



Village of Montpelier
Parks & Recreation

September 2020- August 2021 Service Year POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title

Montpelier Parks and Trees Watershed Steward

Sponsoring Organization

Montpelier Parks, Trees and Conservation
Montpelier, VT

Sponsoring Organization's Mission

To maintain and improve Montpelier's park system to meet the "green space" needs of present, and future, residents and visitors.

Conservation Commission mission: The Montpelier Conservation Commission seeks to strengthen the relationship between people and nature in order to involve residents in the protection and enhancement of the City's natural environment. The Commission is charged with advising the Planning Commission, City Council and other city officials on issues concerning Montpelier's natural resource.

Trees: To care for the downtown trees, all the trees in the city right of ways, and city properties, to plant and care for trees to enhance the environment and improve the quality of life and safety of the residents in Montpelier.

Goals for the ECO AmeriCorps Position

1. Collaborate with community partners, groups and volunteers to improve the trail system and watershed in Montpelier Parks.
2. Reduce sediment that comes off park roads and trails and into the Lake Champlain basin watershed.
3. Improve quality of riparian habitat through removing invasive plants, planting trees, and reducing erosion.
4. Educate landowners and support groups in their efforts to improve watershed and riparian habitat on their properties.

Essential Functions. Functions that the applicant must be able to perform

- Collaborate with the community, the Parks Department, and private contractors to develop a comprehensive trail assessment for the City of Montpelier. Use this assessment to make recommendations for trail improvements, ways to reduce erosion, and places to expand our trail network to connect natural areas within Montpelier.
- Conduct follow-up service on the previous years' impressive efforts on woody invasives, remove "stragglers" and sprouts, water plantings, help assure success of plantings.

- Organize efforts to increase work on managing herbaceous invasive plants, including engaging local volunteers, landowners, and/or neighborhoods in planting shade producing natives and natives with allelopathic characteristics. After invasives are “contained” by appropriate plantings, perform control measures and other plantings to create control areas where groups could do “research” on invasives.
- Lead job trainees (at risk youth), volunteers, school groups, and numerous other groups looking to do community service in the Parks to conduct a variety of improvements related to our watershed goals such as trail improvements, removing invasive plants, and planting beneficial native species. ð Educate the local community, through workshops, news articles, social media, contests, school group efforts, regarding the effects of invasives and some of the best practices in managing invasives.
- Implement an existing plan from "Stone Environmental" for improvements to the gravel road that runs through Hubbard Park with the goals of reducing erosion and increasing safety on the road.
- Assist in managing a healthy treescape along the streets in Montpelier. Montpelier is a city of hills and rivers. Most of the trees in the in the right of way are located in roadways not far from waterways, and many are located along steep gradients. Planting and maintaining healthy trees on the ROW's in Montpelier will help with storm water management, reducing erosion on our hillsides, and generally contribute positively to our watershed. ð Collaborate with the Montpelier Tree Board (a volunteer group) on their neighborhood tree planting program, investing in our city's future treescape.

Marginal Functions. These are secondary to Essential Functions, may be negotiable, and can be completed as time allows.

- Make improvements to Interpretive Invasive trail signs. ð Develop creative invasive plant performances to be performed at our annual seasonal festivals
- Hold workshops in neighborhoods on invasive control techniques.
- Instigate neighborhood efforts to control invasives along riparian corridors.
- Collaborate with local volunteers to gather information about existing invasives threatening the rest of the Montpelier’s waterways.
- Collaborate with the Conservation Commission to assess where erosion may be causing watershed related problems in Montpelier and then work with the Commission, city staff, and volunteers to address those issues.
- Engage school groups, local colleges, interns and community members to conduct creative research projects and effort to control invasives.

Projects May Include

The service project has two main focuses:

1. Assessing, maintaining, and improving our trail system with the goal of reducing erosion and increasing access and connection to natural areas in Montpelier.
2. Improving our riparian areas by removing invasive plants and replacing them with beneficial native species.

Erosion and Sediment Control:

Background: Both Hubbard Park and the North Branch Park are critical parts of the Winooski and North Branch watersheds. Part of our work is to limit erosion from our parks and control sediment deposition into these rivers. Many of our trails were developed organically, with user convenience in mind and not erosion control. We hope that the service member will be able to do a comprehensive analysis of our trail system. The analysis will inform a 10-year work plan that will include trail improvements to minimize erosion, closing down some trails, and identifying areas in which to expand trail use in order to connect natural areas within the city.

