Table of Contents

Introduction .................................................. 1
Play .............................................................. 5
Learn ............................................................. 11
Serve ............................................................ 21
Work ............................................................. 25
  Partnership Employment .................................... 25
  Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) ......................... 29
Coordination, Communication, and Training .............. 33
  Coordination and Communication ......................... 33
  Training ....................................................... 36
Conclusion ..................................................... 39

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Engaging the Next Generation
2016 Annual Report

Contributors

Region 1 (R1)
Chris Logan

Region 2 (R2)
Ken Garrahan, Gary Hutchison, Angela Myers, Art Needleman, Nathan Wiese

Region 3 (R3)
Megan Wandag

Region 4 (R4)
Sharon Fuller-Barnes, Kevin Lowry

Region 5 (R5)
Chris Nolan

Region 6 (R6)
Amy Thornburg

Region 7 (R7)
Kristen Gilbert

Region 8 (R8)
DC Carr

Headquarters (HQ)

Budget Planning and Human Capital
Jessie Cheek, Kim Howze, Alisa Rawlins

Diversity and Inclusive Workforce Management
Carolyn McGuire

Fish and Aquatic Conservation
Bob Pos, Denise Wagner

International Affairs
Levi Novey, Heidi Ruffler

Migratory Bird Program
Roxanne Bogart, Chris Deets, Suzanne Fellows

National Conservation Training Center
Drew Burnett, Steve Chase, Laura Creamer, Blaine Eckberg, Georgia Jeppesen, Dawn Lagrotteria, Chelsea McKinney, Maria Parisi, Nancy Zapotocki, Kristin Simanek (Graphic Design)

National Wildlife Refuge System
Kevin Kilcullen, Phil LePelch, Angelina Yost
“Studies show that kids who spend time in nature are healthier and happier, and have fewer issues in school. But America’s increasingly urban and diverse population faces growing hurdles trying to create meaningful experiences with nature. As a result, a generation of kids is at risk of growing up alienated from the air, water, and land that support us all. It’s becoming more and more important to engage our youth in conservation. We have to find them. We have to inspire and recruit them. They will make conservation relevant.”

- Jay Slack, Director, National Conservation Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

What’s your first memory of nature? Did you hear a bird outside your window? Were you dazzled by the colors of fall? Did you have a favorite tree to climb from where you’d sail across a sea of green to your next adventure? Maybe you had a secret hiding place, or maybe there was a stream near where you lived where you and your friends could watch crayfish and tadpoles.

Today, the instinct to explore outdoors competes with the urge to connect with others through technology, no matter where you live. In urban areas, youth are even more disconnected from nature. Children in the US today are more ethnically and racially diverse than ever. Are they getting outside? Are they making a connection with nature? Is conservation relevant?

It’s imperative that youth connect to nature—to make discoveries like a scientist, to move their bodies like athletes, to care. Young people may aspire to a career with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), grow up to study the natural world, or contribute to society in any field while being scientifically and environmentally literate. No matter their path, if they care, they can make responsible choices every day that help conserve, protect, and enhance habitats for people, and for plants and wildlife.

The Service is responding to the changing landscape and engaging today’s young people in the ways they like to connect to nature by going where they are, such as with the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program. We’re exploring new ways to connect with communities and new partners to help us achieve our mission. We reach millions of young people in both urban and rural areas through an array of programming that is integrated deeply throughout the agency—from field stations, fish hatcheries, and national wildlife refuges, to regional and national program offices.

This Report highlights stories about what we are accomplishing across the Service as we engage young people—today and tomorrow’s conservation...
leaders. We offer a small sampling of our efforts and commitment to build life-long conservation stewards. It bears mentioning that our work to achieve our youth programming goals has its challenges. Extremely tight budgets and limited staff resources require us to rely heavily on volunteers and partners. In some instances, there is insufficient capacity to build and maintain partnerships and oversee volunteers. And, once we've engaged and educated young people, our hiring managers must navigate myriad old and new employment authorities to bring in the next generation of conservation leaders to our agency.

We engage the next generation to help us achieve our conservation mission, through outdoor recreation, educational opportunities, volunteer service, and work and training opportunities. We organized the stories in this report using the Play, Learn, Serve, and Work framework outlined in Secretarial Order Number 3332 Engaging the Next Generation, http://tinyurl.com/jrjxhy4.

