

AmeriCorps Positions Available – Elkins, West Virginia Appalachian Forest Heritage Area – Enhancing Assets to Benefit Communities

The Appalachian Forest Heritage Area (AFHA) is seeking 17 AmeriCorps members to work on hands-on projects that enhance community, natural, and historic assets to benefit communities by developing heritage tourism.

AFHA is an 18-county region in the highlands of West Virginia and western Maryland, working to conserve, enhance, and interpret our forest heritage assets – including natural, historic, cultural, forest products, and forest management – to encourage heritage tourism as diversified economic development for our rural communities. For more information on AFHA see

www.appalachianforest.us.

Three AmeriCorps teams will focus on heritage development (including interpretation and community development), conservation of natural resources; and/or historic preservation of community buildings. AmeriCorps members are primarily based in Randolph County, WV pilot county, with some positions based in other AFHA counties, and some travel to project sites in other counties. Training will be provided, although experience or interest in one of the project areas is preferred.

AmeriCorps members work full-time, and receive a living allowance plus an educational benefit at the completion of one year. For more information on AmeriCorps program, including additional benefits see http://www.americorps.org/for_individuals/overview/index.asp. To search on www.americorps.org for our program, go to “I’m Ready to Serve” and look under Community Development or Environment for West Virginia.

Recruitment for this program encourages diversity and will not discriminate based upon race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service. The program will provide reasonable accommodation to qualified persons with disabilities.

Applications will be accepted starting April 1 for positions starting September 15. Interviews will be scheduled starting in April, and applicants may be accepted on a rolling basis through the summer until all positions are filled – so apply early. Positions are full-time, most for 11 ½ months. We are looking for individuals with commitment and initiative, and with an interest or experience in one of our program areas.

For all positions:

Skills and qualities required for all positions will include:

- Commitment to community service.
- Good communication skills.
- Ability to work with groups and community volunteers.
- Able to get along with a wide variety of people.
- Organized, responsible, able to take initiative and be self-directed.
- Interest in learning, able to take direction
- Flexibility, ability to multi-task.

- Willing to travel throughout region as needed.
- Comfortable with common computer programs.
- Both experienced leaders and beginners interested in learning new skills are encouraged to apply.
- High school diploma or GED, at least 17 years old required. For our program, college degree or significant progress toward one, or varied life experience, is preferred.
- Additional skills appropriate to the specific position

Position responsibilities for all positions:

- Members will be organized into three teams – heritage development, conservation, or historic preservation.
- All members will participate in Mountain State Leaders training, as well as trainings appropriate to their project areas. Some cross-training can also be available depending on availability and individual interest.
- Members will participate in team meetings as needed, generally one per month with the whole group together.
- All members will assist with AFHA meetings, events and capacity building.
- All members will participate in some community service activities.
- Members will be responsible for AmeriCorps reporting requirements, including but not limited to timesheets, project reports, volunteer logs, and assessing project impact.

Descriptions of specific positions:

We try to be flexible and assign members to the best fit between their interests and the site's needs. Assignments that cross-over and include elements from the different program areas are possible. You will have input into your assignment – not everyone will get their first choice, but we try to match your project assignments to your interests.

For Heritage Development positions

Positions will be based in specific communities in the AFHA area, and in most cases these members will be assigned individually to specific community organizations.

Additional skills and qualities expected for this position:

- Experience or interest in working with communities and community groups
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Strong computer skills, word processing and email required, database or graphics a plus.

Experience with some of the following are encouraged:

- Training in or experience with education, interpretation or interpretive planning.
- Training in or experience with marketing and promotion.
- Experience with heritage tourism or related retail or small business.
- Interest in helping build consensus and collaboration, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to find common goals
- Experience or interest in working with youth groups
- Familiarity with or contacts within the AFHA region or West Virginia.

Position responsibilities:

Members will be assigned to one or two community groups for the majority of their service.

Working with the site supervisor and members of each group, you will:

- Help identify and define specific project(s) that will be your responsibility to implement. Depending on the scope of the project, each member may be responsible for one major year-long project, or several smaller projects. Projects should in some way benefit the heritage tourism development of the community. They may cross over into any of the other program areas.
- Work with organization to plan project
- Work with organization to recruit volunteers to assist you with project.
- Implement and complete the project.
- Assess the impact of the project, including project reports, volunteer logs and reports, and administering surveys.
- Work with your sponsor organization to support related efforts, including participating in meetings and working as a team member for the organization.

For Conservation positions:

Most positions will be based in Randolph County with some travel, although assignments to other counties are possible. These members will work both individually and as a team on multiple projects in several counties. Individual assignments for planning and preparing longer term projects are also a possibility. Winter work is primarily project planning and office work; spring and summer work will include substantial outdoor hands-on work.

