CONSERVATION LEGACY
US FOREST SERVICE
2019 REPORT
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Conservation Legacy would like to thank the US Forest Service staff, Cooperators and Partners who make our shared vision, mission and programming a continued success. We absolutely could not positively impact these individuals, communities, and public lands without you!
Conservation Legacy is now in its 20th year of operation, supporting local programs that provide conservation service opportunities for youth, young adults and veterans to work on public lands and in their communities.

Continuing the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps and in the spirit of national service, Conservation Legacy regional programs include: Appalachian Conservation Corps (Harrisonburg, VA), Arizona Conservation Corps (Flagstaff, Tucson and Pinetop, AZ), Conservation Corps New Mexico (Las Cruces, NM), Conservation Corps North Carolina (Raleigh, NC), Southeast Conservation Corps (Chattanooga, TN), Southwest Conservation Corps (Durango and Salida, CO; Gallup, Zuni, Acoma and Hopi, NM), Stewards Individual Placements (National; Durango, CO and Beckley, WV) and Preserve America Youth Summit (National).

In addition to these programs, Conservation Legacy manages signature program models such as Ancestral Lands and the Veterans Fire Corps.
CONSERVATION LEGACY, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE, provides crew-based and individual placement opportunities for youth, young adults and veterans to serve and work on public lands. These opportunities foster an awareness of natural and cultural resources and develop skills in the stewardship and science of their management while actively contributing to the preservation of the public lands legacy.

In 2019, Conservation Legacy participants worked on projects in all U.S. Forest Service functional areas except law enforcement. Emphasis was placed on projects that enhanced recreation access, maintained critical infrastructure and trails, mitigated hazardous fuels and improving habitat. By completing these projects, participants from diverse backgrounds helped build capacity for the U.S. Forest Service to meet critical needs facing public lands.

Conservation Legacy programs provide opportunities for job training, personal development, conservation service and natural resource education while at the same time accomplishing needed work benefiting our public lands. Conservation Legacy provides high-quality, locally focused conservation service programs that are customized to meet the unique needs of participants, partners and communities. This approach allows for uniquely tailored programs that establish closer community bonds and leave deeper lasting impacts.

Through this partnership, Conservation Legacy crews constructed and maintained recreational trails, restored and maintained campgrounds, removed invasive species, restored wildlife and fisheries habitat, reduced wildfire fuel loads, installed erosion control features, preserved historic structures, constructed fences and barrier installations, and otherwise helped to support the management of our public lands. Individual Placement program participants engaged in field work, environmental sampling, site monitoring, GIS/GPS, data analysis, program development, archaeology, outreach, education, interpretation, visitor services and coordination of volunteer events. In all, over 600 unique opportunities were provided.

We continue to provide high quality training, personal and professional growth and real on the job work experience through meaningful conservation opportunities. In addition to the significant amount of work our participants completed, we also provided educational programs to increase knowledge of the environment and to develop the next generation of stewards with a deep appreciation for our public lands.
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: Including Conservation Corps Crews and Individual Placements
609

PROJECT LOCATIONS

- Crew/Individual Placement
- Project Locations

PROJECT WORK

PROJECTS WERE COMPLETED IN THE FOLLOWING NATIONAL FORESTS:

REGION 2
Grand Mesa Uncompahgre
and Gunnison National Forests
Pike-San Isabel National Forest
Rio Grande National Forest
Juan National Forest

REGION 3
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest
Carson National Forest
Cibola National Forest
Coconino National Forest
Coronado National Forest
Gila National Forest
Kaibab National Forest
Lincoln National Forest
Santa Fe National Forest
Southwestern Region Office
Tonto National Forest

REGION 8
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest
Cherokee National Forest
Conecuh National Forest
Daniel Boone National Forest
Dixie National Forest
George Washington and Jefferson National Forests
Mount Rogers National Rec Area
Nantahala National Forest
Sumter National Forest
Talladega National Forest
Tuskegee National Forest

REGION 9
Mark Twain National Forest
Monongahela National Forest
Wayne National Forest

REGION 10
Alaska Regional Office

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

TOTAL ACRES IMPROVED:
12,000+

FEET OF FENCeline CREATED/MAINTAINED:
85,395

MILES OF TRAILS CREATED/MAINTAINED:
240

TOTAL CREW PROJECT HOURS:
135,381
CONSERVATION LEGACY
VETRANS FIRE CORPS

THE VETERANS FIRE CORPS CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF OPERATION AND IMPACT

Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) worked in partnership with state and federal agencies like the National Park Service, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Americorps, and others to establish the Veterans Fire Corps (VFC) in 2009. The program engages recent-era Veterans on a variety of fire suppression projects and helps to develop the next generation of the nation’s wild-land firefighters. Four of Conservation Legacy’s local programs currently operate VFC crews.

Over 500 Veterans have completed seasons with Conservation Legacy through VFC programming since Southwest Conservation Corps supported the inaugural program. It can be challenging to readjust to civilian life after military service. Many VFC crew members find the program to be a welcome bridge between their service and ‘normal’ life. Traditional jobs tend to lack the structure, camaraderie, and adrenaline rush that vets experience during their military career, which often leaves them feeling unsatisfied and unfulfilled. “It’s taken me a long time to find something like this,” explained one VFC member while clearing ladder fuels in Arizona. “For a lot of us—for warriors—it’s hard to transition into a behind-the-desk job. I know there are a lot of veterans out there who are looking for something to put themselves into that means something again…And this is really helpful for that.” Conservation Legacy is honored to be able to provide capacity at the local level to engage veterans in an opportunity of continued service.

