



AmeriCorps Project Conserve 2024 – 2025 Service Description



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| AmeriCorps Position Title: | Western Region Program Associate |
| Host Site: | MountainTrue |
| Supervisor Name: | Callie Moore |
| Supervisor Title: | Western Regional Director |
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Host Site Mission Statement:

MountainTrue champions resilient forests, clean waters, and healthy communities in the Southern Blue Ridge. We focus on a core set of issues – sensible land use, restoring public forests, clean energy, and improving water quality – that have high impact on the environmental health and long-term prosperity of our region.

Summary of Position:

The position serves in southwestern North Carolina primarily within our Clean Waters and Resilient Forests program areas. It includes a combination of volunteer recruitment and coordination, water quality monitoring, on-the-ground stewardship of public and conserved lands, and public outreach and engagement. It involves a lot of time outdoors in all seasons and regular travel across several counties. Primary responsibilities are to (1) engage volunteers in all aspects of volunteer monitoring of water quality, aquatic communities and habitat; (2) coordinate and expand the region's microplastics sampling program; (3) help control nonnative invasive plants and restore native plant communities in parks, along greenways, and on other public lands; and (4) coordinate public outreach and engagement activities in the western region.

Qualifications – Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

- Organized, with a high level of attention to detail.
- Education or experience in natural resources management, environmental science/studies, sustainability, chemistry, ecology, or related earth science-type field.
- Experience working with volunteers or as a volunteer
- Experience working with diverse people (e.g. youth, retirees, rural, urban, people of color, people with varying levels of education or income).
- Strong planning and time management skills. Ability to manage multiple projects at once.
- Ability to work outdoors and maintain a positive attitude in challenging conditions.
- Ability to work as part of a team, as well as independently.
- Be a quick learner, unafraid to ask questions, and also have patience to tackle complex problems.
- Excellent oral (including public speaking) and written communication skills. Must be willing to regularly use email as a primary communication tool.

- Familiarity with Microsoft Office and Google suite programs and applications.
- Some ability to identify non-native invasive plants preferred.
- Social media skills and interest a plus.
- Training and/or teaching experience a plus.
- 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:

9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday, some evenings and weekends

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 (20%)

- Educate volunteers and members of the public through organized events (both in-person and virtual), outings, and workdays provided throughout MountainTrue’s western region. Education is aimed at increasing understanding of the natural environment, threats to the environment, and ways individuals can get involved in solutions.
- Manage event page content for website, build volunteer and outing event sign up forms and compose email communications to promote events and programs.
- Participate in the community as a MountainTrue team member contributing to the success of the organization. (CB)
- Communicate with the general public looking to engage with our programs. (CB)

AT-RISK ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS & TRAILS (40%)

- Field inventory/data collection, including photo documentation, of non-native invasive plant species on public lands and conservation easements.
- Create reports for prioritization of future treatments and workdays.
- Physical work of manual and chemical treatment of non-native invasive plants on public and conserved private lands sites in the MountainTrue western region.
- Analyze water samples for microplastics throughout the term.
- Collect and analyze water samples for E.coli for MountainTrue’s Swim Guide program in the Little Tennessee River basin.
- Strengthen and build new relationships with partner organizations to maximize our regional capacity for addressing at-risk ecosystem impacts and trails. Examples include, but aren’t limited to: Mainspring Conservation Trust, Friends of Panthertown, Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, Eastern Band of Cherokee, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park. (CB)
- Conducting activities that support the long-term sustainability and conservation values of natural areas.
- Assist with MountainTrue native tree and shrub sales to provide habitat restoration program funding. (CB)

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT (40%)

- Manage volunteers for non-native plant control, teaching them restoration techniques including manual and chemical treatment techniques, informing them of the associated risks, and supervising them during workdays.

- Keep detailed records of volunteer personnel, including names and contact, liability waivers, hours served, and frequency of participation.
- Coordinate, support and encourage existing volunteers in the microplastics sampling program.
- Recruit, train, and coordinate volunteers to conduct citizen science activities and make direct ecosystem improvements to rivers, trails, public lands, and other at-risk natural areas. (CB)
- Expand the western region's microplastics sampling program by recruiting, training, and organizing volunteers for the program; establishing locations for samples to be dropped off; and picking up samples from each location on a regular schedule. (CB)
- Help guide the organization's efforts around equity, diversity, and inclusion by targeting volunteer recruitment and service activities to reach underserved people and communities. (CB)
- Host at least one volunteer appreciation event. (CB)

Essential Functions:

Essential functions are the fundamental job duties:

- *Meaning the position exists to perform the function;*
- *There is a limited number of employees among whom the performance of the function can be distributed;*
- *And/or the incumbent is hired for expertise or ability to perform the function due to its high specialization.*

Equipment / Software Used: Laptop computer, Google Drive/Suite; Camera; pruners, saws, herbicides and other vegetation management tools

Physical Demands: Need to be able to hike and conduct field work in variable weather conditions and temperatures; insects; proximity to poison ivy; traversing boggy soil conditions and rock outcrops; thorny vegetation; carrying equipment onto and off of work sites; staying hydrated. Must be able to swim on at least a basic level.

Transportation Needs: Personal vehicle required

Setting/Location of Service Activities: Various outdoor locations primarily in Jackson (Sylva/Cullowhee), Swain (Bryson City), Macon (Franklin), Graham (Robbinsville), Clay, and Cherokee counties (to a lesser extent Haywood, Clay & Cherokee), both on and off-trail. Again, while the office is in Murphy, NC, job sites are primarily in Jackson, Macon & Swain counties. The position does require Tuesday afternoons and Wednesday mornings in the Murphy office/lab in June & July.

Other Considerations:

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).
- 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: