

# 2015-2016 ECO AmeriCorps Members

Member Profiles



**VERMONT**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**

**ECO AmeriCorps**



### Jim Armbruster

Jim served at the White River Partnership and VT DEC Biomonitoring and Aquatic Studies Lab as an Assessment Coordinator and Analyst. He graduated with a B.S. in wildlife biology from the University of Vermont.

The highlight of my service so far has been helping BASS lab staff conduct field surveys that include electrofishing, macroinvertebrate collection, and water chemistry sampling. I am looking forward to the spring when we can begin improvement projects to white river access sites. I hope to continue work with natural resources somewhere in Vermont.

### Joe Bondi

Joe served at the Friends of Northern Lake Champlain as an Outreach Coordinator. Joe graduated with a B.S. in environmental science from the University of Delaware.

I am looking forward to the spring when it is time to implement several projects that will hopefully have a beneficial impact on the lake and its associated waters. Upon completion of my service I hope to traverse the Long Trail. After that, I plan to either continue my education or to find another job where I will continue to have beneficial impacts on the environment.

### Madeline Cotter

Maddie served with the VT DEC Clean Water Initiative Program as a Communications Specialist. She graduated with a B.S. in environmental studies from the University of Vermont.

The highlight of my service so far has been meeting all of the other fantastic AmeriCorps members. Our group is very passionate about the environment, and I am motivated by that energy to keep working each day. I'm looking forward to getting into the field more once it is field season again. After AmeriCorps I hope to go back to graduate school at the University of Vermont to get my Master of Science in Leadership in Sustainability through the Rubenstein School. Upon completing the two-year program, I want to move somewhere different for a few years and see the country. I feel like I will eventually end up living in New England, but I do want to travel.

### Brittain Faville

Brittain served with the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts as a Communications Coordinator. He graduated with a B.S. in Forestry from Colorado State University.

A highlight so far is being a part of public discussions and events involving the water quality pollution in Vermont. Hearing the local farmer's dialogs (more positive, some negative) to environmental change has also been exciting. I'm excited to get involved more in the land treatment/land management processes in the near future. I would also like to serve more in the field in regard to fisheries, invasive (primarily aquatic) species management, species stocking, and environmental measures on developmental sites. I would really like to find a career in the state or New England area that could entail working for a governmental agency. I want to work in a field relating to Natural Sciences and

potentially land management. There are still a lot of people I want to meet and shadowing I want to do before making final decisions though.

### Skylar Francis

Skylar served with the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife as an Assessment Coordinator. They graduated with a B.S. in water resources from the SUNY Brockport.

The highlight of my service has been to watch the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions Success Story Library website 'go live'. With this implementation, I helped manage the publications of press releases, social media posts, and setting up a live interview with the local news team. After AmeriCorps I hope to continue my career and education within the environmental field.

### Katy Gimma

Katy served as the ECO AmeriCorps Team Leader, she graduated with a B.S. in biology from SUNY Plattsburgh.

I am looking forward to field season, so I can participate in easements, water sampling, leading community workshops and swimming! I hope to either continue my career helping the environment or spend my life addressing the refugee crisis. Both are interrelated and will only continue to worsen in my lifetime.

### Michelle Graziosi

Michelle served with the University of Vermont Extension Center for Sustainable Agriculture & Vermont Department of Health Climate Change Adaptation Program as a Water Quality Research Technician.

A highlight of my service has been the many opportunities I've had to collaborate with fellow ECO AmeriCorps members. From planting native trees in riparian buffer restoration projects, to invasive species removal and river cleanups, my favorite projects have been those that we've tackled together. After ECO AmeriCorps I plan to pursue a career in environmental conservation and stewardship.

### Elizabeth Gribkoff

Elizabeth served with the Watersheds United Vermont and the Vermont River Conservancy as a Volunteer and Stewardship Coordinator. She graduated with a B.A. in environmental studies from the University of Vermont.

I am looking forward to the spring stewardship season with the Vermont River Conservancy, since I get to visit beautiful rivers throughout Vermont to monitor conservation easements. I'm hoping to buy an old airstream trailer this summer and then...who knows! Hopefully stay around Vermont for a while, then go to graduate school, write a short story collection and travel back to South America. All in no particular order.

### Julia Gulka

Julia served with the Vermont Land Trust as an Assessment and Planning Assistant. She graduated with a B.A. in conservation biology from Middlebury College.

I am looking forward to spring when I'll be getting back out in the field! I have been accepted to attend graduate school in the fall for a Master's degree in Biological Sciences at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada. After that, I hope to continue working in the field of environmental conservation.

### Travis Hart

Travis served with the VT Natural Resources Conservation Service as a Wetlands Conservation Assistant. He graduated with a B.S. in natural resources from the University of Vermont.

The highlight of my service so far has been the many field days spent in the swamps of Brandon and Leicester on different easements, as well as my efforts of surveying for potential restoration projects coming to fruition with the application of a landowner from one of the sites that I had identified. I am looking forward to participating in much more of the wetlands determinations field work and continuing the projects that I have started already. I plan to find a career in the natural resources field somewhere within the Vermont/New York area and continue to grow and learn new skills and gain new experiences to help further myself and my career.

### Diana Jaramillo

Diana served with the VT Department of Forest, Parks & Recreation's Urban and Community Forestry Program as an Education & Technical Assistant. She graduated with a B.S. in biology from University of Central Florida.

