PLEASE NOTE: All applications must be submitted through this link - https://form.jotform.com/StewardsIPP/cva-member-application-2027

Position Title: Community Volunteer Ambassador – AmeriCorps

Conservation Legacy Program: Stewards Individual Placements

Site Location: Gateway National Recreation Area

26 Hudson Road, Highlands, NJ 07732

Terms of Service:

- **Start Date: 2/22/2027**
- **End Date: 2/4/2028**
- **AmeriCorps Slot Classification: 1700 Hours (50 Weeks)**

Purpose:

Stewards Individual Placements (Stewards), a program of Conservation Legacy, provides individuals with AmeriCorps service and career opportunities to strengthen communities and preserve our natural resources. Participants serve with federal agencies, tribal governments, and nonprofits to provide institutional capacity, develop community relationships, and support ecosystem health. The Community Volunteer Ambassador (CVA) Program combines the strength of a national leader in conservation service with the National Park Service to train emerging leaders to assist park units in building lasting connections to communities.

Gateway National Recreation Area is an urban national park managed by the National Park Service, spanning approximately 27,000 acres across New York and New Jersey. The Sandy Hook Unit is located at the northern tip of the Jersey coast. Sandy Hook features ocean and bay beaches, maritime forests, dunes, salt marshes, and varied wildlife habitats. The peninsula is also home to Fort Hancock, historic coastal defense batteries, and the Sandy Hook Lighthouse. The park's natural and cultural resources

provide opportunities for environmental education, historic interpretation, wildlife conservation, and outdoor recreation.

The Sandy Hook Volunteer Program engages community members in protecting park resources, educating visitors, and supporting park operations and public programs. Volunteers contribute to a variety of initiatives, including historic site interpretation, pathway and trail stewardship, beach cleanups, and environmental education. Specialized programs, such as the Shorebird Ambassador and Seal Education programs, help visitors understand and protect coastal wildlife and sensitive habitats. Through volunteer recruitment, training, and community partnerships, the program builds stewardship and encourages lasting connections between local communities and their national park.

Description of Duties:

The Community Volunteer Ambassador (CVA) at Sandy Hook will support the park's Shorebird Ambassador and Seal Education volunteer programs by recruiting and supporting volunteers, engaging visitors, and strengthening relationships with local communities and partner organizations.

From March through September, the CVA will focus on shorebird education and conservation, helping visitors understand the importance of protecting nesting piping plovers and other shorebirds, respecting protected beach areas, and minimizing disturbance to sensitive habitats. From November through January, the CVA will support seal education and outreach by helping visitors observe seals responsibly, sharing information about seal behavior and seasonal haul-out areas, and promoting safe viewing practices that protect both wildlife and visitors.

Throughout the year, the CVA will assist with volunteer recruitment, training, scheduling, communication, educational materials, and program evaluation. The position will also help develop outreach strategies that strengthen community participation and partnerships while promoting stewardship of Sandy Hook's coastal wildlife and natural resources. This experience will provide professional development in environmental education, volunteer management, public communication, and wildlife conservation.

Responsibilities:

- Serve as a professional, friendly, and engaging steward of the NPS and respond to visitors' questions
- Communicate park rules and regulations, and to help visitors understand why restrictions are in place and how they benefit wildlife and their habitats
- Report resource violations to appropriate personnel
- Provide information and orientation to volunteers, groups, and park visitors about park closures, shorebird ecology, nesting bird species and sensitive dune

habitats at pop-up information booths/tables located at key park locations
- Develop and review VIP materials related to Piping Plovers/shorebird & seal ecology
- Attend required NPS-led trainings, including GATE Audience Centered Experience Interpretation, Operational Leadership, & Conflict De-escalation.
- Develop, plan, and schedule outreach programs at local community events such as farmers markets, fairs, church events, colleges and high schools, & Audubon Society programs
- Rove independently and shadow Volunteers in the field; assisting with bird identification, teaching how to repair stringline, and modeling positive visitor engagement
- Assist rangers with Social Meet-up VIP events; to connect, network and build relationships around shared interests, activities & community
- Actively recruit new VIP's
- Coordinate and support GATE Volunteers
- Develop and share Data Collection with the Resource Stewardship and Interpretation Divisions
- Provide weekly updates to the supervisor
- Attend weekly Sandy Hook Interpretation staff meetings and monthly Interpretation division-wide meetings

Qualifications:

