

AmeriCorps Project Conserve 2023 – 2024 Service Description

Service Description

AmeriCorps Position Title: Environmental Education Assistant
Host Site: Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Supervisor Name: Susan Sachs
Supervisor Title: Education Branch Coordinator
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Host Site Mission Statement:

The education program in Great Smoky Mountains National Park provides an array of educational offerings designed to create a “ladder of opportunity” to connect students to park resources in order to instill a personal sense of stewardship. Specifically in our education programs for schools, we strive to provide a sequence of opportunities for learners to interact with park resources in ways that foster emotional and intellectual connections to the park.

Summary of Position:

The AmeriCorps member will be involved with leading citizen science and other environmental education programs for Kindergarten - High School students. Each season focuses on a different audience with most field trips occurring in the spring and the fall. During winter months, the AmeriCorps member may give a variety of Distance Learning and in-classroom presentations about the park's unique natural resources including data analysis, and observation and exploration activities. In the summer, the AmeriCorps member will work with local summer camps and JR Ranger programs.

Qualifications – Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

- Have a background in natural history and the scientific process including being comfortable using it in education programs.
- Have some experience working with student groups, most specifically with elementary and middle school ages.
- Be comfortable developing and presenting programs to the public including school children and adults.
- Be familiar with plants and animals of the Southern Appalachian Mountains.
- Be comfortable in reaching out to teachers and school administrators in an effort to determine their primary needs.
- Have the ability to juggle multiple projects, work under pressure and maintain a positive attitude.
- Be prepared to work outdoors in a variety of weather conditions
- Be willing to live and work in a remote location with limited internet and cell coverage

- 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:

Monday – Friday, 8:00 – 4:30 with some occasional Saturday or evening work

Position Responsibilities and Duties:

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Description of Member Service Activities: The AmeriCorps member will be involved with leading nature education programs for Kindergarten - High School students. Each season focuses on a different audience with most field trips occurring in the spring and the fall. During winter months, the AmeriCorps member will give Distance Learning and classroom presentations about the park's unique natural resources. In the summer, the AmeriCorps intern will work with public programs focused on youth (JR Ranger programs). The AmeriCorps member will reach out to target schools to develop special programs based on that school's needs. This may include in-class presentations, after school programs and possibly camp experiences for students when school is not in session. The AmeriCorps member will work with park staff to identify gaps in existing programs and will develop new or adapt existing curriculum to need needs.

Percentage of Time: 90%

AT-RISK ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS & TRAILS

Description of Member Service Activities: The Environmental Education AmeriCorps member may assist our other AmeriCorps member in training volunteers who collect citizen science data in the park. This program is for community members and consists of monitoring tree phenology in one of 36 plots set up throughout Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Percentage of Time: 10%

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Equipment / Software Used: computers with Microsoft Word, Excel and Powerpoint. Experience with video editing a plus

Physical Demands: Must be able to hike up to 8 miles in strenuous mountain terrain, some off trail work required

Transportation Needs: The park is remote, so it is critical to have a car for personal use; no public transportation is available. A government vehicle is usually available for work related transportation needs.

Setting/Location of Service Activities: Most activities occur in Great Smoky Mountains National Park at one of the sites for our education programs. The office for the position is located at Oconaluftee which is near the Cherokee entrance of the park. Programs in the winter months occur at nearby schools.

Other Considerations: Housing in the park is provided at no cost to the serving member. The internet and cell coverage is unreliable.

Choose the essential functions of this position:

- 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).
- Other Essential Functions: Entering data from citizen science education programs into databases.