I am looking forward spending some time in the field as I provide support to the Urban Forest Inventory and Analysis program. I hope to continue my career by starting grad school.

### Julianne Lovergine

Julianne served with the Natural Resources Conservation Service as a Conservation Assistant. They graduated with a B.A. in Chinese language from University of Maryland.

The exposure to the many roles and aspects of NRCS and its partners has been incredibly informative and valuable both in experience as well as understanding how the service operates in the broader environmental field. I am looking forward to more fieldwork in the spring when I can practice some of the skills I learned last fall, and develop new ones that I can contribute to future conservation efforts. My hope is that the exposure to different fields within environmental conservation will help to narrow my focus, and maybe even lead to an opportunity to blend with my language background.

### Andrew Nguyen

Andrew served with the Windham County Natural Resource Conservation District and Windham Regional Commission as an Outreach and Project Coordinator. He graduated with a B.S. in biology from James Madison University and obtained a M.S. of Environmental Science and Management from University of California; Santa Barbara.

I am looking forward to the spring season so that I can fully start on developing a new Education Center, buffer plantings, and conservation easements. I hope to continue my career in environmental science and trying to integrate the natural world into the lives of people.

### Chelsea Roston

Chelsea served with the Franklin Watershed Committee as a Project Coordinator. She graduated with a B.S. in environmental earth science and sustainable energy.

A highlight of Americorps so far is engaging in community projects such as assisting a junior high and middle school class in repairing a riparian zone. I am looking forward to field projects in the spring and summer that consist of water sampling, buffer control, implementation projects, working with the community, implementing shoreline erosion best management practices. I am also excited to spend time educating kids on the importance of clean water and what they can do to help improve the environment in the future. I hope to spend my life after Americorps helping communities around the country, and eventually around the world, with clean water and helping to improve the environment.

### Zack Simpson

Zack served with the Montpelier Parks Department as a Watershed Steward. He graduated with a B.A. in environmental science from Capital University.

I am currently working on a culvert inventory and mapping project for the Montpelier Parks Department that will be used to better control sedimentation and erosion within the City's natural areas. This project utilizes GIS software and advanced surveying equipment to assess the locations of the culverts and their conditions. I am looking forward to field season so I can begin implementing a city-wide invasive management plan that I have been preparing this winter. This plan will serve in both the short and long term to remove and manage established exotic plants from riparian zones and spread awareness to Montpelier Residents on the hazards posed by these plants. I am also looking forward to participating in water sampling, leading community educational workshops, tree plantings, and recruiting volunteers! I intend to continue pursuing a career in the environmental field. This field has become my passion and one that I wish to continue to gain experience and apply myself.

### David Sinclair

David served with the City of Burlington Water Resources Department as an Outreach and Development Coordinator. He graduated with a B.S. in earth sciences from Dartmouth College.

I am looking forward to working with the BLUE® watershed-friendly certification program to help homeowners implement better stormwater management on their properties and educate them on ways they can improve water quality in Lake Champlain. I hope to dedicate my career to addressing important environmental issues and protecting and improving our water resources. I am currently investigating going back to school for my Master's Degree in the near future.

### Bea Smith

Bea served with the USDA as a Conservation Assistant. They attended Colby College for environmental science and art.

So far, the highlight of my service has been the opportunity to experience areas of Vermont I have never seen before. I am looking forward to completing a land treatment plan from start to finish and seeing this document help improve efficiency and sustainability of a farmer's operation. After Americorps I hope to find an occupation that makes me happy and through which I can help better the relationship between human beings and our natural world.

### Grant Taylor

Grant served with the Lake Champlain Sea Grant and VT DEC with the Green Infrastructure Collaborative as the Green Infrastructure Collaborative Assistant. He graduated with an associates degree in environmental science from Community college of Vermont.

I am looking forward to hosting the Green Stormwater Infrastructure Symposium on March 30th. It will be the culmination of lots of planning and coordination. I hope to continue my career in sustainable community development, which may include water resource protection. I am most intrigued by bridging the gap between opposing stakeholders in areas where the environment is at stake.

### Jimmy Young

Jimmy served with the Northwest Regional Planning Commission & Missisquoi River Basin Association as an Outreach and Project Coordinator. He graduated with a B.S. in energy and environmental policy from the University of Delaware.

Really looking forward to field season because I love being outside and the water sampling & road erosion inventories I will be doing sounds awesome! So far, the highlight of my service was definitely creating a stormwater management workshop for homeowners in St. Albans. The experience was very rewarding! I really want to stay in the field of water quality protection, whether it be with a consulting firm or even with the DEC. An environmental scientist would be a perfect position (mix between field work & some office work). I would love to find work in Vermont next year.

### Chris Yurek

Chris served with the Connecticut River Watershed Council; Ottauquechee Natural Resources Conservation District; Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission and the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation as a Water Quality Monitoring Assistant. He graduated with a B.S. in environmental studies from Keene State College.

The highlight of my service so far has been providing a comprehensive 5-year report regarding the Ottauquechee River Group's water quality monitoring results, which hadn't been reported on since 2010. I am most looking forward to the return of the field season so on the ground implementation of some of the projects I have been involved in can begin. I aim to get my master's degree in an earth/biological science or sustainability related field from the University of New Hampshire.