



AmeriCorps

2023-24 ECO AmeriCorps

Ecological Restoration Associate

Environmental Careers and Opportunities (ECO) AmeriCorps is an AmeriCorps program within the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC). ECO AmeriCorps is funded in part by an AmeriCorps state grant provided through SerVermont from the Corporation for National & Community Service. Service sites will provide meaningful service opportunities, regular supervision with oversight of service hours and timesheets, office space and office equipment, orientation to the worksite, additional training (as needed) and mileage reimbursement. The 2023-2024 program will begin mid-September 2023 and end in August 2024.

To be considered, service sites must:

- Demonstrate a commitment to DEIJ principles and provide a pathway for involvement at the host site and program level.
- Be a non-profit, municipality, state agency, tribal government, or educational institution.
- Provide a position description showcasing activities that are appropriate to the mission of ECO AmeriCorps.
- Provide a work environment that is ADA compliant, drug-free, and carries supplies and equipment necessary for members to perform their duties.
- Be able to provide the cash match and mileage reimbursement at the federal General Services Administration (GSA) rate for service-related travel for the member.
- Attend a supervisor orientation and be available for a minimum of two subsequent site visits and check-ins from ECO AmeriCorps staff.
- Clarify any additional responsibilities to the member according to your organization's policies.
- Notify ECO AmeriCorps staff about conflicts or other issues as they arise.

Other Requirements and Responsibilities:

- Confirm member selection, on-site training, member supervision and support throughout term of service, other forms and documentation as required by AmeriCorps, mileage reimbursement for service-related travel.
- Main supervisor must attend AmeriCorps supervisor orientation (or make special arrangements).

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

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

- 0-3 \$8,000
- 4-10 \$9,000
- >10 \$10,500

Half-Time (900 hours over 6 months)

- \$5,250 regardless of size

Quarter-Time (450 hours over 3 months)

- \$2,625 regardless of size

For more information about the host site application:

- Visit the ECO Website for supporting documents: www.ecoamericorps.org
- Or contact Program Supervisor, Dustin Bowman, dustin.bowman@vermont.gov, 802-461-5222

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation is sponsoring AmeriCorps positions through its AmeriCorps Program. The State of Vermont is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Positions are open to all applicants without regard to race color, national origin, ethnicity, disability, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, political affiliation, veteran's status, religion, or creed.

Name of Organization or Municipality:

Vermont Natural Resources Council

Address of Organization or Municipality:

11 Baldwin Street

Primary Supervisor Name and Title:

Karina Dailey, Resoration Ecologist

Primary Supervisor's email:

kdailey@vnrc.org

Primary Supervisor's phone #:

(802) 881-3423

Please provide a brief description of your role at your site:

Provide technical support for policy development related to water quality and forest conservation, and manage dam removal and aquatic habitat restoration.

Which hosting category are you applying to?

Full-Time (September-August)

What is the title of the position you are requesting?

Describe your proposed service project.

[Note: performance measures are based on improved acres of public land, improved miles of waterways or trails, number of Vermonters provided environmental stewardship education or training, and number of members placed in green jobs after completing their AmeriCorps service. Capacity- building activities are allowed. Please describe any projected impact.]

This position will assist VNRC's Water, Forests & Wildlife, and Sustainable Communities Programs. Possible tasks and responsibilities include the following:

- Goal: Undertake community engagement around dam removal, riparian buffer protection, floodplain restoration, and wetland values. This work could also include maintaining the FreeVermontRivers database and staff support for VT Dam Task Force meetings.

Expectation: Attend VT DTF mtgs and other mtgs, take notes and conduct research, contribute to conversation, provide updates to the FreeVTRivers Database.

