



Perennial Internship Program – Summer 2026

Internship Position Description

Internship Title: Invasive Species Field Technician (2 positions)

Internship Site: Mad River Valley (Waitsfield, Warren, Fayston, VT)

Description:

The world-renowned biologist E. O. Wilson has stated that invasive species are the second leading cause of biodiversity loss. The Vermont Agency for Natural Resources confirms this finding, stating that the second greatest threat to biodiversity, in Vermont and across the world, is the proliferation of invasive species. According to Vermont Invasives: “Vermont Non-native, invasive terrestrial plants are one of the greatest threats to the health of Northeastern forests. They negatively impact forest regeneration, forest structure, ecosystem function, recreation and wildlife habitat, are costly to manage, and can be harmful to human health.” The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services reports that an estimated 1 million species currently face global extinction.

Concerned about this threat to the health and functioning of ecosystems, the three conservation commissions in the Mad River Valley have been working for years- with some notable success- to manage significant infestations of Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) and other co-occurring terrestrial invasive species and to restore riparian habitat. Experts from U.S. Fish & Wildlife, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, and Vermont Land Trust have noted that this initiative represents some of the best regional work in the state. This work has been accomplished through a partnership between members of the Warren, Waitsfield, and Fayston Conservation Commissions, community volunteers, and UVM’s Rubenstein Perennial Internship Program. For a number of years now, Perennial Interns have contributed to this conservation work. In 2025, seven interns were engaged by the commissions.

For 2026, the three towns are looking to engage a team of interns to serve as Invasive Species Field Technicians.

The Technicians, who would work together on a team, will:

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- continue efforts to arrest the spread, using manual methods, of Japanese Knotweed in identified locations in Warren, Waitsfield, and Fayston;
- initiate targeted work to control selected other terrestrial plant invasive species in the Mad River Valley;
- employ restoration strategies in riparian areas where invasive species management work is being undertaken;
- use social media, newspaper articles on in-person educational events to educate community members, including young students, about invasive species and how best to manage them;
- work alongside community volunteers in invasive species management and habitat restoration;
- work with two invasive species ecologists from UVM – Noelia Barrios-Garcia and Mariano Rodriguez-Cabal – to help ensure that the invasives and habitat restoration work in the Valley continues to advance based on the latest scientific research;
- use the Valley-wide invasive species GIS system to document invasive management efforts and record data taken from the research monitoring plots; and
- propose and complete small projects of interest to the intern that will help advance the overall initiative.

Much of this work will take place outdoors in typical summer weather conditions. When outside conditions are not safe (i.e., during thunderstorms), the interns will move to one of several inside locations in the Valley to work on tasks best done indoors. Knotweed removal involves physical work with shovels and picks. Some locations will require navigating steep rivers and stream banks. Attention to safety is emphasized and is guided by a safety policy.

Overall, we are looking for the team to help the three valley towns advance their ongoing work to create a model approach for invasive terrestrial plant management and habitat restoration that serves as a guide for action and a resource and inspiration for other towns in the state and the Vermont Agency for Natural Resources (ANR).

We have engaged talented and committed intern teams for five years. The members made a real difference. We can arrange for candidates interested in this role to speak with previous interns. Here is what a 2023 intern, Ashly Cray, had to say about her experience:

My time as a Perennial Intern with Waitsfield, Warren, and Fayston's Knotweed Project was nothing short of incredible. I got hands-on experience managing a project between three towns and coordinating a crew of 7 other interns. This project allowed us each to focus on what was interesting to us as students; there is something for everyone in this project! Some interns took on GIS work, literature reviews and research to further our knowledge on invasives in Vermont, social media, and community outreach, all

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of course in addition to removing Itadori Knotweed. Not only was I able to dive into furthering my leadership, outreach, and managerial skills, but I also had the privilege of working in one of the most beautiful parts of Vermont. Days were spent in beautiful forests, rivers, next to waterfalls, and pastures with scenic backdrops of Vermont's Green Mountains.

One of my favorite parts of this project was connecting with community members. Volunteer days with the community were spent digging holes and laughing alongside dedicated volunteers. By the end of the internship, we all felt a deep connection to the Mad River ecosystem and the wonderful community there. One of the most rewarding parts of the work was seeing the native plants begin to grow back towards the end of our internships. A memory that sticks out to me was at one of the larger plots we worked at weekly, the Lareau Swim Hole. Here, we completed a complete dig of knotweed crowns along a section of the Mad River. After digging up root crowns, one of my fellow interns spread a conservation seed mix. On the last day of my internship, I noticed a milkweed plant with a tiny monarch caterpillar that had decided to make this plant its new home. In a place that had once been a complete monoculture of Knotweed was now full of native grasses, a view of the river, and a home for a monarch caterpillar.

