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Two Environmental Education Interns begin 9-month Program at the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association

The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association recently welcomed two students, Jennifer Rogers and Nicholas Vos-Wein, selected to participate in the Association's environmental education internship program from among close to 50 applicants. The nine-month internship runs from March 7 to December 9. Mr. Vos Wein has been awarded the J. Seward Johnson Internship, named in recognition of the J. Seward Johnson, Sr. Charitable Trust, which funded the internship.

After graduating from Allegheny College with a B.S. in environmental science, Nicholas Vos-Wein served in the AmeriCorps New Jersey Watershed Ambassadors Program, sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and volunteered on a reforestation project at the Cloudbridge Nature Reserve in San Gerardo, Costa Rica.

Mr. Vos Wein first became interested in environmental education during a trip he took to the Galapagos Islands, when he was 13 years old. He thinks he will develop a greater breadth of knowledge working in a non-traditional setting, and he is particularly interested in the advocacy and outreach work of nonprofit conservation organizations.

Asked where he sees himself in 20 years, Mr. Vos-Wein replied, "I would ultimately like to start my own grassroots organization within the Riverkeeper network. I truly want to make a difference in preserving our fragile ecosystem for those who come after us."

Jennifer Rogers graduated from the University of New Hampshire in May 2004 with a B.S. in wildlife management. She has previously worked as an intern teacher at St. Paul's School in New Hampshire and as a camp counselor at Camp Billings in Vermont. She has also coached crew teams and served as coxswain, as well as forming and serving as president of the University of New Hampshire Rifle Club.

Ms. Rogers wants to get experience working with a variety of age group and ultimately hopes to teach environmental education at the college level. She was a fan of Ranger Rick magazine as a child and was always encouraged to be outside, where she developed a love of the natural world.

“I am really excited to be working in a non-traditional setting,” says Ms. Rogers. “Jeff Hoagland [Education Director] and his team of teacher-naturalists are among the best in the field and their passion for their work is inspirational.”

Students awarded the internships gain solo and team teaching experience, complete two independent projects, and perform onsite assessments of three other nature centers. Other Association activities that enrich the internship experience include managing large groups of volunteers on stream bank restoration and reserve maintenance projects, participating in watershed management meetings and activities, and acquiring real world experience translating theory into ordinances and practices that safeguard surface and groundwater.

“We are indebted to The J. Seward Johnson Charitable Trust for helping to fund this program, which allows us not only to further the education of our interns but also helps us deliver inquiry-based environmental education to hundreds of children from surrounding school districts,” said Executive Director Jim Waltman.

Launched in 1994, The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association internship program is the only environmental education internship in New Jersey offering valuable “hands-on” experience for students planning a career in the field. Past interns have gone on to positions in Somerset County Environmental Education Center, Delaware Bay Schooner Project, The Pennington School and Johnson Park Elementary School in Princeton. Former intern Rick Lear is now Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association Naturalist on the education staff.

The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association protects water quality in the 265-square miles of central New Jersey drained by the Stony Brook and the Millstone River. The Association’s headquarters is the J. Seward Johnson, Sr. Education Center, located on an 830-acre preserve in Pennington. The property includes a nature center, pond, and 14 miles of trails, as well as an independent organic farm. Visitors are welcome from dawn to dusk all year long. For more information, call 737-3735 or visit online at www.thewatershed.org.

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Chosen from among 50 applicants to participate in the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association’s environmental education internship program for 2005 are Nicholas Vos-Wein (left) Jennifer Rogers. Mr. Vos Wein, who served in the AmeriCorps New Jersey Watershed Ambassadors Program, sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, has been awarded the J. Seward Johnson Internship, named in recognition of its underwriter, the J. Seward Johnson, Sr. Charitable Trust.