

Katherine McCool Member Spotlight



Katherine McCool (she/her) is serving with the [Middlebury Area Land Trust](#) (MALT) as their Lands, Trails, and Education Coordinator. Growing up in northern Virginia, she found her love for the natural environment while exploring the Blue Ridge Mountains and Shenandoah National Park. After graduating from University of Virginia, she wanted to take some time to discover her passions before taking off to pursue graduate school. She found her next step in a quarter-time AmeriCorps position through the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and Cross Vermont Trail Association. She spent the next summer building trails in Central Vermont. That fall she joined ECO AmeriCorps to start her full-time service with MALT. Her role is split between education and trail work/conservation. Before the stay at home order, she was teaching outdoor lessons to preschoolers three times a week as well as leading the afterschool program for kids in grades K-2. This spring Katherine also organized and managed their summer camp registration system. Within the first minute of the form opening they had 21 families register and are looking forward to serving almost 75 families this summer! She also helps on trail maintenance on the 19-mile Trail Around Middlebury (TAM), this is a widely used trail system by Addison County residents and she ensures the trail is accessible and stays healthy. Katherine has also been crafting a specific invasive management plan for MALT, she is hoping this project successfully compares different methods of invasive management and determines which is the most feasible for MALT to pursue. Since the stay at home order, Katherines service has transitioned to offering many online education opportunities. She successfully utilizes MALT's social media pages to reach a wide audience to share natural discoveries and her outdoor adventures. She is also now able to get outside to maintain the survival of the trail which is especially vital now during mud season and a growing, unprecedented usage of the trails!

“I serve because I am aware of my privilege and want to do my part to help others who were not born into circumstances as fortunate as mine. I have occasionally struggled with my position here, because Vermont is one of the most environmentally lucky places in the country; it sometimes seems silly to dedicate so much to a place that is already so fortunate...I've realized that our service is a long-term benefit with results that will likely never be tangibly recognized. Environmental service sets a base for environmental stewardship and protection that can inspire future leaders through nature education, promote clean water that allows millions to avoid health risks, and provide untouched land for non-human uses. We are establishing the groundwork for eternal systems that have the opportunity to touch unimaginable lives.”