

2018-2019 ECO AmeriCorps Members

Member Profiles



Catie Bartone

Catie received a BS in environmental engineering with a minor in environmental studies from UVM in 2016. Originally from southwestern Connecticut, about 45 minutes outside Manhattan, she left Vermont after graduating to move back home and work for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, where she worked on improving the complicated water and wastewater infrastructure within the city using modeling software. She then left suburbia and moved into the heart of Queens, where she worked for a small environmental engineering firm working on brownfield sites using bioremediation. She missed the beauty of Vermont, and her ability to ski, hike, backpack, and swim all in one place - quite a beautiful one, she might add! She decided to return last fall and took on a position with a small environmental engineering firm in Williston as an environmental scientist working on wetland restoration and water infrastructure projects. She then took a bit of a turn and worked with a transportation firm in Burlington and worked on a few local transportation planning projects. Just this fall, after a whirlwind of awesome opportunities in the engineering and science world for the past two years, she took on a dual position with ECO AmeriCorps with the Franklin Watershed Committee and the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, serving to protect water quality in and around Lake Carmi in Franklin. Catie is delighted about this opportunity to become a part of a larger cause and is excited to apply her engineering and scientific background to a varied, multi-faceted, and often challenging, water quality issue.

Cassi Carpio

Cassi received a BS in Environmental Engineering from Michigan Technological University in 2016. Following a Peace Corps service she decided to join the ECO Americorps team to do further service work and to explore different environmental fields. She would like to expand her knowledge on the different techniques that organizations use to improve water quality. Cassi is serving with Friends of Northern Lake Champlain (FNLC) as a Project Assistant to aid in the different grant projects both current and future to increase water quality in Lake Champlain by reducing land-use pollution. In her position she will be assisting with outreach projects focused on landowners, monitoring water, applying for grants, and partnering with other agencies to complete projects in the Franklin County area.

Ollie Cultrara

Ollie received a degree in chemical engineering from Tufts University in 2018. Originally from upstate New York, they are thrilled to be living in Vermont and serving at the Addison County Solid Waste Management District. As the Waste Diversion Program Assistant at ACSWMD, they will focus on food waste diversion through programs and outreach to schools, businesses, and community organizations. A compost and recycling nerd, Ollie is grateful for the opportunity to explore their professional interest in organics recycling while serving and living in a vibrant local community. They are especially excited to complete UVM's Master Composter course and teach backyard composting workshops to local residents.

Allie Dinwiddie

Allie received a degree in Environmental Engineering from North Carolina State University in 2018. She is excited about living, learning, and serving in Middlebury, Vermont as a Water Quality Planner for the Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC). As a Water Quality Planner, Allie is responsible for coordinating and implementing water quality planning functions across transportation, emergency management, municipal storm water and river corridor planning projects for towns located in Addison County. She will mainly be assisting with completing road erosion inventories for local municipalities and grant applications to fund a variety of projects meant to improve the health and quality of Vermont waters. Originally from Waynesville, NC, Allie decided to move to Vermont, join the ECO AmeriCorps program, and brave Northeast winters to explore environmental career opportunities outside of traditional engineering roles. Over her next year of service at ACRPC, Allie is looking forward to engaging with local communities, assisting with the protection of natural resources through conscientious planning efforts, and indulging in many things dairy.

Elana Feldman

Elana is a February 2018 graduate of Middlebury College where she received a degree in Conservation Biology. Originally from Swampscott MA, Elana decided to serve with ECO AmeriCorps to develop her professional interests in environmental management while also giving back to the state that taught her to love the outdoors! Elana is serving as the Habitat Steward for the Battenkill Watershed Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area.

Michael Foushee

Michael joins us from Idaho, where he fostered a close connection to wild landscapes from an early age. He holds his B.S. in Geography with a minor in Climate Change Studies, and his M.S. in Environmental Science from the University of Idaho. With a keen interest in data management and developing spatial solutions, he has provided technical expertise for a wide variety of disciplines including water resources, natural hazards, cultural resources, and invasive species. His love of exploration and interest in conserving natural resources motivated him to move to Vermont to serve in ECO AmeriCorps. Michael currently serves in Montpelier with the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, where he will assist with managing conservation easements in the Forest Legacy Program and with developing the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Sujata Gautam

