



April 2020 - September 2020 Service Year POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title

Environmental Educator

Sponsoring Organization

The Nature Museum
Grafton, VT

Sponsoring Organization's Mission

The Nature Museum is a regional resource for nature, science, and environmental education in the Vermont and New Hampshire communities of the Connecticut River Valley. The Museum provides information and experiences which engage and enlighten our audiences and inspire stewardship of the natural world.

Goals for the ECO AmeriCorps Position

- To assist with environmental program creation and implementation; and
- To assist with improving the museum exhibits by helping with research, and the creation of more interactive exhibits that change monthly or seasonally.

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

- Enjoy interacting with people;
- Think creatively with regard to program and exhibit ideas;
- Have good communication skills, both oral and written;
- Be adept with a computer and familiar with Google applications;
- Be comfortable being outside in all kinds of weather;
- Be a problem solver;
- Have reliable transportation.

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

- The ability to flexibly adapt programming to meet the needs of different audiences.

Projects May Include

An ECO AmeriCorps Environmental Educator would serve closely with our Senior Environmental Educator to plan, and implement, nature based programming for people of all ages, the overarching goal being to inspire our audience to become environmental stewards. David Sobel, author of a number of books about Place-based Ecology Education, writes that if we want people to take care for the earth, first we need them to care about it. At The Nature Museum, believe that by providing our communities with high quality experiences in nature, we are doing just that. To that end, and AmeriCorps member at the museum would be gaining experience in creating environmental programs that not only teach about a diversity of eco-systems, they would also be mentored by museum staff in how to facilitate learning in developmentally appropriate ways that inspire a call to action for the good of our planet. The ECO AmeriCorps member would also assist with researching, and creating, new interactive exhibits that change monthly or seasonally.

- Assists museum staff to designs, and implement, youth programming aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards, state standards, or other relevant accredited education metrics as needed.
- Supports the creation of new interactive exhibits.
- Supports table events held throughout the six-month service period, including the Herrick's Cove Wildlife Festival.

Desired Qualifications

- BA or BS in Environmental Education, Biology, Natural Sciences, or a related field.
- Experience working with children in a nature-based setting.
- A passion for connecting people to nature for their physical and emotional well-being, and the well-being of the planet.

Networking Opportunities

The Nature Museum offers countless networking opportunities. An ECO AmeriCorps member will be involved in schools, working directly with teachers to design the experience they want for their class. We also just initiated the Southern Vermont Environmental Educators Round Table which meets every other month to discuss our successes, problem solve around any obstacles an organization might face, and create opportunities for collaboration. Antioch University New England is about 45 minutes away in Keene, NH, and we are in regular communication with them regarding how we can help provide their environmental education graduate students with authentic learning experiences in the field of environmental education. This April, we are collaborating with Grafton Trails and the Windham Regional Conservation Commission to offer a day-long Knotweed Conference for legislators, land conservationists and managers, and the general public. We just offered a Vermont Humanities Council talk about indigenous values towards nature in collaboration with the Living Earth Action Group, a grassroots environmental organization, and the Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association, a land conservation organization. The Nature Museum was invited to be the Southern Vermont "Hub" for Project Learning Tree, and both our Senior Environmental Educator and I attended a two-day training last fall. We will begin to offer professional development opportunities for teachers this spring. The AmeriCorps member would also be required (if not in conflict with a statewide Eco AmeriCorps event) to help provide an activity at the Herrick's Cove Wildlife Festival, sponsored by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, which saw over 2,000 visitors last year, and is known for the many environmental and wildlife organizations that are on-site to present their work.

Service Conditions

Service will be performed in a variety of settings. The AmeriCorps member will have a desk but will often be outside serving with children and adults, assisting with, or delivering an environmental program inside the museum or off-site in a school, a local park, or nearby forest. The hours will be flexible to meet the needs of our audience. Many of our programs take place in the evenings or on Saturdays. The museum is also open on Saturdays, and the AmeriCorps member will be asked to assist with Saturday morning family programs.

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.