Native Garden Stewardship Intern Job Description

Title: Native Garden Stewardship Intern

Wage: $10.60 per hour

Department: Calvin Ecosystem Preserve

Location: Calvin Ecosystem Preserve & Native Gardens (1750 E. Beltline Ave SE 49546)

Supervisor: Jen Howell, Land Manager – jlh89@calvin.edu or (616) 526-2576

Positions Available:
- Native Garden Stewardship Intern (Summer): 2 positions which serve from early May through early August.
  - Summer Native Garden Stewardship Interns are expected to work 40 hours per week (typically Mondays through Fridays) from 8 am until 4:30 pm with an unpaid lunch break from noon-12:30 for the duration of the summer field season. A week of unpaid vacation is scheduled for the week after the 4th of July. Application period is January through mid-February with the specific application deadline posted on the Preserve’s website.

Purpose of Positions (Summary): Native Garden Stewardship Interns are responsible for working under the guidance of the Land Manager to actively manage the native plant demonstration gardens located in the Ecosystem Preserve & Native Gardens surrounding the Venema Plaza. This includes but is not limited to: routine weeding and watering, ecological monitoring, scouting for pests and diseases, working with volunteers and assisting with the propagation and cultivation of 100+ native plant species.

Primary Responsibilities:
- Maintain the native garden beds and infrastructure according to the guidelines established in the garden maintenance plan by weeding, removing leaves and debris, deadheading flowers, pruning, staking plants, planting, maintaining paved pathways, etc. (45% of time).
- Conduct a variety of ecological monitoring projects including caterpillar, pollinator, and native bird species inventories of the native gardens (15% of time).
- Actively participate in hands-on training (i.e. herbicide use and safety, tool use, native plant identification, etc.) to develop the knowledge and skills needed to maintain and expand proficiency in subject-matter content, field science process and native garden management skills (10% of time).
- Monitor native garden beds for pests and diseases and follow appropriate Integrated Pest Management strategies to address issues including vertebrate pest management (deer, voles, rabbits, groundhogs, etc.) (5% of time)
- Assist the Cartography Intern with garden bed planting plans as necessary (5% of time).
- Work with volunteers and ensure their safety (5% of time).
- Maintain compost bins (5% of time)
- Develop outreach materials related to native plants, pollinators, and birds and assist with database management and educational programming as needed (5% of time).
- Perform other duties (i.e. greeting visitors, assisting with native seed collection, etc.) as assigned by supervisor (5%).

**Required Skills/Experience/Qualifications:**

- Willingness, curiosity and excitement to learn about Michigan's native plants, native gardening, land management, and the ecology and natural history of the flora and fauna of West Michigan.
- Enthusiasm for performing manual labor outdoors in a variety of adverse weather conditions and exposure to poison ivy, biting insects, thorns, etc.
- Prior experience working with hand and power tools (i.e. shovels, rakes, hand saws, pruners, loppers, drills/augers, string trimmers, lawn tractors, etc.)
- Eagerness to learn and excellent oral and written communication skills
- Ability to follow instructions, work effectively with a diverse group of people, and work independently when needed
- Attention to detail and effective follow-through on projects
- Passion for caring for God's creation and commitment to the Ecosystem Preserve & Native Garden's mission

**Preferred Skills/Experience/Qualifications:**

- Commitment to working the entire summer field season @ 40 hours per week.
- College-level coursework in botany, horticulture, plant taxonomy, plant physiology, environmental science, or previous work experience with native plants.
- Experience working with volunteers.
- Possession of a valid driver's license and the ability to achieve Calvin University's “Approved Driver” status to be able to drive university owned vehicles on public roads

**Physical Requirements:** Applicants must have tolerance for working outdoors in a variety of weather conditions and exposure to biting insects, poison ivy, thorns, etc. Native Garden Stewardship Interns must have the ability to safely lift at least 30 pounds and should expect manual labor to be a regular requirement of the job.

**Outcomes:** Native Garden Stewardship Interns gain valuable experience (and build resumes and portfolios) towards pursuing a career in horticulture, greenhouse management, landscaping, land management, ecological restoration, etc. Native Garden Stewardship Interns will work alongside professional mentors and will be exposed to a variety of native garden and plant propagation techniques and research methodologies while spending time outdoors and learning more about God's Creation.

**How to Apply:** To apply for this position, applicants must fill out an Ecosystem Preserve Student Employee Application online at [https://calvin.edu/ecosystem-preserve/resources/calvin-student-employment/](https://calvin.edu/ecosystem-preserve/resources/calvin-student-employment/) in addition to submitting a resume with 3 references. Completed application materials should be submitted to Jen Howell, Land Manager, at: jlh89@calvin.edu before the application deadline indicated on the Preserve's website.