NPS UNIT: NATIONAL PARKS OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA AND FORT NECESSITY NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

| Position Title: | Natural Resource Management Assistant |
| Position Type:  | DHA Resource Assistant |
| Primary natural resource discipline: | Multidisciplinary |
| Project keywords: | GIS, invasive plants, native plants, propagation, mapping, inventory, monitoring |
| Location:       | Farmington, Pennsylvania |

**DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY RESOURCE ASSISTANT OVERVIEW**

The DHA Resource Assistant internship (DHA-RA) is a unique internship opportunity within the Department of the Interior (DOI). The objective is to build a pathway to employment in the DOI for exemplary students in higher education. DHA-RA interns will apply natural resource science expertise to NPS management and build a network with federal employees throughout the internship. The internships are designed to develop the participant’s technical and creative thinking abilities, leadership skills, and problem-solving capabilities. DHA-RA interns who successfully complete the internship requirements receive a 2-year eligibility period starting from the date of their degree during which they can be non-competitively hired by the DOI. Successful completion of the internship does not guarantee that the participant will be hired in to a federal position.

The DHA-RA internship is focused on full representation of women and participants from Historically Black, Hispanic, Asian Pacific Islander, and Native American schools or other schools with diverse student populations. In order to be eligible for a DHA-RA Internship, participants must be a U.S. citizen or U.S. permanent legal resident (“green-card-holder”) and currently enrolled in an undergraduate, graduate, or PhD degree program at an accredited institution of higher education during the summer internship. Persons enrolled solely in a certificate program do not qualify for DHA positions.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND WORK PRODUCTS**

Position Description: The Research Assistant (RA) position will support the Western Pennsylvania Parks (WEPA), Division of Resource Management in the ecological restoration and the promotion of native species. The RA will use GIS to track and optimize management efforts, operate remote cameras for wildlife observation, and will support the native plant propagation efforts in the newly established greenhouse and nursery operations at WEPA. The RA will also develop and implement a monarch butterfly monitoring protocol. Along with these projects, the RA will assist the Division and Park with other appropriate projects, such as outreach and education, and will work closely with park partners to establish a strong network of conservation professionals.

The position will be supervised by the Natural Resource Manager and will be based out of Fort Necessity National Battlefield. The position will require a valid state driver license, as the position will travel between the five parks of WEPA, including Fort Necessity National Battlefield, Friendship Hill National Historic Site, Flight 93 National Memorial, Johnstown Flood National Memorial, and Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site.
The RA will research the species that are appropriate to the habitat selected for restoration from both the natural and culture resource references. The RA will locate populations of these species in the field by analyzing soil and hydrology characteristics, and identifying areas of likely occurrence. Upon locating suitable source material, the RA will take plant cuttings in the field, collect seeds, or obtain root material, and apply the appropriate propagation technique in the greenhouse. The RA will care for the cuttings and seedlings, evaluating plant health and adaptively manage the process.

The RA will incorporate previous forest surveys with GPS technology to inventory and monitor areas of high-priority species according to park natural resource management plans. The RA will locate these populations in the field, accurately map them using Trimble technology, and collect pertinent attributes, such as population condition and density, to support management efforts.

The RA will evaluate existing natural resource reports to develop ecological restoration and enhancement plans and prioritize the sites based on park objectives. The RA will develop an interactive spatial system that includes site attributes, such as soil structure, pH, and wildlife forage/cover, to determine appropriate species assemblages and planting locations. The RA will develop protocols to inventory and monitor the sites’ success and provide any adaptive management recommendations to improve outcomes.

The RA will work to develop a volunteer base to support greenhouse and nursery operations, training them in proper plant care. The RA will identify suitable training materials for the plant propagation topics, and present training appropriate to the volunteers’ skill levels. The RA will also work with the NPS partner organizations within the Southern Laurel Highlands Plant and Pest Management Partnership to educate the public on the importance of native plants and pollinators through volunteer work days, posters, social media posts, and other methods.

The RA will also be responsible for developing the monarch monitoring program at WEPA. The RA will select sites, research survey protocols, conduct the surveys, and report data to the various data clearinghouses. The RA will educate visitors on the importance of pollinators, develop outreach presentations, and will train volunteers in survey methodology.

The RA’s work will enhance the effectiveness of natural resource management at the park by collecting and analyzing data to support decisions and prioritization of volunteers and resources.

This position is offered through the National Park Service’s Geoscientists-in-the-Parks (GIP) Internship Program in partnership with Stewards Individual Placement Program (Stewards) and The Geological Society of America (GSA).

**Work Products:** The final products include work plans to support funding requests for ecological restoration and interactive spatial products to inform management decisions and to monitor invasive species and ecological restoration projects. Plant propagation training materials will be developed. A survey protocol for monarch butterflies will be established, and a volunteer base for nursery operations and butterfly monitoring will be established.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

Plant identification skills, plant biology skills or interest, bachelor’s degree in the geosciences or biological sciences, strong interest in working for NPS as a career, ability to communicate clearly with a variety of audiences, responsible, dependable, curiosity, sense of humor

The applicant must be a U.S. citizen or U.S. permanent legal resident (“green-card-holder”) between the ages of 18 and 35 years old. Prior to starting this position a government security background clearance will be required.
## VEHICLE/DRIVER LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

**Applicant must have a valid driver license and a good driving record.** The intern will drive a park vehicle between the 5 WEPA parks.

