



GREEN IOWA AMERICORPS: LAND & WATER STEWARDS

TRACK DESCRIPTION:

The Land & Water Stewards (LWS) track of the Green Iowa AmeriCorps program has been operational since 2017 to provide coordination and collaboration for conservation, sustainable agriculture, and water quality efforts in communities across Iowa. The program is partnered with nonprofits, county conservation organizations, city governments, and colleges. The LWS track provides support through direct service, education, and community engagement for the creation and expansion of conservation practices related to resource management, water quality and quantity issues, and proven mitigation techniques. From rain garden installation to tree planting projects, water quality testing to the restoration of native habitat, the LWS track is focused on the improvement of Iowa's resources. Finally, the program seeks to engage Iowans as Volunteers through service projects to learn more about the environment, engage in their communities, and gain hands-on skills and experiences.

TRACK DESIGN:

The Land & Water Steward track is designed to place two AmeriCorps members with each host organization, each serving a 1,700-hour service commitment over the course of an 11-month period. This breaks down to roughly a 37-40-hour weekly commitment. Members assume one of two coordinator roles created by their host organization. Typically, one position is geared more towards communication and outreach for the organization while the second position is focused more on coordinator of hands-on field experiences. Our Land & Water Stewards coordinator roles vary based on the needs of the host sites. Because this branch of Green Iowa is incredibly broad, our staff work intuitively with our host sites to craft coordinator descriptions that mutually benefit each partner, and align with GIA's mission. Land & Water Stewards can serve as anything from communication specialists, program coordinators, conservation leaders, and much more!

The Land & Water Stewards track also engages a minimum of two members to serve in 3-month summer AmeriCorps positions as Environmental Summer Stewards. This is an introduction for members to the environmental field, community service projects, job training, and hands-on skill development. Summer members are typically college students looking to gain more experience in their field of study. It also provides additional capacity for sites during the busiest season for this type of environmental work. By engaging young people in activities impacting their native environment and community, we hope to continue to engage and ignite passion in the next generation of "green collar" workers.

PROJECT & COORDINATOR EXAMPLES

- Collaborate with a local soil and water district to plan a water quality testing day with volunteers and host water quality workshops.
- Organize a field day with local farmers to showcase mitigation practices to reduce soil erosion
- Organize a native plant identification workshop

- Plan and execute a tree planting project with local high school students
- Remove invasive species at a county park
- Develop a series of infographics for social media about native Iowa plants
- Collaborate with the local library to implement water quality and resource education lessons for students after school
- Recruit and manage volunteers as part of environmental outreach events/National Days of Service/host site initiatives.
- Implement land conservation practices including tree planting, invasive species removal, and native habitat restoration.
- Implement water quality mitigation projects including rain gardens, rain barrels, buffer strips, river clean ups, and other best practices identified by their community and host site

FAQs

- 1. Who qualifies to host a Land & Water Stewards track?** This program branch typically partners with nonprofits, conservation organizations, and Iowa Counties.
- 2. We are interested in hosting a team. What are my next steps?** The program has an application process for anyone interested in hosting members from any of our service tracks. Host site selections are based off of availability of open spots, the host site application, and timing of requests. You can contact Program Director Ashley Craft at Ashley.Coffin@uni.edu or Land & Water Stewards Program Manager Leah Baethke at leah.baethke@uni.edu with your inquiries.
- 3. What requirements are involved with hosting a program?** The program requires the necessary capacity to host a team, including functional office space, a designated site supervisor, and a cash match payment to the program annually to help cover costs associated with the member's uniforms, living allowance, and general program operations. Each host executes a host site agreement with Green Iowa AmeriCorps and the University of Northern Iowa that outlines all the host and program responsibilities that goes into greater detail of the expectations of each partner.
- 4. Are members considered employees of our organization?** All Green Iowa AmeriCorps members, including members serving in Land & Water Steward sites, are contractual employees through the University of Northern Iowa (UNI). UNI is responsible for all hiring processes, paperwork, distribution of living allowance, health benefits, FICA, workers compensation, etc. A host site is where a member is placed for their service, but they are not considered the host's employee, intern, etc. (For example: Members serving at the Center for Energy and Environmental Education would be referred to as Green Iowa AmeriCorps members serving in partnership with the CEEE at the University of Northern Iowa)
- 5. I am interested in serving as a Land & Water Steward member. How do I apply?** Interested applicants can take the first step in the process by applying to our available positions on our website at www.greeniowamericorps.org/open-positions. Applicants can also send any questions to the GIACrecruitment@gmail.com email address.