



BLM Recognizes Youth Non-profit for Commitment to Public Lands

The BLM recently joined the Public Lands Foundation (PLF) in awarding that organization's Landscape Stewardship Certificate of Appreciation to the Montana Conservation Corps (MCC), based in Bozeman, Mont. A ceremony was held at the BLM-Montana/Dakotas State Office in Billings with BLM staff from several field offices and other partners highlighting specific MCC contributions. MCC's entire Board of Directors and several staff members witnessed the presentation.

"Our partnership with Montana Conservation Corp enables the BLM to help us focus on several key goals involving youth, leadership, and public land stewardship," said Jamie E. Connell, BLM-Montana/Dakotas state director. "The Public Lands Foundation award is a fitting way to recognize the group's excellent contributions in conserving natural, cultural, and historic resources on our public lands."

The Landscape Stewardship Certificate of Appreciation honors the work done by private citizens who work to advance and sustain community-based stewardship on landscapes that include, in whole or in part, lands administered by BLM. The BLM



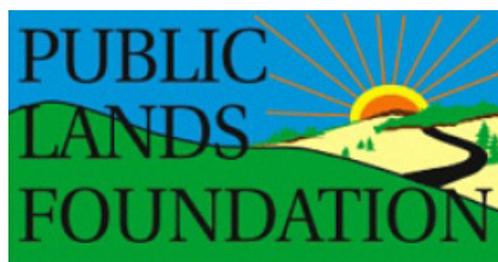
Montana Conservation Corps CEO/President Jono McKinney (center) accepts the PLF Landscape Stewardship Certificate of Appreciation from Dave Mari, PLF representative and former BLM Lewistown District Manager, and Associate State Director Kate Kitchell. The certificate recognizes the MCC's work with BLM Montana/Dakotas. Photo by Brad Purdy

nominated MCC for the award based on that organization's ongoing work on BLM-managed lands in Montana and South Dakota. In the last three years, nearly 500 youth have served about 15,000 hours on projects such as planting trees and shrubs; treating noxious weeds; restoring sagebrush, grassland and riparian environments; constructing and maintaining

trails; removing old fences and building new ones; installing signs; and inventorying and stabilizing cultural resources.

"This award reflects the exciting development of our partnership with the BLM, and we are so honored to be recognized by our Montana BLM partners. Working together at places like

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the Missouri Breaks Monument, Pompeys Pillar, Pryor Mountains, and Garnet Ghost Town, we are creating great experiences that connect young people to our public lands, giving them the skills to become the next generation of stewards of these lands while getting priority conservation and historic preservation projects completed,” said Jono McKinney, MCC CEO/ president. “Our partnership reflects how the Department of Interior’s 21st Century Conservation Service Corps initiative becomes a ‘win-win-win-win’ for the BLM, MCC, the land, local communities, and youth.”

Montana Conservation Corps (<http://mtcorps.org/>) is a nonprofit organization empowering youth and young adults through hands-on conservation service and education. Each season over 200 young adults are enrolled from across the country, age 18 and up, in their AmeriCorps program, and more than 100 local teens, ages 15 to 17, in their Youth Service Expedition program. MCC’s mission is to inspire young people to be leaders, stewards of the land, and engaged citizens who improve their communities.

“One of PLF’s objectives is to interest and involve young people in the management of BLM-managed lands through actions such as offering scholarships and convening a ‘student congress’ to make recommendations to the BLM Director,” said PLF member Dave Mari. “The MCC fits this objective extremely well by employing young people in on-the-ground projects to improve the BLM lands at a landscape level. We are very pleased to recognize MCC’s contributions to the public’s lands.”

The Public Lands Foundation (<http://www.publicland.org/>), whose members are mostly former BLM employees, advocates and works for the retention of America’s Public Lands in public hands, professionally and sustainably managed for responsible common use and enjoyment.

For more information, contact Dave Lefevre, BLM’s National Conservation Lands program lead, at (406) 896-5037.

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BLM photos