Urban Ecology
Teen Internship

Get Green, Get Smart
Get Active, Get Paid

Summer 2019
Urban Ecology Teen Internship

For Bronx high school students who have an interest in the environment and are willing to work hard academically and physically – this may be your calling! Students entering their Junior and Senior year in Fall 2019 are eligible to take 3-credit college courses, tuition-free at CUNY Lehman College, in Environmental Studies. Returning interns and graduating high school seniors are eligible to take a GIS (Geographic Information Science) course applying cutting edge technology with data from Van Cortlandt Park’s landscape. In addition to the academic study, students work in the park with natural resources professionals.

Summer Session

This 7-week PAID program is a chance to engage in educational activities that focus on forest ecology and urban environmental science. Our Urban Eco-Teens will also work outdoors with foresters, horticulturists, and trail builders. The group takes field trips to other ‘green’ institutions such as the New York Botanical Garden, Wave Hill, and The High Line.

Dates* Monday, July 1 – Friday, August 16, 2019
Hours 9am – 4pm
Days** Mondays: First- and Second-Year Interns will meet at Lehman College.
Third-Year Interns will meet at Van Cortlandt Park.
Tuesdays-Thursdays: All interns will meet at Van Cortlandt Park for outdoor field work and field studies.

Compensation Wages:
First-Year Interns: $15.00 per hour Tuesday - Thursday
Second-Year Interns: $15.50 per hour Tuesday - Thursday
Third-Year Interns:- $16.00 per hour Tuesday - Thursday

School Year Session

After the summer introductory experience, students can return during the school year to become Leadership Interns and take on more responsibilities assisting with weekend programming. (see page 3 for more details).

*Schedule is subject to change.
** Lehman classes are credit-bearing college level courses & time in class is unpaid.
Third-Year interns are not paid for time spent working on their special project.
Program Ladder

First-Year College Prep Interns
(eligible rising 11th & 12th graders)
First-year interns will attend class at CUNY Lehman College, where sessions focus on the impact of human activities on natural resources and environmental quality. Topics will include soils, forest ecology, water, wildlife habitats, outdoor recreation, and energy resources. Further exploration of these subjects occurs during field studies in the park.

Leadership Training
(available to high school program participants during the school year)
The Leadership Training component directly follows the summer internship and runs through the following spring. Leadership Training will include field trips and workshops designed to build professional skills, effective leadership style, confidence, and the ability to resolve conflicts. Interns will lead small groups of volunteers in forest restoration activities that encourage the ecological health of the park.

Second-Year GIS Interns
(eligible returning interns & eligible graduating seniors)
This program for returning students partners with field data experts in Van Cortlandt Park. Interns will collect essential data for cataloging special features in the park and tracking the Urban Eco-Teens’ field work. Students learn about basic mapping, Geographic Information Science (GIS) tools and techniques used by professionals to create maps, then use hand held Global Positioning System (GPS) devices to inventory the park’s plant species, plot trails, and map tree conditions.

Third-Year Interns
Interns returning for a third-year will have the opportunity to create a project that they will spend the summer developing. Last year interns created a video (click here). Another possibility is to write and illustrate a children’s book about the park.
Crew Leaders
(eligible only to college students)

College students who have an interest in the natural sciences and/or youth development can apply to become a summer Crew Leader. Crew Leaders play a very important role as they are second in command to the Program Director and serve as role models to interns. Program alumni are strongly encouraged to apply.

Clockwise from left: soil testing at Lehman College laboratory; collecting GPS coordinates; identifying plants
Outdoor Field Work
In the field, students receive specialized “hands-on” training in five disciplines that serve a critical purpose in greening the park.

Forest Restoration
Urban forests require ongoing management using proper ecological restoration techniques. Interns will learn basic ecological principles that include taxonomy, soil science, hydrology, and forest dynamics. Invasive plants need to be removed and native species planted in order to keep an ecological balance that will support wildlife. To this end interns learn to identify these plants, use specialized tools to remove weeds, and plant supportive species.

Trail Building
Van Cortlandt Park has over 30 miles of beautiful trails which regularly need care and improvements. Water bar installation, edging, erosion control, and weeding of overgrowth are needed for well kept trails. Interns will gain an understanding of the relationship between geology and topography while engaged in managing the park’s complex and historic trail systems.

Lake Management
Interns learn about lake management by working with the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park to restore the delicate aquatic system at the 16 acre Van Cortlandt Lake in efforts to remove the highly invasive water chestnut that floats on the surface.

Nursery Management
Seedlings and cuttings must grow hardy for success outside. Nursery structures protect and nurture these young plants before placing them into parks. Interns learn and assist in the basics of greenhouse management and propagation at the Arthur Ross and City-wide Nurseries.

