

## ECO AmeriCorps Host Site Application 2022-'23

Since 2015, ECO has enjoyed working with an inspiring list of conservation partners in providing environmental leaders a paid opportunity to serve Vermont communities. ECO AmeriCorps values all voices and identities in the conservation space. We seek to uplift and engage diversity, equity and inclusion commitments in service and in our state. Thank you for your interest in joining us!

For more information on host site application supporting documents:

<https://dec.vermont.gov/administration-innovation/eco/current-host-organizations>

Contact:

[dustin.bowman@vermont.gov](mailto:dustin.bowman@vermont.gov)

802-461-5222

ECO AmeriCorps Living Stipend:

\$21,335 (full-time members)

\$11,295 (half-time members)

Host Site cost based on # of full-time employees:

Full-Time (1,700 hours over 11 months)

0-3 \$7,500

3-10 \$8,400

>10 \$9,800

Half-Time (900 hours over 6 months)

\$4,900 regardless of size

Quarter-Time (450 hours over 3 months)

\$2,450 regardless of size

### Service Site Responsibilities

- Provide host site match based on organizational size
- Participate in ECO member recruitment, confirm member selection, arrange site training, member supervision and support throughout term of service, other forms and documentation as required by AmeriCorps, reviews bi-weekly member timesheets, mileage reimbursement for service-related travel.
- Supervisor must attend AmeriCorps supervisor orientation (or make special arrangements).
- Applicants must submit a Certificate of Insurance, indicating that the entity or entities have met the insurance requirements listed in Attachment C (see risk assessment document).

## Full-Time Member Benefits\*

Living Stipend: \$21,335 Education Award: \$6,495

Other Benefits: Professional development training, networking opportunities, health care, child care assistance, program support, mileage/meals reimbursement for ECO AmeriCorps-related travel.

\*Benefits for half-time and part-time members are prorated.

VT-DEC administers the member's living stipend, health care benefits, child care benefits, timesheets, activity reports, and other AmeriCorps and employee-related benefits and documentation.

## Organization Name \*

Vermont Land Trust

## Organization Address \*

8 Bailey Ave, Montpelier VT 05601

## Supervisor Name and Title \*

Allaire Diamond, Ecologist

## Email \*

allaire@vlt.org

## Phone number \*

802-879-6672

Which hosting category are you applying to? Note: ECO prefers full-time members for the vast majority of our program opportunities. Please contact Coordinator [dustin.bowman@vermont.gov](mailto:dustin.bowman@vermont.gov) with questions. \*

- Full-Time (September-August)
- Half-Time (flexible)
- Quarter-Time (May-August)

How many ECO Service Members are you applying to host? \*Note\* The program looks to disperse capacity builders geographically and by experience. Consideration will be given to those that can demonstrate unique need. \*

- 1
- 2

Host Site Contribution Method \*

- Lump Sum
- Quarterly, \*program preference is for one-time payment (reach out with questions)

Please provide a brief description of your role at your organization. \*

Coordinate ecological restoration program including wetland and riparian restoration projects, dam removals, and ecological assessments.

What is the title of the position you are requesting? \*

Assessment and Planning Assistant

Describe your proposed service position. Please outline the role. \*

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 and wetland overlays, buffer plantings, wetland restoration, 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.
- Ecological Assessment: Each new VLT project is remotely assessed for features of ecological significance,

such as rare and uncommon natural communities and wetlands. The service member will complete these assessments with training and consultation with VLT's ecologist.

- 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.

What are the essential 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.

What are the secondary functions? These are projects or tasks that may be accomplished as time allows or applicant's interests evolve. \*

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

What are the desired qualification for this position? \*

- Job duties require knowledge equivalent to completion of a Bachelor's Degree in Natural Resources, Forestry, Agriculture, or a related field. 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.

Will the member have access to "vulnerable populations"? This includes youth, elderly and individuals with disabilities. \*

Yes

No

What initiatives does your organization take to support diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice and how will the ECO member be included or supported in this work? \*

Vermont Land Trust has a deep commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. A staff workgroup on Power, Privilege, and Equity meets regularly to develop programming, coordinate resources, and advise organizational initiatives using this lens. Past ECO members have joined this group and provided valuable input both to the VLT efforts and back out to the ECO community.

Please provide information that provides a compelling need for the proposed position (data, statistics, resources, etc.) \*

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 and wetland 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 the supervisor's leadership experience. Will they have adequate time to manage and mentor an ECO AmeriCorps member? \*

Yes. I have served as an ECO AmeriCorps site supervisor for one year and work closely with the previous site supervisor who has five years' experience. 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 how your organization has adapted to COVID-19. What communication strategies and tools have you implemented? i.e. teleservice, remote service, etc. \*

VLT has supported employees' remote work needs with priorities on flexibility and safety. Staff and ECO members are provided with technology and support needed to be successful. In the 2021-22 service year, the ECO member and site supervisor worked together in person at least one day per week.

Describe networking opportunities that will be available to your service member. \*

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.

Is there someone in your organization's network that might be interested in mentoring your ECO service member? \*Note, 1-2 hours per month, not required

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Does your organization currently host or plan to host an AmeriCorps member from another program? If yes, briefly describe the duties of this other position. \*

We are currently hosting a VT Housing & Conservation Board service member at our Brattleboro office.

Please list any clothing/equipment the member will need that you cannot provide (e.g., hiking boots, waders, raingear, etc.). Is a reliable vehicle expected? 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 and winter gear
- Reliable transportation

Are you willing to search with program staff over the summer to help your ECO member secure affordable and safe housing?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

## Performance Measures

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.

Document can be found here: <https://dec.vermont.gov/administration-innovation/eco/current-host-organizations/prospectivehostsites>



Water Quality and Trail Improvement - Please project Impact Numbers on miles of river/stream/trail treated and/or improved. \*

3

Land Conservation and Remediation - Please project impact numbers on acres of public parks or other public, publicly managed or tribal lands improved. \*

80

Community Engagement Outreach and Education - Please project number of individuals receiving environmental stewardship education or training. \*

10

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