



NATURAL AREAS CONSERVANCY
Urban NEST Workforce Fellowship
Job Announcement

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Through its visionary leadership and high impact staff, the Natural Areas Conservancy (NAC) champions urban natural areas in New York City and across the nation through innovative research, partnerships, and advocacy. We increase the health and resilience of urban forests and wetlands, catalyze connections between people and nature, and strengthen the environmental workforce.

Started in 2012, the Natural Areas Conservancy is the first park conservancy dedicated exclusively to New York City's natural areas—20,000 acres across all five boroughs. Since 2019, we have also worked on a national scale, leading a network of representatives from cities across the U.S. to strengthen research, information sharing, and communication efforts to enhance the field of urban forest management.

We want all people to feel welcomed, inspired by, and connected to the natural world.

POSITION OVERVIEW

The NAC has created the Urban Nature Ecology Stewardship Training (NEST) Fellowship program to support the development of a local workforce for natural resource management jobs in NYC by bridging the gap between college and employment for CUNY students. This program is a curated year-long program for CUNY students eager to pursue an environmental career by focusing on four pillars: hard skill/field work training and certifications, applied project work, professional development, and stewardship. In addition to the core curriculum and technical skill building, fellows will be placed in a practical skills project following the Field-Based Conservation or Research & Analysis track. This project placement, which is based on participant interest, will inform students' career discernment and expand on skills needed to be competitive candidates for local environmental jobs. Fellows may be a part of projects that are embedded in the NAC's Research and Conservation team, Community Impact team, Workforce Development team, with staff at the NYC Parks Department, or local parks conservancies.

Fellows training during the program will address the following elements:

- Fall - Urban Fundamentals workshops, certifications, field-based skill development (plant identification, restoration techniques, etc.), professional development, group stewardship
- January - Introduction to Geographic Information Systems (GIS), indoor field work opportunities, certifications, professional development
- Spring - project assignment/team embedding (meet staff, protocol training, equipment training), project work (field or desktop based), occasional professional development and group stewardship
- Summer - project work (field or desktop based), professional development, group stewardship, final presentation at Research Showcase

Fellows will also benefit from the NAC Alumni Network of over 100 CUNY alumni that have participated in our internship and fellowship programs since 2016. This network will provide them with ongoing career development, networking, and mentorship opportunities, even after program participation and



graduation from CUNY. After program completion and graduation from CUNY, fellows are expected to serve as NAC ambassadors—actively seeking employment in the environmental field, contributing to a growing alumni network, and continuing to build community as well-rounded advocates and practitioners of urban natural areas.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Complete 800 hours of technical training and hands-on project work experience in natural resources management including data collection, urban ecology surveying, plant identification, trail navigation, and community engagement
- Participate in workshops facilitated by practitioners in the environmental field focused on urban ecology, environmental justice, environmental policy and regulation and GIS
- Engage in professional development sessions focused on program success, career discernment and job search skills in the environmental field
- Under the supervision of a Project Manager, take ownership of and further develop a long term project they will be matched with based on career interests
- Attend group stewardship events citywide that serve as professional networking and volunteering opportunities
- Participate in mentorship from professionals from organizations like the NAC, NYC Parks, local park conservancies, city environmental organizations and the NAC Alumni Network of past program participants
- Work towards valuable certifications to add to resumes such as First Aid/CPR, GIS courses, and becoming Super Stewards
- Interact with NAC staff, Parks staff and members of the public in a courteous, professional and timely manner

REQUIRED SKILLS/QUALIFICATIONS

- Current CUNY upperclassman student in good standing
- Passion for studying and improving local ecosystems as demonstrated through coursework, volunteerism and past professional experiences
- Interest in joining the local natural areas management workforce post program completion
- Field data collection experience
- Commitment to work collaboratively, share knowledge and participate actively in the program
- Ability to maintain a positive, collaborative attitude during hot (and probably buggy) days in forests, wetlands and on trails in variable weather conditions
- Participation in alumni network activities, NAC advocacy efforts and social media elements
- Excellent organizational, analytical, and written communication skills
- Ability to travel/work independently
- Computer/Microsoft Office/GSuite skills

PREFERRED SKILLS/QUALIFICATIONS:

- Experience identifying plants, invertebrates, and/or fish
- Experience with ArcMap Desktop or ArcGIS Online



- Experience in community organizing and engagement
- Experience with ecological data analysis and visualization
- Experience with environmental education
- Experience with land management, restoration, or horticulture

ELIGIBILITY:

Fellows must be a current student (undergraduate, graduate and students pursuing certifications) who are upperclassmen (juniors and seniors and established graduate students). Students with any major or degree focus within the CUNY system are eligible to apply, strong preference will be given to applicants who demonstrate a passion for studying and improving local ecosystems as proven through coursework, volunteerism, and past professional experiences with a goal of seeking employment post program.

JOB LOCATION:

Reporting locations are possible in all five boroughs of New York City (Manhattan, Queens, the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Staten Island) depending on the project and position focus. While working from home, access to a computer and stable internet connection is required. There is access to office space at NYC Parks [Arsenal North](#), [Queensbridge](#) and the [Transit Center](#). See below for more information on travel accommodations.

DURATION:

This position will start the week of September 23, 2025 and end Friday, August 14, 2026. Applicants must be available for the entire program which is in person with select remote days depending on the assigned project. This is a stipend role will work the following schedule during the following sessions throughout the year while accommodating student classes*:

- Fall session: September 23 - December 12, 2025 (14 hours/week*; two seven-hour days a week)
- January session: January 5 - 30, 2026 (14 hours/week*; two seven-hour days a week)
- Spring session: February 23 - May 15, 2026 (14 hours/week*; two seven-hour days a week)
- Summer session: June 22 - August 14, 2026 (35 hours/week; five seven-hour days a week)

COMPENSATION/BENEFITS

The Fellow will receive a stipend of up to \$15,000 to support their participation in the program. This amount includes travel funds to support commuting citywide for program and project activities throughout the fellowship.

The stipend will be paid monthly as follows: \$1,000 per month from September through June, and \$2,500 per month in July and August. This stipend is not considered wages and no employment taxes will be withheld. Fellows are responsible for any tax obligations that may arise from this stipend. Fellows are not eligible for health, dental, or retirement benefits nor any other NAC sponsored benefits or paid time-off.



APPLICATION

To apply for the Urban NEST Workforce Fellow role at the Natural Areas Conservancy, apply online by completing the following [application form](#). In this document, you will include your resume, cover letter, and unofficial transcripts from your CUNY institution in the format listed below. You may be asked to provide the contact information of two references later during the interview process.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position closes at 11:59pm on **Friday, August 8th, 2025**. Please address any questions to workforce@naturalareasnyc.org.

Please upload all materials as PDF files with each labeled as follows:

- A. Cover letter → 2025_last name_first init._CL (i.e. '2025_Jones_J_CL.pdf');
- B. Resume → 2025_ last name_first init_R (i.e. '2025_Jones_J_R.pdf');
- C. Unofficial transcript → 2025_ last name_first init_UOT (i.e. '2025_Jones_J_UOT.pdf')

SECTIONS OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

- Personal Information
- Uploading resume, cover letter and unofficial transcript
- Eligibility and skills assessment questions