

Maryland Veterans Conservation Corps



Mission

The mission of the Veterans Conservation Corps (VCC) is to empower veterans through the therapeutic value of the outdoors by leveraging their unique background and service ethic to address pressing conservation needs on public lands.

The focus of the VCC is to develop veterans professionally through training and on the job experience within the Maryland Park Service and the Department of Natural Resources. These are full-time, paid, year-round positions.



Immersion into the Maryland Park Service (MPS)

Through hands-on conservation work and environmental service, the VCC enhances public lands for the enjoyment of all, while contributing to the expansion of each Corps member's personal and career development.

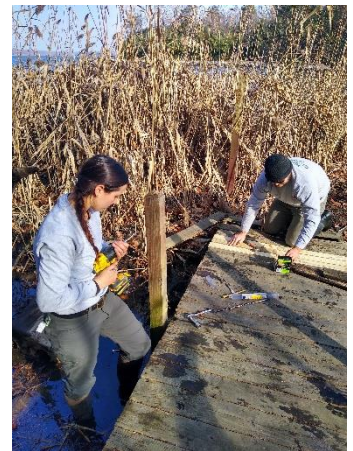


What We Do

Members serve in Maryland's State Parks by assisting with park operations and maintenance, as well as working on conservation projects within the parks.

Projects consist of:

- Trail building and maintenance
- Facilities improvement projects and maintenance
- Educational programs/Interpretation
- Recreation management
- Park operations
- Work with volunteers
- Assisting with special events
- Mentoring Conservation Jobs Corps members (dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/pages/cjc)
- Tree planting/Maintenance of forest buffers
- Stream, bay, and wetland restoration
- Stream surveys
- Habitat restoration and invasive species removal
- Opportunities to work with Maryland Conservation Corps members on various regional conservation projects.



In 2019, VCC members:

- Planted 250 various native plant species across Point Lookout State Park
- Maintained, improved, and repaired 36 miles of State Park trails
- Improved 43,560 sq. ft. of state park land through invasive species removal
- Constructed and deployed over 35 oyster reef balls, restoring habitat for the oyster population residing in the St. Mary's River
- Completed over 38 park recreation and facility improvement projects
- Removed 44 hazardous and invasive trees from state park land
- Educated 85 elementary school students and 25 high school students on environmental stewardship practices relevant to their communities
- Treated 30 Eastern Hemlock trees for resilience to the invasive Hemlock Woolly Adelgid insect



Who Can Join

Qualifications

Maryland's Veterans Conservation Corps program aims to empower veterans looking to explore a career in environmental stewardship. Applicants should be enthusiastic and have a desire to improve Maryland's public lands. Other requirements include:

- Prior service in the U.S. Armed Forces. If claiming military service, DD Form 214 may be required prior to accepting employment.
- Education or experience in the field of park operations, recreation, education, business, administration, forestry, social sciences, or a natural resources related field is preferred.
- Ability to lift up to 20 lbs repeatedly and use hand tools (These are often heavy tools like pulaskis, sledge hammers and chainsaws, etc.).
- Personal vehicle for travel to/from locations for daily pickup to worksites.



General Job Requirements

VCC Members will:

- Serve for one year, with the possibility of contract renewal.
- Attend some mandatory overnight trainings and projects, for up to one week at a time.
- Be required to work on certain weekends.

VCC employs a Zero Tolerance Policy for any member who uses alcohol or illegal drugs while attending a VCC project, training, or event.



Member Benefits

Benefits

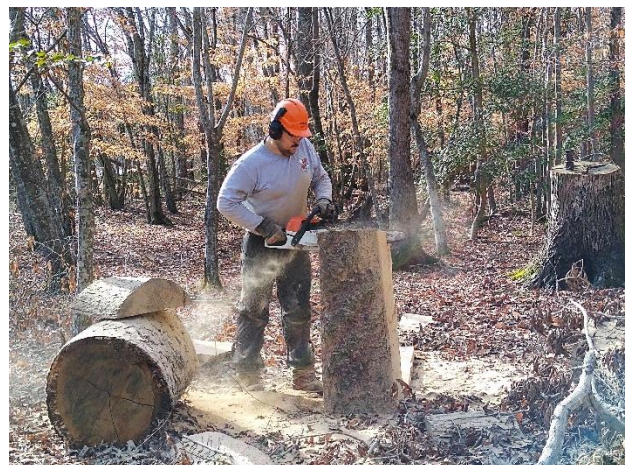
- Wages of \$14.50/hour
- Health Insurance
- Valuable professional and networking opportunities
- Professional skills development to prepare participants to enter natural resource management careers.



