



2021-2022 NYC Civic Corps Member Position Description

Host Site Name: Natural Areas Conservancy

Position Title: NYC Civic Corps Member

Location: Citywide

Tentative Schedule: Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm & weekends as needed

of member Slots in this Position: 1

Position Supervisor: Trails Community Engagement Coordinator

Supervisor Email: josh.otero@naturalareasnyc.org

Need for the specific project on which AmeriCorps Member is serving:

The NYC Parks Department incurred steep budget cuts in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic downturn, which included an elimination of the only two dedicated NYC Parks positions to support trail work in NYC. This has greatly limited the Citywide Trails Team's capacity to maintain nature trails, and we are working diligently to streamline, prioritize, and delegate work so that trails are safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all park goers as the trails see unprecedented levels of usage. Training advanced volunteers to maintain their local nature trails is a critical component of filling in the gaps to ensure that local nature trail networks are safe and enjoyable for the public.

The Citywide Trails Team runs the NYC Parks Super Steward: Trail Maintainer program which trains advanced volunteers to steward and adopt their neighborhood trails. The NAC recently streamlined recruitment and onboarding for volunteers and is expecting a dramatic increase in advanced volunteers in 2021. The number of Super Steward: Trail Maintainers doubled in 2020, and the program is on track to have every formalized nature trail adopted by an advanced volunteer by 2022. Trail Maintainers will not only increase the capacity of the Citywide Trails Team to maintain nature trails in all five boroughs, but will also connect communities to their local trail networks and foster a sense of ownership and stewardship over the natural areas. The work of a NYC Civic Corps Member will be instrumental to the success

of the program by conducting community outreach and assisting with volunteer training and management.

Expectations and Goals for the specific project on which AmeriCorps Member is serving:

The NYC Civic Corps member will assist the NAC Trails Community Engagement Coordinator in the recruitment and management of Super Steward: Trail Maintainers. Management of Trail Maintainers will include site visits, training and collecting Trail Maintainer reporting. The NYC Civic Corps member will also support trail volunteer events to add staffing capacity, as well as work with the NAC Citywide Trails Team on trail projects that will enhance their knowledge and expertise of trail and forest management techniques.

The Civic Corps member will help to train and manage advanced volunteers citywide, with a focus on volunteers who are working in Bronx Forest, Pelham Bay Park, Seton Falls Park, Blood Root Valley, High Rock, La Tourette Park and Willowbrook Park. Within these parks there are 24.2 mi of trail formalized and in the process of becoming formalized by the end of 2021. Our goal is to have a Super Steward: Trail Maintainer on every segment of formalized trail by the end of 2022, which would require approximately 15 Trail Maintainers on adopted trail segments in each of the parks listed.

The Civic Corps member will help to grow the number of Super Steward: Trail Maintainers by conducting community outreach to inform people about the program and to promote the existence of the trail networks. Additionally, as the Civic Corps member's knowledge of trail maintenance grows, they will be able to train tier 2 volunteers who wish to learn more advanced techniques.

Member Position Summary:

NYC Parks has mapped over 350 miles of trails in natural areas parkland. These nature trails provide a means for New Yorkers to connect to nature in their public parks, but the majority of these trails are unmarked and difficult to navigate. Some trails are in need of rehabilitation to mitigate erosion. In other places networks of informal trails (called desire lines or social trails) are promoting damage to natural resources and should be closed to restore healthy forest. Through a grant from the Helmsley Charitable Trust, the NAC has a mandate to formalize the entire citywide nature trail system over three years, in part by launching a program to train advanced volunteers in trail maintenance and stewardship. A Civic Corps member will be indispensable to the growth and development of this new NYC Parks Trail Maintainers program.

The New York City Parks Trail Maintainer Program is a collaboration between NYC Parks Stewardship and the NAC Citywide Trails Team with support from the New York New Jersey Trail Conference (NYNJTC) that trains and supports advanced volunteers to maintain access and safety of NYC nature trails. The NYC Civic Corps member will report to the NAC Trails

Program Manager and work closely with the NAC Trails Community Engagement Coordinator to train and manage NYC Parks Trail Maintainers and assist with volunteer trail events. The Civic Corps member will also occasionally assist in the implementation of trail improvement projects in order to learn trail maintenance and forest restoration techniques that will enhance their ability to instruct NYC Parks Trail Maintainers. These efforts will greatly contribute to the implementation of the NYC Parks Trail Maintainer Program and the overall health and accessibility of NYC nature trails for New Yorkers.

Detailed Tasks:

- With direction from the Trails Community Engagement Coordinator, conduct outreach to community organizations throughout NYC with the goal of recruiting advanced volunteers for NYC trails
- Schedule, organize, and lead engaging trainings of advanced volunteers in the areas of sustainable trail maintenance, forest restoration techniques, and stewardship reporting systems
- Monitor and create monthly reports for the Citywide Trails Team on the trail work and stewardship efforts of local trail volunteers to ensure management milestones are being met
- Assist with trail volunteer events citywide, including supervising volunteers and event preparation such as setting up supplies, PPE, and planting site preparation
- Support Trails Community Engagement Coordinator with determining advanced volunteer recruitment goals (volume and location) based on trail formalization goals
- Assist with implementation of trail projects in parkland throughout New York City through a combination of improvements and closures to existing unofficial trail networks that encourage community use and protect sensitive natural resources.

Required Skills for AmeriCorps Members (set for all program members):

- Strong commitment to national service and the mission of the host site
- Desire to work in the non-profit sector
- Desire to serve with diverse communities
- Excellent organizational and communication skills
- Ability to conduct community outreach and make presentations to community groups
- Willingness to take initiative to achieve goals
- Strong project management/multi-tasking abilities
- A clear plan for living on the AmeriCorps stipend in New York City
- Availability to lead and/or attend events during evening and weekend hours (frequency varies by position)

- Minimum high school diploma or equivalency
- Ability to pass a criminal background check
- US Citizen or lawful permanent resident (AmeriCorps regulations)

Preferred Academic or Experience Qualifications, Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

- Valid New York State driver license
- Experience with workplace safety practices
- Experience engaging volunteers, members of the public, and/or public agencies
- Willingness to work occasional evenings and weekends
- Willingness to work long hours outside in varied weather condition

* Please note: The duties and responsibilities in this service position description may be subject to change. In the rare event that there are any changes, fellows will be notified prior to beginning the service year and the position description will be amended. All changes will be reviewed and approved in advance by NYC Service.