TOTAL ACRES IMPROVED:
Including prescribed burns
10,000+

MILES OF FIREBREAK CREATED/ MAINTAINED :
Creating safer communities along the wildland-urban interface
40

TOTAL PROJECT HOURS:
On all US Forest Service Veterans Fire Corps Projects
24,264

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS:
78

JOB PLACEMENT STATISTICS
519 TOTAL MEMBERS HAVE SERVED WITH THE VETERANS FIRE CORPS SINCE 2009, OF THAT TOTAL:

- 57% FOUND FIRE JOBS OR STAYED WITH VFC
- 40% FOUND FIRE JOBS WITHIN THE US FOREST SERVICE

CONSERVATION LEGACY PLACED VFC CREWS WITH:
Apache-Sitgreaves Nat. Forest
Chattahoochee-Oconee Nat. Forest
Cibola National Forest
Conecuh National Forest
George Washington and Jefferson NF
Gila National Forest
Grand Mesa Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests
Lincoln National Forest
Pike-San Isabel National Forest
Rio Grande National Forest
San Juan National Forest
Sumter National Forest
Talladega National Forest
Tuskegee National Forest
SOUTHEAST CONSERVATION CORPS
In 2019 Southeast Conservation Corps’ (SECC) VFC crew 46 was based out of the Villanow Work Center in the Conasauga Ranger District of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest. To start the season the members received Wildland Firefighter certifications and Chainsaw operator certifications. Throughout the season the crew completed fuels reduction projects in the Chatt-O National Forest in order to reduce the risk and severity of unwanted wildfires. The crew also received experience putting fire on the ground through participating in prescribed burns in the Conasauga Ranger District, Blue Ridge Ranger District, Chattooga Ranger District, Hitchi Experimental Forest, and the Conecuh National Forest. This crew also participated in responses to wildfires in San Angelo, TX and the Little River Fire on the Long Cane District of the Sumter National Forest. The work of this crew served to improve the resilience of our National Forests to the threat of forest fires, not only by responding to the outbreak of wildfire, but also working preemptively to reduce fuels in overgrown forests and reduce the severity of potential forest fires. The crew completed nearly 8,000 acres of prescribed burns during their season.

According to the project partner supervisor Mike Seaton, “The crew built a great reputation in the region.” Additionally, they had a, “Very successful year accomplishing close to 8,000 acres of prescribed burns, 40 plus days as an AD on wildland fires, completing 9 NWCG fire courses, and a lot of hours on chainsaws completing fuels reduction projects, land surveys, plant ID and Monitoring, timber marking, etc.”

SOUTHWEST CONSERVATION CORPS
The Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) has seen continued growth in our Veterans Fire Corps (VFC) in 2019. This year, SCC successfully ran its first winter program. Starting in early January, two leaders and five members arrived in Durango, CO and received training to become Wildland Firefighters and certified chainsaw sawyers. SCC partnered with the Cibola National Forest in New Mexico to complete high priority fuels mitigation work and prepare their forest for a prescribed burn. The first phase of a prescribed burn is clearing out all small trees and shrubs; that’s where the Veterans Fire Corps comes in. “I just point them in the right direction, and they get it done,” stated Kyrk Barron, Assistant on the Forest Service’s Apache Kid Wildlife Fire Module. The seven person crew spends their days felling, bucking and piling junipers and little ponderosa trees. The crew was able to thin out 25 acres and clear a one-mile fire break around the perimeter.

“The people in this field all want to work hard. They all want to be out in nature. We all have a similar mindset and positive attitude. It took me a little bit to find it, but I owe everything to Southwest Conservation Corps for developing my saw skills and giving me the experience.”, stated Ahren Rae-Will, SCC VFC crew member.

ARIZONA CONSERVATION CORPS
In partnership with the City of Flagstaff Fire Department, the US Forest Service, and Conservation Legacy, Arizona Conservation Corps (AZCC) crew 131 worked on a hazardous fuels reduction project in an effort to reduce the risk of unwanted wildfire and to improve the resilience of the watershed ecosystem upstream of Flagstaff, Arizona. Dry Lake Hills is located upstream from the financial and cultural center of Flagstaff. Neighborhoods, infrastructure and recreation areas located within this area are vulnerable to severe wildfire. A catastrophic fire would severely threaten the area’s recreational and scenic values and impact the tourist industry, as well as kill large areas of forest with crown fire, threatening important wildlife habitat including Mexican Spotted Owl Protected Activity Centers. This project strongly aligns with and is immediately adjacent to the landscape-scale conservation initiative, Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI).

Arizona Conservation Corps Veterans Fire Corps crews also partnered with the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest for the summer/fall season of 2019. The crews worked on the Lakeside, Alpine, Clifton and Black Mesa Ranger Districts. The scope of work focused on completing fuels reduction and fire management projects. In total, the crew completed 161.4 acres of fuels reduction work and assisted interagency staff on a 400 acre prescribed burn.

CONSERVATION CORPS NEW MEXICO
The Conservation Corps New Mexico Veterans Fire Corps crews partnered with the Gila and Lincoln National Forests during the winter season of 2019. The crews worked on the Silver City, Wilderness, Smokey Bear, Carlsbad and Sacramento ranger districts. The scope of work focused on completing fuels reduction and fire management projects. In total the crew completed 89.73 acres of fuels reduction work.
Coconino National Forest has experienced decades of fire suppression activities and as a result, the City of Flagstaff and the Dry Lake Hills area is at risk of catastrophic wildfire and post-fire flood impacts. In 2010, Flagstaff experienced the Schultz Fire, burning 15,000 acres and producing at least $133 million in economic damages. Forest management activities within portions of the Coconino National Forest have increased the risk of catastrophic wildfire events and the effects of severe post-fire flooding to the City of Flagstaff.

The Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project (FWPP), a city and federally funded forest thinning and fuels reduction project is aimed at reducing these risks. Due to the rugged and steep terrain, the Dry Lake Hills region within FWPP has historically not been targeted for fuels reduction. Therefore, this region is at an especially high risk to experience a catastrophic wildfire event. Unfortunately, the Dry Lake Hills is located above the financial and cultural center of Flagstaff so a wildfire has the potential to result in severe economic, social, and ecological consequences for the City of Flagstaff.

