

Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge 2023 Biology Internships

Do you have a passion for prairie? Want to engage in land stewardship? Opportunities are available to gain experience and contribute to one of the world's premier tallgrass prairie ecosystem restoration sites! The Friends of Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge are sponsoring several Biology internships at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge for 2023. The Refuge is a unique ecological restoration project featuring endangered tallgrass prairie, oak savanna, and sedge meadow ecosystems. Located 20 miles east of Des Moines, Iowa, it was the first large-scale prairie reconstruction project ever attempted. Since its inception in 1990, the 6000-acre Refuge has become a home to hundreds of prairie plant species; re-introduced bison, elk, and regal fritillary butterflies; rare grassland birds; and many other species dependent on large areas of prairie or grassland. Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Duties: Biology interns will be a crucial part of prairie and savanna restoration work, involving monitoring plants and wildlife, invasive species management including use of herbicides, propagating plants in a greenhouse, planting prairie seedlings, hand-harvesting seeds of native plants, and data entry and management.



Benefits: Internships will run 3–9 months each for 40 hours/week. Timing of internship is flexible, with positions available in spring, summer, and fall (April through October). Each intern will receive a stipend of \$7200 to \$21,600 for 3–9 months (\$15 per hour). Housing will not be provided. Refuge staff will work with students to fulfill internship credit requirements at individual universities. Non-students are also eligible to apply.

Qualifications: Any qualified person 18 years or older with a valid driver's license is eligible for an internship. Biology interns must have an interest in **native plants** and a strong desire to learn about prairie and savanna ecosystems and restoration. Experience identifying prairie plants is strongly preferred. Must enjoy working outdoors and be willing to walk through dense, tall grass, do physical work outside during hot, humid weather, and tolerate stinging and biting bugs and plants and other discomforts of working in nature. Must become an Iowa certified pesticide applicator **before start date** (pass the Core and Category 6 tests). Instructions and study materials will be provided if you are selected for the position. Interns will be provided training on the safe operation and maintenance of utility terrain vehicles, brush mowers, pesticide sprayers, and other tools. Most important are sincere interest, enthusiasm, and a good work ethic. Other desirable skills include experience with greenhouse propagation, computers, writing, and field research.

To Apply: Submit the following: 1) a one-page **cover letter** highlighting your qualifications and describing why you would like to participate in this internship program and what you hope to gain from this experience. Please **include dates you are available**; 2) a detailed **resume** noting education, experience, and skills, including 3 references and their contact information; and 3) a **letter of recommendation** written by an educator or employer. Materials should be **mailed** to: Karen Viste-Sparkman, Wildlife Biologist, Neal Smith NWR, P.O. Box 399, Prairie City, IA 50228. Applications received via email will not be considered. Intern applications including letters of recommendation must be postmarked by February 11, 2023; however, positions may be filled earlier. For additional information visit http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Neal_Smith/ or <http://www.tallgrass.org/> or contact Karen Viste-Sparkman at (641) 521-5720.