**A personal vehicle is RECOMMENDED but not required for this position.** A vehicle will be needed to get to grocery stores and for recreation outside of the park.

If the GIP is required to drive a park vehicle for their position, Stewards will perform a driving records search, and the GIP’s ability to drive a park vehicle during work hours will be contingent upon the results. GIPs will have to have had their license for 3 years or be over the age of 21 to be insured as drivers under Stewards insurance policy. Examples of things that will preclude a GIP from driving a park vehicle include: GIP under the age of 21 years old that has been licensed less than three years, DUls, multiple moving vehicle violations, suspended or revoked license, or three or more accidents (regardless of fault) in the last 3 years. If the driver’s search is favorable, Stewards will provide driver’s liability insurance while the intern is driving a NPS vehicle for their GIP position. If the GIP is denied coverage by Stewards, they will not be permitted to drive during work hours.

## HOUSING

**Park housing is available and will be provided at no cost to the participant.** Private room, kitchen facilities, semi-private bathroom. Bring linens and towels.

## INTERNSHIP START/END DATES

- **Start Date:** 5/11/2020
- **Number of weeks:** 12 weeks
- **Flexibility of dates:** Yes

## LIVING ALLOWANCE

- **12 weeks ($450/week = $5,400)**

## TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

- **$250**

## AMERICORPS PROGRAM

AmeriCorps is a program that engages individuals in intensive community service work with the goal of “helping others and meeting critical needs in the community”. The GIP Program is supported through AmeriCorps by providing a Segal Education Award in addition to the GIP’s living stipend and relocation allowance.

Upon successful completion of the GIP position, the GIPs (AmeriCorps members) are eligible for a $1,638 - $6,195 pre-tax education award that can be used for paying back student loans or for continuing their education. The amount of the education award is based on the length of the position.

AmeriCorps limits the number of terms an individual can serve to 4 terms. If an applicant has previously completed 4 GIP or other AmeriCorps positions, they will not be eligible to apply for an additional GIP position.

## NATURAL & PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

**Natural Environment:** The five parks of WEPA:

- Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site (ALPO)
- Johnstown Flood National Memorial (JOFL)
- Flight 93 National Memorial (FLNI)
- Fort Necessity National Battlefield (FONE)
- Friendship Hill National Historic Site (FRHI)
are located throughout western Pennsylvania and within the Laurel Highlands region, about 1.5 hours from Pittsburgh.

**Physical Work Environment:** The position will be a mix of field and office work.

**MENTORING AND LEARNING GOALS**

**Mentoring:** The RA will work closely with resource management staff and partners, and will be provided opportunities to work with other park divisions as well. The RA will meet regularly with the natural resource manager to determine priorities and review progress. The intern will also have the opportunity to work with regional staff on projects.

**Learning Goals:** The RA will learn the NPS culture, develop technical skills such as plant identification, propagation methods, and inventory and monitoring procedures. The intern will be offered opportunities for training both within and outside of the park, as available.

**DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

To be engaged, you must feel included and valued, and we do this by ensuring an open door policy and a welcoming culture between all divisions. We strive to build and nurture a culture where inclusiveness is a reflex, not an initiative that will fade over time and where there is a deep sense of pride, passion and belonging that transcends any role, park unit, or background. We know through experience that different ideas, perspectives and backgrounds create a stronger and more creative work environment that delivers better results for the park, the visitors, and the resources. We encourage these ideas by creating interdisciplinary teams to solve problems, develop plans to guide park actions, and by empowering our staff to seek out and accept opportunities. To support an inclusive environment where employees feel empowered to share their experiences and ideas, we’ve encourage participation in a variety of Employee Resource Groups, including groups for Women, Veterans, LGTBQ (Pride & Allies), Developing Professionals and more. We reach out to under-served communities in the western PA area and seek to engage them in park activities through presentations, invitations to park activities, and community outreach events.

**PRESENTING PROJECT RESULTS**

The GIP’s work will enhance the effectiveness of natural resource management at the park by collecting and analyzing data to support decisions and prioritization of volunteers and resources. These findings will be presented to resource managers, chief rangers, and the superintendent at all employee meetings, senior leadership team meetings, and workshops. Specifically, the intern will present the results of their work in a multimedia presentation to the senior leadership team of WEPA, which consists of all division chiefs, and the Southern Laurel Highlands Plant and Pest Management Partnership. This may be either at a joint meeting or separately to each group, as scheduling allows. The Partnership is comprised of federal, state, and local agencies working collaboratively to address invasive plants and pests in southwestern Pennsylvania. The Partnership seeks grants, matches volunteer groups with projects, and educates the public about native species.

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

The GIP will work closely with resource management staff and partners, and will be provided opportunities to work with other park divisions as well. The GIP will meet regularly with the natural resource manager to determine priorities, review progress, and participate in career counseling. The intern will have the opportunity to work with regional staff on projects, as well as leading volunteer groups in park activities. The RA will be coached in taking ownership of projects, and provided with guidance and parameters on how to plan and execute projects. The RA will be encouraged to network with park partners to both seek and provide assistance and share resources.

**SUPERVISORS/MENTORS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Supervisor/Mentor:</th>
<th>Secondary Supervisor/Mentor:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brenda Wasler</td>
<td>Colleen Curry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Resource Manager</td>
<td>Acting Chief of Resource Management</td>
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