

Interview with Julie estes

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What is your job title? What does it entail?

UCC Logan Permaculture Initiative Assistant.

Job Summary

A 12-month term (675 hours, approximately 15 hours/week) AmeriCorps position with the Utah State University (USU) Permaculture Initiative and the permaculture teaching garden on main campus, coordinated by Roslynn McCann (ENVS) and Jake Powell (LAEP). The AmeriCorps Permaculture Initiative Assistant will work with a variety of audiences primarily via education and outreach. Permaculture is a design framework guided by ethics and principles, mimicking the diversity, functionality, and resilience of natural ecosystems.

Position Goal

To increase involvement with the USU main campus permaculture garden - and understanding of permaculture design - by university faculty, students, facilities staff, and Cache Valley residents.

Position Objectives

Complete garden maintenance, harvesting, and integrate additional planting as needed in collaboration with the permaculture leadership team (found at permaculture.usu.edu under "Our Partners"), Bridgerland Audubon Society and USU Facilities. Garden Site Operation Manual to be referenced for all maintenance and harvesting.

Oversee dietetic students completing garden rotations to fulfill required supervised practice rotations and volunteer experiences (in collaboration with Alyssa Reidhead in NDFS).

House monthly community workshops/garden tours/webinars, advertised via the permaculture meetup page, local newspapers, flyers, and social media.

Design and manage a strategic plan for community and USU class involvement in permaculture, including service, educational and fundraising events. Plan should include expansion and longevity of the USU permaculture initiative.

What have you learned about Permaculture since being involved with the Permaculture initiative?

I came into this position with zero knowledge about Permaculture! I am still learning more and more each and every week.

Why is permaculture important?

The description on the USU website (see below) perfectly describes why Permaculture is so important. Solving and preventing current, past and future issues.

"Permaculture is a design process mimicking the diversity, functionality, and resilience of natural ecosystems. The principles and practices are drawn from traditional ecological knowledge of indigenous cultures combined with modern scientific understanding and technological innovations. Permaculture design provides a framework helping individuals and communities develop innovative, creative, and effective strategies for meeting basic needs while preparing for and mitigating the projected impacts of climate change."

Where are the Permaculture gardens located? What plants are growing there?

The garden is located on campus at USU (behind Aggie Ice cream). The list is long. It includes a variety of plants that really feed our entire ecosystem. From fruit trees, to a variety of herbs, to strawberries, elderberries, milk weed, sunflowers, and the list goes on.

How do you use your skills in design and photography to help with your position?

My design skills have helped in the maintenance of the garden as well as the placement of new plantings. I try to document the cycle of the garden and its amazing

volunteers to help spread the word on what a treasure is hidden behind aggie ice cream.

How have you seen the community come together with the different Permaculture projects you are involved in?

I hosted a seed swap in the spring and was so impressed with all those that came together to build the community even stronger and freely share their seeds with others to help encourage the use of permaculture design in their gardens to benefit all. Also, recently a youth group came and volunteered in the effort to help weed and lay mulch in the garden. It was so great seeing teenagers get so involved and pumped to help this effort move along.

What is your favorite part of your job?

I love being able to give back. Be it teaching about permaculture, harvesting and sharing with those in need or being a part of a workshop to help teach the community useful skills to benefit themselves and the community.

What have you learned since starting in your position?

That permaculture design is very doable and beneficial, and that the community is looking for opportunities to serve if given.

What tips can you give someone who wants to become more involved with community garden projects?

Email me for opportunities and to be added to the volunteer list for upcoming events: Julie.estes@usu.edu

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Working as a landscape architect and making a positive impact for the entire ecosystem in communities around the world!

What is one fun fact about you?

I served in the US Navy!

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