Sujata hails from charming ole' McKinney, Texas, and graduated from the University of Houston in May 2017 with a degree in Civil & Environmental engineering (Go Coogs!). Upon graduation, Sujata joined ECO AmeriCorps to explore and understand Vermont's progressive materials management laws & practices. She enjoyed her first year of service so much that she decided to stay on another year serving as the Outreach & Education Assistant for the Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District. Last year, Sujata communicated with over 2,000 folks in the District through outreach at farmers & community markets, school presentations, transfer stations, and special events. Sujata's fascination with materials/resource management never seems to cease, and this year she is excited for quite a few endeavors. Sujata plan to continue stewarding the Lamoille Waste Warriors volunteer program and looks forward to assisting community partners in keeping food scraps out of the landfill. Additionally, she is eager to start and lead several "Demystifying Waste" workshops this year to help answer the community's waste disposal related questions.

Christopher Gaynor

Chris, whom prefers to be addressed by his last name, Gaynor, received an B.S from the University of Florida - Go Gators! - in Agricultural and Biological Engineering. In his efforts to broaden his ability to become an environmental steward, Gaynor is pursuing an M.S. in Environmental Studies. Gaynor is originally from a relatively small South Florida community in Cooper City, FL and decided to join ECO AmeriCorps in order to fulfill his desire to serve after returning from his Peace Corps Service in Tanzania. Gaynor was ultimately inspired to combine his STEM background and past service to be a part of the growing movement to optimize sustainability and address the environmental obstacles a community faces, and wishes to be a facilitator that may allow a community to overcome those obstacles. Being a Clean Water Planning Associate for the Windham Regional Commission, Gaynor desires to compile a powerful network that collectively pursues the improvement of water quality awareness, education, and protection. Gaynor, although new to the region, greatly enjoys serving his community and intends to use his ECO AmeriCorps position to further build beneficial relationships among key stakeholders.

Jacqueline Huettenmoser

Jac grew up spending summers on a small lake in northeastern Pennsylvania where she learned to love the complexities of the natural world. She made her way to Virginia to attend the College of William and Mary and graduated in 2017 with a degree in geology and a focus in earth surface processes. Jac was motivated to serve in AmeriCorps by a desire to help conserve our natural resources at the grassroots level. As the Parks and Watershed Steward at Montpelier's Parks and Trees Department, she organizes and empowers community members to preserve the water quality through improving riparian habitats and controlling sediment erosion.

Theron Lay-Sleeper

Theron Lay-Sleeper will serve at the Central Vermont Waste Management District. He will be supporting the outreach team on special projects and events and assisting in the development of programs to divert waste and promote recycling and composting under the requirements of Act 148 (Vermont's Universal Recycling Law). He studied international relations, environmental policy, and German literature at Tufts University and graduated in 2015. Theron is interested in working towards energy independence and a more sustainable society. He hopes that this year of service will expose him to opportunities to engage in the field. He is excited to organize and share Repair Café events with the public, and to teach people about composting and recycling.

Liza Lemieux

Liza is serving with the Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District. As a Conservation Technician she will be increasing the District's ability to improve water quality by taking on regular monitoring of surface waters and tile drains, as well as soil sampling at farms throughout the county. These soil test results will be used in UVM's Nutrient Management Course which Liza will be attending along with the farmers this winter. She will also be contributing to projects such as riparian buffer plantings, a spring tree sale, and distribution of conservation road signs. Before her service, Liza studied environmental science with a focus in agriculture at the University of Vermont, and worked as a technician at the Agricultural and Environmental Testing Laboratory. With strong interest in improving agriculture and the environment, she is excited to get things done with ECO AmeriCorps & the District to improve quality of life, land, and water in in her home state.

Tommy Ott

Tommy graduated from the University of Vermont in May of 2018 with a B.S. in Environmental Sciences and a minor in Geospatial Technologies. Tommy was drawn to ECO AmeriCorps for the wealth of local connections the program provides and the opportunity to serve Vermont within his field of interest. He is serving with the Vermont Land Trust out of their Richmond office, where he is a Planning and Assessment Assistant. Within his service term, Tommy hopes to expand on his skills with mapping technologies and ecological assessment as well as continue to learn about land conservation and stewardship.

Christian Pelletier

Christian received his mechanical engineering degree from the University of Connecticut in 2014. Since then he has worked as an engineer, hiked around the east coast and received his Masters of Environmental Law and Policy from Vermont Law School. Christian will be serving this year as the Watershed Stewardship Coordinator at the White River Partnership. When not serving at the White River Partnership, Christian can be found hiking with his pups and fiancé, running on trails, cooking, or pursuing his love of sharing meals with friends.

