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### **Obama Administration to Hire 20,000 Young People for Summer Work on Public Lands**

*Vilsack, Salazar, Sutley Announce \$3.7 Million in Competitive Grants for  
New or Expanded Youth Corps*

WASHINGTON, D.C. and SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS, CA – In response to [President Obama's call](#) to expand opportunities for summer employment for young people and connect them with the great outdoors, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, and Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality Nancy Sutley today highlighted summer work opportunities for more than 20,000 young people, ages 15-25, in national forests, national parks, wildlife refuges and other public lands.

Salazar and Sutley are kicking off the summer work season at an event in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in California, where they are being joined by members of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps and the California Conservation Corps, representing the many corps partners working with USDA and DOI to provide summer work and training opportunities for young people.

On the East Coast, USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment Harris Sherman and U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell kicked off the season at an event celebrating volunteers and other partners who are critical to connecting Americans to the great outdoors. They were joined by representatives from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to announce, along with Salazar and Sutley, \$3.7 million in competitive grants for [20 projects across the country](#) that will put more than 500 young people from diverse backgrounds and experiences to work on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands and national forests and grasslands this summer work season.

This competitive grant initiative is being funded with \$1.4 million from the BLM and the Forest Service, matched by \$2.3 million raised by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation from private partners through the *America's Great Outdoors: Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists* initiative.

“President Obama’s call to expand summer job opportunities for young people is helping us engage and train the next generation of natural resource professionals and build a workforce that represents all of America,” said Salazar, who is visiting a youth conservation corps that is conducting trail and habitat restoration in the Santa Monica Mountains. “These first experiences building trails, clearing out hazardous fuels, or cleaning up rivers not only equip young people with skills for a new career, but can also awaken a love for the outdoors that lasts a lifetime.” Since Secretary Salazar established youth employment as a high priority performance goal, Interior has employed 35% more young people each year since Fiscal Year 2009.

"This program is putting youth to work and making our nation's public lands more accessible," said Vilsack. "With 80 percent of our country now living in urban areas, it is through partnerships like these that we are finding opportunities for Americans to work, live and play on our forests and grasslands and experience America's Great outdoors."

“Through the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative, the Obama Administration has made it a priority to support communities connecting American youth with the health, economic and recreational benefits of being outdoors,” Sutley said. “This summer jobs campaign will link youth with opportunities to gain valuable work experience, grow our economy, and protect and appreciate our extraordinary natural resources.”

The grants align with President Obama’s America’s Great Outdoors initiative to develop a 21<sup>st</sup> century conservation and recreation agenda. The projects were chosen because they have a connection to the 258 million acres managed by the BLM or the 193 million acres of forests and grasslands managed by the Forest Service. Many of these projects target our underserved youth and populations.

“This public-private partnership will help bring young people from diverse backgrounds and urban areas to the public lands for meaningful employment opportunities, mentorships, and the joy of the great outdoors,” said Jeff Trandahl, executive director and CEO of NFWF. “This is a perfect example of how we can team up to help foster the next generation of conservationists.”

**The 20 projects announced today are below. Additional details are available [here](#).**

#### **Alaska, California, and Colorado:**

- Celebra las Playeras (Celebrate Shorebirds): Environment for the Americas will recruit eight Latino interns ages 18 to 25 to work with education and outreach and to engage in field research training and data collection at Forest Service and BLM sites in California, Colorado and Alaska where monitoring shorebirds is a priority. \$40,000 Forest Service; \$40,000 BLM; \$169,440 non-federal funds.

