



# AmeriCorps Project Conserve 2024 – 2025 Service Description



**AmeriCorps Position Title:** AmeriCorps Stewardship & Volunteer Associate  
**Host Site:** Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy

**Supervisor Name:** Sarah Sheeran  
**Supervisor Title:** Stewardship Director  
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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. This year, we are celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## **Summary of Position:**

This position will provide support to the Stewardship Director, Stewardship Associate and other SAHC stewardship staff to 1) educate conservation landowners by monitoring conservation properties and providing tailored reports and resources, 2) assess properties for anthropogenic threats/issues and conservation values through preparation of detailed baseline documentation reports and land management plans, 3) ensure compliance with conservation easements, and 4) conduct outreach activities and land management workdays with volunteers on SAHC properties and for 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
- Basic experience with 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, both on- but primarily off-trail.
- Enthusiasm, creativity, self-motivation, humor, 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 occasionally vary). One and possibly two weekend retreats with board and staff. There are 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. There will also be optional opportunities to table/participate at SAHC outreach events on weeknights.

***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 (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 190 conservation easement properties, totaling nearly 45,000 acres. Each Stewardship & Volunteer Associate (3 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 often 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.
- Support stewardship staff via site visit preparation for hundreds of protected properties, field data collection, data management and curation, GIS organization, drafting monitoring reports and baseline document reports, recordkeeping and assisting with stewardship inquiries. (CB)

**AT-RISK ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS & TRAILS (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. (CB)

### **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.
- Plan and organize group volunteer workdays to improve at-risk ecosystems on SAHC protected properties, pursuant to land management plans prepared for the properties. (CB)
- Supervise volunteers for workdays (volunteer activities include removing invasive species, clearing debris, installing water protection devices, and creating wildlife habitat.) (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:

Physical Demands:

Transportation Needs:

Setting/Location of Service Activities:

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: