

Center for Whole Communities at Knoll Farm

Internship Program Applicant Information

This information will provide you with details about the Internship program at our nonprofit learning center, Center for Whole Communities, at its base at Knoll Farm in Fayston, Vermont. Please read through the information thoroughly before applying, and feel free to contact us with any questions you may have about the program.

Questions should be directed to Taz Squire, Land Steward:
Taz@wholecommunities.org or 802.496.5690

Contents

- Information on Center for Whole Communities and Knoll Farm
- Internship Program Overview
- Internship Program Schedule
- Work and the Work Schedule
- Safety
- Community Life, Communication, Food and Travel
- Our Expectations of Interns and What We Look for in an Applicant
- Directions for Applying

Information on Center for Whole Communities and Knoll Farm

The Campus

Center for Whole Communities is based on a 400-acre working farm in Fayston, Vermont. One of the first settlements in the Mad River Valley, the farm has a 200-year-old history as a dairy, an inn, a community gathering place, and now a diversified organic farm and nonprofit. A three-story, timber frame barn holds our dining area, library, yoga space, and space for major gatherings. Group dialogs and meditation happen in the mountain yurt. The participants to our summer programs stay in platform tents that center around a cob and stone solar bath house. Summer staff live also live in platform tents or a small yurt. The farmstead, which is also the home of the Center's founders, Peter Forbes and Helen Whybrow, is surrounded by the sheep and hay fields, a blueberry and apple orchard, and intensive vegetable gardens. Mixed hardwood forests with a trail network lead from the farm up to about 1800 feet. The land looks southeast onto the Northfield range and the Mad River.

Fayston is one of four small towns that make up the Mad River Valley. The other towns are Warren, Waitsfield, and Moretown. A mix of working farms, small businesses and ski resorts, the

area is known for its rural beauty and recreational opportunities, which focus around the mountains and river. Our farm is less than a mile from the village of Waitsfield where there is a grocery store, health food store, library, church, hardware store, lumberyard, pharmacy, post office, restaurants, and a weekly farmer's market.

The Whole Communities Staff

Whole Communities employs five office staff who run the daily operations. In addition to our Interns we have other seasonal staff: one or two cooks and a land steward. Taz Squire, our buildings and grounds manager and land steward, supervises the summer staff. We all work very closely together throughout the summer.

Internship Program Overview

The Internship program is summer-long and corresponds with our growing and retreat season, from May 1 to November 1. We give preference to Interns who are able to stay for the entire session. However we do provide a shorter option for returning college students. See the dates below for the 2009 season. We hire at least two interns in the summer.

The basic schedule is as follows:

Full Summer Session: May 1-Nov 1

Application Deadline: March 1

Applicant Notification Date: by March 31

The Internship Program's Mission & Objectives

The overall mission of the Internship Program is to provide a unique experience as part of a dynamic learning community living close to the land. Program participants learn basic skills including but not limited to growing food, building soil fertility, animal husbandry, trail maintenance, hosting and maintaining the running of a retreat community that serves a diverse group of activists and leaders.

Our Interns provide us with heartfelt, committed work and day-to-day support. Interns each contribute approximately 50 hours of manual labor per week in exchange for housing, a weekly stipend (changes annually; please inquire), and three meals a day when the retreats are in session (approx 10 weeks of the summer).

It is important to us that the Interns feel part of, and contribute to, the diverse and changing community here at the farm. For most of the summer, we eat all our meals together with the people who are here at a program. This gives us an opportunity to learn from one another and to build our connections as friends and colleagues.

Work and the Work Schedule

Schedule

We set a schedule at the beginning of every summer that will assign work focus areas: supporting the retreats, land and building projects, kitchen shifts, garden and farm, and office/program support. Some interns with a particular interest can focus on one or two of these areas more than

others, but all interns will get the experience of a wide array of tasks and subjects. Likewise we work as a team to arrange the summer schedule so that everyone has adequate time off between retreats: on average 2 days off per week.

