

# 2016-17 Year-End Newsletter



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## ECO AmeriCorps Concludes its Second Service Year!



Members and program partners pose with Gov. Phil Scott, ANR Secretary Julie Moore and SerVermont Executive Director Phil Kolling during the end-of-service celebration.

The second service year of the ECO AmeriCorps program has come to a close. On Friday, August 11th, outgoing ECO AmeriCorps members gathered for one last time to conclude their eleven months of service. Members met in Berlin, at the Capital City Grange for a day to celebrate and reflect upon their service.

Members were joined by service site supervisors, program mentors, and other program

partners. Speakers included Governor Phil Scott, ANR Secretary Julie Moore, and SerVermont Executive Director Phil Kolling. Each member also received a personal letter from Senator Bernie Sanders, thanking them for their service.

During the afternoon, each member gave a brief presentation, highlighting their accomplishments during their 11 months of service to the State of Vermont.



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## Members Prepare for Life After Service



On the last Friday of April, our AmeriCorps members gathered at the Vermont College of Fine Arts in Montpelier to begin preparing for their lives after service. Prior to the training, our members were tasked with updating their resumes and preparing a cover letter for a mock position with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. Members began the day with a presentation by University of Vermont Career Readiness Counselor Lauren Petrie, who reviewed member cover letters and resumes and provided career preparation guidance.

Following the morning presentations, members had the opportunity to sit in on panel discussions with some of Vermont's leading natural resource professionals. Panelists included ANR Secretary Julie Moore, Vermont State Park Director Craig Whipple, DEC Environmental Compliance Division Director Kim Greenwood, USDA NRCS Soil Conservationist Hisa Kominami, Vermont Land Trust Central Vermont Director Bob Linck, DEC Environmental Scientist Josh Mulhollem, University of Vermont Waste & Recycling Program Supervisor Corey Berman, and Chris Smith of the US Fish & Wildlife Service. Panelists shared stories regarding their personal career paths as well as suggestions for ECO members to begin their environmental careers.

### *Did you know...*

AmeriCorps serves as a pathway to economic opportunity that provides members with valuable skills specific to their service (environment, construction, teaching, etc.) as well as general skills of leadership and problem-solving that all employers are looking for in their employees.

## Members Participate in Earth Day Efforts



*ECO Members Emily, Michelle, Andrew N. & Chris help clean up the banks of the White River in collaboration with the White River Partnership on Earth Day*

On Saturday, April 22nd, ECO Members celebrated Earth Day with a day of service. Members focused on two projects in collaboration with the White River Partnership and the Burlington TreeAGE Nursery. Members serving in southern and central Vermont made the journey to the banks of the White River in South Royalton to help collect trash from along the river banks, while members who serve in northern Vermont gathered in Burlington to help plant, water, and mulch trees within the TreeAGE Nursery.



*ECO Members (L to R) Joe, Shannon, Marissa, Annie, Dom, and Lindsay assist in mulching young trees.*



*ECO Members Tom and Trevor with Jackson and TreeAGE Nursery's Marie pose with a tree they are about to plant.*

## Cleaning Up Vermont's Communities on Green Up Day

ECO Members participated in Vermont's Green Up Day on the first Saturday in May. Members went out into their local communities and joined other Vermonters in a variety of service projects from Brattleboro to Newport. Some members joined other Vermonters in removing trash from Vermont's roadways and public spaces while others used the day to serve with their regular host sites, educating area residents on ways in which they can help keep Vermont green and litter free. Each year, more than 22,000 volunteers come together to green up Vermont.



*Above, ECO Members Michelle, Joe, Maddie, and Emily join forces to plant trees with the Montpelier City Parks in their Green Up Day efforts.*



*Above ECO Member, Andrew Donahue, manages a booth with his service site the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District to promote education for recycling and composting.*



*ECO Members Thomas, Clarice, and Dom assist with trash removal along the Burlington waterfront*



*ECO Members Marissa and Rachel assist with roadside trash removal with the Winooski Valley Park District.*

## Members Participate in Annual SerVermont Conference



SerVermont Executive Director speaks to a group of AmeriCorps members representing Vermont's various service programs.

In May, SerVermont held its annual AmeriCorps Spring Professional Development Conference at the Common Ground Center in Starksboro. This annual two-day conference serves as a second gathering point for members serving throughout the State of Vermont in various AmeriCorps programs. The conference included a variety of networking opportunities, workshops, and guest speaker sessions.

