



## Future Ecologists Internship

As ecologists, we know that both ecological communities and organizations are strongest and most resilient when they are most diverse. However, we have much work to do to create and sustain diversity and equity in the field of ecology itself—[one of the least diverse fields of science](#). As an organization that aims to “unite people and science for conservation,” we recognize that to advance that goal, we must create a culture that celebrates diversity, fosters inclusivity, and values dissenting opinions and rigorous examination within our own community. **With those goals in mind, the Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE) is offering our Future Ecologists internship intended to create opportunities for students underrepresented in the field of ecology. We encourage students who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color to apply as well as those who can demonstrate how they add diversity to the field of ecology beyond race.** This internship provides an opportunity for two aspiring ecologists to join VCE in several research and conservation initiatives this summer (June 11-August 16, 2024). We recognize that gaining experience in ecology can open many doors but that individuals who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color have been systematically denied equal opportunities to enter the field of ecology.

### Responsibilities

As a Future Ecologist intern, you will be immersed in our various research initiatives both in the field and at our office in White River Junction, VT. Detailed information about our current projects can be found on our website: <https://vtecostudies.org/projects/>.

For 2024, VCE will support a total of four interns (including the two Future Ecologist interns; <https://vtecostudies.org/about-us/employment/>) across three different positions described below. Interns will have a chance to choose their preferred position, please include your ranked internship choices when applying.

**-Spatial Science Intern (1):** The Spatial Science intern will work with big data from community science platforms, such as iNaturalist, to help answer applied conservation and climate-related questions in Vermont and beyond. The intern will assist with tasks such as modeling species distributions, identifying priority conservation areas, and engaging in science communication by creating interactive figures/maps. This is not a field-based internship but the Spatial Science intern will have the



opportunity to join field team as their schedule allows. VCE Data Scientist [Dr. Mike Hallworth](#) will advise the Spatial Science intern.

**-Field Ecology Interaction Intern (1):** Our Field Ecology intern will primarily work on two projects. The first project investigates how shifts in plant communities and environmental context drive changes in insect biomass (moths and beetles) and bird diets. This project involves assisting a team with weekly insect sampling (moths and ground beetles) and capturing songbirds in the Green Mountains. Secondly, the intern will also help with bee and butterfly transects to compare plant-pollinator networks in different managed green spaces. This internship will be >50% field work, which will take place in Vermont and New Hampshire. The intern will be trained in all field techniques, as well as insect pinning and identification, basic lab techniques, and data entry. VCE Conservation Biologist [Dr. Desiree Narango](#) will advise the Field Ecology intern.

**-Interdisciplinary Intern (2):** Two interns will have the opportunity to work with four VCE staffers for approximately two weeks each and gain experience in various topics relevant to conservation science. With Conservation Biologist [Dr. Jason Hill](#), interns will help sample insects and ticks in backyards, helping us understand how tick management chemicals impact pollinator populations. Interns will also be deploying, and recovering, insect sampling equipment on the tops of mountains in Vermont and New Hampshire and receive training on sorting and identifying insects under a microscope. While working with Conservation Biologist [Eric Hanson](#), interns will use a kayak or canoe on remote lakes and ponds to monitor loon activity, search for nests, and deploy and recover floating signs and nesting platforms. The loon work will also necessitate spontaneous conversations with residents and recreationists at loon lakes to both gather their observations and share information and educational materials. Communications Director [Emily Anderson](#) will lead the interns in turning field experiences into social media posts and blog articles, learning to use communications software tools, and honing skills as a science writer. With Science Director [Dr. Ryan Rebozo](#), interns will work on implementing materials and strategies for place-based science education and community science projects, in addition to exploring science-to-policy initiatives VCE is involved in (with Communications Director Emily Anderson). Interns will get additional field opportunities assisting with sampling bees, butterflies, and grassland birds throughout the summer.

For all internship positions, responsibilities can vary weekly based on field conditions, weather, and priorities. Applicants should be prepared to travel to multiple research sites and be responsible for



keeping detailed notes when conducting fieldwork. All four interns will have opportunities to work together, assist with an overnight bird netting and banding trip atop Mount Mansfield, participate in team-building experiences, and have exposure to external partners and collaborators.

### **Qualifications**

We encourage undergraduates and ecologists in the early stages of their careers to apply. More important than past ecological field experience, successful applicants will be able to demonstrate their passion for conservation and interest in VCE programs in their application. Each intern will receive the training necessary to carry out their work safely, but we seek mature, motivated individuals who will begin the internship ready to learn and contribute. Interns should be comfortable working both alone and collaboratively. Attention to detail, good field note-taking skills, and an ability to embrace a varied work schedule and field conditions are other important attributes for this position. For field-based internships, the ability to work outdoors in various conditions, walk two or more miles on or off trail, and be comfortable paddling a canoe or kayak is expected. Also required is access to a personal vehicle to reach field sites, a willingness to work unpredictable hours in demanding field conditions, physically exert oneself, be flexible in scheduling activities, and show an abundance of good-natured humor.

### **Compensation**

Compensation for the Future Ecologists internship is \$15/hour, and interns are not eligible for VCE benefits (such as retirement contributions and health care). All work related personal mileage accrued during the internship will be reimbursed at the federal mileage reimbursement rate. Housing in or near White River Junction, VT, will be provided for the duration of the internship. To encourage a synergistic environment, interns are expected to live in this house unless previous arrangements are made. VCE can offer financial assistance for necessary field equipment.

### **How to Apply**

To apply, please submit the following materials to Ryan Rebozo ([rrebozo@vtecostudies.org](mailto:rrebozo@vtecostudies.org)) by **February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024**:

1. Cover letter
2. Resumé
3. One to two-page written statement that includes **your interest in joining VCE, how you believe this internship will influence your future as an ecologist, your preferred internship in ranked**



**order, and how you fit our intended audience of early-career scientists underrepresented in ecology**