



## Housatonic Valley Association

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## Position Announcement: Housatonic River Steward Internships (seasonal)

The Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) seeks applications for the Summer 2024 seasonal cycle of our Housatonic River Steward internships. River Stewards will assist with tasks related to watershed management, wildlife conservation, and the community-engagement aspects of natural resource management. In addition to learning and professional development provided by HVA staff, River Stewards will have opportunities to connect with a variety of partners collaborating with HVA to restore and protect the Housatonic River watershed. This includes but is not limited to municipal staff and officials; regional, state and federal agencies; and non-profit organizations.

River Steward positions are based out of HVA's main office in Cornwall Bridge, CT. They focus primarily on HVA's conservation work in the Connecticut and New York regions of the Housatonic watershed with occasional opportunities for work in the Berkshires, MA. These are full-time (40 hours/week) contract positions lasting approximately 12 weeks from early June to Labor Day. **River Stewards must commit to working at least one weekend day per week, including the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend.**

### Internship Overview

River Stewards collaborate with staff from HVA's Watershed Conservation and Land Protection teams to support various programs and projects. They spend approximately 70% of their time in the field with at least one more HVA Intern/Staffer and 30% of their time in the office. Tasks for 2024 will include:

- *River Information and Outreach (RIO) program*

River Stewards will:

- Exchange information with recreational river users about water safety, sustainable use, and equitable access at popular recreation access sites along the Wild and Scenic Housatonic River (from the MA-CT border to Boardman Bridge in New Milford);
- Collect data about recreational use through informal interviews and site assessments;
- Conserve access sites through duties such as trash cleanup and invasive species control;
- Update HVA's @HousatonicInfo Instagram page with news such as river conditions and site openness for people to plan their recreation at the Wild and Scenic Housatonic River.

- *Stream corridor assessments*

River Stewards will support HVA staff in the field with the conduct of "streamwalks" along stream reaches in subwatersheds targeted for watershed-based management planning. Streamwalks document threats to water quality and habitat as well as identify restoration opportunities to address those threats. Stream corridor assessments will use the Unified Stream Assessment (USA) protocol developed by the Center for Watershed Protection. HVA staff will train River Stewards in the USA protocol and use of relevant HVA equipment.

- *Water quality monitoring*

River Stewards will collect and manage chemical and biological data to support watershed management planning efforts and track effectiveness of restoration projects. HVA staff will train them in data collection protocols plus the operation and maintenance of monitoring equipment.

- *Restoration project maintenance*

River Stewards will conduct maintenance activities at restoration project sites where initial installation has been completed. Maintenance activities may include invasive species control, upkeep of drainage systems, dry-weather watering of restoration plantings and trash clean-up. These tasks may be done with a high-school Crew completing HVA's Connections program.

- *Follow the Forest Independent Projects*

River stewards will develop an independent project in coordination with HVA staff to advance a meaningful part of the Follow the Forest Initiative. Projects may include (but are not limited to) utilizing ArcGIS Online to create a story map, developing an implementation/restoration plan for a habitat linkage, or generating communications strategy.

Other projects that River Stewards may support during their internship include but aren't limited to:

- *Detailed assessment of restoration project sites*

River Stewards would assist with rod-and-level surveying and other focused assessment to support engineering design of proposed restoration projects, including culvert right-sizing projects and natural stream channel reconstruction. HVA staff would train them in data collection protocols and use of surveying equipment.

- *Terrestrial habitat linkage assessments*

River Stewards would assess linkages between core forests in areas predicted to be most important for wildlife movement. Assessments use a protocol that HVA developed to evaluate what impedes or facilitates wildlife movement between core forests. HVA and our partners use linkage assessment data to prioritize land protection and stewardship projects.

- *Road-stream crossing assessment / Replacement planning*

River Stewards would visit and assess bridges and culverts—using the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative protocol—to identify barriers to fish and wildlife passage as well as support the application of this data to town-scale prioritization of culvert right-sizing projects.

### **Desired Qualifications:**

The ideal River Steward is detail-oriented, flexible, highly motivated, passionate about watershed conservation, and able to succeed both independently and as part of a team. Candidates who come to HVA with some or all of the following qualifications will be most competitive:

- Enthusiasm for outdoor field work and ability to safely complete tasks under hard environmental conditions (heat, rain, clouds of mosquitos, ticks, rash-inducing and thorny plants, etc.);
- Ease in approaching and interacting with strangers;
- Strong organization and data management skills;
- Experience with field data collection using GPS;
- Experience with data management and analysis using GIS;
- Fluency in Spanish and/or Portuguese languages.

### **Requirements:**

- Daily access to a reliable personal vehicle. HVA does not provide vehicles for staff use, but reimburses use of personal vehicles at the Federal Mileage Reimbursement Rate;
- Ability and willingness to work at least one regular weekend day each weekend (including 4th of July weekend) in support of the RIO program;
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to represent HVA in a professional manner at all times;
- Physical ability to complete strenuous field work (i.e., physically active labor outside for several hours at a time during the heat of the summer).

**Compensation:**

River Stewards will be paid at a rate of \$18/hour. Work-related travel will be compensated at the 2024 Federal rate of \$0.67/mile. Housing is not provided. HVA will assist successful applicants in finding summer lodging near the HVA office, if necessary.

**Application Procedure:**

Interested candidates should submit materials listed below—if accessible, in a single PDF file—via email with “2024 River Steward Internship” in the subject line. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

1. COVER LETTER explaining your interest and qualifications
2. RESUME
3. TWO PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES
4. Optional - Examples of past training or work relevant to HVA’s mission and the River Steward position (please limit to 1 page per example and no more than three examples)

**Due date:** Applications will be reviewed and positions filled on a rolling basis. Applications received before 3/31/2024 will be given preference.

**Questions and applications should be directed to:**

Rodrigo Pinto  
Connecticut Watershed Manager  
Housatonic Valley Association  
Email: [rpinto@hvatoday.org](mailto:rpinto@hvatoday.org)  
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and

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Housatonic Valley Association  
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**Who we are:**

HVA leads conservation action in communities across the tristate Housatonic watershed in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York. We restore and protect the Housatonic River and its tributaries, protect strategically important lands, and take action to help ecosystems and communities adapt to climate change across the watershed and beyond. We do this directly or in collaborations with partner agencies and organizations, community and business leaders, and concerned citizens working for a clean and healthy natural environment. Our overarching goal is to achieve a climate-ready Housatonic Watershed by 2040. In addition to our advocacy, issue response and education programs, two major campaigns toward our 2040 goal are underway: Clean, Cold and Connected, aimed at restoring and protecting local streams and the waters they flow to, including Long Island Sound; and Follow the Forest, aimed at protecting a continuous forest corridor through the Housatonic watershed to connect the Appalachian Highlands of eastern New York with the forests of western Massachusetts and Vermont through to Canada. HVA is committed to being fully representative of the watershed’s people and diverse communities in all our work and across our organization. We strive to make our conservation actions equitable and inclusive by enabling participation by all and increasing our understanding of and responsiveness to environmental inequity. Our team is committed to continuously improving equitable representation across our organization and in our work towards a healthy watershed. Learn more about HVA at [hvatoday.org](http://hvatoday.org).

**HVA is an equal opportunity employer.** If you have the drive, interest and skills to succeed in this position, tell us about how you can help, and we will consider your application. HVA provides equal employment opportunities to all eligible persons and administers personnel policies and practices in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws. We do not discriminate or abide discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, gender, gender identity or expression, political belief or affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, legal history, genetic information, mental disability or physical disability. Our commitment to equal opportunity is a guiding principle in all of our employment practices and policies.