



Middlebury Area



Land Trust

ECO AmeriCorps Service Year 2021-2021

Environmental Careers and Opportunities (ECO) AmeriCorps is an AmeriCorps program within the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC). The emphasis of the program is on building capacity in nonprofit organizations and municipalities throughout rural Vermont communities. Program focus areas include the following:

- engagement, outreach, and education
- improvement of water quality
- protection and restoration of public lands

ECO AmeriCorps is funded in part by an AmeriCorps state grant provided through SerVermont from the Corporation for National & Community Service.

All ECO AmeriCorps members have some college education (preference given to college graduates with a science background) and will receive technical training and mentorship from VTDEC throughout their term of service. VTDEC handles the administrative components of the program, including providing living stipends, health insurance, and monthly trainings to members.

Full-Time Member Benefits*

Living Stipend: \$17,300

Education Award: \$6,345

Other Benefits: Training, networking opportunities, health care, childcare assistance, program support, mileage reimbursement for ECO AmeriCorps–related travel.

VTDEC administers the member’s living stipend, health care benefits, childcare benefits, time sheets, activity reports, and other AmeriCorps and employee-related benefits and documentation.

Applicant Information		
Name of Organization or Municipality: Middlebury Area Land Trust		
Primary Supervisor Name: Caleb Basa	Primary Supervisor Title: Programs Coordinator	
Mailing Address: PO Box 804		
City: Middlebury	State: VT	Zip: 05753
Phone: 802-388-1007	Fax: n/a	
Email: caleb@maltvt.org	Website: www.maltvt.org	
Sponsoring Organization’s Mission:		
The Middlebury Area Land Trust works with our community to conserve natural and productive landscapes, and to enhance scenic, recreation, and education opportunities.		

Please provide a brief description of your role at your site:

As Programs Coordinator, Caleb Basa oversees all operations, personnel, and volunteers on lands, trails, and in education programs at MALT. His responsibilities include community engagement, stewarding an engaging culture of volunteerism, stewardship of trails and conserved lands, and vision, content, and quality of environmental education programming.

Caleb and the ECOAmeriCorps Member will be closely supported by Jamie Brookside, MALT's Executive Director. Jamie oversees all operations, staff, and volunteers at MALT. Her responsibilities include fiduciary management, human resources, community engagement, fundraising, stewardship of trails and conserved lands, oversight of new land conservation projects, and guiding the vision and outcomes of MALT's environmental education programming.

What is the title of the position you are requesting?

Lands, Trails, and Connections Coordinator

Describe your proposed service position:

Our AmeriCorps Member will bolster the opportunities for Addison County 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.

Our 2021-2022 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 conserved lands and trails.

IMPROVE LANDS, TRAILS, and EDUCATION by:

- 1) Continuing to engage MALT's 150 annual volunteers in environmental education, maintenance and improvement over 30+ miles of trail on MALT-conserved and other public lands, and stewardship and of 2,000+ acres of conserved land.
- 2) Monitoring, maintaining, and improving at least 8 miles of MALT-owned trails adjacent to Otter Creek, a tributary of Lake Champlain. Focus will be on invasive species management, erosion control to protect natural characteristics of the trail, and increasing lifespan of popular trails.
- 3) Serving alongside MALT's Program Coordinator to research and recommend a 10-year plan for improving MALT's conserved lands. This plan will aim to improve Otter Creek's water quality and native species diversity and abundance. The plan will also map how MALT will engage new volunteers in an expanded land stewardship program, incorporating elements of community science (formerly known as citizen science).

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

- 1) Making MALT's conserved lands more accessible by serving as a trailhead steward during peak season. Hosting new engagement programs such as Tuesdays on the TAM by greeting and educating up to 100 users on trail use, Leave No Trace principles, and trail design for erosion control and water quality.
- 2) Designing, leading, and improving nature-based, environmentally-themed programs for over 150 youth, ages Pre-K through 18. Themes including wilderness skills, nature connection, local ecology, and nature art. Service projects on MALT trails and lands will be included in youth programs.
- 3) Improving an education program with 60 local 5th graders, focusing on invasive species removal and native plant

restoration. The program will include 4 sessions of 2 hours each.

4) Collaborate with VHCB AmeriCorps Member to revive MALT's adult and family programs. These were cancelled due to COVID-19 and the member will help plan, advertise, execute, and evaluate these popular programs in 2021-2022.

- Knowledge of and/or experience in: trail building, maintenance, and improvement techniques; land monitoring practices such as wildlife monitoring, conservation biology, invasive plant management, erosion control techniques, and watershed improvement.
- Ability to research, understand, assess, and recommend steps for building volunteer-based trail management and land stewardship.
- Experience in, and deep passion for, teaching environmental education for any and all audiences, ages 3 to adulthood.
- Proven ability to recruit, manage, inspire and serve side-by-side with volunteers in an outdoor and hands-on setting.
- Co-develop and teach up to 7 weeks of summer day camps for ages 3-14.
- Develop evaluation tools to gauge success of MALT programs and maintain performance measurement records.
- Experience interacting with youth AND adults in a mission-driven setting, including any combination of environmental education, coaching, public service, volunteering, leading clubs, leading interest groups, etc.
- Passionately participate in relationship building. Engage in verbal, written, and creative communication with community members who share a passion and curiosity for learning about, protecting, and engaging with nature.

Marginal Functions. These are secondary to Essential Functions, may be negotiable, and can be completed as time allows. These may be listed in bullet form:

- Coursework and/or applicable experience in GIS mapping.
- Interest in working with MALT's mapping files in an effort to improve conservation processes and records.
- Help publicize programming via social media, website, newsletters, flyers, and blogs.
- Assist with special events as an educator (e.g., Middlebury Green Up Day, the TAM Trek (annual race around the TAM), etc.).