A wildfire could severely threaten the area’s recreational and scenic values and impact the tourist industry. Ecologically, a crown fire would kill large areas of forest and would threaten to destroy important wildlife habitat including Mexican Spotted Owl Protected Activity Centers. Neighborhoods and infrastructure located within this portion of FWPP are vulnerable to severe post-fire flooding. In partnership with the City of Flagstaff Fire Department, the US Forest Service, and Conservation Legacy— Arizona Conservation Corps (AZCC) is conducting hand thinning operations to reduce hazardous fuels and improve the resilience of the watershed ecosystem upstream of Flagstaff. This project strongly aligns with and is immediately adjacent to the landscape-scale conservation initiative, Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI). One of the major goals of 4FRI is to restore the structure of Ponderosa pine ecosystems and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires through fuels reduction. The FWPP operations adjacent to current 4FRI mechanically treated units strategically creates an expanded and more continuous treatment area and a more fire resilient forest around Flagstaff.

The primary objective of this project is to implement forest hand thinning operations, in strategic locations, to decrease the threat of catastrophic wildfire and damage caused by post-fire flood impacts. To accomplish this, AZCC engaged young adults, and military veterans to complete this work. Programs of Conservation Legacy are founded on the legality of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Conservation Legacy is now in its 21st year of Corps programming with young people - providing a structured, safe, educational and challenging work environment by supporting locally based conservation programs, like AZCC. These programs provide service and work opportunities for a diverse group of individuals to complete important conservation and community projects for the public benefit.

AZCC will continue to deploy young adult crews in the winter and spring session to complete the remaining 51 acres. Crews will be trained in forest management careers, obtain job skills training and receive education in fire ecology and fire regimes. By doing so, this will provide networking opportunities with forest management professionals across multiple agencies including the United States Forest Service and the City of Flagstaff Fire Department. AZCC will coordinate with the City of Flagstaff and FWPP to organize and conduct 2 public outreach events led by AZCC volunteers. AZCC will continue in its mission of providing opportunities and on the job training for our members to foster the next generation of land stewards.
INDIAN YOUTH SERVICE CORPS PROGRAM

In 2014, the Forest Service’s Office of Tribal Relations provided funding that began a Native youth development relationship between the Tonto National Forest and the Arizona Conservation Corps (AZCC) that has resulted in the AZCC Native crews working each year since. AZCC connects youth, young adults and recent era military veterans with conservation service work projects on public and tribal lands.

Recently, Native crews helped with the restoration of portions of the Superstition Wilderness on the Tonto National Forest as well worked on portal systems impacted by the devastating Woodbury fire. Further north, the well-established AZCC White Mountain office has been managing Native crews for years in accordance with the White Mountain Apache Tribe and with state and federal agencies such as the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. Starla Reno (Tohono O’odham) AZCC Native Crew Leader shares about her conservation service experience, “The experience was so impactful as each crew member, including myself, was very connected to the project areas. Each area held a strong history with our ancestors’ footprints and presence they left behind. We understood that we are the caretakers of the land and we must do our best to preserve these lands because our ancestors, our future, and our Earth are depending on us.” The long-term meaningful work completed by Native crews on the Tonto National Forest, and on other forests in the area, will serve as an integral part of the foundation for creating a sustainable Indian Youth Service Corps (IYSC) program in southern Arizona and New Mexico.

AZCC has built solid relationships with the Tribes of Arizona. The San Carlos Apache and Tohono O’odham Tribal Nations are both slated to implement AZCC supported Indian Youth Service Corps (IYSC) pilot programming in 2020. The Cocopah Tribe is working to partner with AZCC and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to run two Salt Cedar removal crews that will work key sections of the Colorado River to free-up resources for culturally significant species like the Cottonwood. Finally, AZCC is working with the Ft McDowell Yavapai/Apache Tribal Community wildlife department to plan and conduct an eagle nest understory restoration project that is essential to the health and well-being of one of the Tribe’s most critical pairing of bald eagles.

Greg Hansen (Ponca), AZCC Tribal Relations Coordinator, reflects on the time he has spent working with AZCC Native crews, “after working with our Native youth leaders over the past six-plus years I’ve been inspired by their sincere interest to learn about the land and by their willingness to work hard at becoming goodhearted people. I’ve been honored to work with some of the best here at AZCC and look forward to continuing to learn from and mentor our awesome Native youth so that they will be able to pass what they’ve learned about caring for the land on to the next generation of Native leaders.” Watch for more on this priority Native youth IYSC development initiative by AZCC to work with Tribes and federal agency partners to provide quality conservation work, training, education, career mentoring and job placement to Native youth and veterans.

APACHE-SITGREAVES NATIONAL FOREST AND HISTORICORPS

AZCC White Mountains Crew 361 joined HistoriCorps for a week of historic preservation work in Pinedale, AZ. Located in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, the crew worked on the Pinedale Ranger Station originally built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1934. Upon arrival, the former barn was quite a sight – panels of white and teal lead paint were peeling off the sides, patches of roof tiles were curled and missing, and failing wood was clearly visible.

Project partners from HistoriCorps continually taught, supervised, and laughed alongside the hardworking crew the entire week. The majority of the preservation efforts for the week were scraping and stripping the toxic lead paint that covered the building’s exterior, in preparation for repainting. Paint is often the first line of defense from the elements – and buildings are much less likely to be vandalized if they’re well cared for. The crew built a containment tent lining two exterior walls – this prevented lead paint chips from blowing away and becoming an environmental contaminant. They then suited up in lead-isolation suits and PPE: Hard hat, eye pro, special lead-dust respirator, rubber gloves, full body suit, and shoe covers.

In between paint scraping, each crew member got to choose, remove, and restore a window from the ranger station structure. Using a Speed-Eater to speed-heat the lead paint for removal, each member learned how to remove, clean, and re-glaze the glass. Once the windows were returned to their rightful sills, every member was able to point to a window and proudly say, “I did that!” Both crew and staff were able to keep the enthusiasm up through the sweat, heat, and laborious project work. Partnering with HistoriCorps was an exciting change in pace for the trail crew. It showed them that the skills they developed on the trail can translate to a variety of different fields; whether that might be historic preservation, carpentry, and renovations, or leadership, and keeping a positive attitude.
I am happy to have helped the community and this was a good stepping stone to be able to actually do national service in wildland fire. At AZCC I received all fire certifications, got a solid experience and received a job offer with the Black Mesa Hotshots.”