Training

Most of the training for the crew occurs throughout the fall, winter, and spring. Trainings include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency Medical Responder: week-long class covering 1st aid, CPR, trauma, etc.
- Wildland Fire Fighter: online sessions & written tests, as well as a field practical
- Chainsaw Use and Care and hazardous tree removal
- Environmental Education and Interpretation: learn how to teach students and park visitors about the environment and/or history
- Trail construction and maintenance
- Basic tool use and safety and basic carpentry skills
- Small Craft Safety and other natural resource management skills.



About the Work Site

The host site for the VCC crew is Merkle Natural Resources Management Area in Prince George's County, MD. As the wintering ground for the largest concentration of Canada geese on the Chesapeake Bay's western shore, Merkle is one of Maryland's most unique Natural Resource Management Areas.

Address:

Merkle Natural Resources Management Area and
Visitors Center
11704 Fenno Road
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Contact:

443-510-9920



Driving Directions:

From Annapolis: 32 miles

Follow Route 50 West to Route 301 South. Continue on Route 301 South to Croom Road (Route 382). Turn left on Croom Road. Continue on Croom Road and turn left on St. Thomas Church Road, which will turn into Fenno Road. Continue until you see Sanctuary signs on your left at Merkle Road.

From Baltimore: 38 miles

Exit Beltway (I-695) at Route 97 South. Follow to Route 3 South and then to Route 301 (joins at the junction with Route 50). Continue on Route 301 South to Croom Road (Route 382). Turn left on Croom Road. Continue on Croom Road and turn left on St. Thomas Church Road, which will turn into Fenno Road. Continue until you see Sanctuary signs on your left at Merkle Road.

From Washington, D.C.: 11.7 miles

From Beltway (I-495/95) follow to Exit 11 at Route 4 East (Pennsylvania Avenue) toward Upper Marlboro. Continue on Route 4 to Route 301 South. Continue on Route 301 South to Croom Road (Route 382). Turn left on Croom Road. Continue on Croom Road and turn left on St. Thomas Church Road, which will turn into Fenno Road. Continue until you see sanctuary signs on your left at Merkle Road.

Hours of Operation:

Grounds open sunrise to sunset

Frank Oslislo Visitor Center: Open weekends 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Veterans Conservation Corps FAQs

What are the requirements to join the Veterans Conservation Corps?

We look for members to have a dedication and commitment to service. Our service is done in our state parks and public lands, in the classroom, with local non-profit organizations, in the watershed and tributaries of the Bay, and in our communities. Daily schedules and projects vary, but what every member needs is the passion to serve our community as an upstanding member of the MD Department of Natural Resources and the Maryland Park Service.

How is the schedule constructed?

Generally, the crew will operate Monday-Friday 7:00/8:00 a.m. to 3:30/4:30 p.m., with a half hour for lunch. However, there are exceptions. There are times when members serve on the weekends such as traveling to training events or projects, working with the state parks, operating visitor centers, and assisting with community volunteer days.

What is the pay?

You will receive \$14.50/hour.

How does the health insurance work?

You will receive health insurance through the Student Conservation Association.

What gear do I need to bring?

Besides personal belongings, it is recommended that you bring lunch and water containers, a small calendar to record your schedule, work boots, a tent, sleeping bag, sleeping pad, rain gear, work pants, gloves, and warm/wicking base layers and socks.

The VCC provides your uniform, consisting of work shirts and sweatshirts, a \$200 boot reimbursement (guidance on boot requirements will be provided), and all of your personal protective gear including safety glasses, ear protection, hard hat and chainsaw chaps, etc.

Contact VCC

The Veterans Conservation Corps is comprised of post-9/11-era US Military Veterans receiving essential training, credentials, and experience to competitively pursue conservation and natural resource management careers.

The Maryland Veterans Conservation Corps will serve at Merkle Natural Resource Management Area and in the Southern Maryland Regional Complex, with other nearby state parks, and on Maryland Conservation Corps projects, which involve overnight travel.

For more information or to apply, contact:

Ranger Luke Terrell

Deputy Director of Conservation Corps

luke.terrell@maryland.gov

240-278-5218