### *National Service in Vermont*

In 2016, Vermont was the #4 AmeriState in the country with the fourth most AmeriCorps members per capita in the nation. Vermont has more than 530 local service sites, supports more than 2,300 national service members, and accounts for more than \$11 million in Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and local funding. Since 1994, nearly \$18 million in AmeriCorps education awards have been earned in by AmeriCorps members in the Green Mountain State.

## Members Serve & Learn During Summer Service Event

In late June, the ECO team made its way up to Grand Isle State Park for our second annual Summer Solstice Training and Service Event. Members met at Grand Isle on June 20 where they spent part of the day serving with Vermont Dept. Forests, Parks & Recreation Invasive Species Coordinator Elizabeth Spinney to remove invasive buckthorn from a six-acre section of the park's campground.

Members reconvened during the afternoon for a series of team-building activities led by Team Leader Zack Simpson before making our way to our campsites for the night.

The following day we participated in a cyanobacteria monitoring training led by Lake Champlain Committee Executive Director Lori Fisher. The event wrapped up with one final reflection activity before members returned to their host sites for the final month of



*ECO Members Rachel, Bonnie, Marissa, and ECO staff Nikki remove invasive common buckthorn from Grand Isle State Park.*



*ECO Members participated in exciting "Zactivity" team building activities.*



*ECO Members learn about cyanobacteria monitoring from the Lake Champlain Committee's Lori Fisher.*



## What are our members doing after their service?

1. **Trevor Banister**—*Trevor is serving a second year of service with his 2016-17 host site, the Northwoods Stewardship Center.*
2. **Joe Bondi**—*Joe has returned to his home state of Pennsylvania where he will continue his search for employment within the environmental field in Pennsylvania and Vermont.*
3. **Dominic Brennan**—*Dom is working in a temporary, part-time position with his service site, the Lake Champlain Committee, where is assisting with finishing up their cyanobacteria monitoring season after which he plans to move to Philadelphia to pursue his career goals.*
4. **Thomas Bryce**—*Thomas signed on for a second year of service with ECO AmeriCorps. In his second year of service, Thomas is serving with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture.*
5. **Shannon Choquette**—*Shannon was hired by her service site, the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District, where is working in a full-time position the new Outreach Coordinator.*
6. **Lindsay Cotnoir**—*Lindsay is working in a temporary full-time position with her service site, the Orleans County Natural Resource Conservation District.*
7. **Maddie Cotter**—*Maddie accepted a full-time position with her service site, the Intervale Center as their new Production Specialist and Volunteer Coordinator.*
8. **Clarice Cutler**—*Clarice accepted a full-time position with the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts as their new South Lake Conservation Planner.*



*Maddie Cotter nurturing native trees at the Intervale Center in Burlington. Maddie served with the Intervale this year and was hired as a full-time staff person when her service ended.*

## What are our members doing after their service?

9. **Andrew Donahue**—Andrew recently accepted employment as a zero waste coordinator with a non-profit organization in Boulder, Colorado.
10. **Stephi Drago**—Stephi is working in a full-time position with the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts as their new Strategic Watershed Cartographic Technician.
11. **Billy Ernest**—Billy is serving a second year in the ECO AmeriCorps program. In his second year of service, Billy is serving with the Windham Regional Planning Commission.
12. **Michelle Graziosi**—Michelle Graziosi is working in a full-time position with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation.
13. **Brodie Haenke**—Brodie is serving as second year in the ECO AmeriCorps program. In his second year of service, Brodie is serving with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District in St. Albans.
14. **Joshua Klavens**—Josh is remaining private regarding his future plans. We wish him the best of luck in his endeavors.
15. **Emily Markstein**—Emily is serving a second year in the ECO AmeriCorps program. In her second year of service, Emily is serving with the Intervale Center.
16. **Marissa Ng**—Marissa is serving a second year in the ECO AmeriCorps program. In her second year of service, Marissa is serving with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Colchester.



Last September, 24 ECO AmeriCorps members came together for their service year orientation. Today, 10 of those members are working in green jobs and seven are returning for a second year of service with ECO AmeriCorps.



