



Media Release

Colorado Youth Corps Association announces \$800,000 in project funds for conservation corps programs.

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The Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) announced today that it will distribute over \$800,000 in conservation project funds to conservation corps programs in 2006 and 2007. In addition to distributing these funds to support 64 conservation projects such as trail construction, weed eradication and fire mitigation, CYCA will also distribute more than \$554,000 in AmeriCorps Education Awards for over 420 participating youth to attend college or trade school.

CYCA is a non-profit organization that supports the state's network of eleven youth conservation corps. Youth corps engage 800 young people annually in the conservation of Colorado's natural resources while improving the future for youth participants through work, learning, and service to their communities.

CYCA utilizes funds from Colorado State Parks, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the Colorado State Trails Program, the State Off-Highway Vehicle Program, Great Outdoors Colorado, the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative, and the State Board of Land Commissioners to support conservation project work throughout the state. A grant to CYCA from the Governor's Commission on National and Community Service funds the AmeriCorps Education Awards.

According to Ann Baker Easley, CYCA's executive director, "these project funds provide a tremendous boost to public land managers who continually work to maintain and enhance Colorado's natural resources for recreation and wildlife purposes. And the best part is, young people are taking an active role. Conservation corps participants are investing in these lands with their own sweat and labor, efforts that will help secure these public lands for generations to come."

Youth conservation corps, based on the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930's New Deal Days, are comprehensive employment and education programs that use conservation work projects as a means of developing young people's work and life skills. Youth corps participants, ages 14-25, conserve the beautiful places that Coloradans love and use on a regular basis. A visit to a State Park, National Park, National Forest, or even a city park on Colorado's high plains, Front Range or Western Slope will undoubtedly take visitors to trails and wildlife habitat restored by a youth corps crew.

Conservation corps do much more than enhance and maintain Colorado's public lands. They offer environmental education, life skills, and job-readiness training to participants, with the goal of creating responsible and active citizens. In addition to earning a wage, corpsmembers can earn an AmeriCorps Education Award for use in furthering their education. Since 1997, CYCA has distributed over \$963,000 in AmeriCorps funds to 896 youth and young adults.

The comprehensive "work-learn" program model of corps is proven effective. CYCA's recent evaluative study of Colorado corps conducted by OMNI Research and Training, Inc., a social science research firm based in Denver, confirms the findings of two decades of research into the impacts of corps programs. The study measured participant outcomes in educational and career outcomes, job readiness, civic engagement and social responsibility, environmental efficacy, self-esteem and social confidence. ***The OMNI study found significantly positive shifts across a number of key outcome areas.***

For more information about CYCA, contact Ann Baker Easley at 303-863-0604 or visit www.cyca.org.