–Robert Jolles, VFC Crew Member, Arizona Conservation Corps

THE WOODBURY FIRE AND THE ARIZONA TRAIL

The Arizona Conservation Corps (AZCC), a program of Conservation Legacy, in partnership with the Tonto National Forest, is completing important trail maintenance and Burn Area Emergency Stabilization work on section 19 of the Arizona National Scenic Trail that burned during the Woodbury Fire of 2019, by engaging AmeriCorps members in projects that will benefit the forests and community that surround it.

Earlier this summer, the Woodbury Fire consumed 123,000 acres of National Forest land, which included 30 miles of the Arizona National Scenic Trail in the Superstition Mountains. The Arizona Trail Association (ATA) completed an assessment of the trail conditions after the blaze died down in the area between Rogers Trough Trailhead and Roosevelt Lake. They found the trail passable but very hard to follow, with numerous blowouts from erosion events, downed trees, and new growth in the middle of the trail tread. With the results of the ATA’s assessment and the region’s busy thru-hiking and outdoor recreation season fast approaching, Tonto National Forest was in need of a trail crew to begin maintenance efforts on the damaged trail. In October, Arizona Conservation Corps (AZCC) responded and deployed crew 132 on the Reavis Trail.

The Reavis trail lies hidden in the Superstition Wilderness. A two-hour drive on rutted dirt roads takes you back to Roger’s Trough Trailhead, the entrance to the wilderness. The landscape is undeniably beautiful, even with a burn scar from the recent fire. Our crews spent two weeks working on the Reavis trail, clearing portions that had been affected by the burn. For some of the members, it was their first time traveling and living in the backcountry. The hike in was challenging, they had to carry all their food, gear and tools for eight days. The nights were cold and windy, and the work was physical. When asked at the end of the season what each members’ most memorable and rewarding project was, this was it. Each member was affected not only by the remarkable landscape, but particularly by the work and the meaning they found in it. Members felt fortunate to be able to work on a project that was helping the land after it had been burned through. They realized the value in being a part of re-opening this beautiful space to those wanting to experience the same wilderness that had challenged and rewarded them.

“Be sure someone knows where you are going...” reads the ominous warning at the end of the description for the trail. Of course, the crew was well equipped with all the gear they would need and a detailed project framework, working closely with USFS rangers. The hitch went off without a hitch so to speak, but featured the juxtaposition of hardship tempered by deep fulfillment that is so often characterized by life on a trail crew. Conservation work is rarely easy, but the profound satisfaction of being part of something bigger than yourself and giving back to the land that raised you is often revolutionary for participants.
In a region where snow is still common in the middle of June, working outside takes on a whole new set of challenges. That's what Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) crew 443 learned last summer when they set off to complete a large-scale rockwork project in the alpine meadows of the Weminuche Wilderness.

High spring runoff caused severe erosion along Pine River trail 523 near Vallecito, an unincorporated community just a few miles northeast of Durango, Colorado. One particular bend in the trail—flanked by the river on one side and a sheer cliff face on the other—experienced extensive damage. The loss of this 50’ portion of the trail would permanently divide the trail into two sections, so the rangers of the San Juan National Forest Columbine District determined that the only option was to restore the section by armorimg the downhill side of the trail with an 8ft tall rock retention wall. They reached out Southwest Conservation Corps who jumped at the chance to move big rocks in the mountains—their specialty.

However, when crew 443 arrived for their first hitch in June, they were met with stubborn snowpack still clinging to the high country and downed trees crisscrossing the trail. According to local paper The Durango Herald, the snowpack in Vallecito reached 160% of normal levels in the winter of 2019. Their worksite was 9 miles into the wilderness, and the crew were relying on a horse packing outfit to haul gear for their campsite in order to establish an efficient base camp. "The snowpack was crazy last year," reminisced SCC Program Director Jordan Burningham. "The crew spent the first hitch clearing the trail for the horse packers and when the snow finally melted, all the runoff caused the river to run high, and the crew had to wait until the water receded, so the actual rockwork portion of the project had to be postponed for several weeks until conditions returned to normal.”

Finally, in early July, the crew was able to begin work on the rock wall. They hauled boulders from a nearby rockfall using a highline griphoist and rock nets, placed them using rock bars, and smashed smaller rocks into ‘crush’ with sledgehammers to fill between the cracks and reinforce the wall. The work alone was physically demanding, but the crew also lived in the backcountry for up to two weeks at a time to complete the project: using a latrine, hanging their food and ‘smellable’ items in trees at night, and sleeping in tents. Two members unfortunately had to leave the project early due to medical issues. Despite the hardships, the crew remained dedicated and enthusiastic about the project. “It’s been absolutely beautiful,” insisted Jonathan Reed, one of the members of crew 443. “A lot of hard work, but I knew what I was signing up for. This is my favorite project we’ve had. When we started, we were 8 feet below the water, and now the wall’s as tall as I am. It’s just been really rewarding.”

Throughout the 13-week-long project, the crew worked a total of 3,430 hours, constructed a 550 square foot rock retaining wall, and removed 187 downed trees from the trail corridor. “This was the most important project implemented on the District in 2019,” said Don Kelly, USFS Trails Foreman. “Despite the remote setting, the installation of a complicated mechanical highline, the high-water levels in the river, and medical issues forcing 2 crew members to leave the program early, the project was completed ahead of schedule.” The crew wrapped up work in late September with the successful completion of a formidable retention wall, which will secure the trail for years to come and protect the surrounding habitat from overuse.
**CONSERVATION LEGACY**

**SOUTHWEST CONSERVATION CORPS**  
**USFS ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION**

**LOS VALLES YOUTH PROGRAMMING**

The Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) Los Valles office has a long-standing partnership with the Conejos Peak Ranger District of the Rio Grande National Forest. As one of the first supporters of SCC in the San Luis Valley, adult crews have completed a variety of projects over the years from maintaining sections of the Continental Divide Trail to logging out OHV trails to remote crosscut projects in the South San Juan Wilderness. During that time, there has been a desire to engage more local youth in these conservation projects which led to a new partnership between Conejos County Social Services and the Conejos Peak Ranger District to fund a 5-week youth crew based out of Conejos County.