In 2016 the City of Montpelier contracted a report from Stone Environmental that included a number of recommendations for improvements along the road in Hubbard Park. In 2017, some of the recommendations were completed, and more are planned for the summer of 2019. Several more phases of the project remain, and we anticipate completing the report's recommendations in 2020 and 2021.

Project Focus: This service project will include carrying out significant improvements to our trail system, and to the road in Hubbard Park. Work will include culvert headers and end walls, plunge pools, ditching improvements and stone barriers. The service member will supervise this and ensure that it complies with the international trail building standards set out in the Stone Environmental report. The service member will also collaborate closely with Sinuosity Trail Design to ensure that the mountain bike trails built in the North Branch Park do not cause sediment deposition into the North Branch River

Invasive Species:

Background: While work battling invasives in Montpelier Parks has occurred on over 400 acres of city and state land, the area with the highest remaining concentration of invasives, where invasives create the most vulnerable situation for the watershed, has occurred on about 45 acres of parkland. Major work has been done on about 35 of those most infected acres.

Project Focus. The focus of the service will be on the remaining six to ten acres with the serious remaining invasive problem. Another 10 - 20 acres with a less serious problem need attention but represent much less time and service. Some follow up service to make sure nothing was missed would be helpful and relatively quick, helping ensure long term success. Given the huge amount of progress that has been made in our project so far, and given that this project seemed an impossible task to many people in the first phases, it is now getting the point where people can see that control of honeysuckle, barberry and multi flora rose is starting to be in reach. This momentum will help engage more volunteers and create more excitement as we get closer to the goal. Without this support it is an effort the city parks department does not have the resources to successfully take on. However, we do have the resources to combat new invasions and do follow up service should we get the help to remove the woody invasive currently present.

We have also generated interest and excitement with our idea of preventing the spread of invasives (such as knotweed) and/ or shading them through the planting of taller evergreen natives. Last year we planted around 400 evergreens and have had a great survival rate so far and would like to widen some of these barriers this next year. There may also be a few community improvement opportunities to assist in a couple other community tree planting projects. Additionally, improving sediment control on public trails and gravel roads, identifying and providing remedies for sediment source points on public and private lands around Montpelier will also improve the watershed. This is a huge effort that will best be done through the strategic coordination of community groups and volunteers who understand and share an interest in protecting our community resources.

Desired Qualifications

-Interest and ability to serve with a wide range of people to improve the watershed. Our organization thrives on volunteers of all stripes---from kids with behavioral challenges, to service groups to high functioning college age students, to senior citizens in our community. Applicants must be interested in being a leader for groups of all kinds. ∅ Interest in being a “model” for a variety of people for problem solving, being a community catalyst, developing and implementing plans, and “getting things done.”
- Interest in physically and intellectually challenging work in ALL types of weather.

- Creative, outside the box thinking and problem solving.
- A willingness to learn technical skills around the wide variety of tools we use here (tractors, chainsaws, vehicles, wood processing, trail tools, carpentry, snow management, trail grooming, etc.)
- Competency in writing.

Networking Opportunities

Yes, through various training as part of the ECO AmeriCorps cohort. Many people love the parks we manage and will allow the member to be exposed to potential employers throughout their service.

Service Conditions

A substantial amount of service will be done in the outdoors, year-round, in a variety of weather and conditions. In the winter and at other times there will indoor service, planning, finding funding for plantings, educating the public about related efforts. Some nighttime meeting to collaborate with others and some late afternoon and weekend service to accommodate volunteers and community service groups is likely. Most service will be done within the window of 8am-4:30pm.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Be a US citizen, a national, or legal permanent resident alien of the U.S.;
- Be at least 18 years of age upon entering the Pre-Service Orientation (there is no upper age limit);
- Be a high school graduate or have a GED certificate, or be willing to work towards their GED as part of their service-year successful completion requirement. A member cannot have dropped out of high school to join AmeriCorps. If a member has a documented medical reason/professional opinion why they cannot finish high school, they might be eligible; call in this case;
- Has not been convicted of murder or sexual assault and is willing to undergo a National Service Criminal History Check;
- Must submit to Agency of Human Services checks, i.e. Adult Abuse and Child Abuse Prevention;
- Be committed to the ECO AmeriCorps program, and its ethic of service and personal and professional development of its participants;
- Have the ability and enthusiasm to drive to, attend, and participate in required trainings and events, and be prepared to drive up to 2-3 hours each way.