## What are our members doing after their service?

17. **Andrew Nguyen**—Andrew is continuing his goal of obtaining employment within the state of Vermont.
18. **Rachel Ross**—Rachel plans to hike the entirety of the Vermont Long Trail before traveling out to California for a well-deserved vacation.
19. **Annie Schatz**—Annie has begun her Ph.D. studies in marine biology at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.
20. **Zack Simpson**—Zack has been hiking the entirety of the Vermont Long Trail after which he hopes to enlist in the United States Army as a Geospatial Engineer to pursue his career goals.
21. **Bonnie Woodford**—Bonnie has accepted a temporary part-time position with her service site, the VT Dept. Forests, Parks & Recreations Urban & Community Forestry Program, to assist with its Town Forest Recreation Planning Initiative.
22. **Carlie Wright**—Carlie is serving a second year in ECO AmeriCorps where she is splitting her time as the ECO AmeriCorps Team Leader and Clean Water Initiative Social Indicator and Communications Assistant.
23. **Jimmy Young**—Jimmy is working in a full-time position with the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts as their new Land Treatment Planner for Chittenden, Washington, and Orange County.
24. **Chris Yurek**—Chris was hired by his service site, the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, in a full-time Planner position.



At the end of her service Stephi Drago (left) began full-time employment with the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts. Brodie Haenke (right) is serving a second year of ECO AmeriCorps in 2017-18.

## Our 2017—2018 Service Sites

**We are excited to partner with these service sites in 2017-18**

Addison County Regional Planning Commission

Addison County Solid Waste Management District

BattenKill Watershed Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area

Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District

Friends of Northern Lake Champlain

The Intervale Center

New England Interstate Pollution Control Commission

Lake Champlain Basin Program

Lake Champlain Committee

Lake Champlain Sea Grant

Lamoille Solid Waste Management District

Missisquoi River Basin Association

NorthWoods Stewardship Center

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Planning Commission

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Vermont Center for Ecostudies

Vermont Land Trust

Windham Regional Commission

DEC—Waste Management and Prevention Division

VT Dept. Environmental Conservation Watershed Management Division's  
Monitoring Assessment, and Planning Program (MAPP) &  
Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP)

## ECO AmeriCorps members in action



ECO members Thomas and Stephi hold a jam session after the first day of the SerVermont Conference.



ECO Member Lindsay uses a clinometer to assist with determining the slope of an agricultural field.



ECO Member Brodie collects water samples in northern Vermont.



ECO Member Shannon and Team Leader Zack take a tour of the Coventry Landfill.



ECO Member Dom assists with efforts to remove water chestnut from Vermont's ponds and lakes.



ECO Member Maddie utilizes heavy farming equipment to carry out plantings at the Intervale Center.

## ECO AmeriCorps members in action



ECO Member Marissa assisting with the state of Vermont's Bear Monitoring Program.



ECO member Rachel helping DEC staff with spring phosphorous monitoring.



ECO Member Shannon helping grade school students understand the benefits of composting and recycling.



ECO Member Andrew D. held a compost bin decorating event this past spring.



ECO Team Leader Zack assisting with outreach efforts at the University of Vermont's career fair.



ECO members Chris and Andrew D., along with Reuben Allen, removing invasive common buckthorn at Grand Isle State Park.

## ECO AmeriCorps Program Bulletin Board

### Thank you to our supporters!

ECO AmeriCorps thanks everyone who helped make the 2016—2017 service year a success. Our success is not only achieved by our members. It is also the result of assistance, guidance and support provided by our site supervisors, member mentors, community partners, and many others who support our program. With each passing year, support for our program continues to grow and so does the impact our members are able to make on Vermont's environment. It is through these combined efforts that our members are able to get things done and achieve the most from their eleven months of service.

### Service Year Accomplishments

- 40,942.25..Total hours served
- 35,316.25..Hours of direct service that directly effects Vermont water bodies, landscapes, or citizens.
- 5,314.5.... Hours of training
- 311.5 ..... Hours of fundraising
- 25.63 ..... Miles of rivers improved
- 345.8..... Acres of public land improved
- 3,245..... Vermonters educated on environmental stewardship
- 542..... Vermonters reporting an intention to change their behavior as a result of training/education
- 778..... Community volunteers supported
- 5,355..... Community volunteer hours served
- 10..... Members hired into green jobs