Horticulture
Interns will work closely with Park gardeners to help maintain the many welcome gardens in the park. Interns will learn basic gardening skills such as pruning and mulching techniques.
Eligibility

Requirements

1. Interns must meet the following academic proficiencies:
   a. A grade of 75 or higher in ELA Regents
   b. A grade of 70 or higher in Math Common Core Regents
   c. High School GPA of 80
   d. Pass all High School Regents

2. Interns must be able to work outdoors. The program requires lifting, pulling, digging, and hiking.

3. Meet the STEP requirements. Visit: http://www.lehman.edu and search STEP.

Documentation Needed

1. Non citizens must submit a clear copy (front and back) of Alien Registration card OR U.S. citizens born abroad must bring a copy of naturalization papers.

2. Photo Identification (NYS I.D. or School I.D.)

3. If under 17: Working papers (can be obtained at school)

4. High School Transcript

Application Deadline: April 26, 2019

Selected applicants will be scheduled for an interview in one of our offices and an outdoor field work session in the park.
Application Form
Urban Ecology Teen Internship

(Please print clearly.)

☐ First-Year   ☐ Second-Year   ☐ Third-Year

First Name __________________________
Last Name __________________________

Home Phone (____) _____-_____
Cell Phone (____) _____-_____
Parent/Guardian Phone (____) _____-_____

Email _____________________________ @____________________

Street Address ____________________________ Apt ______
City ____________________________ State ______ Zip Code ______

Date of Birth _____ / _____ / _______

The best way to contact you is (circle all that apply):

Home Cell Parent/Guardian Email

And what is the best time to reach you? _____:_____ (am/pm)

High School______________________________

In Fall 2019 I will be a: ☐ junior ☐ senior ☐ HS grad

G.P.A ______

Parent or Guardian Name (Print)
______________________________

Parent or Guardian Signature
______________________________

Date _____ / _____ / _______
CUNY Lehman College Requirements

The Lehman College STEP Program requires the self-reporting information below:

- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- White/Caucasian
- Asian/South Pacific Islander
- Other

Number of Children in the Home: _________
Household Annual Income $ ___________

Application Q & A

On a separate sheet of paper, please provide all information requested below.

For All Applicants:
Previous Experiences

Please list any paid and/or volunteer experience you have had. For each one list as follows:
- Name of organization & address
- List specific tasks/responsibilities
- Start & End Dates

First Year Interns:
Short Answers
1. What is the greatest challenge you have faced as a high school student?
2. Describe a situation in which you were recently very proud of yourself.
3. Describe one aspect you wish to improve about yourself.

Essay (one page)
Why do you think you would be a good candidate for this summer internship and how would you contribute to the program?

Returning Interns
Short Answers
1. As a returning student, how will you motivate and encourage new members of the program?
2. After your experience last year, how has this program changed you?

Essay (one page)
Tell us why you want to return to the program.
Application Checklist

☐ Application form

☐ Q & A responses, including essay

☐ Most recent high school transcript

☐ Working papers and Photo I.D.

☐ Parent signature

Mail Application and documents to:
Urban Ecology Teen Internship
Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy
1 Bronx River Parkway, Bronx, NY 10462
or electronically to:
paulina.mohamed@parks.nyc.gov
Online applications can also be obtained at VCPark.org.

Got questions or would like to schedule a recruitment presentation?
Please call 718.430.4687
or email the Director of Youth and Volunteering:
paulina.mohamed@parks.nyc.gov
Lehman College is the only public senior college in the Bronx affiliated with the City University of New York. Located on an historic tree-lined campus in the northwest Bronx, the college is a cultural and recreational center for the region. STEP (Science and Technology Entry Program) is funded by the New York State Education Department and is designed to prepare under-represented or economically disadvantaged students for careers in science, technology and math fields. For more information, visit lehman.edu.
Van Cortlandt Park constitutes 1,146 acres covering ridges and valleys of the northwest Bronx and is New York City’s third largest park. Athletic fields and playgrounds are scattered about the park’s edges, surrounding a verdant forest fed by Tibbetts Brook. Van Cortlandt was established as a park in 1888 and is home to the country’s first public golf course, the oldest house in the Bronx, and the borough’s largest freshwater lake. This park is the most important outdoor space for many working class, minority and immigrant communities in the Bronx. For more information, visit www.vcpark.org.
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CUNY Lehman College, NYS S.T.E.P. Program,
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Wave Hill, Friends of The High Line, Youth Development Institute,
and NYC Parks.

Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy’s mission is to sustain and enhance the park as a vibrant destination for recreation, leisure and the enjoyment of natural landscapes. In partnership with NYC Parks, the Conservancy aims to help care for, preserve and program Van Cortlandt Park through fundraising efforts as well as public outreach.