One of the top priorities of the Engaging the Next Generation initiative is to increase participation of diverse, tribal, veteran, or other underserved audiences. Watch for highlights of diversity programs and activities in blue sidebars and textboxes.

PLAY

51.2 million people hunted, fished, and observed or photographed wildlife on the Service’s National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) and National Fish Hatcheries (NFH).

Learn

1.7 million young people participated in Service environmental education programs focused on the importance of the great outdoors to increase environmental literacy, and to provide opportunities to practice natural and cultural resource stewardship on public lands.

27,297 youth participated in the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program that teaches wetlands and waterfowl conservation to students in kindergarten through high school.

22,000 youth were reached by the Urban Bird Treaty Program with migratory bird education and outreach programs in 27 urban areas.

16,688 students participated in the use and construction of Schoolyard Habitat (SYH) project sites across the country. The program establishes eco-regional wildlife habitats in both urban and rural communities, which are used as multi-disciplinary outdoor learning classrooms to enhance students’ environmental stewardship.

Serve

53,343 volunteers gave nearly 1,552,909 hours of their time, in addition to their expertise and other resources, to nearly all branches of the Service. Volunteers are critically important resources, and they help the Service provide quality experiences for the millions of visitors who enjoy our lands each year.

Work

3,159 youth, ages 15–35, worked either directly or, through partnerships with nonprofit organizations.

111 nonprofit partner organizations employed 1,280 youth who worked in all 50 states helping achieve resource management goals. Of these employees, 34 students completed the Service’s Directorate Resource Assistant Fellowship program and are on track to receive direct hire status for Federal positions upon graduation as authorized under the Public Land Corps Act.

1,876 young people under the age of 35 were employed in permanent and temporary positions. Of these employees:

• 51 students attending high school, college or vocational schools filled Pathways positions with the Service.

• 1,034 high school students served in the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) at the Service’s national wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries, field stations, regional offices, and at Headquarters (HQ) in Falls Church, Virginia.

5.1 million people hunted, fished, and observed or photographed wildlife on the Service’s National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) and National Fish Hatcheries (NFH).
Play: Developing and enhancing outdoor recreation partnerships that create new and systemic opportunities for outdoor play.

The Service provided excellent opportunities for young people to play outdoors at field stations and through partnerships programs. Millions of young people enjoyed experiences outdoors through interpretation and education programs at national wildlife refuges and fish hatcheries; schoolyard habitats in over 500 schools nationwide, and outdoor play spaces on Service or partner lands. Here are a few highlights of these experiences.

Archery in the Schools Program / Okmulgee Archery Days
R2 / Deep Fork National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Okmulgee, Oklahoma

The National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) allows students to learn Olympic style archery, incorporating a popular outdoor recreation activity with team building, improving focus and even elevating student self-esteem. NASP is unique in that all students, regardless of fitness level, athletic ability, or disability, can participate. Okmulgee Archery Days has seen increases in school participation since its start in 2006, and Service staff, state wildlife officials, and volunteers from the Friends of the Deep Fork NWR come together each year to make the event a success. Following the NASP outline, Okmulgee Archery Days builds upon a nationwide curriculum that has been in existence since its founding in Kentucky in 2003. Participation in Okmulgee Archery Days currently includes multiple grades ranging from fourth grade through high school, representing seven different school districts across south central Oklahoma.

Backyard Field Day
R3 / Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Saginaw, Michigan

The Shiawassee NWR's annual Open House features guided hikes, kayak trips, and a 5K trail run. This year included a new event located at our Environmental Learning Center, neighboring the urban community of Saginaw, Michigan. The event was designed to draw newcomers to the Refuge. We carefully chose the theme and named it “Backyard Field Day” to tie into a fun outdoor experience with which local kids are familiar. We invited a local double-dutch group, provided wildlife-themed relay races, and made a Pokémon GO-themed geocaching course. We also offered face painting, nature crafts, fishing, practice casting, aquatic dip netting, and self-exploratory activities. Advertising included street signs and flyers as well as typical social media and press release avenues. We received remarkable feedback as the event provided a vibrant and refreshing moment at the Refuge.

