



## *September 2020- August 2021 Service Year* POSITION DESCRIPTION

### Position Title

Citizen Science Outreach Naturalist

### Sponsoring Organization

Vermont Center for Ecostudies  
Norwich, VT

### Sponsoring Organization's Mission

The Vermont Center for Ecostudies advances wildlife conservation across the Americas through research, monitoring, and citizen engagement. With a reach extending from Canada and northern New England through the Caribbean and South America, our work unites people and science for conservation.

### Goals for the ECO AmeriCorps Position

VCE's programs and constituent base have grown, participation in our research projects and contributions to the crowd-sourced natural history databases we manage has skyrocketed, the need for someone to focus entirely on citizen engagement in our conservation science has become paramount. Our goals for this position will be to support citizen engagement in VCE programs by bringing programs (both field-based and presentation-style) to audiences around the state, including to those previously underreached by VCE; assisting in the management and volunteer coordination for one of VCE's signature citizen science projects, Mountain Birdwatch; engaging citizen scientists in the use of digital tools that VCE manages, including iNaturalist Vermont, eBird Vermont, and eButterfly), and our new groundbreaking project, the Vermont Bee Survey, which aims to survey the entire bee fauna across the state over the next 5 years with the help of volunteers.

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

Organize, plan, and manage the service flow on a variety of assignments, in collaboration with the project leader on any given project. Follow directions and take advice and then serve independently to implement the project, checking in regularly for progress reports, seeking input or feedback as needed. Be competent in the use of all digital tools VCE manages and capable of learning enough to field help-desk questions. Be an enthusiastic naturalist, encouraging and positive educator, clear communicator, effective ambassador of VCE to the public. Be able to organize and train the public to serve as citizen scientists. Plan, carry out, and follow up training sessions with support for the citizen scientists in implementing it. Be sufficiently detail-oriented to manage data. Communicate clearly with multiple

stakeholders throughout the process: VCE's staff, colleagues at sister organizations or organizations hosting our programs, landowners in permission to access field sites, citizen scientists in recruiting, training, and managing their efforts, VCE colleagues in functioning as a full member of the organization's staff team, the public in presenting the project in outreach programs. Contribute to a collegial, positive team environment. Be willing and able to transport oneself to field sites, and flexible enough to conduct field service at odd hours and in all kinds of weather.

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

-Write engaging and educational blogs and other articles to be used in VCE's outreach materials  
-Participate in a variety of VCE projects not directly related to assigned service, for the benefit of professional growth and breadth of experience of the AmeriCorps member and to be a fully participating member of the VCE team.

### Projects May Include

The Citizen Science Outreach Naturalist will support citizen engagement in VCE programs in the following ways:

#### 1. Outreach and Communication:

- 1a. Create and deliver fun, educational, clear, entertaining, and scientifically-rigorous public programs, both formal presentation-style and field trip-style, and appropriate to target audience.
- 1b. Travel throughout Vermont to bring VCE's programs to new and underserved audiences.
- 1c. Team with VCE's science staff to develop and enhance presentations that accurately represent them.
- 1d. Evaluate outcomes of these programs through directly surveying participants and host organizations.

#### 2. Citizen Science stewardship and project support:

- 2a. Assist Mountain Birdwatch and Vermont Bee Survey projects with volunteer recruitment and coordination, and provide operational support (e.g., conducting surveys, establishing new survey routes, maintaining web pages). Training will be provided as needed.
  - 2b. Engage citizen scientists using digital tools VCE that manages (eBird Vermont, e-Butterfly, iNaturalist Vermont, etc.), providing inspiration, training, opportunities for learning, and help-desk support to users.
  - 2c. Through outreach activities, increase the user base and volume of data submitted via these tools. 2d. Coordinate volunteer data entry and proof data submitted by volunteers.
3. Participate in an Independent Service Project under the guidance of ECO AmeriCorps.
  4. Participate in ECO AmeriCorps Trainings, Service Days, Events, and Program Initiatives.
  5. Engage in professional and personal development activities and networking opportunities.
  6. Write a final report outlining the year of service, documenting the number of hours spent providing outreach, recommendations for future outreach and citizen science efforts, and evaluating the outreach program.

### Desired Qualifications

- Have a BS in wildlife biology or a related field.
- Have experience successfully conducting field work in wildlife biology or a related field.
- Be able to efficiently learn new things about VCE projects and about biodiversity, in order to get up to speed quickly on a topic and be able to teach/present it to the public. Present public programs in "draft" form to the VCE science staff and integrate their feedback to improve presentation style, format, and content. Be open to feedback and eager to grow professionally.
- Have experience working with volunteers or managing others.
- Be a strong, engaging public speaker and clear writer.

- Have the ability to organize and manage a project from start to finish, seeking and integrating the input of experts, recruiting and training volunteers, and managing the time line and project work flow to be completed on time and within budget.
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Be comfortable serving as a team and independently, in the field and in the office.
- Be willing and able to transport oneself to field sites, and flexible enough to conduct field service at odd hours and in all kinds of weather.
- Be physically able to carry out the field service required in this position, including but not limited to carrying a backpack with necessary equipment, using a GPS to hike off-trail across uneven terrain to access field sites, navigating via GPS to predetermined sampling locations, camping overnight in remote areas.

#### Networking Opportunities

Yes. ECO AmeriCorps member will have opportunities to attend region meetings, such as the FEMC annual meeting and the annual Northeast Natural History Conference. And there are many opportunities at VCE to meet visiting colleagues. Additionally, VCE is well connected in the region with other environmental groups.

#### Service Conditions

Service will be performed primarily indoors, with VCE staff biologists, constituents, members of the public, volunteers, and citizen scientists. During certain seasons (e.g., summer) there may be periods of extended outdoor field service (ranging from leading bird walks to conducting multi-day excursions to remote mountain ridges to conduct or map out routes for bird surveys or bee surveys).

#### 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.