



AmeriCorps Project Conserve 2019 – 2020 Service Description



AmeriCorps Position Title: HRI Stewardship and Volunteer Engagement Associate
Host Site: WNC Communities – Hemlock Restoration Initiative Program

Service Term: September 3, 2019 – July 31, 2020

Supervisor Name: Margot Wallston
Supervisor Title: HRI Program Director
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Host Site Mission Statement:

The Hemlock Restoration Initiative's mission is to work with a variety of partners and existing programs to restore hemlocks to long-term health throughout North Carolina and ensure that eastern and Carolina hemlocks can resist hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) and survive to maturity on North Carolina's public and private lands. The Hemlock Restoration Initiative (HRI) is a grant-funded program, managed by WNC Communities. WNC Communities is dedicated to providing a unique forum for leaders in the mountain region of Western North Carolina to convene, collaborate and carry out innovative programs to improve the quality of life for rural communities and to enhance the economy of the agriculture sector.

Summary of Position:

The purpose of the HRI Stewardship and Volunteer Engagement Associate position is to increase the number of eastern and Carolina hemlock trees currently receiving protection from HWA by increasing the capacity of HRI partner agencies to treat trees using chemical and biological control methods, and to educate, engage and empower more community members and groups to participate in hemlock conservation.

Qualifications – Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Required:

- Bachelor's or master's degree, preferably in a related field (Forestry, Entomology, Environmental Science, Communications, Outdoor Recreation, etc.)
- One year or more leading groups in task-based, goal-oriented activities
- Enthusiasm for sharing the outdoors with people of all abilities and backgrounds
- Enthusiasm for reaching out to and engaging new audiences
- Exemplary writing, speaking, and presentation skills for a variety of different audiences
- Confidence, leadership, and tact in direct and indirect communications
- Comfort and proficiency in social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Energy, creativity, initiative and good humor
- Ability to collect, evaluate and summarize information from a variety of resources

- Attention to detail and experience recording and entering data into an Excel-based database
- Willingness to work long hours outside in a variety of environmental conditions, off-trail on steep and/or rugged terrain, carrying up to 40 lbs. of equipment
- A demonstrated ability to work independently and with others, receive and offer feedback
- Possession of a valid driver's license and access to a reliable vehicle
- 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:

- Experience and knowledge of southern Appalachian forest ecosystems, invasive species control methods, forestry, entomology and conservation biology
- One year or more working in natural resource management, forestry or a related profession
- Experience in field data collection
- Map reading and orienteering skills
- Grant writing experience
- Experience using GIS software
- Strong competence with Microsoft Office, including Word, Excel, Access, and Publisher
- Basic graphic design skills; familiarity with software, such as InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator

Preferred Service Hours / Weekly Schedule:

Typically M-F, with occasional weekend days (up to 3 per month); some days in the field may exceed 8-10 hours and occasional multi-night field work will be required; however comp time will be granted as necessary and overall schedule is flexible.

Position Responsibilities and Duties

Conservation Education: 35%

- Schedule approximately one presentation and or tabling/outreach event per month to introduce groups and community members to the HRI and the importance of hemlocks and associated ecosystems to habitat, water quality, recreation, and sense-of-place, the impact of HWA and options for control and restoration.
- Schedule, organize and publicize approximately one hemlock educational hike per season, to showcase local hemlock populations and efforts to conserve them and to develop an appreciation for our native species and their unique niche in the ecosystems they contribute to.
- Share HRI and partner activities and accomplishments and HRI-related stories and research on Facebook or Instagram and HRI website (averaging one post a week).
- One-on-One Education – Create training/resources for community residents. Keep tabs on reader comments and individual requests for information and assistance and communicate with HRI Coordinator to develop appropriate response.
- Group Education – Help plan and lead workshops and trainings on hemlock conservation and best management practices.
- Assist with landowner site-visits and follow-up reports, as needed.
- Develop new and/or synthesize existing outreach materials that are useful and specific to the audiences being served (capacity building).
- Assist with youth education programs when needed and as appropriate.

Volunteer Infrastructure Program (VIP): 20%

- Create volunteer workday opportunities and recruit volunteers for workdays to collect data, chemically treat trees, and monitor trees for biological control program on public and conserved lands, coordinating efforts with the appropriate land managers.
- Schedule and facilitate volunteer workdays to support the work of HRI partners, such as the Forest Restoration Alliance.
- Educate volunteers on importance of hemlocks and associated ecosystems to habitat, water quality, recreation, and sense-of-place, the impact of HWA, and options for control and restoration.
- Train volunteers to collect data and perform HWA-control treatments.
- Develop and/or improve written job descriptions, training materials, and recognition protocols for volunteers (capacity building).
- Track volunteer activity, time and skills.
- Track volunteer inquiries and match volunteers to appropriate activities.
- Acknowledge volunteers for their time, effort and dedication through follow-up communication, recognition and celebratory events.

At-Risk Ecosystem Impacts: 45%

- Fall through spring, assist HRI Coordinator and others to perform stand assessments and HWA-control treatments on public lands, coordinating efforts with other crew members and volunteers.
- Maintain and keep track of all equipment and data used/generated during treatment workdays.
- Support additional crew members or volunteers to perform treatments effectively and safely.
- Fall through spring, provide HWA and predator beetle monitoring support to HRI biological control partners and insectaries on public lands.

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

Equipment / Software Used: GPS, GIS, Microsoft Office Suite, Loggers Tape, Backpack sprayer

Physical Demands: Must be able to hike off-trail on steep, uneven terrain, for a full day, carrying up to 30 lbs of equipment, in a variety of weather situations.

Transportation Needs: Requires reliable car for trips up to two hours from office.

Setting/Location of Service Activities: Based in Asheville, NC, but sites extend across Western NC.

Other Considerations: Unpredictable weather may impact activities planned for any particular week or season.

- 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.

- Conducting field-based monitoring, assessment, and management of conservation properties, public lands, and/or water quality monitoring sites.
- Using mapping software and other computer programs to create quality reports, management plans, maps, and/or analysis, based on field data
- Other Essential Functions: Attention to detail; Exhibiting confidence, leadership, and tact in direct and indirect communications