Additional skills and qualities expected for this position:

- Interest, experience or training in natural and environmental issues -- could include forestry, botany, landscape, gardening, ecology, invasive species, watershed, wildlife, trails, outdoor recreation, etc.
- Willing and able to do physical labor.
- Experience with GPS/GIS is a plus.

The team will work together on several projects in multiple locations. Working with the site supervisor and volunteers, you will:

- Be assigned to one or several projects for planning and organization of projects. Help identify, define scope, and plan specific work project(s) that conserve, restore, or beautify forest or community landscape sites.
- Perform hands-on conservation work such as trails repair, invasive species control, site cleanup, site inventories and mapping, habitat restoration, tree planting, etc.
- Team will come together to perform the hands-on work for most of the projects, completing several projects in different localities
- Participate in training alongside volunteers.
- Work with site sponsors to recruit volunteers to assist you with project.
- Work with site sponsors and volunteers to the complete project.
- Assist with conservation awareness and educational efforts related to your projects.

- Assess the impact of the projects, including project reports, volunteer logs and reports, and administering surveys.
- Work with your sponsor organizations to support related efforts, including attendance at meetings and working as a team member for the organization.

For Historic Preservation positions:

Most positions will be based in Randolph County with some travel. These members will mostly work as a team on multiple projects in several counties. Individual assignments for longer term projects are also a possibility.

Additional skills and qualities expected for this position:

- Interest, experience or training in historic preservation, construction, or restoration skills.
- Willing and able to do physical labor.

The team will work together on several projects in multiple locations. Working with the site supervisor and volunteers, you will:

- Perform hands-on construction tasks to rehabilitate historic buildings. Hard physical work, using power tools, and occasional difficult working conditions are to be expected. Tasks will range from unskilled cleanup and demolition to skilled preservation tasks that you will be trained to do. You will learn and be expected to follow safety procedures and wear appropriate safety equipment.
- Help recruit volunteers for training workshops,
- Participate in training alongside volunteers.
- Help identify, define scope, and plan specific work project(s) that preserve, rehabilitate or restore historic properties. Team will complete several projects in different localities.
- Work with site sponsors to recruit volunteers to assist you with project.
- Work with site sponsors and volunteers to implement the project.
- Assist with preservation awareness and educational efforts related to your projects.
- Assess the impact of the project, including project reports, volunteer logs and reports, and administering surveys.
- Work with your sponsor organizations to support related efforts, including attendance at meetings and working as a team member for the organization.

Position expectations and benefits:

Positions will begin on Sept 15, 2009, with most completing by August 30. Each member will commit to completing 1700 hours of service within no more than a 12 month period. (Early completion can be arranged for those wishing to complete service in time for fall 2009 school semester). Schedules can be individualized to some degree, depending on the needs of the projects, your team, and the training you are committed to, balanced with your own needs. Since projects will be working with volunteers, all positions will likely include some evening and weekend activities. Limited outside school or other work responsibilities can be allowed as long as all AmeriCorps responsibilities are met.

Position will pay a living allowance of \$11,400 gross for the year, payable in bi-monthly installments. Workers Comp and basic health insurance for yourself (not family) will be provided. A child care subsidy can be available for qualified candidates. Unemployment coverage is not included.

Educational benefit of \$4725 will be paid at the successful completion of your 1700 hour term of service. Incomplete terms do not receive educational award. The educational award can be used for college tuition, technical or vocational education, or repayment of qualified student loans. Existing student loans can be deferred during your AmeriCorps service.

Application Process:

Applications will be accepted from April 1 until positions are all filled. Interviews will be arranged, either in person or by phone.

To apply, or for more information:

Phyllis Baxter

phyllisb@meer.net

304-636-6182 (office)

304-636-2467 (home)

Appalachian Forest Heritage Area

PO Box 1206

Elkins WV 26241

www.appalachianforest.us

To apply, send the following. Email is preferred, or mail to address above.

- Cover letter, including which position(s) you are interested in and why you think this AmeriCorps position would be good for you.
- Resume
- At least 3 reference names w/contact information.
- You will need to fill out the online americorps.org application – this can be done as your initial application, or you can do it later if you are selected for interview.

NOTE to early applicants: AFHA Web site and AmeriCorps portal have NOT yet been updated for 2009-2010 year recruiting. We will notify you when these are done. In the meantime, feel free to send us your materials directly.

We will reply within two weeks and will arrange for an interview if the program seems likely for you. Interviews can be on the phone or in person. If you are traveling here for an interview & visit, we can arrange the interview to fit your schedule. Followup will include:

- Complete the AmeriCorps online application, if not already done
- Checking references. These can be the AmeriCorps application reference forms, or you can provide us with names & contact info and we'll follow up.
- If you complete the AmeriCorps online application first, this can serve as your resume, but we would still like you to send a cover letter.

We will notify you as soon as possible if you are selected to be offered a position. Applicants will be chosen on a rolling basis - applications will be taken until all positions are filled.