Organization: Mississippi Valley Conservancy
Date Posted: March 19, 2021
Location: La Crosse, WI
Service Position: AmeriCorps Land Steward and Outreach
Term: April 26, 2021 to August 20, 2021 (675 hours)

Mississippi Valley Conservancy (the Conservancy) is an award-winning regional, non-profit land trust based in La Crosse, WI that has permanently conserved over 21,600 acres of blufflands, prairies, wetlands, and streams in southwestern Wisconsin. The Conservancy owns and manages over 3,500 acres of public nature preserves and works with private landowners and local communities on voluntary conservation projects and outreach and education in nine counties along or near the Mississippi River.

Position Purpose: To provide opportunities for gaining practical conservation stewardship and outreach skills while exploring career options, to promote community service and environmental awareness through community engagement and volunteerism in the outdoors, and to obtain an AmeriCorps Education Award.

Key Service Responsibilities:

Land Stewardship (Approximately 30 hours/week)

- Assist with habitat management and restoration of native prairie, forest, oak savanna, and wetland habitat on Conservancy-protected land throughout southwest Wisconsin.
- Gain skills and expertise in several aspects of wildlife habitat management, including species identification, timber stand improvement, prescribed burning, prairie planting, oak savanna and prairie restoration, invasive species control, and trail maintenance.
- Operate and maintain chainsaws, brush cutters, herbicide applicators, mowers, and UTVs to accomplish habitat management tasks as assigned.
- Assist with installing, improving, and updating kiosks, signs, and trails.
- Help supervise school and volunteer groups during land restoration workdays.

Outreach (Approximately 10 hours/week)

- Help broaden the Conservancy's base of habitat restoration volunteers to expand land management activities on Conservancy nature preserves.
- Assist with designing and implementing Naturehood Connections, a new community outreach program with the goal of engaging local families and nature preserve neighbors of all ages in land restoration, volunteer fieldwork, conservation education, and nature exploration.
- Create restoration kits for families to check out from the Conservancy office. These kits will contain land restoration tools and supplies, identification cards for nature education, "how-to" instructions, and other engaging resources.
- Create exploration kits for engaging young children with our nature preserves. These will contain items such as ID cards, nets, bug boxes, garbage bags, and binoculars.
- Help schedule and lead volunteer workdays and guided nature discovery walks for participating families and individuals to help them feel confident and prepared for working on

their own.
- Help create short, simple “how-to” videos teaching volunteers how to identify and remove invasive species. These videos would prepare interested participants who are unable to attend any in-person workdays and will be available for review at any time.
- Keep detailed records of volunteer hours, program activity, and event attendance for continual program improvement and grant reporting.
- Use basic budgetary and financial guidelines to manage expenses.
- Assist with documenting and promoting the Naturehood Connections program by photographing activities and participants in the field.
- Volunteer Recruitment and Management
- Assist with recruitment, training, and evaluation of unpaid, non-AmeriCorps volunteers who assist with restoration work

Physical Requirements:

- Physically fit and able to work long days outside on steep, rugged terrain.
- Ability to perform field duties while exposed to adverse conditions such as inclement weather and biting insects.
- Willingness and ability to use herbicides, chainsaws, and any other tools required to complete assigned tasks.
- Possess a valid driver’s license and working vehicle

Tools and Equipment

- Chain saws, brush cutters, shovels, wheelbarrows, Pulaski, pickaxe, and other hand tools
- UTV operation as needed

Mental Requirements

- Sincere interest in preserving southwest Wisconsin’s ecosystems.
- Strong work ethic and positive attitude.
- Ability to identify plants, trees, and natural communities and willingness to learn more.
- Ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing.
- Ability to work well independently and as part of a team.
- Effective problem-solving skills and ability to accomplish work in challenging environments.
- Respect for the values and customs of others in a diverse team environment.

Performance Requirements

- Maintains professional working relationships with peers, co-workers, vendors, and the public that are inclusive, collaborative, and respectful.
- Willing to accept responsibility in a dependable and flexible fashion.
- Ready to take initiative in doing assigned work without prompting and seeks out other tasks that help the team accomplish their collective goals.
- Accepts supervisory authority and maintains professional workplace conduct.
- Completes work assignments in a safe, professional, and efficient manner.
- Works hard with a positive mental attitude, in all weather and terrain conditions.

Health and Safety:

- Must not be a significant risk of substantial harm to the health and safety of oneself or others.

- Must be able to accurately recognize and assess dangerous work sites or activities to prevent injuries from happening.
- Must wear proper safety equipment and follow all staff instructions regarding safety in the workplace.
- Ability to follow all health and safety protocols in relation to COVID 19 as needed.

Minimum Eligibility requirements for an AmeriCorps participant:

- Documentation proving status as US Citizen, US National, or US Lawful Permanent Resident Alien.
- Proof of eligibility to work in the US.
- Have HS Diploma or agree to obtain diploma or GED prior to using Ed Award.
- The member must be at least 17 years of age at the commencement of service; or
- Be an out-of-school youth 16 years of age at the commencement of service participating in a program described in §2522.110(b)(3) or (g);
- Have a high school diploma or its equivalent; or
- Not have dropped out of elementary or secondary school to enroll as an AmeriCorps participant and must agree to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent prior to using the education award; or
- Obtain a waiver from the Corporation of the requirements in paragraphs §2522.200 (a)(2)(i) and §2522.200 (a)(2)(ii) of this section based on an independent evaluation secured by the program demonstrating that the individual is not capable of obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent; or
- Be enrolled in an institution of higher education on an ability to benefit basis and be considered eligible for funds under section 484 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1091);
- Satisfy the National Service Criminal History Check eligibility criteria pursuant to 45 CFR 2540.202.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Knowledge of land trust principles and practices.
- Forestry, ornithology, or other natural resources specialty.
- First aid, CPR certification.
- Herbicide/pesticide applicator certification
- Advanced SAW, FISTA, or other chainsaw certification
- Prescribed or wild land fire experience

Mentor/Supervisor: Mississippi Valley Conservancy Land Manager

Compensation: AmeriCorps Members are paid a living allowance and may earn an education award for their service.

To Apply: **Send letter of interest, resume, and list of 3 professional references by email in Microsoft Word or PDF format to levi@mississippivalleyconservancy.org. Applications will be accepted until April 13, 2021.**