Longest Day of Play
R4 / Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery (NFH), Jamestown, Kentucky

Each year, Wolf Creek NFH partners with Russell County Health Coalition to host the Longest Day of Play, a community summer solstice celebration that encourages outdoor activity among children ages 1 to 15 and their families. Nearly 90 children jumped rope, made bird feeders, cycled along the Cumberland River, fished at Hatchery Creek, and met our educational animals. They also played physically active games such as the Great Fish Migration and a scavenger hunt on the nature trail, which nurtured a greater appreciation of nature. Several local organizations participated: Lake Cumberland Beekeepers Association; Russell County Library; Hospice of Lake Cumberland; Healthy Kids Clinic; UK Extension; US Army Corps of Engineers; and Russell County Sheriff’s Department. Children explored booths to learn about healthy lifestyles. At the end of the day, a drawing was held with items intended to reinforce outdoor play such as bicycles and fishing poles.
International Mud Day and the Festival of Fire and Ice

The New York Field Office, working with the Ithaca Children’s Garden, established a place where children of all ages and abilities are free to explore, experiment, and connect with the natural world. Free play is encouraged at the Hands-on-Nature Anarchy Zone, and it means that kids are in charge... getting dirty, taking calculated risks, building things, destroying things and generally being wild. It also means that kids need to make decisions, solve problems, generate creative ideas and navigate social situations by themselves. Free play empowers kids to explore and connect with nature in ways that are most meaningful to them. These experiences are likely to stay with kids for a long time and stimulate greater respect and love for nature. We are working to inspire the next generation of naturalists and environmental stewards!

Great Plains Nature Center Youth Activities

The GPNC is a partnership among the Service, Kansas Wildlife Parks and Tourism, City of Wichita, and the Friends of the GPNC. The Center hosts many special events for kids each year. A Student Conservation Association (SCA) intern helped with several notable events attended by thousands of people including: the OK Kids event, with more than 10 hands-on outdoor activities; the Walk with Wildlife, which featured native Kansas animals along trails; and the Prairie Pollinator Party with pollinator-themed crafts and activities. The SCA intern gained valuable conservation education experience while assisting the GPNC with events that allow people in the urban area around Wichita to get outside and enjoy nature without spending a lot of money.

Soul River Runs Wild on 24-Day Expedition

For the second year, Soul River, a Northwest non-profit committed to strengthening communities by connecting Portland, Oregon inner city youth and US veterans to fly fishing, embarked on a 24-day expedition to Alaska. This year 10 youth and veterans, a service dog named Ax, and seasoned Alaskan volunteers logged over 4,000 air miles, 1,600 road miles, and 70 river miles to explore the Nishak River of the Arctic NWR and visit the Kenai Peninsula. On route they even joined the Service’s Fisheries Program to mentor and teach Anchorage youth from the Northeast Muldoon Boys and Girls Club how to fly fish. The entire expedition was an opportunity for youth and veterans to learn from one another, discover arctic climate change impacts first hand, fly fish amazing rivers, and meet and exchange ideas with Alaskans. Learn more at “Seeking Refuge,” Drake Magazine, http://tinyurl.com/hfhnmhc, and “I am Conservation” trailer at: http://tinyurl.com/j64ykdo.
Connecting Urban Youth with the Outdoors with the Canoemobile

Eighty fourth graders from the city of Novato were the first to experience canoeing a newly acquired portion of San Pablo Bay NWR. In partnership with Wilderness Inquiry, the Refuge offered students from Hamilton Elementary in Novato, California, the opportunity to experience the Refuge from a different perspective—from the water. In addition to paddling, the students learned about wildlife in the area, tools biologists and managers use in their job, water quality sampling, and team building. Wilderness Inquiry provided the canoes, instructors, and some of the activities, while the Refuge staff provided the venue and two days of Novato were the first to experience canoeing a newly acquired portion of San Pablo Bay NWR. In partnership with Wilderness Inquiry, the Refuge offered students from Hamilton Elementary in Novato, California, the opportunity to experience the Refuge from a different perspective—from the water. In addition to paddling, the students learned about wildlife in the area, tools biologists and managers use in their job, water quality sampling, and team building. Wilderness Inquiry provided the canoes, instructors, and some of the activities, while the Refuge staff provided the venue and two days of activities focused on conservation and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Notable guests included Virginia’s Governor Terry McAuliffe, Congressman Don Beyer and Molly Ward, Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources. They joined David Hoskins, Assistant Director for the Service’s FAC Program; Alexcy Romero, the Superintendent of the GW Memorial Parkway, and Mari Lou Livingood, Executive Director of the Trust for the GW Memorial Parkway, to introduce nature-related activities that help create a foundation for a conservation ethic with our next generation.

