



# **AmeriCorps Project Conserve** **2018 – 2019 Service Description**



**AmeriCorps Position Title:** Property Steward  
**Host Site:** Mainspring Conservation Trust  
**Service Term:** January 16 – July 31, 2019

**Supervisor Name:** Kelder Monar  
**Supervisor Title:** Stewardship Associate  
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## **Host Site Mission Statement:**

The mission of Mainspring Conservation Trust is to conserve the waters, forests, farms and heritage of the Upper Little Tennessee and Hiwassee River Valleys. We are dedicated to three core initiatives: conserve the land, restore the water, and connect the people to these valuable resources.

## **Summary of Position:**

The primary mission of a service member would be twofold: to manage habitat on three Mainspring properties, Tessentee Bottomland Preserve, Gibson Bottoms and Welch Farm, and to connect visitors with those properties. Though Mainspring has long owned these properties, we have only recently decided to hold them long-term. The properties have a rich natural heritage, including rare species and several aquatic and upland habitat types. They also have a rich cultural heritage spanning Cherokee and early settler periods. Part of the service would consist of activities to maintain early-successional habitat, manage invasive exotic species, promote rare plant species and preserve the historic character of an old farmstead. The other part of a member's service would consist of activities to connect community members and visitors to the resources at these three properties. This would include trail building, trail maintenance, creation of educational materials, and leading tours.

A secondary mission would be to assist in summer aquatic biomonitoring, Mainspring's long-running fish-based citizen science water quality monitoring program. The member would be expected to serve alongside staff, to supervise volunteers, and to work independently.

## **Qualifications – Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**

- Comfort using hand tools - shovels, loppers, hand saws, maddock, etc.
- Experience using gas-powered tools – brush cutter, ATV, etc. (though not chainsaw), or ability to learn
- Experience with hiking trail construction and maintenance, or ability to learn
- Experience using physical and chemical methods to control invasive plant species, or ability to learn
- Comfort supervising groups of volunteers
- Writing skills, especially scientific writing for a general audience
- Basic plant identification skills, or ability to learn
- An interest in nature photography (ideal, but not required)
- Familiarity using ArcGIS software (ideal, but not required)

- Organizational skills
- Eligible applicants must be at least 18 years of age, be a citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States, and consent to a criminal history check.

**Preferred Service Hours / Weekly Schedule:**

40 hours/week typically Monday-Friday, 8:30am-4:30pm

**Position Responsibilities and Duties:**

**Conservation Education: 20%**

- Design printed brochures for each property, working from past brochures and primary documents.
- Take photos of natural and historic features of each property for use in brochures and other materials, and organize existing photos.
- Adapt the brochure content for use on the Mainspring website or in Facebook posts.
- Lead 1-2 tours of each property for members of the public.
- Train volunteers to conduct the Stream Visual Assessment Protocol, in connection with the biomonitoring program.

**At Risk Ecosystem Impacts & Trails: 75%**

- The service member would create and improve publicly accessible trails on Mainspring properties. She/he would create approximately 1,500 feet of new trail, as well as improve up to 4 miles of existing trail. This service would involve coordination and supervision of volunteers as well as hands-on service.
- The service member would also assist Mainspring staff in treatment of public lands. This service would entail restoration of early-successional habitat through mechanical methods, and potentially through a prescribed fire.
- Another focus would be invasive species management using chemical and mechanical methods, under supervision of a certified pesticide applicator.
- Conversely, service would include promoting rare plant species, such as Fraser's loosestrife, through plant surveys, habitat management and propagation.
- Finally, the service member would assist in coordinating aquatic biomonitoring activities and training volunteers.

**Volunteer Infrastructure Program (VIP): 5%**

- Although already described under Conservation Education and At-Risk Ecosystem Impacts and Trails, the intern would lead and train volunteers as part of her/his trail building, habitat management and biomonitoring capacities.
- In addition, the member would recruit volunteers for property management at 1-2 festivals or other events.

PLEASE NOTE: In addition to fulfilling host site service responsibilities, all Project Conserve members are required to fully participate in team trainings, service projects and statewide AmeriCorps events. Project Conserve team events will occur approximately twice per month in locations throughout the service area and may require one or two overnight stays.

## ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

**Equipment / Software Used:** Hand tools (shovel, maddock, loppers, hand saw, etc.), power tools (brush-cutter), herbicide (with spray bottle), Microsoft Publisher, ArcGIS (optional)

**Physical Demands:** Ability to hike 8 miles in one day. Ability to carry up to 40 lbs for short periods.

**Transportation Needs:** Personal vehicle for commute to the Mainspring office is desired. A Mainspring vehicle is available for service-related transportation. Mileage reimbursement is available for service-related use of a personal vehicle.

**Setting/Location of Service Activities:** The Mainspring office in Franklin, NC, and the three properties, 10 miles (Tessentee), 6 miles (Gibson Bottoms) and 45 miles (Welch Farm) from Franklin

- Using computer software and online programs for conservation-based education and outreach initiatives, including social networking, written articles and press releases
- Leading, coordinating, and interacting with diverse individuals in field-based and office settings (ex. landowners, students, low-income residents, partner organizations).
- Conducting field-based monitoring, assessment, and management of conservation properties, public lands, and/or water quality monitoring sites.