



Forest Ecosystem Monitoring Cooperative

Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, University of Vermont



Job Title: Forest Health Monitoring Field Technician – Crew Lead

The Forest Ecosystem Monitoring Cooperative (FEMC) is an environmental cooperative that seeks to serve the northeast temperate forest region through improved understanding of long-term trends, annual conditions, and interdisciplinary relationships of the physical, chemical, and biological components of forested ecosystems. Specifically, the FEMC's Forest Health Monitoring Program (FHM) acts as one of these long-term monitoring projects in the northeast, and since 1991, the FEMC has established 194 plots to monitor long-term trends in tree demography, canopy conditions, seedling abundance, sapling survivorship, invasive species and browse presence, and damage agents.

The Forest Ecosystem Monitoring Cooperative (FEMC) seeks to fill 2-3 Field Crew Lead positions based out of Burlington, VT with field visits throughout New England and New York to inventory and measure forest plots as part of the Forest Health Monitoring (FHM) Program. Annually, the FHM program collects data on forest stand composition and structure, canopy condition and crown health, crown closure, tree regeneration, and forest stressors and threats using a variety of field collection tools and protocols.

With support from the FEMC staff and state coordinators, the technician crew leads will oversee and lead crews of 3-4 crew members and travel to monitoring plots in each of the 7 states to collect forest health data, primarily focusing on Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Maine. Crews will train with FEMC staff and state agency personnel to learn the data collection protocols, methods, and techniques. Following training, crew leads will be responsible for planning trip logistics, maintaining equipment, traveling to and from field sites, conducting field work, and entering quality assured data while out in the field. In addition to these responsibilities, the crew lead will also be responsible for managing a safe and inclusive work environment, relaying consistent communications between supervisor and field crew, and making decisions in the field for the crew.

Field Work will include:

- Driving to designated states for multiple hours with some 4x4 driving on unmaintained logging roads.
- Car camping during field stints to further locations, typically lasting 3-4 nights per week
- Locating and/or establishing plots while navigating off-trail to sampling sites
- Collecting forest health data in a variety of forest ecosystems, including but not limited to tree heights, diameter at breast height (DBH) measurements, dieback, transparency, defoliation, discoloration, special damages, invasives, browse impact, seedling abundance, sapling survivorship, and prism
- Using a compass and/or GPS unit for off-trail navigation
- Maintaining communication with monitoring coordinator while out in the field even in remote areas without cell coverage
- Maintaining safety awareness while out in remote locations
- Potential opportunity to work on other projects such as Dutch Elm Disease Monitoring with TNC, and Emerald Ash Borer Monitoring with the Ecological Research Institute's MaMA project

Required Qualifications

- Ability to identify common native and invasive trees/plants in the Northeast and familiarity with plants and ecosystems of the northeastern U.S. (this can be demonstrated by having completed a college-level dendrology or botany course, or other equivalent life experiences)
- Experience hiking and camping, and/or the willingness to do so for this position
- Capable of conducting daily field work safely in rough terrain in harsh environmental conditions (heat, rain, biting insects)
- Ability to hike up to 6 miles per day while carrying up to 20 lbs
- Strong attention to detail and communication skills
- Demonstrate a high level of maturity, responsibility, attention to safety, and a willingness to raise questions or concerns when necessary
- Familiarity with navigation using a map and compass, and/or GPS unit
- An understanding of data collection and processing using software like Microsoft Excel at a basic level
- Degree, certification, coursework, or equivalent internship/volunteer experience within the field of natural resources

Desired Qualifications

- Experience leading a field crew in a remote setting
- Experience with gear/equipment coordination and organization
- Experience with forest inventory sampling techniques and protocols
- Wilderness first aid or other first aid safety training
- Experience driving on 4x4 dirt roads in remote areas

Physical Demands

For field-based positions, data collection often occurs in remote locations, where cellular connection is unavailable or inconsistent. Field conditions can be challenging, from hot temperatures to heavy rainfall. Travel to and from field plots can be physically demanding, plots can sometimes require up to 8 hours of travel in a vehicle. Ability to hike up to 6 miles per day with 20lbs is required. Crews should expect to do several stints of camping for 3-4 nights at a time during the course of the season. Camping locations will vary from research facilities to state campgrounds based on accessibility. There may be days where, due to travel, Field Technicians will be expected to work 10+ hours (when daylight allows).

Position Details:

Supervision:

Field Technicians will work with their designated crew members, personnel from partnering state agencies, and with the FEMC Monitoring Coordinator (Ben Porter), Elissa Schuett (Program Manager), and Matt Rios (AmeriCorps Member).

FEMC Home Base: 705 Spear St, South Burlington, VT 05403

Location of work:

Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maine.

This position will be based out of Burlington VT with field visits to sites across Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and Maine.

Start Date: May 26th, 2026 (subject to change)

End date: August 22nd, 2026 (with possibility of additional work for 3-5 crew members through September)

Total Anticipated Hours: 12 weeks, 40 hrs per week

Compensation: \$18-20/hr depending on experience (plus compensation for meals per diem while travelling overnight)

Highly recommended gear that is not provided:

- Camping equipment: sleeping bag, sleeping pad, tarps, cooking pans, eating utensils, and a tent (if you have trouble accessing this equipment please do not be discouraged from applying)
- Rain gear (jacket and bottom) and comfortable clothing for field work
- Waterproof hiking boots and a pair of rubber rain boots
- Backpack you are comfortable wearing for long periods of time (recommend a ~30L backpack)

How to apply: Send a resume and cover letter in a **single PDF**, along with contact information for two references, to Matthew.Rios@uvm.edu and CC: bporter5@uvm.edu

In the subject line please put **2026 FHM Crew Lead Application**. If you would also like to be considered for the Ash crew lead position please include a note in your email. FEMC Staff will begin reviewing applications in January 2026 on a rolling basis. The positions will remain open until filled. All interviews will be done remotely using Microsoft Teams.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, protected veteran status, or any other category legally protected by federal or state law.