General responsibilities of the Interns include, but are not limited to:

- Source and pickup local food for the retreat kitchen and prepare whole foods using local ingredients; meal set-up and clean-up
- maintain our campus to be welcoming, efficient, clean and well-prepared for our workshop participants
- maintain and advance our trail network, infrastructure, and growing capacity at the farm
- being a welcoming, helpful host to all visitors, and helping support day-to-day operations on the land and logistics of our programs.
- Help with farm and gardens and general land stewardship
- Program support in the office

Understanding the work and daily rhythm as an Intern at the center depends on getting a feel for our programs and retreats. The flow during a week when a retreat is not in session is quite different from a retreat week. Likewise, our work follows the growing season to a large degree. In May and early June, before the programs begin, we will spend much of our time planting and composting, setting up the tent cabins and solar water system, and clearing forest trails. During the programs, which run from late June to mid September, our days are more about keeping campfires, lanterns, and woodstoves going, answering questions, harvesting, preparing and serving local food, and hosting the daily activities. In October we have our day-long Harvest and Courage Celebration, which often draws over 300 people. Our autumn work centers around that event, breaking down the retreat campus, making repairs and getting in firewood for the next season. For a complete calendar listing of the retreats and workshops planned for this year, go to www.wholecommunities.org/

It would be impossible to describe a typical day in the life of an Intern at Knoll Farm, given the changing nature of the work, the demands and limits of the weather, and the unexpected things that come up. We rely on our Interns to help us with the unexpected, to think and act on our feet, to keep our community running smoothly and to notice when something is broken or needs to be taken care of. We encourage Interns to take initiative and to suggest priorities. Although we do our best to work and make decisions as a team, there are also times when each Intern will need to work independently and alone, on a task that is ongoing or on something that comes up and needs immediate attention. We are open and receptive to hearing from Interns who would like to build a specific skill while they are here, and we will always do our best to share our collective resources as well as open the door to learning opportunities at a workshop or class outside of the farm. That said, it is important to set realistic expectations. Interns gain knowledge and experience here through daily chores and interactions; doing an independent project that is tied to very specific personal goals may not always be possible.

Much of the work at Knoll Farm is manual labor of some sort. Interns need to be realistic and honest about their ability and willingness to work long hours outside, in all weather conditions. It is

important to come free of recent or recurring physical injuries. Interns also need to come prepared with the right clothing – lots of layers, excellent raingear, and clothing that will hold up to hard physical work – and the right attitude – lots of positive energy, a sense of humor, inner motivation, joy at being outside on beautiful land in the elements. With the right preparation and attitude, the provides a rewarding, stimulating, and invigorating summer.

Safety and Health Concerns

This is a working farm and there are natural hazards associated with our work, the land, and with the physical effort of using the tools for outdoor work. We do not ask Interns to operate chainsaws or power tools, but we do expect that you will learn to drive a tractor while here. Safety is a top concern of ours, but we also rely on Interns to know their physical limitations, to be vigilant and careful, and to notify us of potential hazards in the forest or around the farm rather than try to remedy them themselves. We ask Interns to send us proof of medical insurance *before* arrival at the farm. As part of the acceptance process, Interns must also fill out a medical information form and sign a release form, releasing Whole Communities from any responsibility of injury while here.

Community Life, Communication, Food, and Travel

Community life at the farm is often intense, with as many as 30 people from around the country eating, working and living together. At other times it can be very quiet, when retreats are not in session, our office staff has left for the day, or we have a weekend with nothing planned. Interns can expect to share a room or tent cabin, share a bathroom and shower and kitchen. Privacy is most often found by going for walks on the 400 acres or getting away to the river, mountains or elsewhere during time off. Sometimes we spend our time-off together, around a campfire, playing music, or firing up the outdoor oven for a meal, but at other times we are all going our separate ways and are responsible for preparing our own meals. Our summer community thrives when we all practice tolerance and respect, good and clear communication, flexibility and openness. In addition, we all take collective responsibility for the whole – for supporting one another and for respecting the give and take of public/private space and work/leisure time. At a farm and retreat center where some people live and others come and go this is a constant dynamic balance and one which we must take on together. The land of Knoll Farm is consistently inspiring and nurturing and is a huge part of all the community we endeavor to create here.

