



# Albany Pine Bush Preserve Volunteer Naturalist Program

Located in the heart of New York's Capital District Region, the Albany Pine Bush Preserve consists of 3,200 acres. The Preserve protects a globally rare inland pine barrens ecosystem and a unique diversity of life including the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly and 62 other species of greatest conservation need in New York State. In addition to its ecological significance, the Preserve is an invaluable open space recreational and educational resource for local communities.

The Albany Pine Bush Preserve Volunteer Naturalist Program was created in 1998 with the goal of establishing a consistent educational presence on the trails of the Preserve. The primary responsibility of the Volunteer Naturalists is to promote a greater public understanding of the Albany Pine Bush through person to person education in an informal setting. By raising awareness of the ecology, management and responsible use of the Albany Pine Bush, we hope to foster a sense of stewardship on the part of the public for this unique ecosystem.

Pine Bush Volunteer Naturalists patrol the trails of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, providing information on Pine Bush ecology, management and history and rules and regulations to visitors. There may also be the opportunity to lead small group interpretive walks through areas of the Preserve and participate in outreach activities throughout the year.



The Volunteer Preserve Naturalist represents the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission as an official educational presence. This position requires interaction with the public as well as hiking over moderate terrain in variable weather conditions. The Volunteer Preserve Naturalist is supervised by the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Outreach Coordinator.

***Training for the Volunteer Preserve Naturalist is provided.***

## **Duties**

- Use environmental education as a means to foster a greater appreciation for the unique natural and cultural attributes of the Albany Pine Bush
- Interact with Preserve visitors in a friendly educational capacity, providing interpretive information on the Pine Bush, including its ecology, history, land management and protection efforts and Preserve rules and regulations
- Encourage visitors to minimize their impact while visiting the Albany Pine Bush Preserve by providing guidance on low-impact use (note: this is an educational rather than enforcement position)
- Report any illegal or inappropriate uses of the Pine Bush Preserve (i.e. dumping of garbage, removal of plant or animal species) to the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission
- Monitor impact on natural communities caused by human visitation
- Report trail conditions to Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission staff
- Collect and report use/attendance figures
- Optional: Lead scheduled interpretive walks for school groups and other special-interest groups (requires additional training)
- Optional: Assist with trail maintenance
- Other duties as requested by the supervising Environmental Educator

## **Requirements**

- Excellent interpersonal skills and a positive enthusiastic attitude
- Ability to effectively communicate with Preserve visitors of all ages in an interpretive capacity
- Good physical condition and a willingness to work outdoors in a variety of weather conditions
- Experience as an educator, or public speaking preferred but not required
- Background and /or interest in the natural sciences
- Ability to use field identification guides and a willingness to learn
- Strong interest in the ecology, history and management of this area
- Ability to work with minimal supervision
- Reliable source of transportation is required
- Background checks are conducted on all volunteers.

## **Reply to:**

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