This work ended up being one of the most rewarding and fun jobs I've had. I learned so much about invasives, as well as growing as a leader and person. I've been able to apply so much of what I learned this summer to my classes and job applications. I am more than happy to speak with any interested applicants and answer any questions you may have. You can reach me at (802)-989-0230.

Desired qualifications/skills/coursework:

- The ability to work well with others.
- Interest or previous coursework in GIS mapping and invasive species.
- Passionate about restoring healthy, functioning ecosystems and dealing with the threat presented by invasive species.
- Interested in educating community members about invasive species and how they can best be managed.
- Interns typically carpool to and from sites; personal vehicle preferred but arrangements with other interns who have vehicles are common.

Supervision:

The Invasive Species Field Technicians will be supervised and supported by the Project Manager and by the Chairs of the three Conservation Commissions: Jito Coleman from Warren, Curt Lindberg from Waitsfield, and Andrea Henderson from Fayston. They all have extensive experience in conservation and an interest in mentoring young people. Andrea is a terrific organizer. Jito, an engineer by training, has extensive experience with Japanese Knotweed management. Curt is playing a central role in the creation of a statewide coalition of conservation organizations devoted to biodiversity protection. Education about invasive species and their management will also be offered to all interns by invasive species ecologists Noelia Barrios-Garcia, and Mariano Rodriguez-Cabal. The Project Coordinator and conservation commission leaders will strive to make this summer internship gratifying, educational, and enjoyable.

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Each day the interns will work on a site or sites in a designated town. Guidance on management of the sites will be provided by the Project Coordinator and the appropriate Conservation Commission member. There is close collaboration among the three Conservation Commissions on invasive species work, methods, evaluation and scheduling.

Start and End Dates: Early June – Late August 2026 (exact start/end dates to be determined)

Total Hours: 24 hours/week for 12 weeks)

Compensation: \$18.00/hour

How to apply:

Rubenstein students who will have completed their sophomore or junior year by summer 2026 are eligible to apply. Students graduating in May 2026 are not eligible to apply. Earning Independent Study or Internship credit through the Rubenstein Internship Program is required.

1. Click the following link to view the Rubenstein Perennial Internship Descriptions in Handshake:

<https://uvm.joinhandshake.com/employers/226837>

- If asked to log in: click “UVM Net ID Login” & login.
- Click the Favorite button to enable easier searches in the future.

2. Click “View All Jobs” in Jobs at Rubenstein Perennial Internship Program box on the right side of page.

3. You should now see the Perennial Internship opportunities! Click “View Details” to learn more about each position.

- Please do take the time to carefully read each individual description so that you don’t miss a great opportunity by judging an internship solely on its title.
- You may apply for up to **three** Perennial Internships.
- All applications are due by **11:59pm, on Wednesday, February 4th, 2026.**

4. You’ll need to upload a Resume, Cover Letter, and Recommender File in Handshake before you can apply

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for any Perennial Internship:

- Click on your name at top right of screen in Handshake
- Select Documents.
- Please upload all documents as PDFs.
 - The following are the required documents:
 - ♣ Resume
 - ♣ Cover Letter
 - You should write and upload a unique cover letter for each position to which you are applying.
 - In your cover letter, provide the name & contact information for at least one professional reference. This could be someone who supervised you in a past work/internship/volunteer position, or a professor or teacher, etc. The person listed should not be the person who completes your recommendation form.
 - ♣ Recommender File (see below) - as you will not have access to the form, you are asked to upload a PDF with the name and email of the recommender to whom you have sent the recommender form.

5. A Recommendation form will need to be completed by a Rubenstein faculty, graduate student, or staff member of your choosing. When you ask your recommender if they are willing to complete the form to support your application, please provide your recommender:

- This link: [RECOMMENDATION FORM](#)
- Only one recommendation form needs to be completed regardless of how many Perennial Internships you are applying for.
- Your recommender will complete and submit this form online, and then your recommendation will be confidentially added to your application(s). **This recommendation form needs to be submitted by the February 4th, deadline.**

6. Make sure that your resume and cover letter(s) are as strong as they can be! Utilize the resources around you:

- Get your resume and cover letter reviewed by a Career Counselor at the Career Center. You can check the Career Center's drop-in hours [here](#). The Career Center also offers a guide on building your resume available [here](#).
- Set up an appointment with one of Rubenstein's Career Coaches - [Emily LeForce](#) or [Cathy Shiga-Gattullo](#) - or with the PIP Coordinator, [Sarah Mell](#). Just swing by Aiken 220 to connect!

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7. If you are selected to interview for a Perennial Internship, you will be contacted by the site to set up an interview during late February to early March.

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