Food, Communication, and Transportation

We have cell phone service here. Interns can, at their own expense, install and share a phone line in the staff apartment. Interns can also take advantage of our wireless Internet service and computers on off hours. All Interns will have a mailbox for work-related memos, but cannot receive mail at the Center address. It is possible to get a PO Box in town at a reasonable charge.

Summer staff will share our communal kitchen and solar bath house. Sharing communal space is not always easy and requires flexibility and consideration of others. During retreats we eat meals together and Interns will not be expected to shop or cook for themselves. All summer staff are encouraged, but not required, to be present at community meals. When a retreat is not in session, Interns do shop and cook for themselves, as a group or as they wish. A weekly share of vegetables is available for the interns from the farm.

We do not have room for each person on the summer staff to bring their own vehicle, so if Interns would like to bring a car or truck, it should be arranged ahead of time. It is helpful, but not essential, to have a vehicle. A bicycle can also be great for getting to and from town and nearby swimming holes.

Our Expectations of Interns & What We Look for in an Applicant

Our Expectations

We ask that Interns arrive at Center for Whole Communities eager to be part of our mission, values, and community. In addition, we look for people who are interested in being part of an organization that is place-based, and where the land is at the center of what we do, how we teach, and what we experience. We expect our Interns to want to spend a summer rooted very much in one place, willing to embrace all of the rewards and challenges of living in a close-knit community.

More specifically, our expectations are as follows:

- Interns will commit to a minimum of 3 months and start and finish on the dates agreed-upon in their contract with us. Time off is also agreed-upon and any changes to that will be worked out with a supervisor. Interns come to work on time and put in a full day of quality work, on the appointed tasks.
- Will be careful and responsible and vigilant of hazards.
- Will take care of tools and equipment and return everything to the place and in the condition it was taken.
- Will work with others in the community with honesty, integrity, openness and fairness.
- Will not use the property of Knoll Farm or the Center for personal reasons or on personal time without permission.
- Will treat everyone who comes to the center with respect and will endeavor to make everyone as welcome and comfortable as possible. Will keep person and property clean and respectable when working with the public at the Center.
- Will bring one's personal creativity, hobbies, humor, and sense of fun and adventure to share with all of us.

What We Look for in an Applicant

We are committed to creating and serving a community of people with diverse skills, backgrounds, and histories. We strongly encourage International students and people of color to apply to our s. Overall, we look for people with a strong interest in sustainability, community, land-based skills, and working with one's hands.

Qualifications for the position include:

- a passion for the land and people's connection to land
- some knowledge of gardening, soil-building or agriculture
- basic carpentry and trail-building skills
- experience working with the public in an educational setting

- ability to do physical work for long hours outdoors, in any weather
- willingness to learn, try new things, and work hard
- a positive flexible attitude, ability to work independently and with others

Directions for Applying

If all of this sounds interesting to you, please fill out an application and return it to us by mail or e-mail. You can download the form on our website, or email or call Helen and she will send you one. In addition to the application form, please send a cover letter stating what interests you about this opportunity. Resumes are helpful as supplemental information, but not required. We also encourage applicants to visit us if possible before or during the application process.

After we receive and review your application, we may call you with questions. Please be aware that our spots are competitive and we only interview top applicants each session. You will hear from us either way about the status of your application within a month of applying.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Taz Squire at Taz@wholecommunities.org or 802.496.5690. Our address is Knoll Farm, 700 Bragg Hill Road, Fayston, Vermont 05673. You can apply online at www.wholecommunities.org.