

Tallgrass Prairie Center

2412 W. 27th St., Cedar Falls, Iowa

Host Site Overview: The Tallgrass Prairie Center (TPC) at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) in Cedar Falls, Iowa would like to host two eleven-month AmeriCorps members to help us expand our impact and manage the natural areas entrusted to us. We are looking for members who are passionate about environmental conservation and also want to apply and/or expand their skills in 1) mass communications, marketing, and networking or 2) natural areas management. Each position will offer AmeriCorps members professional development opportunities.

The Tallgrass Prairie Center is a nationally recognized center for ecological restoration of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem. Our mission is empowering people to value and restore resilient, diverse tallgrass prairie. We conduct research and provide technical support for roadside vegetation managers, farmers, conservation professionals, and native seed stakeholders. We are also responsible for the restoration and management of Irvine Prairie, a 77-acre prairie in Benton County, and 64 acres of university grounds near the TPC encompassing prairie, woodland, and native seed production plots. In early 2021, the TPC was given responsibility for management and promotion of the UNI Biology Preserves.

Site Supervisor(s): Kristine Nemec, Roadside Program Manager, and Laura Jackson, Director

Position: Volunteer Coordinator, Natural Areas Management

Position Outline: While the TPC has much of the equipment and skills for management of the UNI Biology Preserves, the TPC lacks the capacity to recruit, train, and coordinate volunteers to help with the labor-intensive aspects of natural areas management. There is also a need to promote the enjoyment and appreciation of natural areas. The volunteer coordinator will implement these responsibilities.

Member Duties:

Orientation to TPC and associated UNI and community-based natural areas

- Study TPC website and publications to learn about TPC programs, projects, partners, and history
- Participate in staff meetings and Biology Preserves Committee meetings

Green Iowa AmeriCorps | Land & Water Stewards Tallgrass Prairie Center Position Descriptions

- Visit and become familiar with campus preserves, Irvine Prairie and community natural areas; their plant communities, history, management plans and principal stakeholders
- Pursue relevant training on prescribed fire, herbicide application, chainsaw use, and natural areas management, and become proficient in the use of all safety equipment and procedure.

Natural Areas Management

- Build a network of volunteers for restoration and management tasks
- Work with the relevant stakeholders for each natural area, to assess and prioritize stewardship needs
- Coordinate stewardship work events, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, for monitoring and control of woody and invasive species, and other actions to improve the diversity and resilience of TPC, campus and community natural areas
- Maintain the safety of volunteers through appropriate training, equipment and consistent adherence to safety procedures
- Manage inventory, and coordinate the repair and replacement of equipment for vegetation and fire management
- Cultivate positive relationships with community partners to achieve common goals in the protection of nearby natural areas of natural or cultural significance
- Keep records of management activities and evaluate outcomes, for adaptive management purposes.
- Assist Plant Materials Program Manager with the management of greenhouse plants in the spring.
- Assist Plant Materials Program Manager with seed production plot maintenance in the summer.

Education and Outreach

- Develop and implement educational and community engagement activities
- Improve and update printed and electronic materials, and work to make natural areas visible on Google Maps, the UNI campus map, and other commonly-used spatial resources.
- Assist the Director with stakeholder communications through social media, website and other means
- Take and curate photos of natural areas in all seasons, for use in education and outreach
- Communicate regularly with volunteers and support continuity and institutional memory from year to year
- Assist with TPC events

Additional related duties as they arise or assigned by Supervisor or TPC Director

The ideal candidate will possess the following skills:

- Interest in ecosystem restoration and natural areas management
- Ability to walk two miles over level terrain carrying a 25 lb pack
- Able to obtain an Iowa Commercial Pesticide Applicator License (Category 6). (for control of invasive species) and S-130, S-180, S-190 certification for prescribed fire
- Strong organizational skills

Green Iowa AmeriCorps | Land & Water Stewards
Tallgrass Prairie Center Position Descriptions

- Small-team collaboration skills
- Strong interpersonal communication skills
- Attention to detail
- Safety-oriented
- Strong record-keeping and reporting skills
- Organized
- Self-motivated
- Punctual
- Accountable
- Passion for helping environmental causes
- Plant identification skills
- Experience with fieldwork such as invasive species control and prescribed fire
- Comfortable interacting with a variety of people from different backgrounds and age groups
- Comfort working independently in rural and office environments
- Experience with event planning and use of social media
- Knowledge of Microsoft, Adobe, and G - Suite apps, including Google Calendars, Google Documents