- Experience in customer service, environmental education, public outreach, interpretation, or volunteer work preferred.
- Interest in coastal ecosystems, shorebird conservation, and wildlife protection.
- Willingness to learn about Sandy Hook wildlife; behavior and habitat protection
- Outgoing, friendly, and approachable demeanor when interacting with visitors.
- Positive attitude and enthusiasm for public engagement and conservation.
- Strong sense of responsibility, dependability, and punctuality.
- Self-motivated, proactive, and willing to take initiative.
- United States citizen, United States national, or a lawful permanent resident alien
- Applicants must be between ages of 18-30 years old, or up to 35 for veterans, based on Public Land Corps Act of 1993 authorizing this AmeriCorps opportunity.
- Has received a high school diploma or equivalency certificate; or has not dropped out of elementary or secondary school to enroll as an AmeriCorps participant, and agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent prior to using the education award
- Agrees to provide information to establish eligibility and to complete a National Service Criminal History Check.

Preferred Qualifications

- Excellent interpersonal communication skills

- Comfortable speaking in front of large audiences
- Ability to engage effectively with park visitors
- Willingness and ability to learn how to specific wildlife species
- Passion for protecting threatened and endangered species
- Ability to communicate conservation messages clearly and accurately
- Strong customer service and public engagement skills
- Ability to serve independently and as part of a team
- Willingness to serve outdoors in varying weather conditions, including heat, wind, and sun
- Ability to walk on sandy beaches and uneven terrain for extended periods
- Willingness to serve weekends and holidays as needed
- Ability to follow park regulations, safety procedures, and wildlife protection guidelines
- Professional and respectful approach when addressing visitor questions and concerns about beach closures and protected nesting areas
- Willingness to participate in required training and ongoing professional development
- Ability to maintain accurate records of visitor contacts, observations, and program activities
- Dependability, flexibility, and a willingness to adapt to changing field conditions and wildlife activity

Our Commitment:

Conservation Legacy is committed to the full consideration of all qualified individuals and will ensure that persons with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations to perform essential job functions. Physical requirements may include periodic overnight travel, non-traditional work hours, ability to move across varied terrain, use program-specific tools and a range of technology on an infrequent or frequent basis. Exerting up to 25 pounds of force occasionally to lift, carry, push, pull, or otherwise move objects. The ability to safely drive an organizational vehicle may also be required for some positions. If you need assistance and/or reasonable accommodation due to a disability during the application or recruiting process, please send a request to Vanessa Morrison at vmorrison@conservationlegacy.org

Time Requirements:

- Typically, this position is expected to serve 40 hours per week, but exact service schedules may vary. A half hour lunch break will not be counted towards AmeriCorps service
- Member may be required to participate in national, state, or local service projects or events as part of their service term.

Orientation and Training:

- Member will receive an orientation that includes training on AmeriCorps prohibited and unallowable activities.
- Week-long, in-person training on NPS Volunteer Program Management and leadership schools.
- Year-long Continuum of Learning supporting participant professional development.
- $750.00 in Professional Development Funds for travel and training.

Additional Position and Community Information:

The supervisor will coordinate off-site visits to local and state parks and other relevant sites to familiarize the CVA with their unique natural and cultural resources, educational programs, and conservation initiatives. These visits will provide opportunities to learn from other professionals, explore successful outreach strategies, and identify approaches that can be applied to enhance visitor engagement and volunteer programming at Sandy Hook.

Housing is available at Sandy Hook in a two-story, dormitory-style building located within the Fort Hancock District. The building is heated during the winter and cooled during the warmer months. Cable television and internet service are not available. Park housing is within walking distance of the primary worksite, Building #58, located in Fort Hancock.

Benefits:

- Segal AmeriCorps Education Award of $7,395.00
- Living Allowance of $700.00 per week.
- Healthcare Coverage if Eligible
- Childcare Coverage if Eligible
- Loan forbearance if Eligible
- Interest Payments if Eligible
- 10 Federal Holidays, 10 Days Personal Leave, 10 Days Sick Leave

Evaluation and Reporting:

As an AmeriCorps member, performance will be evaluated on whether the member has completed the required number of hours, the member has satisfactorily completed assignments, and if the member has met other performance criteria that were clearly

communicated at the beginning of the term of service.

Reporting requirements include, but are not limited to, bi-weekly timesheets and accomplishment tracking.

Program Contact Information:

Please contact James Gasaway at the contact information below with any questions.

Stewards Contact information: James Gasaway, jgasaway@conservationlegacy.org

Conservation Legacy is an equal opportunity employer, and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, national origin, disability status, genetic information, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

We also consider qualified applicants regardless of criminal histories, consistent with legal requirements. If you need assistance and/or reasonable accommodations due to a disability during the application or recruiting process, please send a request to the hiring manager.