

2026-27 Watershed Education & Native Plant Nursery Assistantships

Coldharbour Institute
Gunnison, Colorado

About Coldharbour Institute:

Coldharbour Institute (CI) is a 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to advance regenerative practices to improve the health of working agricultural lands and watersheds through education, research, and applied practices. Our vision is the broad adoption of practices that result in healthier soils while producing food, energy, and providing ecosystem services for our communities.

Position Overview:

We are seeking two motivated and enthusiastic Watershed Education & Native Plant Nursery Assistants to support our ongoing efforts to restore and enhance the health of the Tomichi Creek watershed while enhancing restoration capacity in the Gunnison Basin. This is a unique opportunity to gain valuable hands-on experience in watershed education and native plants cultivation while contributing to a meaningful effort to increase the resiliency of our landscapes.

Assistants will be required to dedicate approximately 10 hours per week to this position over the course of the year. This will amount to a minimum of 520 hours. Assistants may work with Coldharbour Executive Director and Program Coordinator to determine an appropriate schedule. For the Watershed Restoration Assistant position workload may be more intense in the spring, summer and early fall period.

Responsibilities:

- Assist with the implementation of watershed education & restoration activities, including:
 - Co-leading watershed education events and activities
 - Removing invasive species
 - Monitoring water quality, vegetation, soil conditions, etc.
 - Participating in a range of work days at the Coldharbour Ranch (i.e., biochar production, native plant cultivation, tree fencing)
- Coordinate and supervise volunteers involved in restoration activities.
- Create outreach and educational materials and reports. Develop and deliver educational programs for community members and students.
- Assist with the development of subsequent phases of watershed restoration.
- Assist with grant writing and reporting.
- Attend and help coordinate Coldharbour Institute events, workdays, and outreach efforts.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Required Qualifications:

- Accepted as a graduate student in Western Colorado University's MEM program.

- Available to work in person in the Gunnison Valley from May 2026 to May 2027.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Able to arrange own transportation to Coldharbour Ranch.
- Strong work ethic; commitment to completing position requirements

Additional Desired Qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience in watershed education, restoration, plant cultivation, or related field work.
- Knowledge of environmental monitoring techniques and data analysis.
- Experience with volunteer coordination, community outreach and education.
- Familiarity with local flora and fauna.
- Knowledge of GIS and GPS technology.

Physical Demands and Service Environment: This position is primarily based out of our office at Western Colorado University and the Coldharbour Ranch (located approximately 7 miles outside of Gunnison). The position will involve service in outdoor conditions including:

- Exposure to mosquitoes, sun, wind, and other inclement field conditions.
- Occasional long workdays outside engaging in education and restoration activities.
- Hiking/walking on uneven ground, in streams, and through thick vegetation.
- Minor physical labor related to restoration and Coldharbour staff events including digging, shaping wire, cutting vegetation, digging, etc.
- Variable hours (agreed upon with assistant) resulting in a minimum of 520 hours of work dedicated to assistantship position.

Benefits:

- \$9,000 tuition stipend (1/2 applied for each semester)
- Subsidized housing may be available.

We value diversity at our organization. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, veteran status, or disability status.

To apply: Please submit a resume and cover letter stating your interest in this position to Director@Coldharbourinstitute.org. Applications review will begin at the end of January.