Members can expect to gain the following skills/experiences in this position:

- Experience working with natural resource professionals at a nationally recognized center
- Plant identification skills
- Invasive species management skills
- Experience coordinating volunteers to accomplish natural resources management objectives
- Experience implementing tours and educational activities at public outreach events
- We can help you obtain an Iowa Commercial Pesticide Applicator License (Category 6). (for control of invasive species) and S-130, S-180, S-190 certification for prescribed fire

Position: Communications Associate

Position Outline: All of our programs have substantial, concrete impacts on the landscape but we need more capacity to tell our story – not only through traditional print media, but also through digital media, such as website (CMS is Drupal) and social media, and interpersonal interactions at conferences, events, and visitor tours. You will assist with implementing these communications strategies.

Member Duties: Iowa Roadside Management – approx. 50% of time

- Manage social media outlets (Facebook and Instagram)
- Capture media (photo and video) to be used in outreach
- Write case studies about successful county roadside vegetation programs
- Assist with organizing and distribution of native seed at the annual county seed pick up

Green Iowa AmeriCorps | Land & Water Stewards
Tallgrass Prairie Center Position Descriptions

- Assist with tabling at workshops or conferences that may be held to build community support for county roadside programs; some overnight travel to conferences or workshops within Iowa may be possible (up to 5 nights total over the length of the position)
- Attend staff meetings

Other TPC Programs and Projects – approx. 50% of time

- Orientation to TPC
 - Study TPC website and publications to learn about TPC programs, projects, partners, and history
 - Assist staff with documenting events, center and program activities, and impacts
- Digital Media
 - Improve and update website
 - Write editorial articles and capture visual media (videos and photos) of TPC programs, projects, and events
- Education and Outreach
 - Assist in development and implementation of educational and community engagement activities at Irvine Prairie
 - Develop and assist with educational activities for the roots project in schools or nature centers
 - Promote TPC at events, visitor tours, and conferences
 - Create an interactive and child-appropriate activity to take to conferences and STEM- related events
- Plant Materials Program tasks
 - Assist Plant Materials Program Manager with the management of greenhouse plants in the spring.
 - Assist Plant Materials Program Manager with seed production plot maintenance in the summer.
 - Assist with organizing Native Seed Stakeholder meetings
 - Synthesize results of post-meeting evaluation surveys
 - Assist with newsletter and/or other stakeholder communications for the Plant Materials program
 - Assist with graphic design of printed and electronic materials for Plant Materials Program (i.e., seed tags, table display)
- General TPC and Prairie on Farms Activities
 - Help to establish a presence at conferences by staffing display tables for the TPC and the Prairie on Farms program
 - Assist with Prairie on Farms events and projects
 - Assistance with TPC events
- Additional related duties as they arise or assigned by Supervisor or TPC Director

The ideal candidate will possess the following skills:

- Interest in ecosystem restoration
- Strong writing skills
- Strong marketing skills
- Small-team collaboration skills
- Strong interpersonal communication skills
- Attention to detail

Green Iowa AmeriCorps | Land & Water Stewards
Tallgrass Prairie Center Position Descriptions

- Strong record-keeping and reporting skills
- Organized
- Self-motivated
- Punctual
- Accountable
- Passion for helping environmental causes
- Experience with Iowa plant identification or conservation fieldwork
- Comfortable interacting with a variety of people from different backgrounds and age groups
- Comfort working independently in rural and office environments
- Experience with social media platforms (Instagram and Facebook)
- Experience with manipulating video
- Experience with digital photography
- Knowledge of Microsoft, Adobe, and G - Suite apps, including Google Calendars, Google Documents

Members can expect to gain the following skills/experiences in this position:

- Experience working with natural resource professionals at a nationally recognized center
 - Experience creating social media posts
 - Experience organizing volunteers, largely in coordination with the Volunteer Coordinator, Natural Resources Management position
 - Experience implementing tours and educational activities at public outreach events
 - Experience using InDesign to create outreach materials
-