- Serve as dam removal project implementation assistant, assisting with dam removal construction oversight, facilitate restoration effort, and communication with engineers, contractors, and regulators.
- Help with environmental permit compliance, assisting with data collection and draft application for regulatory permitting for dam removal projects including wetland delineations for Army Corps of Engineer and Vermont Wetlands Program, Vermont Stream Alteration Permit, Construction General Permit (CGP), and VT Dam Safety permit.
- Assist with invasive species control and riparian restoration (tree planting) at all active restoration projects.
- Assist with fieldwork to identify and prioritize new dam removal and wetland restoration projects.
- Manage database that collects info on dam removal work completed, including river miles reconnected, wetlands restored, floodplain restored and river channel restoration and tree planting.
- Assist with education and outreach to municipalities about the updated publication Community Strategies for Vermont's Forests and Wildlife, which includes diverse strategies for municipal planning to maintain intact forests, working lands, and wildlife resources. This would include Act 171 planning to identify important forest blocks and habitat connectors, and the identification of strategies and effective case studies to minimize the fragmentation of these features.
- Assist with education and outreach to municipalities and professional planners about the results from the Wildlife Considerations in Local Planning report, which is a collaborative project with the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. The outreach would include sharing insights on the progress and gaps being made in wildlife and forest land stewardship at the municipal level, and coordinating workshops with planning and natural resource professionals to implement report recommendations, such as how to improve municipal planning to address climate change and maintaining a resilient landscape.
- Assist with education and outreach about the Vermont Parcelization Website, which is being improved to provide parcelization and subdivision data through 2020 to inform land use planning and conservation

efforts. As part of this project, the member could help coordinate efforts to integrate new subdivision data into new spatial analysis tools.

- Assist in the coordination of a project to identify new forestland owners in priority landscape areas to understand their management intentions. In coordination with the Agency of Natural Resources and statewide partners, the project will develop effective education and outreach strategies to promote sound forestland stewardship and conservation.
- Help coordinate and staff the Forest Roundtable with the goal of convening in-person or remote quarterly meetings to bring diverse stakeholders together to network and share information on forest management and conservation issues.
- Goal: Support sustainable community planning and resilience by updating and sharing accessible and relevant tools and resources.
- Objective 1: Manage the on-line Community Planning Toolbox. Continue ongoing research and addition of new resources, outreach to VNRC members and towns for new case studies, and support the development and sharing of local smart growth stories.
- Objective 2: Explore opportunities to update other smart growth resources for local support, such as the Resilient Communities Scorecard and Smart Growth Progress Report.

What data collection tools will the member use to record the impacts of their service activity?

Service members will use professional writing, numeric data tabulation, field observations and photographic documentation to record the impacts of their service with VNRC.

Please provide any additional information (data, statistics, reports, etc.) that demonstrates the compelling need for the proposed position:

Vermont has over 1,000 dams that no longer serve a useful purpose; they degrade water quality, aquatic habitat, restrict the movement of fish and wildlife, and are a public safety risk. Vermont is uniquely poised to address this work now with a renewed focus on nature based solutions to climate resilience.

What initiatives does your organization take to support diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice (DEIJ)? Please include any historical data or details for on-going strategic plans, partnerships, and projects, as relevant.

For the past two years we have been working closely with the Center for Whole Communities (CWC) on centering DEIJ principles into our work. For over year, we have had a standing DEI staff committee who meets regularly to further this work. We recently completed a set of DEI rubrics to help screen decision making around operations, hiring and setting policy priorities. Our Board has also recently created a DEI Committee. This is all to advance our strategic plan (completed in 2019) that centered Equity, together with Climate Action and Human Health, at the core of our mission.

Outline how DEIJ principles can be incorporated into your organization's work moving forward. (Provide examples of any trainings, workshops, projects, partnerships, etc.)

Through our partnership with CWC we have regular workshops on various aspects of DEIJ work (e.g., to develop the set of rubrics and metrics to serve as a screen for our operations and priority setting). Moving

forward, we are focusing on our organizational culture to identify potential barriers to embracing DEI principles and practices, and will be revising our governing documents later this year to better address these issues, and we will be updating our strategic plan in the coming calendar year that I expect will continue to center on equity.

Describe specific challenges that your organization has faced while integrating DEI Principles.

We have done a good job of diversifying our Board (racially and with regard to economic status), but have lost BIPOC staff to employers who offered career advancement and have found attracting BIPOC candidates for vacant positions challenging.

How will the ECO member be included or supported in on-going or future DEI work at the organization, if they so choose?

Our current ECO member serves on our staff DEI Committee, which may also be offered to the new member. The ECO member will also participate in all staff trainings, workshops and staff discussions on our DEI work.

Does the supervisor have adequate time and leadership experience to manage an ECO member? Please explain how:

Yes, Karina Dailey has been doing an exceptional job managing and mentoring this year's ECO member (Mary Perchlik), and has made supervising our next member a priority.