ACE Leadership High School students assist with the design and construction of a new Nature Explore Classroom at the Mountain View Community Center.

Nature Explore Classroom Construction at the Mountain View Community Center

In partnership with the National Park Service, and the Trust for the George Washington (GW) Memorial Parkway, FAC provided 75 urban fourth graders from the Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academic Program; Alexcy Romero, the Superintendent of the GW Memorial Parkway, and Mari Lou Livingood, Executive Director of the Trust for the GW Memorial Parkway, to introduce nature-related activities that help create a foundation for a conservation ethic with our next generation.

MENTOR-POP (Progress on Pangolins)

The 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was held in Johannesburg, South Africa from September 24-October 5, 2016. MENTOR-POP (Progress on Pangolins), an 18-month fellowship program supported by the Service and the Zoological Society of London, was there to serve as a voice for Central Africa’s pangolins. Specifically, the fellows worked to ensure that all three Central African pangolin species, as well as all the other pangolin species, were uplisted to Appendix I—the highest level of protection afforded by CITES. The MENTOR-POP Team helped achieve this by learning, networking, and sharing information, and by helping partners, including the International Fund for Animal Welfare, Humane Society International, and the AquaMeridian Conservation and Education Foundation, to raise awareness about pangolins at CITES.

Sharon Kwok/AquaMeridian Conservation and Education Foundation.

MENTOR-POP Fellow Linh Nguyen

Ngoc Bao dresses up in a costume to raise awareness about pangolins at CITES.

The 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was held in Johannesburg, South Africa from September 24-October 5, 2016. MENTOR-POP (Progress on Pangolins), an 18-month fellowship program supported by the Service and the Zoological Society of London, was there to serve as a voice for Central Africa’s pangolins. Specifically, the fellows worked to ensure that all three Central African pangolin species, as well as all the other pangolin species, were uplisted to Appendix I—the highest level of protection afforded by CITES. The MENTOR-POP Team helped achieve this by learning, networking, and sharing information, and by helping partners, including the International Fund for Animal Welfare, Humane Society International, and the AquaMeridian Conservation and Education Foundation, to raise awareness about pangolins at CITES.

Sharon Kwok/AquaMeridian Conservation and Education Foundation.

MENTOR-POP Fellow Linh Nguyen

Ngoc Bao dresses up in a costume to raise awareness about pangolins at CITES.

The 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was held in Johannesburg, South Africa from September 24-October 5, 2016. MENTOR-POP (Progress on Pangolins), an 18-month fellowship program supported by the Service and the Zoological Society of London, was there to serve as a voice for Central Africa’s pangolins. Specifically, the fellows worked to ensure that all three Central African pangolin species, as well as all the other pangolin species, were uplisted to Appendix I—the highest level of protection afforded by CITES. The MENTOR-POP Team helped achieve this by learning, networking, and sharing information, and by helping partners, including the International Fund for Animal Welfare, Humane Society International, and the AquaMeridian Conservation and Education Foundation, to raise awareness about pangolins at CITES.

Sharon Kwok/AquaMeridian Conservation and Education Foundation.

MENTOR-POP Fellow Linh Nguyen

Ngoc Bao dresses up in a costume to raise awareness about pangolins at CITES.

The 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was held in Johannesburg, South Africa from September 24-October 5, 2016. MENTOR-POP (Progress on Pangolins), an 18-month fellowship program supported by the Service and the Zoological Society of London, was there to serve as a voice for Central Africa’s pangolins. Specifically, the fellows worked to ensure that all three Central African pangolin species, as well as all the other pangolin species, were uplisted to Appendix I—the highest level of protection afforded by CITES. The MENTOR-POP Team helped achieve this by learning, networking, and sharing information, and by helping partners, including the International Fund for Animal Welfare, Humane Society International, and the AquaMeridian Conservation and Education Foundation, to raise awareness about pangolins at CITES.

Sharon Kwok/AquaMeridian Conservation and Education Foundation.

