



# AmeriCorps Project Conserve 2023 – 2024 Service Description



**AmeriCorps Position Title:** Stewardship & Volunteer Associate (3 positions)  
**Host Site:** Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy

**Service Term:** September 5, 2023 – July 31, 2024

**Supervisor Name:** Sarah Sheeran  
**Supervisor Title:** Stewardship Director  
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**Supervisor Name:** Chris Kaase  
**Supervisor Title:** Stewardship Associate  
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### **Host Site Mission Statement:**

Founded in 1974 as a non-profit, charitable organization, SAHC works to conserve the unique plant and animal habitat, clean water, local 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:**

This position will provide support to the Stewardship Director and other SAHC stewardship staff to educate conservation landowners by monitoring conservation properties, assessing properties for anthropogenic threats/issues and conservation values through preparation of detailed baseline documentation reports and land management plans, and ensuring compliance with conservation easements. The position will prepare tailored reports educating property landowners of their property and management recommendations for at-risk ecosystems; develop educational resources for conservation easement landowners and assess impact of resources provided; and recruit volunteers and lead volunteer workdays to educate workday participants and enhance at-risk ecosystems.

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

- A strong commitment to community service and conservation.
- Ability to work independently and collaborate as part of a team
- Excellent organizational and communication skills, attention to detail, and a self-motivated ability to anticipate what needs to be done.
- General understanding of database structure and management.
- Technical writing and interpreting technical documents are key components of this position.

- Pertinent knowledge and/or experience (personal or professional) in non-profit organizations, natural resource management, ecology, GIS mapping, geography, environmental or natural sciences.
- Strong communication skills.
- Experience in the basics of GIS mapping software and Microsoft Office suite.
- Willingness to work in the office and in the field in sometimes adverse conditions and potentially steep terrain.
- Enthusiasm, creativity, self-motivation, honesty and flexibility.
- Dedicated to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) through past job experience, personal activism, or any other pertinent experience.
- 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, Monday - Friday, typically 9 - 5 PM (daily schedule may vary). One and possibly two weekend retreats with board and staff, depending on COVID restrictions. There may be opportunities (if desired) to volunteer on weekends to participate in guided hikes, habitat management workdays and other activities that take place on SAHC's protected properties.

**Position Responsibilities and Duties**

**Conservation Education: 80%**

- Educate conservation easement landowners on a regular basis, providing landowners with environmentally-conscious practices tailored for their individual property:
- SAHC holds/is responsible for stewarding over 181 conservation easement properties, totaling over 43,000 acres. Each Stewardship & Volunteer Associate (2 positions) will visit over 50 of these properties per year, assessing each property's forest, water quality, and conservation health.
- During property visits, AmeriCorps members engage in one-on-one conversations with landowners about management goals for their conservation easement.
- When requested, prepare educational materials for the landowner on details of their property and best environmentally-conscious practices to improve their land, such as exotic-invasive species removal, water quality protection measures, wildlife habitat improvements, etc.
- Complete baseline documentation field work and reports for new properties going into conservation. These informative and educational reports given to landowners thoroughly document a conservation property and include natural community inventories, species inventories, and documentation of man-made features using text, photos, and detailed mapping.
- Prepare blog posts/social media content and electronic newsletter articles targeted to our membership and general conservation easement landowner audience describing environmentally-conscious practices and other conservation related resources. (These articles will share, for example, the latest habitat improvement activities, effective trail design techniques, etc., helping landowners reach their goal of being good stewards to their property.)
- Where applicable, give presentations about Southern Appalachian at-risk ecosystems, emerging management issues, best resource management practices or other relevant material to civic, school and other community groups.

**Volunteer Engagement: 10%**

- Assist with recruiting and managing volunteers for SAHC in general and stewardship activities in particular.
- 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, stewardship newsletter, blog posts.

**At-Risk Ecosystem Impacts: 10%**

- Assess properties (including their at-risk ecosystems and threats to the property's conservation values) for volunteer resource management projects. Prepare property plans, outlining management improvement needs, priorities and partnership opportunities.
- Where applicable, organize Citizen Science individuals to accompany AmeriCorps Stewardship & Volunteer Associates and SAHC staff on appropriate property site assessments to collect data for larger volunteer workday projects (e.g., habitat management, invasive species inventory) or for landowner educational reports.
- Plan and organize group volunteer workdays to improve at-risk ecosystems on SAHC protected properties, pursuant to land management plans prepared for the properties.
- Supervise volunteers for workdays (volunteer activities include removing invasive species, clearing debris, installing water protection devices, and creating wildlife habitat.)

***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:** GIS, Microsoft Office, Salesforce, remote monitoring platform

**Physical Demands:** Ability to hike steep terrain under a variety of conditions

**Transportation Needs:** SAHC has vehicles for job-related duties, but AmeriCorps members must have reliable transportation to and from work

**Setting/Location of Service Activities:** Western NC, usually within 1-2 hours from Asheville

- Supporting, coordinating, collaborating, and sensitively engaging with 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 and public lands.
- Using mapping software and other computer programs to create quality reports, management plans, maps, and/or analysis, based on field data.
- Using computer software for conservation-based education and outreach initiatives, including written articles and press releases.