

Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources

University of Vermont

Perennial Summer Internship Program - 2023

Internship Title: Invasive Species Project Coordinator

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

Description:

Background – 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 address a significant infestation of Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*). A concentrated effort has been made to halt its spread along upper elevation roadways and waterways and to restore floodplain forests along the Mad River. Experts from U.S. Fish & Wildlife and leading conservation organizations in Vermont have noted that these initiatives represent some of the best local work on Japanese Knotweed in the state. This work has been accomplished through a partnership between members of the three Conservations Commissions, community volunteers and UVM interns. In 2022, five interns were engaged by Warren and Waitsfield.

For 2023, the three towns are looking to engage one intern to serve as Project Coordinator. The Coordinator would be responsible for overseeing, planning, coordinating, and the scheduling of a team of UVM interns and to work as a member of the team to:

- continue efforts to arrest the spread, using manual methods, of Japanese Knotweed in identified locations in Warren, Waitsfield, and Fayston;
- initiate limited/targeted work to control selected other terrestrial plant invasive species in the Mad River Valley;
- 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;
- conduct an ecological assessment of terrestrial plant invasive species in Warren, Waitsfield and Fayston (involving identification and mapping of such species); and
- research on evidence-based management practices for controlling other terrestrial plant invasive species targeted for attention in 2023.

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

We engaged a UVM intern to serve as Project Coordinator in 2022. She made a real difference. We can arrange for candidates interested in this role to speak with her about her experience.

Desired qualifications/skills/coursework:

Ability to work well with others and foster teamwork.

GIS mapping and invasive species coursework.

Skilled communicator.

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.

Supervision:

The Invasive Species Project Coordinator would be supervised and supported by the Chairs of the three Conservation Commissions – Jito Coleman from Warren, Curt Lindberg from Waitsfield, and Lisa Kiotzsch from Fayston. They all have extensive experience in conservation and an interest in mentoring young people. Lisa is a wildlife biologist. Jito, an engineer by training, has extensive experience with Japanese Knotweed management. Curt Lindberg is playing a central role in the creation of a statewide coalition of conservation organizations devoted to biodiversity protection.

Start and End Dates: Mid-May – Mid-August, 2023 (exact start/end dates are negotiable)

Total Hours: 30 hours/week for 12 weeks)

Compensation: \$15.00/hour for first 70 hours worked. \$21.00/hour for all additional hours over 70 hours, to be paid by site.

How to apply: Rubenstein students who will have completed their sophomore or junior year by summer 2023 are eligible to apply. Students graduating in May 2023 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 right side of page.

3. You should now see the great 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 Monday, February 6th, 2023.

4. You'll need to upload both required documents in Handshake before you can apply for any Perennial Internship:

- Click on your name at top right of screen in Handshake
- Select Documents.

5. Please **upload all documents as pdfs**. The following are the required documents:

- Resume
- Cover Letter
 - i. You should write and upload a unique cover letter for each position to which you are applying.
 - ii. 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.

6. In addition to the documents listed above, 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 Link](#)
- Only one recommendation form needs to be completed regardless of how many Perennial Internships you are applying for.
- Your recommender will complete & 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 6th, deadline**.

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

- The Rubenstein Student Advisory Board members are great at reviewing resumes/cover letters and providing helpful feedback! Email the SAB to schedule an appointment after the start of the semester, or stop by their peer mentoring hours when the Spring semester starts (schedule to be posted by Jan 16, 2023): rsenrsab@uvm.edu
- 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](#).
- Get connected with folks in the Rubenstein Student Services Office for resume and cover letter review during drop-in hours:
 - Meghan Young – Tuesdays, 5:00-6:00pm, Aiken 219
 - Emily LeForce – Thursdays, 1:00-3:00pm, Aiken 220 Hub
 - Cathy Shiga-Gattullo – Mondays, 1:00-3:00pm, Aiken 220 Hub

8. 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.