**YOUTH VOICES**

**Hector Gonzalez**  
This program is the best program that there is for kids like me. I learned a lot and achieved a lot while being in this program and I hope it does the same for other kids as well in the future. I really enjoyed working with the people that were in the same program as me and I’m proud that I learned to reroute trails and I learned how to use tools that I’ve never used before.

The 2019 Conejos County Youth Crew consisted of local youth ages 14-18 that spent the 5-week program camped out with no cell service completing important maintenance projects on the Duck Lake Trail outside of Antonito, CO. The crew maintained 6 miles of trail, designed and constructed a 500-foot trail reroute, cleared 13 downed trees, and installed 15 new drains. Project partners Gerard Sandoval and Jeremiah Martinez were extremely grateful for the youth crew’s help in maintaining the trail systems and were impressed with the quality of work that the crew completed. In addition to completing quality project work, crew members participated in weekly education days that exposed them to different job pathways, opportunities for engagement in their local community, and local recreation opportunities. After an education day spent at a local fish hatchery, one of the members was so inspired that he inquired about volunteer opportunities and decided that he wanted to go to college to pursue a career with CO Parks and Wildlife.

The crew was fully funded by Social Services in hopes to provide low income families with an additional income source and because of the success of the 2019 season, they have decided to fully fund another 5-week session in 2020. SCC LV is grateful for the strong local partners in their region that continue to provide meaningful work and funding to support youth development.

**Diego Romero**

If there is one thing that being in the SCC has taught me, it is responsibility. The physical activity has increased my endurance. When I first started I couldn’t go five minutes without stopping. But now I can hike one mile in fifteen minutes. The ones who kept me going were Lane and Kiersten, my helpful crew leaders, who never let me give up. I’m very thankful for having them as my crew leaders. If I do join next session I will do it for more learning and to lose more weight. But, overall I really enjoyed my time at SCC and I hope to do it next year.

**Jacob Cisneros**

Each moment I spent working, not only did I learn things, but I taught things too. There was never a time I truly hated something, instead I enjoyed each moment and laughed at things that weren’t even that funny. Above all else, the most important things were the leadership skills everyone has learned, and how everyone became good friends.
TAYLOR WILLOW, CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL RESOURCE ASSISTANT

My work has been based in the USFS Rocky Mountain Regional Office in Denver, CO, in support of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail program. Before I was hired, the entire 3,100 mile long CDT was administered by a single USFS staff member; I was able to step in and take on projects she previously didn’t have the capacity for. These projects fell into two main categories: geospatial data and systems management, and the development of web-based interpretive content to educate the public about the CDT. It’s been fun and fulfilling to have such diverse types of projects; I would be exercising my analytical and technical skills one moment and doing some creative writing the next. Though the work has mostly been office-based, I was able to join a few field trips during the summer to visit the CDT in other regions and to meet local recreation staff. Going out in the field and learning about how trails are managed and maintained on the ground was a fantastic experience and a highlight of my term.

Working within a federal agency has shown me that the "service" mentality doesn’t have to stop at volunteerism. I have had the good fortune to work with so many people who are passionate about what they do in support of public lands and see their jobs as a form of service to the American public - even the paperwork and day-to-day tasks are necessary for the good work to get done. Service does not need to mean sacrifice; service is bringing a passion and joy and forward motion to doing good work for a cause that you and others care about.

The Continental Divide Trail program is all about collaboration. Along this 3,100 mile long trail, we work with federal staff from 20 National Forests, 4 National Park Service units, and 5 BLM State Offices. We also work with dozens of NGO partners along the entire length of the trail. My closest collaborations have been with the staff of the Continental Divide Trail Coalition, the trail-wide partner for the CDT, whose office is conveniently located down the street in Golden, CO. I have also interacted with the Montana Conservation Corps, Montana Wilderness Alliance, Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, Colorado Fourteener’s Initiative, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, Wildlands Restoration Volunteers, National Forest Foundation, and Environmental Learning for Kids during field visits to CDT trail maintenance project sites, or for outreach events about careers in the Forest Service where I represented the Resource Assistant program.

The last 10 months have taught me an incredible amount about what it means to work in a federal agency. The Forest Service in particular, with its multiple-use mission, has been fascinating to be immersed in, and different in many ways from how I imagined it might be. I’ve grown knowledgeable about the foundations of land management and the systems the Forest Service works within to get the job done, and this term has proven to me that staying in this career path would be a great fit. In my interactions with the wider recreation and trails community, I’ve really felt like I’ve found "my people." Moving forward, I plan to use the hiring authority from my RA term to continue a career path in the federal government as a GIS specialist working to support recreation, trails, and resource management.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: PAONIA TRAIL MAINTENANCE

If you were hiking in the backcountry of the Paonia Ranger District last summer, chances are you came across two Stewards Individual Placement Program members, Rachel Schmitzer and Holly Henrikson, busy at work. These two individuals spent a majority of their USFS project work clearing, maintaining and constructing miles and miles of trails, using stock to pack in their tools and gear.

Spending week-long overnight hitches in the backcountry, both Rachel and Holly developed their field knowledge and personal skill set. Regular activities included clearing felled trees, using hand tools to repair tread and damaged spots of trails, removing dangerous rocks and obstacles, and more. Rachel recalls, “This season has been one of skill development; I’ve acquired so many new perspectives and experiences that I deeply value and will continue to explore. I learned how to safely operate many new tools, how to most efficiently improve trails, and how to communicate Forest Service rules and regulations to the public.”

In addition to their field work, Rachel and Holly interacted with and educated members of the public on a regular basis. The duo recalls their encounters with the citizens of the local community as overwhelmingly positive. Hikers, hunters, fishermen, and cowboys were always interested in and thankful for the recreational work that they were doing, bolstering Rachel and Holly’s enthusiasm for the work. Holly’s even excited for the start of next summer, when she plans to return as a true seasonal technician for the District.
CONSERVATION LEGACY
APPALACHIAN CONSERVATION CORPS
USFS SOUTHERN AND EASTERN REGIONS

BAILEYS TRAIL SYSTEM HIGHLIGHT
The Wayne National Forest is a new partner for ACC, and one that has already provided a wealth of valuable experiences for our members and leaders. On the Bailey’s Trail System, ACC crews have worked on over seven miles of new mountain bike trails, part of what will be an 88 mile brand new trail system. ACC crews work alongside professional trail-building crews, who run mechanized equipment to do the bulk of the earth-moving, as well as interfacing with Wayne National Forest employees and other project partners. Crew members not only get to build trail working alongside equipment, which is an experience not currently offered elsewhere in our programming, they also are able to network with a wide variety of professionals in the outdoor recreation and natural resource management fields.