Please list any clothing/equipment the member will need that you cannot provide (e.g., hiking boots, waders, rain gear, etc.). As the host site, you are responsible for providing all tools and technical equipment needed for the position (e.g., computer, phone, GPS, etc.).

- Waterproof hiking boots or other appropriate trail/land stewardship footwear, for fall/winter/spring/summer seasons
- 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)

Desired qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent professional experience in an environmental field such as environmental sciences, natural resources, recreation, conservation, or related field
- 1-3 seasons of experience teaching outdoor, science, or environmental education
- Knowledge of, or interest in learning, the use of simple hand tools such as drills, hammers, weed whackers, etc.
- Knowledge of basic nature-connection techniques and pedagogy, such as nature art, sit spots, story-telling
- Demonstrated passion for serving with youth, ages Pre-K to 18
- Ability to work independently for long periods of time, and also enjoy working as 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 coordinating up to 30 volunteers and/or participants, ideally in an outdoor and/or environmental setting, including proven ability to recruit, schedule, manage, serve, and learn side-by-side with volunteers and/or participants
- Experience in Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher, and Social Media platforms
- Highly organized with astute attention to detail, experience supervising projects of varying size and duration from start

to finish

-Enthusiasm to serve with a fast-paced, passionate, environmental non-profit

Describe how the position will contribute to the program’s National Performance Measures:

1. Number of individuals educated on environmental stewardship; number of individuals with an intention to change behavior
2. Number of miles of trails/streams/rivers improved
3. Number of acres of publicly owned or managed land improved

Enumerated as above:

1. 150 individuals, ages 3-adult will participate in environmental programming directly instructed and/or coordinated by the ECOAmeriCorps Member. Programming will include nature-based afterschool care, summer and vacation camps, volunteering in our new land stewardship community science program, and more. All youth and adult participants in the Spring and Summer programs will be surveyed for knowledge gained and intent to change behavior. We anticipate 25%-50% of participants will indicate an intent to change behavior in favor of environmental benefits.
2. The member will maintain about 30 miles of trail, with 1-8 miles being specifically treated for erosion control, improved surface durability, and prolonging life of the trail. Each trail season is different, with emphasis being placed on various trail needs. This is why we anticipate a range of trail miles treated. Trail activities include blazing trails, clearing natural debris, constructing new trail miles, and repairing damages from trail use.
3. The member will improve conserved lands and access to them. These lands offer access to recreation, hunting, fishing, and vibrant flora and fauna communities. The member will monitor and steward over 1,500 of MALT's 3,700+ acres, with specific invasive treatment taking place on about 35 acres.

Focus Areas

Provide approximate impact numbers (e.g., miles of rivers treated) in each focus area. Refer to the 2021–2022 Performance Goals document for an explanation on each focus area.

Focus Area	Projected Impact Numbers	
Water Quality Improvement	Miles of river/stream/trail treated and/or improved	1
Protection and Restoration of Public Land	Acres of parks or public land treated and/or improved	35
Engagement, Outreach, and Education	Number of individuals receiving environmental stewardship education or training	150

Provide additional information (data, statistics, reports, etc.) that demonstrates the compelling need for the proposed position(s).

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 two. The Middlebury Area Land Trust (MALT) is an Addison County based non-profit who serves as a small, local land trust with over 30 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 (TAM) 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. Recently, MALT has grown to provide nature education and connection to nearly 300 annual youth program participants and an estimated 10,000 unique users of our 30-mile trail network. The TAM parallels about 7 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. We estimate over 10,000 unique users access the trail each year, including local residents, Middlebury College students, families, and staff, and seasonal tourists.

Describe how the supervisor has adequate time and leadership experience to manage an ECO member? Please explain how:

With 13 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 six 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 2021-2022. Jamie Brookside served as the ECOAmeriCorps host site supervisor during the 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 service years. Additionally, MALT's Programs Coordinator, Caleb Basa, is our second full-time staff member. He served as an AmeriCorps member with MALT through the VHCB program and was hired in a new full-time position in fall of 2019. Caleb too, embodies the ethic and appreciation of AmeriCorps members that is so vital to them feeling supported, welcomed, and valued at their host site. Caleb will serve as the primary supervisor for MALT functions of the 2020-2021 member, with Jamie serving in a supportive role.

Describe networking opportunities that will be available to the member during service?

The AmeriCorps Member will receive the following additional member benefits and opportunities:

- 1) Attendance at two environmental education conferences - In Bloom for early childhood nature-based education and Summerama by the VT Parks & Rec Dept;
- 2) Shadowing nature science programming at regional organizations such as Crow's Path, Common Ground Center, and Willowell Foundation;
- 3) Field naturalist programs/workshops at partnering environmental education organizations such as Otter Creek Audubon Society and the Aurora Learning Center;
- 4) Participation in monthly Middlebury Conservation Commission meetings;
- 5) Serving as a liaison to the Otter Creek Audubon Society's Education Committee;
- 6) Shadowing with Vermont Land Trust colleagues for best practices in land monitoring;
- 7) Direct mentorship from MALT's volunteer trails coordinator of 30 years;
- 8) Access to affordable and local housing options coordinated through MALT.

Does your organization currently host or plan to host a member from a different AmeriCorps program? If yes, explain the duties of the other AmeriCorps position(s).

We currently host a 6-month member from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and a full-time member from the ECOAmeriCorps. We will apply for one 11-month member from VHCB for the 2021-2022 service year, and one 11-month member from ECOAmeriCorps for 2021-2022.

In what ways does your organization support diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice?

MALT's early exploration of this topic was born in our youth education programs. In the past year 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 will include an action agenda for DEI. 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.

The program will begin mid-September 2021 and end in August 2022. Looking forward to meeting you!