#### **Alaska**

- Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program: The University of Alaska and several partners will expand the program to encourage high school and college-age Alaska Native youth to pursue conservation careers via mentorship programs and hands-on internship opportunities on Forest Service and BLM lands in Alaska. \$50,000 Forest Service; \$50,000 BLM; \$100,000 non-federal funds.\*

### **California:**

- Employment and Mentorship of Urban Youth: BLM-California, in partnership with the Student Conservation Association, California Conservation Corps and Los Angeles Conservation Corps will recruit and select 10 young adults ages 18-25 from underserved communities for employment in the Student Temporary Employment Program, potentially leading to career-conditional positions with the BLM. \$75,000 BLM; \$125,000 non-federal funds.
- Sierra Native Youth Conservation Corps: At least 12 Sierra Native American youth will tackle conservation projects in the Forest Service's Hope and Indian Valley Meadows, and the BLM's Stocking Flat and Tribute Trail in Nevada City. Training on tribal language skills, native conservation restoration techniques and researching traditional use of resources and ceremonial significance of sites will also be provided. \$37,000 Forest Service; \$37,500 BLM; \$75,000 non-federal funds.
- Nick's Interns: The Mattole Restoration Council will provide 30 paid conservation internships for high school and college-age young people on projects on the King's Range National Conservation Area and adjacent lands. Project activities will be guided by established management plans and improve grassland, estuarine, and forest habitats as well as riparian and in-stream conditions on the Mattole River and its headwaters tributaries. \$50,050 BLM; \$50,000 non-federal funds.
- Promoting Careers in Southern California: At-risk youth from the Los Angeles Conservation Corps will learn about conservation by helping to remove invasive species and plant native species on the San Bernardino and Angeles National Forests and on BLM preserves within the Coachella Valley in Southern California. \$50,000 Forest Service; \$50,000 BLM; \$100,000 non-federal funds.\*

### **Colorado:**

- Yampa River Basin Youth Conservation Career Development: Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests, working with the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, The Nature Conservancy and Yampatika Outdoor Awareness Association, will hire young people to work on the Yampa River Basin in northwest Colorado, working on wildlife habitat and stream restoration projects. The project is primarily on the California and Slater Park Special Interest Areas on the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest, on BLM and other public lands in the Basin. \$50,000 Forest Service; \$100,000 non-federal funds.
- Sangre de Cristo Youth for Conservation: The Forest Service will hire at least 20 youth from Costilla and Conejos counties to work on the Rio Grande National Forest and San Luis Valley Bureau of Land Management. The youth will work on high-priority conservation

projects such as riparian restoration, surveying bark beetle disturbance and mapping osha, a culturally significant herbal plant. \$12,769 Forest Service; \$11,000 BLM; \$23,769 non-federal funds.

- Southwest Conservation Corps, Delores River Restoration: The Southwest Conservation Corps and Delores River Restoration Partnership is a three-year-old private/public collaboration that is part of the Walton Family Foundation's Freshwater Conservation Initiative. The project will involve 70 to 80 crew members for conservation work along Disappointment Creek, a major tributary in BLM's Uncompahgre District in Southwest Colorado. \$80,000 BLM; \$412,000 non-federal funds.

### **Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee**

- Bridging the Forestry Diversity Gap: Chattahoochee, Cherokee and Nantahala-Pisgah National Forests will work with Groundwork Hudson Valley and The Wilderness Society to recruit 16 youth ages 18 to 21 New York to introduce participants to camping, develop job readiness, leadership, and team-building skills. The eight member youth crews will restore 24-plus miles of wilderness trails to standard over two years in areas prioritized by the Forest Service- \$25,000 Forest Service; \$76,672 non-federal funds.

### **Kentucky and Indiana**

- Conservation Career Training in the Ohio River Watershed: The Ohio River Foundation will hire two crews of six high school students for three weeks of summer work on the Ohio River Watershed on the Boone and Hoosier National Forests near Red River Gorge, Ky., and Norman, Ind. Activities will restore riparian habitat by removing invasive species and planting native species, and will protect water quality by reducing erosion. \$28,300 Forest Service; \$37,000 non-federal funds.

