



NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release – April 13, 2011

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GOV. HICKENLOOPER ANNOUNCES \$1 MILLION FOR YOUTH CORPS PUBLIC LAND STEWARDSHIP JOBS

April 13, 2011 DENVER, CO – Gov. John Hickenlooper announced today that \$1 million in Great Outdoors Colorado/Lottery funding will create 400 statewide outdoor jobs for young adults through the Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA). Young people hired will work on stewardship projects for Colorado’s trails, parks, open spaces and wildlife habitat.

“Great Outdoors Colorado and the Colorado Youth Corps Association are combining two of Colorado’s best assets—our youth and our great outdoors,” Hickenlooper said. “These jobs will help provide young people with the job skills and training to be successful in future careers, while building a respect and love for the outdoors.”

More than half of the youth hired will work on projects this summer, while the remaining youth will work on projects later in 2011 and in 2012. Participants will generate an estimated 54,000 hours of labor. The Colorado Department of Natural Resources will select and manage their youth corps projects. Projects for local government and land trusts will be selected through a competitive process conducted by both Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and CYCA.

The Colorado Department of Natural Resources has used GOCO funds since 1999 for youth corps to work on a variety of projects including weed removal, fire prevention, beetle kill removal and trail construction and enhancement. Local governments and land trusts will provide additional projects.

Youth corps teaches job readiness and leadership skills with the goal of preparing young citizens to be productive and ready for the work force. It also gives young people important time in the outdoors and educates them about a range of stewardship issues, including water conservation, land use, fire danger and the impact of invasive species. While in the corps, members can receive high school or college credits or prepare to take their GED. They are also eligible to receive funding for college, trade school or student loans.

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The funding initiative announced today provides jobs for a segment of the population with high unemployment. In 2010, the unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 15.7 percent in Colorado, compared to an overall statewide rate of 8.7 percent.

“We are thrilled that Great Outdoors Colorado has chosen to dedicate funds to employ and train young people who are eager and willing to work hard to improve our public lands,” said Jennifer Freeman, CYCA’s Executive Director.

Youth corps is traditionally a popular employment opportunity, and has become more so since the economic crisis. Prior to the recession, youth corps received an average of three applications for every one job available; in 2009 and 2010, it received nine applications for every job. For half the participants, youth corps is their first job. Youth corps has also represented an important opportunity for minority and low-income youth. In 2010, 74 percent of corps members were low-income and 30 percent were non-white or Hispanic.

The latest funding initiative follows a proud history. Great Outdoors Colorado first provided money for the expansion of youth corps in 1996 when there were only five local corps in the state. The result of that seed funding was the creation of the Colorado Youth Corps Association, a statewide coalition of 10 accredited youth conservation corps that employ 1,800 young people annually.

Juan Marquez-Martinez, a member of the Mile High Youth Corps and a 2010 Corps Member of the Year, talked about his experience, “The corps has provided incredible opportunities for me that I haven’t seen in any other program: a chance to help the state that I grew up in and love so much, and the chance to earn useful skills I can apply in real life. I look forward to passing these values down to my own son.”

“Last year, the GOCO Board adopted among its top three priorities, the engagement of youth and families in the outdoors,” said GOCO Board Chair Peggy Montaña. “This initiative is a significant investment toward that goal by providing opportunities and jobs for the next generation in taking care of Colorado.”

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About Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO): Great Outdoors Colorado is the result of a citizens’ initiative passed by voters in 1992. It receives up to one-half of Lottery proceeds annually. Entities eligible to receive GOCO funds are local governments, land trusts and the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. To date, GOCO has provided funding for more than 3,400 projects in all of Colorado’s 64 counties. Since 1996, GOCO has invested \$5.5 million in youth corps efforts. For more information about GOCO, visit www.goco.org.

About Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA): The Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) is a statewide coalition of 10 accredited youth conservation corps that employ and train youth and young adults on land, water and energy conservation projects. Youth corps is a proven strategy for engaging young people in service to their communities and stewardship of their environment while cultivating valuable skills to meet the challenges of the 21st century. For more information about CYCA or the statewide youth corps coalition, visit www.CYCA.org.