



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Mile High Youth Corps Replaces Fence at Chico Basin Ranch** *Project Funded by State Land Board*

**Aug. 29, 2011, Colorado Springs, Colo.** – A crew of young people from the Mile High Youth Corps commenced work last week at Chico Basin Ranch. Located just south of Colorado Springs, Chico Basin is a working cattle ranch with an emphasis on conservation and education. The youth corps crew will replace cedar posts, some which may have been in the ground more than 100 years, with corner posts, cross bracing and new barbed wire fence. The project is made possible by the State Land Board, which manages the state-owned ranch. The State Land Board leases state-owned land to generate revenue for K-12 education. Hiring a youth corps allows the State Land Board to further impact education by providing on-the-job training and AmeriCorps Education awards to youth, and gives youth corps members a chance to work for the benefit of public education and young people in the state of Colorado.

In addition to the four-week job pulling and installing fence, the crew will camp at the ranch each weekday evening. “Most of our crew members have never experienced ranch life. This is a unique and exciting opportunity,” said Nancy O. Wilson, regional director of Mile High Youth Corps – Colorado Springs.

The Chico Basin crew will consist of eight youth corps crew members and one crew leader working for about four weeks to tear down existing fence and erect new fence throughout the 87,000-acre ranch. The crew was excited to discover that many of the worn and weathered cedar posts are still like new underground, just as they were in the early 1900s. “Colorado has a long and proud ranching tradition, and I’m excited to play a part in it,” said corps member John Biggs, 22.

Youth corps employs youth and young adults between the ages of 16 and 25 to work on land, water and energy conservation 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 AmeriCorps education awards for college, trade school or student loans. Corpsmembers also earn a full-time wage.

The funding initiative provides jobs for a segment of the population with high unemployment. The national unemployment rate for 16-to-24 year olds is currently 25 percent.

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### **About Mile High Youth Corps**

Mile High Youth Corps (MHYC) helps youth make a difference in themselves and their community through meaningful service opportunities and educational experiences. The Corps employs young adults on projects in neighborhoods, public lands and open spaces throughout Metro Denver and the Southern Front Range. By integrating paid work experience on community projects with career exploration, education, and lifeskills training, MHYC helps youth gain the knowledge, skills and motivation they need to make positive changes in their community, their own lives and the world. For more information, contact Alexandra Lee at alexandral@mhyc.net or 720.407.7281 (ext. 333) or visit [www.milehighyouthcorps.org](http://www.milehighyouthcorps.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](http://www.CYCA.org).

### **Media Contact/Schedule a Site Visit:**

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