

## Hawk Mountain Appalachian Ecology Course

June 14 through June 23, 2024

Cost: \$2,800

This course is designed for the future conservation professional, based on principles of service learning. Service learning is, simply put, challenging participants by immersion while they conduct “real” work. Students of this course will be exposed to a variety of conservation field skills and disciplines and have the chance to put several concepts into practice, using newly learned skills including the chance to improve and/or monitor wildlife and their habitats.

This is not a summer camp program; it is a serious residential field course where students will live and work, camping at the Sanctuary. Participants will form a closely knit working unit responsible for shared meal preparation and other live-in chores. Students group camp area will be adjacent to Stewardship Staffs personal on-site residence.

The ideal applicant will be between the ages of 15 to 17, have a passion for the natural world and have a potential interest in a future career in conservation or wildlife management. It will offer direct interaction and mentorship from Hawk Mountain Sanctuary’s world-renowned scientist and award-winning sanctuary stewardship staff along with the chance to interact with plenty of other conservation professionals over the duration of the course. This approach is to maximize the chance to gain knowledge, insight, and networking opportunities. On the final evening, each participant will share a presentation on their personal learning experience to an audience of conservation professionals' conservation professionals across several different disciplines, thus providing another excellent networking opportunity.

Below are several of the disciplines for immersion:

**Raptors:** Hawk Mountain Conservation Scientists

Field Based related to ongoing research of grassland and forest birds

Classroom ID component/telemetry/nestbox banding and nest observation

**Songbirds:** Hawk Mountain Conservation Scientists

Field Based with mist netting/banding demonstrations

**Forest Ecology/Dendrology:** Dr. Chris Sacchi, Kutztown University

Field identification related to Hawk Mountain and Central Appalachian Species

**Habitat Management:** Hawk Mountain Stewardship team and others

Field based management within meadow and forest including storm water management and invasive species management

**GIS/GPS in Conservation:** Hawk Mountain Conservation Scientists and Stewardship team

Overview of importance of mapping with a field exercise aiding Hawk Mountain Land Management and supervised by Hawk Mountain Stewardship staff

**Riparian Corridors:** Hawk Mountain Stewardship and Stroud Water Research Center

Field Based with canoe travel and water quality assessments, chemical and invertebrate sampling on the Little Schuylkill River, one of Pennsylvania's Scenic Rivers, and located within Hawk Mountains Viewshed.

**Herpetology:** Hawk Mountain Stewardship team and others

Field based conducting inventories

**Native Plants:** Hawk Mountain Stewardship team and others

Focus on planting and propagation of native plants for wildlife

**Entomology/Pollinator Focus:** Mike Slater, Botanist and Entomologist

Classroom introduction with field time in Hawk Mountains Native Plant Garden

**Wildland Travel:** Hawk Mountain Stewardship team and others

Canoe use within riparian corridor and overnight trek on foot

**Rigging and Mechanical Advantage:** Hawk Mountain Stewardship team

Use of basic field equipment for forest/trail work

**Life Skills:** Hawk Mountain Stewardship team and ALL others

Basic automotive care, basic tools, and machinery review, cook a meal, proper PPE use

### **Qualifications and Needs:**

Participation demands a drive and passion for conservation including a strong work ethic. Other items needed are work clothes such as work/hiking boots, long pants, and long-sleeved shirt advisable as well as additional clothing for a week afield. Evening camp shoes can be open such as sandals, but each day closed toe shoes must be worn. Advisable to have an old pair of sneakers or water shoes for river day, and no open toe footwear such as sandals on the river. Enough clothes for the week are advisable, with limited access to laundry except a camp combined load or two.

A personal sleeping bag with sleeping pad is necessary, ideally packable for overnight trek. It is helpful for each participant to have their own backpack but is not required for the overnight trek. Personal toiletries for the week are necessary. Showers will be accessible to the students for the week except during the overnight trek. If a participant is selected with dietary restrictions, reasonable accommodation can be made within a team dining environment.

### **Conservation careers:**

Overview/discussions of what is available prior and during the participant presentation/cultivation night. Hawk Mountain staff, PA game commission, the nature conservancy staff, NRCS staff, Berks Nature staff, Hawk Mountain Board of Directors, Stewardship Advisory Committee, and others. Participants present a short program of their week's work while building networking skills on the last night of course.

### **Emergency/Medical Protocols:**

One to two Wilderness First Responders/EMT (WFR, WEMT) will be serving as mentors for the group during daytime field time. Evening mentors when not in the field will consist of WFRs and WEMTs. Covid protocols in accordance with CDC recommendations will be followed for any indoor component. If a participant does not have a facemask when needed/required, one will be provided. Any relevant medical history/medications of selected participant must be filed with Stewardship staff for reference during program.

### **How to Apply:**

As mentioned, this is a serious course with performance expectations. If a student is willing to commit to being considered for this course, their application must consist of a heading including name, address, contact email, and phone number. Following the heading, an essay of approximately 700 words is required on why the student wants to explore the possibility of working in the field of conservation and how they feel this experience could shape their career direction.

After submittal and review of essays, the top candidates will be scheduled for an interview. If a candidate is within an hours drive of the sanctuary, an in-person interview will be conducted. If the candidate resides more than an hour away, zoom interviews will be conducted. References may be requested of any candidate.

We are seeking to have the course filled by May 31, 2024. Applicant review will be initiated immediately but interviews for selection will not be conducted until after April 18, 2024. With this being the process, it is advantageous to apply early.

All potential participants wanting to be considered for the program should email the above information and essays to Sanctuary Stewards Noah Rauch and Steve Wade at [rauch@hawkmountain.org](mailto:rauch@hawkmountain.org) and [wade@hawkmountain.org](mailto:wade@hawkmountain.org) with the subject line "Appalachian Ecology Course Applicant."