staff and any AmeriCorps members serving in the DEC office. Through service with VAWQP, the ECO AmeriCorps member will have the opportunity to meet staff from VAAF, UVM Extension Service, NRCS, and more. In addition, given the nature of outreach tasks, we anticipate including the ECO AmeriCorps member in a wide range of outreach events and conferences.

Misc.

Laptop computer with applicable software. This is an office-based position, and we don't anticipate any significant amount of field service, outside of occasional attendance at off-site events. If the member chooses to engage in optional field-service activity, such as tree plantings, we would ensure they have adequate personal protective equipment and any tools needed. A reliable vehicle is expected.

Office based position with opportunities to visit outdoors service sites (i.e. assisting with tree plantings, observing project sites [e.g. stormwater project implementations or dam removal sites]) and opportunities to attend off-site trainings and events around the state (e.g. statewide partnership conferences, farmers' markets, field day events).

Making local recommendations and connecting the ECO AmeriCorps member to local staff. We also hope that one or more other AmeriCorps members might be stationed in or near this member's site (the DEC office), which would provide additional opportunities for socializing with peers.

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

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

Position begins September 17th, 2024 and ends August 15th, 2025

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.



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