Our crews quickly fell into a rhythm working with the professional crews, sending ACC sawyers ahead of the equipment to clear fresh corridor, and then falling back behind the equipment to polish the machine-cut tread with hand tools. Our crews sculpted 40 drains in order to make the most sustainable trail possible, and constructed two rock bridges to ensure long lasting and safe creek crossings.

Constructing designated mountain bike trail is a relatively new experience for most of our crews, giving them the opportunity to learn new trail-building techniques and to think about trail construction in a slightly different way. Working with the Wayne National Forest gives our crew members and leaders learning opportunities to further their trail-building knowledge, as well as ample space for networking and personal development. This project has been an excellent chance for growth both as an organization and on an individual level, and we look forward to working more with the Wayne National Forest in the future.

MOUNT ROGERS DEVELOPED RECREATION HIGHLIGHT
While ACC crews frequently work with trail tools and move vast quantities of dirt, sometimes we get the occasion to do a little carpentry and work with power tools. One such opportunity was tearing out and re-decking an area around a bathhouse at Bear Tree Recreation Area. Generally, such projects allow ACC crews to work closely with partner staff, and this was no exception. Crew members got the benefit of tool and carpentry knowledge from Mount Rogers Staff and were able to expand their carpentry skills immensely over the course of this project.

Even when the project ran into difficulties, such as uneven measurements and rotten support beams, the crew was able to brainstorm solutions and see their ideas take shape. By the end of the hitch, even the members with no prior experience were seasoned carpenters, confident with the necessary tools and able to take measurements with ease. It is gratifying to be able to watch members grow and learn, especially with such excellent support from partner staff.
DANIEL BOONE NATIONAL FOREST HIGHLIGHT

Project work completed in the Daniel Boone National Forest in 2019 represented only the second time that SECC crews worked with this partner. Crews were largely tasked with completing developed recreation work, which is outside of the standard conservation trail work that crews generally complete. Crews worked to rehab campsites, picnic areas, and ADA pathways to improve safety and access for visitors to the National Forest. This work provided many new learning opportunities for crew members including working with asphalt and working alongside USFS staff. The supervising partner for this project reported that, “Despite never working with asphalt the group learned as they went and continued to refine their process. The group did their own quality control and went back to correct or improve portions that they started learning on to bring it to a place that met their and the FS standards. Very diligent works and did a fantastic job of spreading out the “heavy lifting” and the easier jobs.”
**PARTNER AND PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE**

**VIVIANA RUIZ,**
**VOLUNTEERS & SERVICE PROGRAM AND PARTNERSHIP COORDINATOR, MOUNT RогERS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA**

“[The crew needed] very little direction from our staff, which is a huge help. They are self-sufficient and they really knew where to go and what to do!”

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**KIM OBELE,**
**MAGDALENA DISTRICT RANGER, CIBOLA NATIONAL FOREST**

“I’m happy and fortunate to host this crew of Veterans to help us meet our management goals in the San Mateo Mountains. Their hard work contributes directly to the mission of the Forest Service – caring for the land and serving the people.”

---

**VICTOR PEREZ,**
**CREW MEMBER, CONSERVATION CORPS NEW MEXICO**

“My season in the Gila National Forest was challenging, in a positive way. Having felt lost for the majority of my life, being present in difficult moments on this crew gave me some sense of clarity, it steered me in a better direction. Hiking several miles, a day with heavy gear and working long hours gave me a change to evaluate myself under strenuous conditions. This program has given me something to aim for in life, I am relieved that programs like this exist.”

---

**ROBERT JOLLES,**
**VFC CREW MEMBER, ARIZONA CONSERVATION CORPS**

“I am prior military and I know what National Service is. I am happy to have helped the community and this was a good stepping stone to be able to actually do national service in wildland fire. At AZCC I received all fire certifications, got a solid experience and received a job offer with the Black Mesa Hotshots.”

---

**JASON NEEL,**
**USFS TRAIL CREW LEADER, GILA NATIONAL FOREST**

“The crew exhibited professionalism and enthusiasm for the diverse projects they completed this season, all of which were demanding in unique ways. I was confident that I could assign them a variety of tasks and that those tasks would be completed in an efficient manner. The crew was always up for the challenge, and they accomplished an immense amount of work in the process. CCNM has been an asset to this forest’s trail program.”

---

**SAM GOLD,**
**CREW MEMBER, APPALACHIAN CONSERVATION CORPS**

“I have seen my service translate to a better National Forest trail system and seeing people enjoy my work makes me feel proud and fulfilled.”

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**ANTONIA NINO,**
**CREW LEADER, CONSERVATION CORPS NEW MEXICO**

“This hitch crew 377 got the chance to explore many parts of New Mexico. We were surveying campgrounds in Carson, Santa Fe and Cibola National Forest. One of the days, we had the opportunity to see the Christmas tree that is going to be placed in the White House be escorted and shipped to Washington, DC. Overall, we got to survey three different National Forests in New Mexico, while getting the chance to fall in love with all its beauty.”

---

**FRANK GONZALEZ,**
**VFC CREW MEMBER, ARIZONA CONSERVATION CORPS**

“National service means working to improve the environment around you, whatever that is. I know that the work we did will help prevent fires in the future. I got to give back and preserve natural resources.”

---

**DAVID PAUL,**
**RESOURCE ASSISTANT, MARK TWAIN NATIONAL FOREST**

“I have learned that the work involved in the maintenance and beautification of our world’s natural resources is an ongoing and extremely involved process. It is vitally important to preserve our natural resources and educate the public on the subject.”

