



NATURAL AREAS CONSERVANCY
High School Program Intern
Forest Park, Queens & Greenbelt, Staten Island
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.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Since 2022, the NAC has run a paid urban ecology internship program for local high school students to use the framework of science identity to promote environmental stewardship among NYC youth. Over the course of six weeks, high school interns will gain skills in flora and fauna identification, field ecology, natural areas management and stewardship, and the scientific method through several mentored monitoring and restoration projects. Interns will also participate in professional development training in public speaking, networking, and resume building. Finally, interns design and carry out their own ecological research project focused long-term forest health monitoring in NYC Parks. Interns can look forward to collaborative stewardship and field trip days. This program will work out of NYC Parks in Forest Park, Queens and Greenbelt Nature Center in Staten Island. Our program partners include: [Forest Park Trust](#) (Forest Park) , [The Greenbelt Nature Center](#), and [NYC Parks Department](#) (both locations).

POSITION OVERVIEW

Starting in early 2026 (February - May), interns can look forward to virtual professional development sessions facilitated by staff at City Parks Foundation once a week that will focus on college & career readiness. At the start of the summer (July 2026) interns will work under the supervision of NAC and partner staff. During the summer, interns will have one hour of remote work weekly on Mondays and meet for full day programming the remaining four days (Tuesday - Friday) that week. Throughout the program, interns will use the new skills they developed to collect data in NYC Parks, pursue a research question of interest, and create a scientific poster that will be presented at an end-of-summer symposium as a part of the [New York City Science Research Mentorship Consortium](#). This position will be 90% in-person, field-based and 10% remote-based. The ideal candidate will have an interest in nature, working outdoors through hands-on field work, and learning introductory environmental science and ecology.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Participate in weekly [City Parks Foundation](#) professional development training in public speaking, networking, resume building, and college & career readiness, from Feb - May 2026
- Participate in [Irontdale](#) public speaking and science communication workshops



- Learn about how the NAC and NYC Parks collect data to understand the health of urban natural areas, the importance of stewardship, and local environmental organizations doing this work
- Ability to report to offsite locations such as the American Museum of Natural History, and various other locations for stewardship, teambuilding and professional development
- Become familiar with flora and fauna identification, introductory forest and wetland ecology
- Design and conduct their own research project from ecological data collected over the course of the program
- Connect with NAC and NYC Parks Staff, as well as college students participating in the NAC's Urban NEST college programming
- Present research project to members of the public during the NYC Science Research Mentorship Consortium's end-of-summer Symposium, August 13th, 2026.

REQUIRED SKILLS/QUALIFICATIONS

- Must be a NYC resident who either lives in or attends high school in Queens or Staten Island, is within a one-hour commute to the site, and will be a rising junior or senior in Summer 2026 (enrolled for Fall 2026) and will be 16 years old by July 1st of program year
- Ability to maintain a positive, collaborative attitude during hot (and probably buggy) days in natural areas and in variable weather conditions
- Strong interest in science research and nature, caring for NYC's natural areas and working outdoors
- Ability and motivation to work independently
- Computer access with reliable network connection and camera for occasional remote meetings
- Ability to arrive in a timely manner to multiple work-sites and to communicate with program lead on attendance and progress
- Commit to participating in the professional development workshops with City Parks Foundation from February to May 2026 and the site-based internship July 7th - August 15th, 2026
- Attend New York City Science Research Consortium required events: College Workshop: Friday, July 11 and Symposium: Thursday, August 13

JOB LOCATION:

Queens interns will report to Forest Park, Queens ([corner of Myrtle Ave and Park Ln S](#)) and occasionally at [Oak Ridge](#) on in-person days. Staten Island interns will report to the [Greenbelt Nature Center](#) on in-person days. Both sites will occasionally meet virtually for remote work days. Program days may also occur at off-site locations, including the American Museum of Natural History, and additional sites as scheduled.

