Ohio Natural Areas & Preserves Association (ONAPA)
2026 Contract Position for Stewardship Assistants (SA)

ONAPA is looking for 1-3 new stewardship assistants this year. We are offering 3-6 month part-time contract positions designed to assist ONAPA with stewardship activities including habitat management on nature preserves, preserve monitoring (status review of preserves), rare plant monitoring with the Division of Natural Areas & Preserves (DNAP) and the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), and other administrative duties such as database management and social media. Specific activities will be assigned weekly/monthly by Vice-President, Jennifer Windus. These activities will provide an individual recently graduated from college, college student, or graduate student, with excellent field experience, training, and good contacts for future full-time employment in the natural resources/environmental science field.

POSITION DESCRIPTION:

- Individual may work 10-20 hours a week for a 3-6 month period (1-3 days per week, including a few Saturdays); work may be flexible in case assistance is needed for more than 3 days in a given week (e.g., Eastern prairie fringed orchid surveys in late June-early July). The six-month contract period will likely be April/May – October/November (~25 weeks for 400-500 hours total), but can be less and may be extended through the winter. For college students, the contract may be for 3 months, mid-May through mid-August. Travel time is included in the total hours.
- Most work will be done with others, but there may be some preserve visits conducted on your own with your own vehicle. Some invasive plant control may be done on your own at designated preserves. This work will be conducted in cooperation with DNAP or other partners and with direction from ONAPA.
- Each individual should have health insurance and a reliable vehicle. Although carpooling may be available, travel will include projects at preserves all over Ohio. Travel expenses are typically not reimbursed by ONAPA.
- Each individual must report his/her duties weekly, with a final report to the Board at the end of the 3-6 month contract period. A final presentation will be conducted at the November Board meeting, typically a joint one with the current stewardship assistants.
- ONAPA will provide a contract payment of $7,000-8,000 to the SA for a 6-month contract (~400-500 hours), with no additional expenses reimbursed, unless there is prior approval for specific projects. Payments will be made 3-4 times during the 6-month period, including an initial payment. A final payment will be made after satisfactory completion of the contract, with submission of a satisfactory final report.
- ONAPA will prepare a contract for the individual as a contractor of ONAPA. The individual will not be an employee of ONAPA. The SA will be signed up as a DNAP volunteer. This can be done after you are on contract with ONAPA.
- ONAPA is looking for individuals who recently graduated from an Ohio college, or are currently enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program with a biology/botany/natural resources major/environmental science emphasis, or significant course work in these areas.
- The individual should be in good physical shape as the position involves significant hiking, brush & tree removal, herbicide application, outdoor working conditions, and strenuous work.

STEWARDSHIP ASSISTANT DUTIES:

- Assist with ONAPA Stewardship Projects on preserves and other natural areas, in coordination with Jennifer Windus and other crew leaders.
- Assist with rare plant survey and monitoring projects in cooperation with DNAP and USFWS, as directed by Jennifer Windus and other crew leaders.
- Conduct preserve visits to report on preserve status and conditions, per ONAPA Preserve Monitoring guidelines; these visits will be determined by Jennifer Windus, in cooperation with other ONAPA crew leaders and DNAP.
- Assist with ONAPA website, Facebook page, and Instagram, as well as volunteer database management and preserve monitoring reports as needed.
- Other duties as assigned and needed by ONAPA, such as assisting with ONAPA field trips and events.

NOTE: ONAPA = Ohio Natural Areas & Preserves Association; DNAP = ODNR Division of Natural Areas & Preserves; USFWS = US Fish & Wildlife Service; KWLT = Killbuck Watershed Land Trust.