---

**HANNAH HATHeway,**
**RESOURCE ASSISTANT, GUNNISON NATIONAL FOREST**

“Natural resource management is a lot more than just keeping trees alive. It’s balancing all of the human needs/desires (camping, hiking, fishing, traveling, mining) with the well-being of the environment.”

---

**RACHEL SCHMITZER,**
**RESOURCE ASSISTANT, GUNNISON NATIONAL FOREST**

“This season has been one of skill development; I’ve acquired so many new perspectives and experiences that I deeply value and will continue to explore. I learned how to safely operate many new tools, how to most efficiently improve trails, how to communicate FS rules and regulations to the public. My work for the Forest Service has allowed me to better understand what it takes to manage the wild ecosystems that are utilized and enjoyed by a variety of people for a variety of reasons... I’m very interested in continuing to be a steward for our natural public resources and using my skills to help others enjoy and care for our communal lands.”

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**DON KELLY,**
**USFS TRAILS FOREMAN, SAN JUAN NATIONAL FOREST**

“This was the most important project implemented on the District in 2019. Despite the remote setting, the installation of a complicated mechanical highline, the high-water levels in the river, and medical issues forcing 2 crew members to leave the program early, the project was completed ahead of schedule.”

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**“I JUST POINT THEM IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND THEY GET IT DONE.”**

—Kyrk Barron, Assistant on the Forest Service’s Apache Kid Wildlife Fire Module.
CONCLUSION

Participation in corps programming has a long track record of success resulting in young people developing professional and life skills as well as an increased awareness of environmental and resource stewardship. These activities promote the mission and vision to which both the United States Forest Service and Conservation Legacy are committed. The physical and financial support from the US Forest Service, the interns, crews, communities, partner agencies, staff and partner conservation corps in this effort have been remarkable.

Conservation Legacy and partner corps are humbled to continue to learn and grow together and to continue to provide systems, administrative and coordinating services that can build capacity at the local level to engage youth and young adults with public lands, for the betterment of our shared future.

Conservation Legacy is extremely enthusiastic about the opportunity to continue its partnership with the US Forest Service to expand opportunities for young people to serve on public lands and to provide much needed services in the areas of land restoration, trail maintenance and construction, vegetation management, wildfire risk mitigation, community development and other critical needs.
APPENDIX A: PRESS AND MEDIA

CREWS PROTECT RIPARIAN HABITAT AND NATURAL WATERS ON THE NORTH KAIBAB RANGER DISTRICT
KAIBAB NATIONAL FOREST NEWS RELEASE • OCTOBER 2019

VETERAN GOES FROM FIGHTING IN IRAQ TO FIREFIGHTING
US DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS • SEPTEMBER 2019

BAILEYS TRAIL IS HELPING ECOTOURISM IN SOUTHEAST OHIO
THE ATHENS OHIO POST • SEPTEMBER 2019

ARIZONA CONSERVATION CORPS CREW WORKS WITH HISTORICORPS IN NORTHERN ARIZONA
CONSERVATION LEGACY • AUGUST 2019
https://www.conservationlegacy.org/news/azhistoricorps

HISTORICORPS, FOREST SERVICE, VOLUNTEERS SAVING BROLLIAR CABIN FLAGSTAFF BUSINESS NEWS • AUGUST 2019
https://www.flagstaffbusinessnews.com/historicorps-forest-service-volunteers-saving-brolliar-cabin/

GENERATING STEAM IN ARIZONA: CULTIVATING A NEW GENERATION OF FOREST CHAMPIONS
NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION • AUGUST 2019

NONPROFITS HELP MITIGATE SPREAD OF WEEDS AROUND 416 FIRE BURN AREA
DURANGO JOURNAL • JULY 2019
https://the-journal.com/articles/146862

BAND OF BROTHERS
EL DEFENSOR CHIEFTAIN • FEBRUARY 2019

APPENDIX B: FUNDING

FUNDING AMOUNTS:
USFS Apache $240,000.00
USFS Carson $73,870.24
USFS Cherokee $12,400.00
USFS Cibola $181,086.27
USFS Coconino $351,833.00
USFS Coronado $205,839.50
USFS Gila $199,126.45
USFS GMUG $264,373.75
USFS GW&J $87,230.34
USFS Kaibab $32,535.00
USFS Lincoln $75,908.28
USFS Mark Twain $38,679.04
USFS Monongahela $96,699.79
USFS Nat’l For. NC $45,000.00
USFS Pike San Isabel $312,744.26
USFS Rio Grande $292,059.08
USFS Rocky Mtn $32,148.57
USFS San Juan $819,974.74
USFS Southern Region $516,710.60
USFS Southwestern $86,764.09
USFS Tonto $227,569.81
USFS Wayne Nat’l Forest $24,800.00
USFS Alaska $13,476.75

TOTAL US FOREST SERVICE FUNDING:
$4,230,820.56

APPENDIX C: FULL PROJECT LIST

CREW PROJECTS

APPALACHIAN CONSERVATION CORPS
GW and Jeff NF Dev. Rec 18-19 Improve recreational access
Saw Crew/Planting Restore, protect and improve habitat
VA ERFO