COMPENSATION/BENEFITS

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) will be providing payment for this position at 25 hours per week for 6 weeks, 1 hour remote homework assignment on Mondays and 4 full work days a week (Tuesday - Friday) from July 7, 2026, through August 14, 2026. The expected compensation is \$16.50 per hour, totaling approximately \$2,475.

[Click here to submit an application.](#) Applications close Wednesday, January 14th, 2026, at 11:59 PM. If you have any questions about this position, please reach out to Internship Community Coordinator, Leanna Rodriguez at leanna.rodriguez@naturalareasnyc.org



NATURAL AREAS CONSERVANCY (NAC) STUDENT URBAN NATURE (SUN) HIGH SCHOOL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The NAC hosts a paid urban ecology program for local high school students using the framework of science identity to promote environmental stewardship among NYC youth. With hubs in NYC Parks, Queens and the Greenbelt in Staten Island, our place-based model connects participants to nearby natural areas to learn more about the importance of healthy forests, wetlands and trails. Alongside peers, high schoolers will conduct research that will add to the work of the NAC, NYC Parks and partnership organizations in these areas. Ultimately, participants will grow skills such as: urban ecology research, navigating outdoors, and environmental health monitoring techniques. Students post program feel more confident navigating STEM spaces in college and feel more informed to make early career decisions.



Over the course of our program, high school interns will:

- Learn about how the NAC and NYC Parks collect data to understand the health of forests and wetlands
- Become familiar with flora and fauna identification along with introductory forest and wetland ecology
- Engage with urban ecosystems at program locations through scientific inquiry, monitoring, and restoration projects
- Conduct their own research project from ecological data collected over the course of the program's summer
- Participate in varied professional development trainings on public speaking, networking, and resume building
- Receive mentorship from NAC, NYC Parks, as well as current and previous seasonal staff participating in the NAC's Urban N.E.S.T. (Nature, Ecology, and Stewardship Training) Internship and Fellowship Programs

Duration and Delivery

15 weeks of virtual professional development sessions between Feb-May (2 hrs a week) followed by:
Six weeks of in-person programming with 1 hour remote homework assignment on Mondays and 4 full work days a week (Tuesday - Friday) 25 hours /week (9 am - 4 pm; includes 1 hour lunch break) between July 7th and August 14th- limited absences allowable. The expected compensation is \$16.50 per hour, totaling approximately \$2,475.

Eligibility

Student must:

- Must be a NYC resident who either lives in or attends high school in Queens or Staten Island, is within a one-hour commute to the site, and will be a rising junior or senior in Summer 2026 (enrolled for Fall 2026) and will be 16 years old by July 1st of program year
- Have a strong interest in and positive attitude about science research and nature, caring for New York City's forests and parks, working outdoors, and growing independently and as a team
- As attendance is mandatory, students interested in either the NYC Parks or Staten Island program locations must live no more than a one-hour commute away from the program site, with priority given to students living in the surrounding community of each program site
- Legally be allowed to work in New York City in order to apply to the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)





High School Student Urban Nature (SUN) Internship Program Application: Short Answer Questions

To submit your application to the SUN program (Forest Park or Staten Island) you will need to:

- Attach an updated resume
- Attach a scanned copy of the following responses *handwritten*
- [Submit the listed documents here](#)
- Prepare a two-minute oral presentation for the interview

Provide *handwritten* responses to the following questions. You may write on a separate sheet of paper if needed (no more than 3-6 sentences). **This application is due Wednesday, January 14th, 2026, 11:59 PM EST.**

What do you hope to learn from this program? What intrigued you to apply?

From your perspective, why is nature important in urban settings such as New York City?

Describe something about the natural world that fascinates you. If you had unlimited time and resources, how would you go about gaining a better understanding of this topic or issue?

Tell us about an accomplished skill of yours that you are confident in. What energized you to learn this new skill?

Tell us about a local issue you care about. What have you done or what would you do to make change?

Finally, prepare a 2-minute oral presentation explaining a science project from class or from a science fair that you worked on. *This section will be covered during your interview - you do not need to write an answer to this question.*

