



## Perennial Internship Program – Summer 2026

### Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM) Water Quality Division Internship Position Description

**Internship Title:** Agricultural Water Quality Research and Communications Intern

**Internship Site:** This is a hybrid position involving work in office, on site (farm visits and meetings), and remote work on the computer.

Office Locations: 116 State Street, Montpelier; 94 Harvest Lane, Williston; 10 Merchants Row, Middlebury.

#### **Description:**

Phosphorus (P) loading is a significant issue in Lake Champlain and other Vermont lakes and rivers, with federal water quality regulations bringing urgent attention to the need for action in the 1980s. Over the years, additional policy and regulatory measures have led to increased investments, action, and reductions in P loading across stormwater, transportation, and agricultural sectors. While the agricultural sector has shown to contribute a significant amount of the P reduction occurring through farm actions such as developing and following nutrient management plans (NMPs), upgrading infrastructure, and implementing conservation practices, there continues to be an emphasis on innovative solutions to address the P loading issues produced by VT agriculture. Meanwhile, there is constant new research and innovation being conducted across the world, near and far to Vermont, working to identify and test novel approaches for reducing agricultural nutrient pollution to water.

#### **Overview**

The Agricultural Water Quality Research and Communications Intern will support our team by developing communications materials and researching innovative P removal initiatives, including projects conducted in Vermont and projects that could be beneficial to VT.

The intern will develop a comprehensive report on VT's agricultural innovative P removal projects. This will be achieved through compiling and reviewing all prior projects and results, analyzing their impacts, interviewing stakeholders for qualitative input, and presenting findings in the form of an overall summary and a policy brief for each project. Project technologies include hub and spoke composting systems, biochar, pyrolysis, solid separation, and dissolved air flotation. The goal will be to summarize and disseminate complex technical information into a format digestible for the public.

*\*Rubenstein students currently in their sophomore and junior years are eligible to apply. Earning Independent Study or Internship credit through the Rubenstein Internship Program is required. \**

Additionally, the intern will research innovative agricultural nutrient removal technologies from across the US and the world to bring to VT's attention. This research should then be summarized into a report aimed at educating the legislature and government employees on these technologies. The report should provide an understanding of the feasibility for these technologies to operate in VT on Vermont-sized farm operations, the impact they have proven to have, research or learning gaps that still need to be addressed, and how the technology could be beneficial to VT's agricultural water quality community.

While conducting this research and developing these reports, the intern will be provided with professional education and training opportunities, and will support communications efforts with our programs team, which administers multiple grant programs that support water quality improvements on farms. They will be assigned to write articles for VAAFM's AgriView Newsletter, develop project highlights that feature VT farms and their efforts to employ current technologies or practices to reduce phosphorus pollution, and other opportunities as they come up. The intern will have ample opportunities to visit, speak with, and get to know VT farms as well as some of Vermont's innovative agricultural technologies!

### **Key Responsibilities**

- Conduct research on innovative phosphorus and other nutrient removal projects in Vermont, across the country, and around the world.
- Develop a comprehensive report on VT's innovative P removal projects in the form of an overall summary and a policy brief for each project.
- Summarize research conducted on innovative nutrient removal technologies from outside of VT in a report meant to educate the legislature and government employees on their potential benefits and feasibility to operate them in VT.
- Provide communications support to VAAFM's Water Quality Division, as assigned:
  - Author articles for Agriview, the Agency of Agriculture's monthly newsletter,
  - Develop visuals such as infographics or charts (e.g., in Canva, Adobe) for use in social media or other communication tools,
  - Write project highlights for the division's grant programs, highlighting conservation and water quality achievements on farms.

### **Desired qualifications/skills/coursework\*:**

- The ideal candidate for this position will have completed coursework in environmental policy, natural resources, and/or environmental or biological sciences.
- Experience working on a farm, or a strong connection to the agricultural community will be beneficial for this position.
- Possessing a realistic approach to real world environmental problems and having the ability to distill

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complex information into clear public communication will be beneficial for this position.

**Supervision:** Emma Eason, Agricultural Water Quality Program Coordinator in the Water Quality Division at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

**Start and End Dates:** Mid-May to Mid-August 2026 – exact start/end dates are negotiable

**Total Hours:** 20 hours/week for 12 weeks

**Compensation:** \$18/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 for any Perennial Internship:

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- 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.

**6. 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.**

**7. 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!

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

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