

Part-Time Position Description:
New England National Scenic Trail Planner
Appalachian Mountain Club

The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) is seeking a New England National Scenic Trail Planner to support the completion, protection, promotion, and stewardship of the New England National Scenic Trail in Massachusetts. The Trail Planner will build on the work that a cadre of volunteers has undertaken for 50 years to establish and maintain the trail by advancing more comprehensive protection and trail management strategies.

Background

The New England National Scenic Trail (NENST) is a 200-mile trail that has been known as the Metacomet-Monadnock-Mattabesett trails system during the last 80 years or so. It travels through 39 communities in Connecticut and Massachusetts. The route features classic New England landscape features: long distance vistas with rural towns as a backdrop, agrarian lands, unfragmented forests, and large river valleys. The trail also travels through important Native American and colonial historical landmarks and highlights a range of diverse ecosystems and natural resources—traprock ridges, mountain summits, forested glades, vernal pools, lakes, streams and waterfalls.

The NENST received federal designation as a national scenic trail on March 30, 2009 and is one of only 11 national scenic trails nationwide. The AMC and the Connecticut Forest and Park Association (CFPA) manage the trail with coordination and funding provided through the National Park Service (NPS). A “Trail Management Blueprint,” developed in 2006, serves as the framework for trail management and administration. A Trail Stewardship Council (TSC) has been established to advise and support the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC). Several committees have been formed to develop and implement recommendations for trail stewardship. Key goals for the NENST are to complete sections of the route in both Massachusetts and Connecticut, develop and maintain ongoing communication with landowners and the public, and implement a long-term trail protection strategy.

Job Description

The Trail Planner will work primarily in three areas:

Public Information (~40%)

1. Serve as a primary point of contact about the trail for municipal officials and town committees, land owners, hikers and the general public;
2. Provide information about the trail and nearby activities and facilities and answer questions about trail access and conditions;
3. Organize and facilitate meetings of TSC committees, making sure that meeting minutes are taken and distributed and/or posted on the website;
4. Work closely with the TSC which provides recommendations and advice to the AMC and make presentations about the trail and related issues to TSC committees and the public as required;
5. Attend all TSC and Committee meetings;
6. Work closely with the Outreach and Community Connections Committee of the TSC to assure that Trail information in print and electronic formats is developed and distributed in a timely and professional manner, including newsletters, brochures, maps, and e-mail notices.
7. In coordination with the TSC and AMC, identify and organize public events to highlight the trail with local organizations, community activities, and other events, such as National Trails Day;

8. Working with partners, set up and carry out projects to enhance awareness of the trail, educate communities and organizations along the trail about its features and access points, and provide opportunities for the public to experience the trail first hand.

Trail Project Management (~40%)

1. Work with the TSC and NPS to collect data and develop monthly and annual reports as required, maintain a database to track volunteer trail monitoring and maintenance hours; coordinate with AMC Trail Managers to assure trail maintenance and monitoring is consistent with AMC protocols;
2. Work with the TSC to draft AMC's Annual Work Plan and applications for federal funding;
3. Implement the goals of AMC's Annual Work Plan for the Trail; identify specific trail and recreation management needs and work with AMC trail volunteers and partners to implement them;
4. Track expenses and develop project and program budgets and reports in coordination with AMC and NPS staff; assist with fundraising and preparing grants;
5. Coordinate with CFPA and NPS staff as required to coordinate activities and projects on the Trail;
6. Work with the TSC Trail Protection Committee and Massachusetts land trusts to identify and prioritize trail/land protection projects; develop a prioritized list of land protection needs and opportunities.

GIS and Website Information (~20%)

1. Coordinate with AMC staff, with CFPA and NPS to provide on-the-ground updates regarding conditions that may affect the mapping and trail monitoring efforts;
2. Support development of a New England Trail GIS database by carrying out on-the-ground GPS inventories as needed of trail crossings, trail relocations, access points, intersections with roads, rivers and other relevant data for input to the GIS program by AMC staff;
3. Provide electronic and hard copy GIS maps to the TSC and the public as needed;
4. In coordination with NPS and CFPA staff, regularly update information on the trail website (www.newenglandnst.org)

Work location and conditions

The Planner works closely with and reports to the AMC Southern New England Policy Manager based in Boston. The Trail Planner will work out of an office in Central Massachusetts (currently being identified). The position is a 24-hour per week exempt position (final hours to be determined with the successful applicant) which includes some evening meetings, day field trips and telephone conferences. Work will involve collaboration with community groups, state agencies, land owners, and not-for profit land and resource protection groups.

Position Requirements

The successful candidate will:

1. Have completed a college or university undergraduate degree in a field that may include natural resource management, forestry, geography, geology, outdoor recreation, wildlife management, or a related field;
2. Have some experience and knowledge of using geographic information systems for mapping and data management and be able to carry out basic website maintenance;
3. Have experience using Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS) equipment in the field, including downloading data and basic data management;

4. Have a demonstrated ability to communicate effectively in writing and in person, and be able to successfully meet established goals within schedule;
5. Have a demonstrated ability to work both independently and collaboratively, and have good organizational skills and good meeting facilitation skills;
6. Possess excellent interpersonal skills, be able to develop good working relations with Trail partners, and represent the Trail and AMC in contacts with town officials, land trusts, land owners, state agencies and others;
7. Be able to safely undertake day hikes on easy to moderate terrain in all weather conditions; have trail maintenance and/or construction experience
8. Have a valid driver's license, a clean driving record and have access to a vehicle to drive to meetings and other events in MA and CT.
9. When not in the field, the Planner will work in a standard office setting and should have experience using standard office equipment.

Preferred Experience

In addition to the Position Requirements noted above, the ideal candidate also will have significant experience in hiking and other outdoor recreation activities, experience or familiarity with recreational trail management issues in the Northeast and/or Massachusetts, and be able to lead trail planning and maintenance workshops. The candidate also will have experience in working with the public on trail and/or other recreational issues in groups, committees and other settings and will have good conflict resolution skills.

Compensation and Benefits

This position pays a competitive hourly wage for 24 hours worked per week. Benefits associated with this position include optional enrollment in the AMC group health plan, group life and disability insurance, worker's compensation, flexible benefits plan, free annual AMC adult membership, some employee discounts and reduced rates at AMC facilities, and mileage reimbursement for work travel at \$0.50 per mile.

To apply for this position, please send a letter of interest describing your experience in each of the three areas in the job description and a resume as Word or pdf file to amcjob151@outdoors.org. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. No phone calls please.

The AMC is an Equal Opportunity Employer, and an Equal Opportunity Service Provider. The AMC values diversity in the workplace.