



ECO AmeriCorps Service 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: Vermont Land Trust		
Primary Supervisor Name: Britt Haselton	Primary Supervisor Title: Farm Project Director	
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Sponsoring Organization’s Mission:		
<p>Current and future generations are deeply connected to the land and benefit from its deliberate protection and responsible stewardship.</p> <p>The Vermont Land Trust saves the land that makes Vermont special. Since 1977, we have protected farmland and forestland from subdivision and development – knowing that once farms and forests are gone, they rarely come back. We want our children, grandchildren, and future generations to enjoy local food, farming, clean air and water, hiking, hunting, forestry, and sugaring.</p>		

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

I manage new farmland conservation projects in northeastern and central Vermont. I also help manage riparian restoration projects in northern Vermont.

What is the title of the position you are requesting? **Planning & Assessment Assistant**

Describe your proposed service position:

Vermont Land Trust (VLT) is a nationally recognized leader in land conservation. VLT holds and stewards over 2,000 conservation easements on Vermont's farmland and forests, representing about 10 percent of Vermont's land base. Each year, 60-70 new conservation projects are completed by VLT through purchase and donation. Land conservation activities provide important opportunities to impact water quality. Nearly 90 percent of the properties that VLT has conserved have frontage along, or are located within 20 feet of, a stream or river. Given the current water quality challenges in the State, VLT is focused on developing new partnerships, new expectations and new tools to ensure that land conservation has the best possible impact on water quality now and in the future. The ECO AmeriCorps program launched by VT DEC in 2015 provided VLT with a significant opportunity to increase our capacity to advance water quality goals during this important time. The Assessment & Planning Assistant will work with VLT staff and key partners to advance VLT's water quality objectives across both new and on-going conservation projects being developed in 2021-22 as well as within the existing conserved lands portfolio statewide. This position at Vermont Land Trust provides an opportunity to serve and gain experience with a nationally recognized and accredited land conservation organization.

Building on the program initiatives first launched in 2015-16 with ECO AmeriCorps, VLT looks forward to continuing to address water quality in our conservation easements while deepening both our understanding of the issue and our investment in on-the-ground implementation. As the challenge of improving water quality has become more urgent, establishing and protecting vegetated buffers has become a significant focus on most, if not all, conservation projects - both past and present. Designing buffers for every new conservation project, as well as looking back at VLT's extensive portfolio of conserved land for opportunities to enhance water quality protection, is labor intensive and requires new skills, new partnerships, and new programs at VLT. We look to continue organizational investments in earlier assessments of water quality concerns, better integration with other state and nonprofit partners and USDA programs, and researching and developing new strategies to enhance water quality protection on conserved land.

An ECO AmeriCorps member will gain field experience serving with VLT as we continue to define and expand our role in facilitating water quality solutions in Vermont and transition to newly developed water quality and buffer protocols. They will have the opportunity to impact the development of new conservation projects as well as conduct outreach and interact with the owners of conserved land on the development of water quality improvements, including implementing best management practices, buffer overlays, buffer plantings, invasives control, and forest and agricultural management plan development.

Specifically, the Assessment and Planning Assistant position will involve:

- . Buffer Delineation and Implementation: Each VLT conservation project includes water quality considerations and permanent protections of floodplains, wetlands and waterways. The service member will contribute to riparian buffer design, developing tree planting plans, and coordinating volunteer opportunities for tree plantings.
- . GIS Mapping and Project Development: This position will provide critical project development support for new land conservation projects across the State. This will provide the service member with deeper GIS mapping experience, new field skills, and an understanding of how land trust organizations prioritize and achieve their goals.
- . Enhancing Engagement with Local Watershed Groups: This position will work to help VLT match technical assistance with need on conserved lands and deepen VLT's partnerships with local groups working on water quality issues.

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

- Perform GIS mapping and analysis of conservation projects, with an emphasis on water quality protections.
- Assist with direct implementation (e.g. field delineation, tree planting) of riparian buffers and wetland protection areas on conserved land, including site planning and volunteer coordination.
- Provide general support for conservation projects throughout the state.
- Assist VLT's stewardship staff with monitoring conserved properties.

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:

- Participate in regular VLT staff trainings and occasional webinars/trainings hosted by partner organizations.

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 / muck boots
- Rain gear
- Reliable transportation

Desired qualifications:

- Job duties require knowledge equivalent to completion of a Bachelor's Degree in Natural Resources, Forestry, Agriculture, or a related field. Advanced degree in Resource Management, Environmental Science, Regional Planning, or a related field is desired. Another combination of education and experience providing comparable knowledge and skills may be acceptable.
- Facility with GIS maps and mapping, and ability to read and understand deeds and related legal documents. Strong spatial, reading, and technical writing skills.
- Ability to coordinate and work on multiple projects simultaneously, and to maintain attention to detail while producing a steady volume of work in compliance with deadlines.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills. Ability to communicate with different personalities.

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

1. This position will provide education on environmental stewardship to at least 10 individuals(landowners and/or volunteers involved with riparian buffer plantings or other water quality restoration projects).
2. This position will improve at least 5 miles of rivers (waterways receiving permanent riparian bufferprotection through VLT conservation projects).
3. This position will improve at least 100 acres of managed land (riparian or wetland zones receivingpermanent protection through VLT conservation projects).

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	3
Protection and Restoration of Public Land	Acres of parks or public land treated and/or improved	80
Engagement, Outreach, and Education	Number of individuals receiving environmental stewardship education or training	10

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

A large part of VLT's conservation efforts involves putting conservation easements on privately-owned parcels. On farmland properties, we often obtain state and federal easement acquisition funding through the VT Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB). VLT's current pipeline of VHCB farmland conservation projects numbers more than 50 properties located throughout the state. Each one of these projects -- and all new prospective projects coming through the door -- requires assessment of conservation values including surface water features, e.g. streams and wetlands. Most surface water features receive enhanced buffer protections in our conservation easements; these protections must be mapped using GIS and then delineated in the field. On certain projects, VLT will also implement tree plantings and other physical restoration efforts within buffer areas. The Planning & Assessment Assistant provides critical support for GIS mapping and assessment of surface water protections; field delineation of proposed buffers; and planning and implementation of restoration activities.

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

Yes. I have served as an ECO AmeriCorps site supervisor for the past five years. Over this period of time, the ECO AmeriCorps position has developed into a critical role in our organization. For this reason, VLT has made it a priority to provide ample time for supervision and support for our service members.

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

Yes. In addition to working with the 40+ VLT employees located throughout the state, the member will serve closely with staff members of partner organizations such as the VT Housing & Conservation Board, US Fish and Wildlife and USDA-NRCS. There are also many opportunities to attend conferences and trainings with numerous other water quality partners.

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 are currently hosting a VT Housing & Conservation Board service member at our Brattleboro office and a LEAP AmeriCorps member at our Newport office.

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

Vermont Land Trust prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion

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

