



TITLE: Conservation Apprentice **POSITION TYPE:** Part-time, Temporary, Non-Exempt
LOCATION: Bedford Hills, New York **REPORTING TO:** Program Manager

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW:

Westchester Land Trust (WLT) is a conservation organization dedicated to preserving and restoring natural landscapes to benefit the communities we serve. We work with public and private partners to protect land in perpetuity in Westchester and eastern Putnam counties—a densely populated region under persistent threat from the pressures of development. WLT has protected 9,250 acres of open space, through conservation easements, preserves, and assisting partner organizations. We work across urban, suburban, and rural areas to promote environmental stewardship, land preservation, and connections to nature. More than 1,200 acres of land are owned by the organization, much of which are free and open to the public year-round.

WLT is committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and equitable culture while expanding the reach and impact of our programs through innovative partnerships, and impactful land conservation and stewardship. We are dedicated to continued listening, learning, and growth. As a result, we are adjusting our organizational systems, structures, and policies to increase equity, address opportunities for growth, and expand the spaces in our organizational culture for those who have not been historically included. WLT is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or veteran status. Diverse candidates and candidates with nontraditional backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

APPRENTICESHIP GOALS:

Westchester Land Trust’s conservation apprenticeship program is designed to provide high school graduates and college students an authentic paid experience to explore and pursue a career in conservation. We aim to balance fieldwork with office-based work and expect a ratio of 65% field to 35% office work. The goals of the conservation apprenticeship are to:

- Introduce apprentices to the nonprofit conservation sector, and land trusts specifically.
- Learn how a land trust operates, including understanding the fundamentals of preserve management, easement stewardship, land protection, communications, and development.
- Practice communication skills, which may include professional presentations, reports, video, and social media.
- Build leadership skills by supervising volunteer events on our preserves.
- Develop critical thinking and project management skills through completion of a final project.

For 2025, WLT is seeking **two passionate apprentices** with field or outdoor education experience. Students with experience working in crews to accomplish stewardship projects, such as Groundwork Hudson Valley's Green Team, or similar field-based experiences, are especially encouraged to apply.

Approximately 60% of the apprenticeship will focus on preserve management (visitor experience, invasive species management, meadow and forest restoration), conservation easement stewardship, and land protection under the mentorship of WLT's stewardship and land protection team which includes the vice president of conservation, preserve manager, conservation technician, land protection manager, and conservation easement steward. Additionally, the apprentices will spend time supporting WLT's food pantry garden under the supervision of WLT's farmer.

Apprentices will shadow WLT staff responsible for other aspects of WLT's work to learn about and support nonprofit management, urban engagement, fundraising, communications, and community engagement. This may include creating social media content, guest authoring newsletter articles, crafting outreach and fundraising content, and co-leading volunteer and educational programs. Additional work will include visitor experience and accessibility improvements at preserves, field-based and office-based projects at Sugar Hill Farm.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Implement ecological health improvements.
- Assist in trail and deer fencing maintenance.
- Efficiently identify and remove invasive plants.
- Help lead volunteer or educational programs and events.
- Support WLT's urban engagement programs and projects.
- Learn about the different roles and responsibilities of land trust staff.
- Complete and present a final project with guidance from the WLT Preserve Manager or other staff member.
- Produce photos and written content to support WLT communications, including social media, newsletters, and other outreach material.
- Engage with preserve hikers and neighbors.
- Assist WLT staff with projects as needed.

REQUIREMENTS

- High school graduate or college student with strong interest in land management, ecology, botany, horticulture, sustainable agriculture, environmental education, recreation management, or related field.
- Enthusiasm and dedication to environmental conservation.
- Support for the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in the field of conservation.
- Experience with land stewardship or relevant activities.
- Ability to successfully complete projects in field conditions under tight timelines.
- Interest in learning and quickly becoming proficient in new skills.
- Comfort working both independently and collaboratively.
- Willingness to prioritize safety and situational awareness in the field.

- Facility in communicating with people of all ages and backgrounds.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Ability to walk several miles per day over rough terrain in all weather conditions.
- Able to safely lift 45 pounds.
- Willingness to learn to safely use power equipment like weed whackers and hand drills.
- Candidates should be at least 18 years of age by the start of the apprenticeship.

COMPENSATION, SCHEDULE, AND WORK LOCATIONS

\$21/hour, 32 hours per week (Monday through Thursday). Paid bi-weekly.

9 weeks, roughly June 2025 through August 2025.

WORK LOCATIONS

Field/Outdoors

Most of the work is outdoors at Westchester Land Trust's nature preserves throughout Westchester and eastern Putnam counties in New York.

Indoors

Plan to report to the office every morning. Office space will be provided at WLT's headquarters in Bedford Hills, New York.

TO APPLY

WLT encourages candidates to apply even if they do not feel that they fulfill all the requirements of the position. Please send cover letter and resume to info@westchesterlandtrust.org using the following subject line: Summer Apprenticeship Application 2025. No phone calls please. Applications without a cover letter will not be reviewed. Your cover letter should focus on the two questions below:

- (1) Why are you interested in a career in conservation, and
- (2) What is an example from your life of working on a team to accomplish a goal?

HIRING SCHEDULE

Applications will be accepted until February 28 at 5pm. Candidates selected for interviews will be notified. No phone calls please. Interviews will take place in March with final decisions made by April 11 or sooner.

Westchester Land Trust is an equal opportunity employer and acts in accordance with applicable law in all our hiring and employment practices. No phone calls please. Successful candidates will be notified if selected for an interview. Applications without a cover letter will not be reviewed. Applications accepted until the position is filled. Westchester Land Trust is an equal opportunity employer and acts in accordance with applicable laws in all our hiring and employment practices.

POSTING DATE: January 15, 2025

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