Will the member have access to networking opportunities in this position? Please explain:

Yes, VNRC works with a large number of other organizations and agencies on a wide range of issues and the ECO member will have many opportunities to interact with many of them. The member will also attend regular meetings of the Dam Task Force that includes participation of several environmental NGOs and state and federal agencies (typically 25-30 participants attend task force meetings. .

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.

Yes, for over ten years we have hosted a member through VHCB to help coordinate the Vermont Energy & Climate Action Network (VECAN), the network of over 100 community energy committees. We also hosted an ECO member for the first time last year.

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.).

Sturdy boots and work clothes. Hard hat and reflective vest provided.

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

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

Yes

Many of our members are not from Vermont and are seeking a sense of community away from home. In what ways would you be willing to help them establish community connections? (Housing, peer networks, affinity spaces, local resources, fun places to go)

Our staff prides itself on providing support for one another, and in the past has used our professional and social networks to assist new staff and AmeriCorps members to make connections in the surrounding communities.

Provide approximate impact numbers (e.g. miles of rivers treated) in each focus area.

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

Performance Measures completed in 2022 field season included reconnecting 37 miles of river habitat through dam removal. Proposed performance measures for 2023 field season are projected at approximately 5-10 miles contingent upon dam removal funding and timing of all implementation projects.

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

n/a

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

VNRC frequently convenes webinars attended by 50-100 people on a variety of topics (e.g., history of Clean Water Act) that the ECO member will likely be involved in. The member will also assist with quarterly meetings of the Forest Roundtable that brings together 40-50 representatives of conservation groups, forest landowners, forest products industry, and state and federal agencies, and will assist with the preparation of print and digital communications and educational materials that reach approximately 7,000 households.

Sponsoring Organization's Mission:

Through research, education, collaboration and advocacy, VNRC protects and enhances Vermont's natural environments, vibrant communities, productive working landscapes, rural character and unique sense of place, and prepares the state for future challenges and opportunities.

Goals for the ECO AmeriCorps Position:

This position will assist VNRC's Water, Forests & Wildlife, and Sustainable Communities Programs with a variety of research, member and public education, and aquatic habitat restoration projects.

Essential Functions. Functions that applicant must be able to perform. These may be listed in bullet form:

Possible tasks and responsibilities include the following:

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- Help coordinate and staff the Forest Roundtable with the goal of convening in-person or remote quarterly meetings to bring diverse stakeholders together to network and share information on forest management and conservation issues.

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

- Goal: Support sustainable community planning and resilience by updating and sharing accessible and relevant tools and resources.
- Objective 1: Manage the on-line Community Planning Toolbox. Continue ongoing research and addition of new resources, outreach to VNRC members and towns for new case studies, and support the development and sharing of local smart growth stories.
- Objective 2: Explore opportunities to update other smart growth resources for local support, such as the Resilient Communities Scorecard and Smart Growth Progress Report.

Desired Qualifications:

Knowledge of ecological principles and river dynamics is a plus. Good communication skills (written and verbal), the ability to do a limited amount of physical work in the field associated with habitat restoration projects, be a team player with the ability to collaborate with others, strong research skills, and a commitment to maintaining and restoring environmental quality.

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

Service Conditions (will the position be largely outside, office based, hybrid or seasonally/project dependent, in schools, etc.) *

It will be a combination of remote and in-office work, with field work associated with specific dam removal and habitat restoration (e.g., tree planting) in the late spring, summer and fall)

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

No

Time Requirements:

Full time: will need to complete a minimum of 1700 service hours, serving approximately 40 hours/week over the course of the 11-month service term, September 13, 2023 - August 9, 2024

Orientation and Training:

ECO will provide members with orientation at the beginning of the service term. Host sites are expected to provide additional on-boarding training as well. Throughout the service term, ECO will provide in-person and virtual trainings to members on a variety of topics.

Benefits:

- Education award of \$6,895 (pre-tax) upon successful completion of service
- \$23,000 Living Allowance, paid bi-weekly
- Training
- Childcare assistance, if eligible
- Health Coverage
- Access to AmeriCorps Alumni Network
- Student loan forbearance and interest payments, if eligible

Evaluation and Reporting:

Mid and final performance reviews, quarterly reports, weekly timesheets, and end of service survey.
Thank you for your interest in ECO AmeriCorps!