

## Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge 2012 Refuge Biology Internships

Friends of the Prairie Learning Center is sponsoring several internships at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge for 2012. Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge is a unique ecological restoration project featuring endangered tallgrass prairie and oak savanna ecosystems. Located 20 miles east of Des Moines, Iowa, it is one of the first large-scale prairie reconstruction projects ever attempted. Since its inception in 1990, the 5600-acre Refuge has become a home to hundreds of prairie plant species; re-introduced bison, elk, and regal fritillary butterflies; Henslow's sparrows, short-eared owls, bobolinks, and other 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:** Refuge biology interns will be a crucial part of the applied prairie and savanna restoration work, including monitoring and controlling invasive species, propagation of plants in a greenhouse, planting out seedlings, biological monitoring, hand-harvesting seeds of native prairie plants, and data entry.

**Benefits:** The internship will run 9 - 12 weeks, with interns needed from March through October. Timing of internship is flexible, with positions available spring, summer, and fall. The intern will receive a stipend of \$2880 to \$3840 for 9-12 weeks. Housing will not be provided, but nearby housing is available for rent. Refuge staff will work with students to fulfill internship credit requirements at individual universities. Non-students are also eligible to apply.



**Qualifications:** Internships are available to any qualified person 18 years or older with a valid driver's license. Refuge Biology interns must have an interest in native plants and a strong desire to learn about prairie and savanna ecosystems and restoration. 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. Refuge Biology interns must be willing and able to obtain an Iowa pesticide applicator's license and to apply herbicide. Most important are sincere interest, enthusiasm, and a good work ethic. Other desirable skills for Biology interns include experience in prairie plant identification, greenhouse propagation, GPS, computer skills, writing skills, and research field experience.

**To Apply:** Submit the following: 1) a one-page **cover letter** describing why you would like to participate in this internship program and what you hope to gain from this experience, **including dates you are available**, 2) a detailed **resume** noting education, experience, and skills, including 3 references and their phone numbers, and 3) a **letter of recommendation** written by an educator or employer. For Refuge Biology Internships, information should be sent to: Karen Viste-Sparkman, Refuge Biologist, Neal Smith NWR, PO Box 399, Prairie City, IA 50228.

Intern applications including letters of recommendation must be **received by** February 17, 2012.

For additional information visit <http://www.tallgrass.org> or <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/nealsmith/> or contact Karen Viste-Sparkman at (515) 994-3400.