



NANTUCKET CONSERVATION FOUNDATION, INC.

Volunteer Opportunities 2017

The staff of the Nantucket Conservation Foundation's Science and Stewardship Department strives to effectively manage our conservation lands, conduct research and monitoring on rare natural resources, and provide public access opportunities for supporters and the general public. However, much of this work takes a great deal of time and effort. The following is a list of specific projects where motivated, self-reliant and committed volunteer assistance would be welcome and appreciated. If you are interested in volunteering to help us out with any of these tasks, please contact us!

- **Non-native, Invasive Species Management:** Our Science and Stewardship Department oversees multiple invasive plant species inventory and management projects on our properties and also participates in the island-wide collaborative efforts of the Nantucket Biodiversity Initiative's Invasive Plant Species Committee. Working together, we have made tremendous progress over the past few years controlling populations of spotted knapweed, garlic mustard, purple loosestrife, horned poppy and others, but it takes many hands and repeated effort! Volunteers are needed to help with scheduled invasive species "pull" events, or to adopt a species or site to be responsible for managing on your own time.
- **Horseshoe Crab Spawning Surveys:** Since 2009, the Foundation and the Maria Mitchell Association have been consistently surveying two beaches on Nantucket (Warren's Landing in Madaket Harbor and Monomoy Beach in Nantucket Harbor) to document population sizes of mating horseshoe crabs. Similar surveys are conducted all along the Northeastern U.S. coast on the same days and nights each spring to track population fluctuations over time. Surveys are done at high tide around the new and full moons from late April to late June during 5 survey sessions because this is when horseshoe crabs mate and come to shore to lay eggs. Be forewarned – some of these surveys take place in the middle of the night and/or very early morning. Also, if you volunteer for this project, we CANNOT guarantee that you will see a horseshoe crab. There is typically one survey session with the highest density of crabs (usually the late May or early June survey). Crabs are usually seen more during the night surveys than during the day. BUT, as we like to say in science, zero is still important data!
- **Beach and Trash Clean-up:** The Foundation owns and manages many miles of beaches that are used and enjoyed by the public. However, trash left behind by visitors, balloons released from elsewhere that make landfall on Nantucket, and marine debris that washes up during storms and high tides requires almost daily clean-up. If you have a favorite beach that you would like to adopt or are looking for sites where your help with beach clean-up would be beneficial, please contact us. With a little advanced notice, we can arrange to pick up and transport trash collected from our beaches to the dump. We also encourage your participation in the Nantucket Clean Team, a volunteer group that meets at designated locations across the island from 8:00 – 9:00 AM every Saturday (in season) to collect litter and keep our island clean. For more information: <http://www.ackcleanteam.org/>.

- **Native Species Greenhouse Propagation and Out-planting:** Our Science and Stewardship Department maintains a small greenhouse and fenced community garden where we propagate common, native plant species from seed collected on our properties. When mature, seedlings are out-planted in areas on our properties that have been degraded by over-use or where we have undertaken habitat restoration projects. Volunteers can assist our staff in sowing or collecting seeds, transplanting seedlings to larger pots, weeding native plantings in the garden or out-planting in restoration areas on our properties.
- **Small Mammal Trapping Field Research:** Our Science and Stewardship Department is conducting ongoing research on how grassland management techniques such as brushcutting and disk harrowing affect populations of small mammals (i.e. mice, voles and shrews). We will be live trapping, ear tagging and releasing small mammals on our Head of the Plains property for several weeks in July this year. It would be very helpful for us to have volunteer assistance baiting and setting traps in the late afternoon and early evening during this time to help us prepare for field work the next day.
- **Bat Tracking and Monitoring:** Plans for this field season are still being finalized, but our Science and Stewardship Department is collaborating with a graduate student from UMass Amherst to trap, radio-tag and track Northern Long-eared Bats on the island. This continuing research is being undertaken to document breeding and overwintering sites and determine habitat use and preferences of this rare species. IF trapping efforts are successful, assistance may be needed with conducting “emergence counts” (documenting the number of bats leaving a daytime roost in the early evening).
- **Scientific Literature Database Development:** An ongoing project of our Science and Stewardship Department is to organize and catalog the many scientific publications that we have collected into EndNote™, a reference management software package. Hard copies of older literature need to be scanned and entered into this database so that they are preserved digitally and are readily available to our science staff when they are developing reports and research publications.
- **Digital Photo Library Organization:** Over the years, the Foundation has accumulated thousands of digital photographs of our properties, projects, people, events, plants and animal species, etc. These photos are currently stored on our computer server, but need to be tagged with key words so that they can be easily searched and located for use in publications, newsletters, ads, blog posts, website content, etc.

Volunteer Qualifications: Volunteers should approach their work with a positive attitude and eagerness to learn new skills. Strong observational and organizational skills with attention to detail are also essential. A sense of humor is always appreciated! Volunteers should be undergraduate college students or older. Mature and motivated high school students (at least 16 years of age) *may* also be considered.

Requirements: Volunteers are responsible for arriving on-time. In most situations, we appreciate a commitment to help out for the entire time required to complete the field work scheduled for a particular project on a given day. If working in the field, appropriate headwear, footwear, field clothes and outerwear appropriate to expected weather conditions. *In almost all situations, shorts and sandals are not appropriate for field work - even during extremely hot weather - because of ticks, poison ivy and thorny shrubs.* Sunscreen, food, and drinking water are essential. Training and necessary equipment is provided. Smoking and non-essential cell phone use is not permitted at the work place or in the field.

For more information contact:

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