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Susan Gouveia

From: Lashway, Lisa
Sent: Friday, July 19, 2013 10:39 AM
To: Canning, Sean; Susan Gouveia
Subject: FW: NJDEP Press Release - Americorp Watershed Ambassadors Needed
Attachments: Americorps Watershed Ambassadors-- P75.pdf

Correspondence for 8/6 meeting.

Lisa Lashway
Mt. Olive Twp. Clerk
973-691-0900 Ext. 7291
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Budd Lake, NJ 07828

From: Randazzo, Cindy [mailto:Cindy.Randazzo@dep.state.nj.us]
Sent: Friday, July 19, 2013 10:31 AM
To: Randazzo, Cindy
Cc: Curtis, Gabrielle; Rogers, Joseph
Subject: NJDEP Press Release - Americorp Watershed Ambassadors Needed

Dear Municipal Clerk:

Please see the attached NJDEP Press Release concerning the call for 2014 Americorps Watershed Volunteers.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Cindy W. Randazzo
Director
Office of Local Government Assistance
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
401 E. State Street
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NEWS

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Bob Martin, Commissioner

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 19, 2013

Contact: Lawrence Ragonese (609) 292-2994
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CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION SEEKS 2014 AMERICORPS WATERSHED AMBASSADORS

Future New Jersey Environmental Leaders Cultivated in this Program

(13/P75) TRENTON -- New Jersey is looking for its next generation of environmental leaders, young people with a hands-on desire to improve their state and the quality of life for all of our residents. Some of those future leaders are likely to be found in the Department of Environmental Protection's AmeriCorps New Jersey Watershed Ambassadors Program, which is now seeking recruits for its 2014 class.

"What makes this program so excellent is that it develops environmental stewardship in our young people, who are the leaders of tomorrow," said DEP Commissioner Bob Martin. "They're the ones who will be entrusted with the task of protecting New Jersey's environment, its air and water and natural and historic resources, long after we are gone. It is really heartening to know such talented young people will be in charge of our future."

Coordinators are currently accepting applications for the next group of AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassadors through August 30th. There are 20 potential watershed management areas across the state where an ambassador can be placed. Ambassadors work with all sectors of society to improve the quality of New Jersey's waterways, nurturing community-based environmental activities, and empowering State residents to make responsible and informed decisions regarding their watersheds.

"Individuals who are selected for the Watershed Ambassadors program go through a rigorous training program that prepares them to work in the environmental field, particularly in the area of water resources," said Jill Lipoti, DEP's Division of Water Monitoring and Standards Director. "Ambassadors have proven to be extremely valuable resources in assisting the State with its new focus on Green Infrastructure. They outdid themselves this past year by completing 9 rain barrel workshops at which 164 rain barrels were constructed."

Members of the current class of 2013 recently completed their year of service, graduating on July 12 at a ceremony held at the Assunpink Wildlife Management Area in Robbinsville. In addition to gaining valuable knowledge and experience, they have grown to be integral parts of the communities where they were assigned.

"The New Jersey Watershed Ambassador Program has been an incredible learning experience," said recent graduate Blaire Langston, who served with the Musconetcong Watershed Association. "It is rewarding to give back to the community you grew up in and have the chance to work with professionals who share your enthusiasm for environmental protection. Meeting and serving alongside these hard workers has motivated me to do great things in my career."

Prior to joining to the program, Langston studied Marine Science at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

“The AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador program has completely exceeded my expectations,” said recent graduate Melanie Jackson, who was stationed with the Hackensack Riverkeeper. “This program has made me a well-rounded person and has given me a sense of fulfillment that I have never experienced before.”

Prior to the entering the program, Jackson studied Marine Science and Biology at the University of Miami.

The graduation ceremony featured a tribute to Akili Lynn Gordon, who was the program manager for five years until her sudden passing in December 2012. Akili was instrumental in guiding the Ambassadors through the program and would have been very proud to see the 2013 class graduate. A tree has been planted in Akili’s memory at the Assunpink Wildlife Management Area, and a commemorative stone, as well as water from all 20 watershed management areas (representing each Ambassador), were placed there as well.

The DEP began hosting this federal AmeriCorps program in 2000. AmeriCorps is a national service initiative that began in 1993 and is also known as the domestic Peace Corps. The organization recently announced grants for programs, nationwide. New Jersey’s Watershed Ambassadors Program was a recipient and received \$260,000 in federal funding for 2014.

Ambassadors are expected to complete 1,700 hours of service in a 10 to 11 month period. In return, they receive a living stipend of up to \$12,100 over the course of the term; eligibility for health benefits during this period; and training prior to and throughout their term of service. Once they complete the program, they receive an education award of \$5,550. Applicants must be U.S. citizens, have a bachelor’s degree, and must have a valid driver’s license and reliable transportation to get to and from field sites.

In 2013, 20 individuals served as the DEP’s AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassadors. Current accomplishments to date include:

- 1,671 educational watershed demonstrations performed reaching 42,549 people;
- Nearly 1,000 visual and biological assessments completed;
- Implementation of the Lake Watch protocol for assessment of over 100 lakes;
- 2,000 volunteers trained in the DEP’s visual and biological assessment protocols;
- Engaged in 90 community watershed projects generating about 14,000 stewardship hours;
- Installed 2 rain gardens which are featured on DEP’s new Green Infrastructure Web Page;
- Served as captains for Governor Christie’s Barnegat Bay Blitz initiative;
- Served as captains for Delaware River and Bay – Dash for the Trash and Raritan River Rubbish Roundup Cleanups to commemorate National AmeriCorps Week

Interested applicants for the 2013-2014 Program should apply by August 30 online at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/wms/bear/recruit.htm> to download the application and reference forms.

Interested applicants should submit their application, resume and cover letter to NJWAP@dep.state.nj.us.

For additional information, please contact Kimberly Cenno or Jennifer Noblejas, Co-Program Managers, at (609) 633-1441.

NJ Watershed Ambassadors Program
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For more information on the NJDEP's AmeriCorps NJ Watershed Ambassadors Program, visit: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/wms/bear/amicorps.htm>

For more information on the AmeriCorps National Service Initiative, visit: www.americorps.gov

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