



ECO AmeriCorps Service Program Year 2021–2022

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: Missisquoi River Basin Association and UMATR Wild & Scenic Committee		
Primary Supervisor Name: Lindsey Wight	Primary Supervisor Title: Coordinator	
Mailing Address: 2839 VT Route 105		
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Sponsoring Organization's Mission:		
<p>The Missisquoi River Basin Association's mission is to restore and maintain the ecological integrity of the Missisquoi River system so that the uses and values desired by the community are supported by the river and the quality of its water.</p> <p>The Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers (UMATR) Wild & Scenic River Committee's mission is to collaborate with our partners and the communities that the rivers run through and are adjacent to, in order to promote, protect, and enhance the rivers and their resources, and to support good river management.</p>		

Please provide a brief description of your role at your site:
<p>As the part-time Coordinator for each of these organizations (MRBA and UMATR), I manage all aspects of both organizations: applying for and administering grant funds; tracking finances, membership, and volunteers; facilitating projects, outreach efforts, public events, and monthly meetings; updating our websites and social media; working with partners and landowners; and conducting field work as necessary. I provide supervision to the MRBA's Project Manager, and to the ECO AmeriCorps member shared by both organizations, and I report to the MRBA Board and the UMATR Committee.</p>

What is the title of the position you are requesting? **Education and Outreach Coordinator**

Describe your proposed service position:

Our ECO AmeriCorps member, like the host site supervisor, will serve with two organizations; these organizations have similar goals that focus on the same rivers, but have slightly different priorities. That said, both organizations are striving to have a stronger presence in our communities, and public outreach is our primary tool for achieving that. The ECO AmeriCorps member will provide education and outreach within our communities to give us both wider reach and greater capacity for more projects, more effective events, and community engagement to improve our water resources. As our Education and Outreach Coordinator, the member will collaborate with other local organizations (including our Canadian partners where possible), will conduct site visits to both previous and potential project locations, and will assist with data collection and transforming this data into formats for public consumption (presentations, displays, reports, social media posts, newsletters, etc.). This position will also present educational programs to local schools and community groups, assist with implementation projects, and will play a key role in the MRBA water sampling program. Additionally, the Education and Outreach Coordinator will collaborate within the organization to maintain a calendar of events and deadlines, will help author and revise written program-related correspondence, and will assist with MRBA Board and UMATR Committee meetings, which each occur monthly, in the evening of the first (MRBA) and third (UMATR) Thursdays.

The Education and Outreach Coordinator will spend a good amount of their time out in the watershed, talking to watershed residents, making new contacts, assisting our watershed farmers with water quality information and practices, and hearing about the issues that our communities feel are important to water quality. Though there is always annual flexibility with the focus of our organizations, specific tasks of the ECO AmeriCorps member will most likely include conducting outreach events for schools and community groups; communicating with our membership through regular emails, social media posts, and our annual report; creating and updating in-person and digital learning resources with our partner-program Lake Lessons; planning and holding public events - including paddle trips and river clean-ups - along our Wild and Scenic rivers; helping to solidify our Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area in Orleans County; and assisting with riparian plantings on both public and private lands.

Essential Functions. Functions that the applicant must be able to perform. These may be listed in bullet form:

- strong written communication, and interpersonal skills
- ability to complete tasks independently with limited oversight
- skill with Google and Microsoft applications
- physical capability to perform water sampling and other outdoor projects (can consist of walking up and downsteep banks, lifting 40 lbs, navigating off road)
- must have a personal vehicle and valid driver's license, and be willing to travel through our large watershed (mileage will be paid when performing duties assigned by supervisor)
- must have functioning cell phone or landline where they can be contacted when outside of the MRBA headquarters
- ability to represent our organization professionally, as needed, even in the absence of the supervisor

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:

- maintenance of websites and social media platforms
- design skills (for creating newsletters, event flyers and other outreach materials)
- public speaking
- GIS mapping skills

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.).

- hiking boots may be desired in some situations
- rain gear may be desired in some situations

Desired qualifications:

- experience conducting outreach activities or providing educational programs
- demonstrated interest in water quality
- Bachelor's degree, with preference in the fields of Environmental Science, Natural Resources, Engineering
- previous professional experience in environmental field or other professional setting
- experience using and navigating excel or other database systems to assess project effectiveness
- creative ideas to communicate with a variety of stakeholders, and to develop innovative projects that amplify our message and our positive impact.

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

We will track the number of attendees at community events, outreach programs and volunteer days; the number of miles of river cleaned during public events and the number of water samples collected to monitor water quality. We will also track the number of miles of rivers or acres of land improved through implementation projects, such as riparian buffer plantings, invasive species removal, and streambank restorations.

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	5
Protection and Restoration of Public Land	Acres of parks or public land treated and/or improved	6
Engagement, Outreach, and Education	Number of individuals receiving environmental stewardship education or training	100

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

While we have not always tracked the numbers, our ability to provide educational programming to our communities is greatly increased because of ECO AmeriCorps members. Similarly, our connection with regional partners is stronger thanks to our ECO AmeriCorps members. We have been able to participate more fully in cross-organization and collaborative projects and programs (such as Lake Lessons - a collaborative educational program offered on the shores of Lake Champlain to area schools that has so far reached over 1,000 area students), and network with other groups that are also hosting ECO AmeriCorps members. These connections and opportunities make us stronger and more effective both within the watershed and beyond.

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

I have supervised six ECO AmeriCorps members. Two of these were shared with other organizations and only served with me part-time, but I have been the full-time supervisor for the last four (who have either served full-time with the MRBA, or been shared between my two organizations). I am accustomed to working closely with the ECO AmeriCorps member on all the projects that both the MRBA and the UMATR Wild & Scenic Committee undertake. Although I will assign independent tasks to the ECO AmeriCorps member, we will work together, and with the MRBA Project Manager, consistently, and will be in regular communication on all projects.

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

We collaborate with numerous partners both within and beyond our watershed: watershed residents, local community organizations (conservation commissions, town select boards) and other nonprofits throughout the Northeast Kingdom, regional agencies such as Planning Commissions and Conservation Districts, statewide watershed groups, State agencies, and with the National Park Service.

The MRBA works with towns and landowners, and seeks grant funding and partnerships from a wide variety of groups; UMATR works intimately with our 8 towns to implement projects, offer programming, and provide grant funding, but also collaborates with other Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers up and down the east coast.

There are several meetings and training opportunities that we regularly attend, at both the regional and state level, as well as conferences that include a larger geographic area. We are lucky to be based in an area where numerous organizations and agencies understand that we are stronger together.

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).

No

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

Both of our organizations are interested in providing access to clean water - for recreation, for environmental health, and for our communities to be proud of - to all. We endeavor to ensure that all residents of and visitors to our watershed understand and respect the streams and rivers that flow through our region, and have the opportunity to appreciate them. By seeking diverse grant funds, the MRBA strives to provide equitable opportunities for landowners to implement Best Management Practices. Through free public programming, UMATR removes financial barriers to river activities. And through providing educational opportunities, both of our organizations seek to instill a sense of stewardship and responsibility to all who enjoy our region. Within our work environment, we participate in workshops to explore and eliminate implicit bias in our work and create space for meaningful input from all our team members

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

