



AmeriCorps Project Conserve **2022 – 2023 Service Description**



AmeriCorps Position Title: Community Engagement and Education Associate
Host Site: Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy

Supervisor Name: LaKyla Hodges & Travis Bordley
Supervisor Title: Equity & Education Manager, Roan Ecologist
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Host Site Mission Statement:

The mission of the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy is to conserve the unique plant and animal habitat, clean water, farmland, scenic beauty, and places for all people to enjoy outdoor recreation in the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee, enduring for future generations. We achieve this through long-term conservation relationships with private landowners and public agencies and owning and managing land. We are committed to creating and supporting equitable, healthy and thriving communities for everyone in our region.

Summary of Position:

The Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy is seeking an 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 all people, in present and future generations. This AmeriCorps position will provide capacity and support to the EDI Manager and outreach staff by strengthening relationships with local community centers and other partners, helping to organize educational outings within urban neighborhoods or conservation areas, leading environmental education programs with youth groups, and leading outings for community groups to connect with SAHC preserves.

In addition to the focus on education and outreach, this AmeriCorps member will be responsible for assisting in volunteer management systems, including recruiting and managing volunteers for at-risk ecosystem improvement on SAHC properties. The AmeriCorps member will enhance SAHC's outreach program by expanding virtual and in-person educational outreach opportunities with partnering organizations and businesses by recruiting volunteers, planning and organizing virtual and in-person hikes and educational outings, and educating the community about the importance and necessity of our land conservation program. The position will enable the AmeriCorps member to build initiative and strategic experience in developing public educational programs.

Qualifications – Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

- Strong writing, organization and communication skills
- Ability to think creatively and work independently
- Experience in communicating effectively and working with diverse community groups
- Willingness to engage with diverse groups in various settings – from classroom spaces to hikes

- Willingness to assist in outings, sometimes in remote locations, and to carry gear and supplies as needed to host outings and volunteer work days
- Experience in leading, organizing, or supervising volunteer groups
- Familiarity and experience with social media and other emerging communications technologies
- Experience/skills in the following would be preferred but not required:
 - Fluency in Spanish or other language
 - Experience in photography or producing videos
 - Ability or familiarity with Google Maps, WordPress, Adobe Creative Suite applications, and GIS
 - Basic understanding of Arcview 10.3
 - Experience using a GPS unit
 - Familiarity and understanding of Southern Appalachian ecosystems and conservation topics, including Leave No Trace and principles of responsible outdoor recreation
- 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

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.

Position Responsibilities and Duties:

CONSERVATION EDUCATION (60%)

- Building or expanding relationships with community leaders, community centers, outdoor recreation groups, youth groups, school groups, SAHC members, other partners in environmental work, etc.
- Scouting, planning, and providing logistics support for hikes, events, and other outings.
- Organizing educational outings within urban neighborhoods and/or on SAHC-protected properties to connect diverse community groups with conservation.
- 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 educational website content updates at Appalachian.org, including writing content, editing photos, and updating events.
- 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, creating and/or translating SAHC communication materials into Spanish or other languages

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT (40%)

- The AmeriCorps member will enhance our existing volunteer management system and communicate with those who inquire about volunteering.
- They will recruit and manage volunteers for hands-on improvement projects on our properties that contain at-risk ecosystems. These outings will include trash pick-up, trail improvement projects, and habitat restoration.
- The AmeriCorps will also assist the staff at our Community Farm to recruit and manage volunteers - using livestock to manage invasive species, and using hand tools. By teaching volunteers about what invasive species are and how to identify them, and training volunteers on how to remove them, we hope that people will learn how to be better conservation leaders in the community.

- The Member will recruit volunteers from a wide population base - including local schools, colleges, civic groups, senior centers, and faith-based communities - and via a variety of methods such as tabling at SAHC events, newsletter, social media and blog posts.
- The member will assist in tracking and inputting information into SAHC's volunteer database to more accurately track the contributions of volunteers to conservation across the region

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

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

- 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.