ARIZONA CONSERVATION CORPS
CR14 1450 COCO 14-PA-11030416-035 COCO Weeds - 08/19/19 Restore, protect and improve habitat
SD15 T1508 TNF Mesa RD 15-PA-11031200-016 08/13/2020 Improve recreational access
SD16 1615 TNF 16-PA-11031200-015 $201,500 - 08/13/2020 PLC Improve recreational access
SD16 1620 CNF 16-PA-11030500-051 12/31/19 Improve recreational access
SD16 1641 GNF 16-PA-11030600-019 - 08/30/2021 Improve recreational access
AZ17 1761 CNF 17-PA-11030500-023 $72,890 - 11/01/2020 Restore, protect and improve habitat
AZ18 1823 COCO 18-PA-11030407-018 Bill McClintock Draw 12/31/2019 PLC Improve recreational access
AZ18 1841 ASNF TAM1 18-PA-11030110-019 12/31/2018 Improve recreational access
AZ18 1854 COCO 18-PA-11030408-027 12/31/19 Protect communities from wildfire and mitigate climate related impacts
AZ18 1861 ASNF 18-PA-11030110-022 11/1/20 Restore, protect and improve habitat
AZ18 1865 ASNF 18-PA-11030110-022 11/1/20 Restore, protect and improve habitat
AZ18 1867 CNF 18-PA-11030500-051 12/31/19 Improve recreational access
AZ18 1872 CNF 18-PA-11030500-054 12/31/19 Improve recreational access
AZ18 1879 USFS Southwestern Region Developed Recreation Youth Crew 11/01/20 Improve recreational access
AZ19 1907 ASNF 19-PA-11030100-001 12/31/19 Restore, protect and improve habitat
AZ19 1906 COCO 19-PA-11030406-006 11/30/19 Improve recreational access
AZ19 1915 COCO Weeds 19-PA-11030416-005 Protect communities from wildfire and mitigate climate related impacts
AZ19 1922 CNF AIC Improve recreational access
AZ19 1924 ASNF VETS 19-PA-11030100-003 Improve recreational access
AZ19 1925 COCO YCC 19-PA-1103408-011 08_31_19 Improve recreational access
AZ19 1953 TNF BAER 12/31/21 Improve recreational access
AZ19 1953 TNF BAER 12/31/21 Improve recreational access

CONSERVATION CORPS NEW MEXICO
AZ18 1829 GNF VFA 18-PA-11030600-013 11/01/2020 Restore, protect and improve habitat
AZ18 1838 LNF 18-PA-11030800-009 VFA Lincoln 11/01/2020 Improve recreational access

CONSERVATION CORPS NORTH CAROLINA
Uwharrie YCC Improve recreational access

SOUTHEAST CONSERVATION CORPS
TN19 FS-Reg B (devel rec) - 15-PA-11083150-033 - Mod 8 - SATA Improve recreational access
TN19 FS-Reg B (YCC) 15-PA-11083150 -033 Mod 8 Improve recreational access
TN 19 NPS CHCH (YCC) Improve recreational access
CM Training - Fall 2019 Improve recreational access
Chatt-O Conasauga RD Improve recreational access
Cherokee NF Fall 2019 Improve recreational access
Chatt-O Fall 2019 - Blue Ridge RD Improve recreational access

SOUTHWEST CONSERVATION CORPS
FC 17 18 SJNF 2 3 2 Fuels reduction Protect communities from wildfire and mitigate climate related impacts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>FC 18 SJNF Vets Fuels Reduction Protect communities from wildfire and mitigate climate related impacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>FC 17/18 SJNF SFT Fuels crew Restore, protect and improve habitat</td>
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<tr>
<td>LV19/18 PSINF Salida RD 21stCSC (CDNST-Hancock New Tri 2019), Sangres, Rainbow Wolf Ck 18-PA-11021202-037 Improve recreational access</td>
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<tr>
<td>FC 19 SJNF CDT Gunsight Pass Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>LV19 CPW CO State Trails OHV PSINF Salida RD Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>FC 18 Tri Forest proposal Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>FC 19 Cibola NF Vets Fuels Reduction Protect communities from wildfire and mitigate climate related impacts</td>
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<td>FC 19 SJNF Pine River Trail Improve recreational access</td>
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<tr>
<td>LV19 RGNF Conejos Peak RD SSJ Wilderness XCUT Carlos &amp; Gerard 18-CS-11020900-049 Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>LV19 PSINF VFC 15-PA-11021200-061 Protect communities from wildfire and mitigate climate related impacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>LV19 RGNF VFC 18-PA-11020900-016 Protect communities from wildfire and mitigate climate related impacts</td>
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<td>LV19 Conejos County Youth Camping Corps RGNF Conejos Pk RD Improve recreational access</td>
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<tr>
<td>LV19 RGNF 21st CSC Non-Motorized Trails CMC Divide RD XCUT Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>AL19 USFS Kaibab Springs Support local economies and restore community/cultural assets</td>
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<td>LV19 RGNF Laughlin Gulch - saw training site no funds Protect communities from wildfire and mitigate climate related impacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>FC 19 GMUG (MOD 2) Vets Fuels Reduction Protect communities from wildfire and mitigate climate related impacts</td>
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<td>AL19 GSEP Dixie NF Juniper Thinning Project Protect, restore, and improve habitat</td>
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<td>FC 19 SJNF BAER 416 Fire Scar waterbar work Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>FC 19 SJNF OHV Good Mgmt Jones Creek Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>FC 19 21CSCC SJNF WTFc logout Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>FC 19 SJNF Wilderness Trails Clearing Pagosa RD Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>FC 19 RMEF SJNF WTFc logout Improve recreational access</td>
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<tr>
<td>FC 19 Tri Forest Proposal Building Trails and Relationships: Northern New Mexico Forests Youth Crew Trail Proposal Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>FC 19 Rico trails alliance SJNF Trail maintenance Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>LV19 RGNF Conejos Pk RD OHV Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>FC19 NFF West Cross Creek pro bono Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>LV19 RGNF Conejos Pk RD 21stCSC XCUT Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>FC 19 GMUG 21CSCC $ Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>FC 19 NFF SAC GMUG Norwood RD Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>FC 19 CO State Trails GMUG NF Magic Meadows Phase 2 Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>FC 19 SJNF Dolores RD BAER work Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>FC 19 SJNF Dolores RD Calico OHV trail work Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>LV19 RGNF Conejos Pk RD Trujilo Meadows Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>LV19 RGNF Divide RD CDT Bonito Elwood Improve recreational access</td>
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<td>LV19 RGNF Divide RD CDT Bonito Elwood Improve recreational access</td>
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**INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENTS**

- Carson National Forest
- Cibola National Forest
- Coconino National Forest
- Coronado National Forest
- Kaibab National Forest
- Mark Twain National Forest
- Pike-San Isabel National Forest
- R02 Rocky Mountains
- R03 Southwestern Region
- R10 Alaska Region
- San Juan National Forest
Additional support for Conservation Legacy programs is provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Conservation Legacy is proud to partner with AmeriCorps and the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps to provide national service opportunities for young adults and veterans on public lands.