Laura Pratt

Laura graduated from Beloit College in 2017 with degrees in Studio Art and Creative Writing. She is originally from Minneapolis, MN and is serving with the Lake Champlain Committee in Burlington, VT as the Education and Outreach Coordinator. Laura chose to serve with ECO AmeriCorps to get involved in the community and work toward environmental sustainability. She is excited to explore the mountains this year and is looking forward to all of Vermont's maple products.

Nathaniel Sharp

Nathaniel graduated with Honors from the University of Vermont in 2018 with a B.S. in Wildlife Biology. He is originally from Wallingford PA and will be serving as a Citizen Science Outreach Naturalist with the Vermont Center for Ecostudies located in Norwich VT. Nathaniel was drawn to ECO AmeriCorps by the opportunities to learn from and collaborate with other ECO members and environmentally-conscious groups throughout the state, as well as the service-oriented nature of the ECO AmeriCorps program. As a Citizen Science Outreach Naturalist, Nathaniel will be providing presentations and workshops to various communities in Vermont on the projects currently being undertaken by VCE, and specifically how online citizen science tools can be used to contribute information to these projects.

Jenn Smith

Jenn received a degree in Natural Resources Management from Paul Smith's College in 2011. She is serving near her hometown as a Stewardship and Volunteer Coordinator at the Middlebury Area Land Trust, in Middlebury Vermont. Jenn chose to serve as an ECO Americorps member so she can serve her local community and gain knowledge and experience in the field of conservation. She is looking forward to a field based position that will focus on connecting the community to the Trail Around Middlebury, which is the major project of the Middlebury Area Land Trust.

Kristen Switzer

Kristen received a degree in Environmental Sciences from the University of Vermont in 2018. She is serving as an Environmental Technician for the Monitoring, Assessment, and Planning Program (MAPP) within the Department of Environmental Conservation in Montpelier. Kristen decided to join ECO AmeriCorps because she wants to contribute to water quality monitoring and help improve Vermont's ecosystems. Through this position, she has been sampling streams throughout the state and contributing to the organization and improvement of the LaRosa Partnership Program.

David Wardrop

David received a degree in Environmental Policy from Champlain College in the spring of 2017. He is serving with the Water Quality division of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets (VAAF). David is originally from Long Valley, New Jersey but through the next eleven months he hopes to familiarize himself with the Vermont farming culture through public and educational outreach, as well as site visits and inspections of certified small farms (CSFO).

Alex Wells

Alex Wells grew up in the High Rockies of Colorado, where he was seeded with a deep love of the outdoors and an interest in environmental issues. Both of these came to flower during his time at Middlebury College, from which he graduated in 2018 with a degree in Conservation Biology. Not quite ready to leave Vermont, he is serving with the Vermont Center for Ecostudies as their ECO AmeriCorps Vernal Pool Monitoring Program Coordinator. As the title suggests, Alex will be coordinating a citizen science-driven monitoring project of vernal pools in Vermont that seeks to both establish a baseline of data and increase awareness of the pools. So far he's learned a lot about these pools and is excited to coordinate and contribute to an impactful conservation project (as well as to actually see some salamanders). Alex chose to participate in the ECO AmeriCorps program both out of a sense of wanting to serve and to get a deeper sense of careers in the fields of conservation and the environment in general.

Jenevra Wetmore

Jenevra graduated from Middlebury College in 2017 with a degree in Environmental Studies and Nonfiction Writing. Originally from central Vermont, she is excited to serve as the Assistant Coordinator for both the Missisquoi River Basin Association and the Upper Missisquoi & Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Committee. During her service year she will be conducting outreach, maintaining the water sampling program, and planning events in the watershed. Jenevra is serving with Eco Americorps to give back to her community while gaining hands on experience working on issues related to water quality. She is excited to work directly with the local community, particularly the agricultural community, to learn how to best meet their needs.

Hannah Yates

Hannah hails from the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia where she was taught to appreciate the great outdoors. She graduated from College of Charleston in South Carolina with a degree in Geology. After a year of service last year as the Green Infrastructure Collaborative Assistant at Lake Champlain Sea Grant, she decided to take on a part time position with ECO AmeriCorps to be the Team Leader for this year's cohort. She is very excited to get to know everyone in the program and to be able to share their successes throughout the year!