### **Maryland**

- Potomac River Conservation Job Training Program: The Maryland Department of Natural Resources, in partnership with the BLM, will expand the Maryland Conservation Corps and the Civic Justice Corps to involve students and young adults in conservation projects along the Potomac River at Douglas Point, Md. Participants will be guided and instructed by professionals in park planning and natural resource restoration science and will tackle high-priority restoration work. \$100,000 BLM; \$100,000 non-federal funds.\*

### **Montana:**

- Crown of the Continent and Prairie Next Generation Stewards: The Montana Conservation Corps will engage young people from urban communities, rural Montana and Native American tribes to accomplish 43 weeks of stewardship, restoration and monitoring projects to enhance the Southwestern Crown of the Continent ecosystem, and will work on the Flathead, Lolo and Helena National Forests and the BLM's Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument and northern prairie landscapes. \$38,000 Forest Service; \$42,000 BLM; \$169,755 non-federal funds.

### **Nevada:**

- Virgin River Southwestern Willow Flycatcher Habitat Restoration: The Great Basin Institute will partner with Nevada Conservation Corps and Partners in Conservation to restore 40 acres of BLM land along the Virgin River near Mesquite, Nevada. Partners in Conservation will recruit 70 young people to engage in hands-on restoration and monitoring and visit with hydrologists, biologists, and other natural resource professionals to learn about conservation career pathways. \$80,000 BLM; \$252,515 non-federal funds.

#### **New Mexico:**

- Collaborative Forest Restoration and Education in New Mexico: The Forest Guild and the Cibola National Forest will hire and train 12 Tribal youth from Cibola and McKinley counties for part-time seasonal jobs for up to two years. The young people will help with gathering habitat structure data to carry out management for an area that is habitat for keystone species such as northern goshawk, Mexican spotted owl, and Abert's squirrel. \$50,482 Forest Service; \$100,492 non-federal funds.

#### **Oregon:**

- Restoring the Future: Pathways to Careers in Conservation: Mt. Hood Community College will hire and train 30 urban youth and 2 crew leaders to complete essential restoration projects over two summers in the Sandy River Basin, just east of metropolitan Portland. Youth will work with agency professionals and Basin partners to gain job-readiness skills and hands-on experience in salmon habitat restoration, trail work, native plant restoration, project management, and invasive-plant removal. \$35,000 Forest Service; \$35,243 BLM; \$107,000 non-federal funds.
- Tillamook Coho Stream Restoration Project: The Tillamook School District will partner with the BLM to monitor Coho salmon stream restoration sites and collect data to assess the effectiveness of ongoing stream restoration on the Wilson, Nestucca, and Trask Rivers. A crew of one adult leader and five youth members, will work on will conduct aquatic invertebrate sampling, riparian fence monitoring, fish habitat evaluation, water quality sampling and analysis, and photo-point monitoring. \$42,570 BLM; \$77,500 non-federal funds.
- Klamath Basin Stewardship Project: The Northwest Youth Corps will hire 50 local youth, at least 40 percent from the Klamath Tribe, to work on riparian fence building, invasive species removal, native plantings, survey completions and data management, and public lands access management. This project supports the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Upper Klamath Basin Keystone Initiative by implementing high priority stewardship projects near the city of Klamath Falls, the Wood and Sprague River systems and the Williamson Delta. \$99,995 BLM; \$108,073 non-federal funds.

#### **Utah:**

- Utah Conservation Corps Bilingual Youth Corps: The Corps, based at Utah State University in Logan, Utah, will expand its Bilingual Youth Corps by hiring 36 bilingual high school students over a two-year period to help complete 50 miles of wilderness trail maintenance and habitat restoration on 135 acres of public lands on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National

Forest, the Salt Lake Watershed and along the Jordan River Parkway. \$70,000 Forest Service; \$121,436 non-federal funds.

### **Wisconsin**

- Inventory and Stewardship of Wisconsin River Islands: Operation Fresh Start will engage 60 young people ages 16–24 in the inventory, planning, and restoration activities to identify and conserve the natural resources on 64 islands owned by BLM within the lower Wisconsin River. Activities include GIS mapping of plant communities and observed wildlife, natural features, and human use and development, and removing invasive species control and adding site enhancements such as bird boxes and signage. \$55,072 BLM; \$94,714 non-federal funds.

\* These three pilot projects were previously announced in December 2011 when the America's Great Outdoors: Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists grant program was announced.

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