



# AmeriCorps Project Conserve 2019 – 2020 Service Description



**AmeriCorps Position Title:** Communications and Community Engagement Member  
**Host Site:** Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy

**Supervisor Name:** Angela Shepherd  
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### **Host Site Mission Statement:**

SAHC works to conserve the unique plant and animal habitat, clean water, farmland, scenic beauty, and places for people to enjoy outdoor recreation in the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee for the benefit of present and future generations. We achieve this by forging and maintaining long-term conservation relationships with private landowners and public agencies, owning and managing land and encouraging healthy local communities.

### **Summary of Position:**

The Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy is seeking a Communications and Community Engagement AmeriCorps member to help connect with people and communities throughout our conservation focus areas in Western North Carolina. Addressing issues related to equity and inclusion, while building and enhancing relationships with diverse communities, is critical to our mission to conserve land “for the benefit of present and future generations.”

This AmeriCorps position will provide capacity and support by strengthening relationships with local community centers and other partners, helping to organize educational outings within urban neighborhoods or conservation areas, leading outings for community groups to connect with SAHC preserves, and looking for ways to tell the untold stories of people’s relationships to land in the places we serve. This position will particularly focus on coordinating and leading programs and outings with established afterschool, summer camp, and other youth groups in SAHC’s service areas.

In addition to strengthening community relationships and leading conservation education activities about topics related to SAHC’s work, the AmeriCorps member in this position will help in uncovering, exploring, researching, and sharing the seldom-seen stories of people and land.

Potential projects for this position could also involve translating SAHC’s marketing/communications materials into Spanish or other languages, or writing conservation articles in Spanish or other languages for local or regional publication. The AmeriCorps member in this position could also assist with creating short videos, virtual tours of SAHC preserves, or interactive online maps to improve accessibility of these conservation lands to audiences who may not be able to visit and experience them personally. The purpose of these augmented communications materials would be to overcome barriers in mobility, time, or distance.

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

- Strong writing, organization and communication skills
- Ability to think creatively and work independently
- Familiarity with social networking sites and online media
- Fluency in Spanish, or other language, preferred (but not required)
- Skills in photography or videography (preferred but not required)
- Ability or familiarity with Google Maps, WordPress, Adobe Creative Suite applications, and GIS would be preferred but not required.
- 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:**

9:30 to 5:30 M-F, flexible to accommodate occasional evening events and weekend workdays

### **Position Responsibilities and Duties**

#### **Conservation Education: 90%**

- Building or expanding relationships with community leaders, community centers, outdoor recreation groups, youth groups, school groups, other partners in environmental work, etc.
- Organizing educational outings within urban neighborhoods and/or on SAHC-protected properties to connect more diverse community groups with conservation.
- Researching and writing about previously untold stories of human connections to conservation lands, with a focus on exploring the importance of historically marginalized or underserved communities.
- Creating videos or digital format information to improve community engagement with people who may have mobility constraints or other obstacles that prevent them from physically accessing conservation preserves.
- Assisting with website content updates at Appalachian.org, including writing content, editing photos, and updating events.
- Attending monthly meetings of Everybody's Environment and serving as a liaison with other organizations and community partners.
- Communicating about SAHC and related conservation work via social media platforms, and/or making recommendations for SAHC to improve online communications to reach more diverse audiences.
- Writing and translating in languages other than English. [SAHC has undergone a contracted document review process with the Adaway Group, which provided recommendations on communications improvements with a focus on equity, inclusion and diversity. Translating outward-facing materials into other languages was identified as an improvement SAHC could make toward reaching these goals. A potential project for the person in this AmeriCorps position could be to help translate existing materials into Spanish or other languages, and/or write articles/blog pieces pertaining to conservation topics.]

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

- Assisting with updating volunteer and contact information for our internal database, with a focus on connections to diverse communities and improving relationships with other community partners.

#### **At-Risk Ecosystem Impacts: 5%**

- Assisting with organizing volunteers for events and workdays on conservation properties, with a focus on connections to diverse or underserved communities.

***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 up to three overnight stays.***

### **Essential Functions**

- 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).
- Developing and implementing educational programs and events for groups (presentations, workshops, educational hikes and outings, etc).
- Training, supporting, coordinating, and recognizing volunteers for conservation-based volunteer opportunities.
- Other Essential Functions:

**Equipment/Software Used:** Equipment / Software Used: Microsoft Word/Office suite, Google Apps, WordPress, Adobe Creative Suite, social networking platforms, videography editing software

**Physical Demands:** Ability to hike protected properties and carry event materials as needed

**Transportation Needs:** Must have own mode of transportation. Although the position does not require a great deal of travel, the location of SAHC's Community Farm is approximately 20 minutes away from our home office in Asheville. The AmeriCorps member may need to visit other conservation properties in the landscape, the farthest of which is approximately 2 hours from downtown Asheville.

**Setting / Location of Service Activities:** SAHC office at 372 Merrimon Avenue in Asheville, Community Farm in Alexander, NC; partner sites and community centers; and other SAHC-protected properties within a 2-hour radius

**Other Considerations:** Strong commitment to community service and conservation, Ability to work with diverse groups of people, and speak in public