

2023-2024 AmeriCorps Member Position Description



Partner Organization Name: Pontchartrain Conservancy

Corps Member Position Title: Coastal Tree Nursery Volunteer Coordinator

Supervisor: Michael Hopkins

Days/Hours of Service: M-F, 9-5; occasional Saturday for tree plantings

Physical Location: 3501 N. Causeway Blvd, Suite 220

Organization Mission and/or Goals:

Pontchartrain Conservancy's mission is to drive environmental sustainability and stewardship through scientific research, education, and advocacy.

The Lake Pontchartrain Basin is a 10,000 square mile watershed encompassing 16 Louisiana parishes. The land use of the region is both rural and urban and is the most densely populated region in Louisiana, including metro New Orleans and the state capital, Baton Rouge. It is one of the largest estuarine systems in the Gulf of Mexico containing over 22 essential habitats. The Basin's topography ranges from rolling woodlands in the north to coastal marshes in the south, with the 630 square mile Lake Pontchartrain as its centerpiece.

Program Mission and/ or Goals:

This AmeriCorps position falls within PC's Coastal & Community Program (CCP). Within CCP, Swamp Restoration is an ongoing program that seeks to restore critical swamp habitat throughout the Pontchartrain Basin. Broadly stated, the mission of this program is to ensure a healthy and sustainable estuary that maximizes the ecological functions of swamp habitat and enhances environmental resilience without compromising critical economic functions.

Member Position Summary:

Volunteer Coordinator: The member would be a program coordinator for our swamp tree nursery and volunteer coordinator for our coastal restoration volunteer opportunities. This would involve all aspects of the upkeep of the tree nursery, which currently houses ~5000 trees. This position is primarily focused on two aspects. First, operations of the existing

nursery to ensure that the trees survive to planting season. Then helping coordinate the tree plantings in the fall/winter season. The second aspect will be to do some experimental work with marsh grasses. We're in the early stages of adding a marsh grass component to the nursery. The AmeriCorps member would be involved with an experimental project using locally sourced recycled glass sand to understand the growth/survival patterns using that material. We typically have several volunteer plantings each season (October – March, weather contingent). These events usually have 15 – 40 volunteers, are time- and labor-intensive, and logistically challenging. The member would work closely in a collaborative effort with our communications department the outreach and education departments to develop science communication, outreach, and volunteer recruitment pieces for the coastal department. The member in this position will have a variety of responsibilities that require an interest in science, data collection, fieldwork, data management, outreach, formulation of print and online outreach or awareness materials and social media. The member may also be asked to make promotional materials for initiatives within the coastal program. The member would gain experience in developing print and electronic promotional items, the scientific data collection process and the scientific method.

Member Impact

The member would meet the community need of environmental stewardship. The member will help recruit volunteers to coastal restoration events, which raises the visibility of our work with the public. The member will also be on the front lines of innovative science solutions by using recycled glass sand and devising ways that it can be used in coastal restoration projects. Coastal land loss issues are rampant in Louisiana and there is a community need to increase understanding and involvement in this issue. PC uses science to guide our advocacy. The member would be involved with collecting scientific data for some of our restoration programs. The data we collected guides how we advocate for environmental or policy changes, and therefore quality data collection is important to our mission. The member will also help to highlight to the community how science is our guide and promote our scientific activities and programs.

Essential Functions of Position:

- Lead operations of the existing tree nursery
- Lead tree nursery volunteer program
- Continue development and implementation of marsh grass component of tree nursery and use recycled glass sand to understand impacts to coastal restoration
- Work with local schools to develop student run nurseries
- Schedule, promote, recruit, and attend volunteer activities such as tree plantings or other nursery volunteer events
- Assist in field work and scientific data collection

Skills, knowledge and trainings the corps member should expect to gain from this position

The member will become familiar with the key players in the coastal restoration community in Louisiana, specially at the state, federal, local and NGO level. The member will have the opportunity to learn important tech skills (i.e. ArcGIS, GPS) and other scientific methods during the course of their service. We like to offer open ended opportunities to allow the corps member to expand their skills individually. If a member wants to expand their scientific skills and knowledge or attend workshops and networking events, we can provide those experiences.

Ideal Candidate Qualifications

All training for this position would be on the job training with close supervision by the mentor and other staff. The mentor would also be available for consultation, questions, and general advice.

The following skills are highly recommended:

- Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint)
- Likes to work outside
- Ability to move 50 lbs
- Suitable oral and written communication skills
- Can communicate effectively with new people and can give detailed instructions
- Ability to stay organized, multitask and meet deadlines
- Ability to work effectively in a team environment
- An interest in coastal science or biology/ecology is essential. Some background in either is advantageous but not required

Required Transportation Requirements (ex: own vehicle or able bike to site)

Own vehicle