MENTOR-POP Fellow Linh Nguyen

Ngoc Bao dresses up in a costume to raise awareness about pangolins at CITES.

The 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was held in Johannesburg, South Africa from September 24-October 5, 2016. MENTOR-POP (Progress on Pangolins), an 18-month fellowship program supported by the Service and the Zoological Society of London, was there to serve as a voice for Central Africa’s pangolins. Specifically, the fellows worked to ensure that all three Central African pangolin species, as well as all the other pangolin species, were uplisted to Appendix I—the highest level of protection afforded by CITES. The MENTOR-POP Team helped achieve this by learning, networking, and sharing information, and by helping partners, including the International Fund for Animal Welfare, Humane Society International, and the AquaMeridian Conservation and Education Foundation, to raise awareness about pangolins at CITES.

Sharon Kwok/AquaMeridian Conservation and Education Foundation.

Sharon Kwok/AquaMeridian Conservation and Education Foundation.

Sharon Kwok/AquaMeridian Conservation and Education Foundation.

Sharon Kwok/AquaMeridian Conservation and Education Foundation.

Sharon Kwok/AquaMeridian Conservation and Education Foundation.

Sharon Kwok/AquaMeridian Conservation and Education Foundation.
Learn:
Providing educational opportunities for the Nation’s K-12 student population.

The Service has fostered environmental literacy, stewardship, and conservation for decades. Our regional and field employees provide learning opportunities that engage and educate millions of young people, educators, and families through outdoor experiences based on local needs and realities. Volunteers are critically important in environmental education programs and enable the Service to extend its reach. The following summaries provide a snapshot of current, effective programs for building environmental literacy and engaging the nation’s young people in conservation.

NCTC supports the North American Association for Environmental Education’s (NAAEE) 30 Under 30 Program to bring bright young people to address participants at their annual conference. Learn more at: https://naaee.org/our-work/programs/ee-30-under-30.

Gerry Ellis/NAAEE

Bird by Bird: Bird Habitat Education
R1 / Idaho Fish & Wildlife Office (FWO), Boise, Idaho
R1 / Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Nampa, Idaho

Bird by Bird is an Idaho-based program that teaches youth from preschool through high school about birds and their habitats. Students learn about biology, ecology, and the complex interrelationships that connect wildlife, habitats, and humans in outdoor environments. Championed by the Service’s Idaho FWO through Boise Valley Schools, Bird by Bird has grown from 4 to 17 classrooms in recent years. Facilitators from the Idaho FWO and Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) work with teachers to carry out curriculum, lessons, activities, field trips, and special projects such as nest box building. Bird feeders set up at the schools allow students to feed and provide water for birds; observe behavior; and record data using the online citizen science database eBIRD.

South Texas Refuge Complex Urban Youth Initiative
R2 / Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Alamo, Texas

The South Texas Refuge Complex is arduously working towards engaging with youth in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (RGV). In fiscal year 2016, Santa Ana NWR conducted Environmental Education programs for 5,800 students, facilitated a teacher workshop for 20 teachers, and participated in a Teacher-in-Service workshop to tie schoolyard habitats to state curricula. The Refuge received support from the Every Kid in a Park program to fund field trips and presentations for 1,923 students, each one of whom received Every Kid in the Park passes or vouchers. Santa Ana also awarded passes to RGV top learners.
Knocking Down Classroom Walls
R3 / Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Complex (NWRC), Zimmerman, Minnesota
In partnership with Sherburne NWR, Zimmerman Elementary exchanged walled classrooms for ones without walls: the outdoors. And it’s really working! Zimmerman is a Title I School facing many economic and social challenges. Instead of teaching indoors, Sherburne NWR closely mentored eight second-grade teachers to teach outdoors. The Friends of Sherburne fund field trips to the Refuge’s new Oak Savanna Learning Center and to a prairie restoration site at the school, both of which serve as a new classroom. Students journal, hike, investigate, calculate, decompress, and learn outside each day. Since piloting a year ago, every teacher, some with more than 20 years of experience, reported the best end of year research projects they have ever graded as well as reduced discipline and stress. The teachers hope to become a model for other schools, and continue to revolutionize the way we learn, deal with stress, and find peace through outdoor investigation.

Mississippi River Connections
Collaborative’s 2016 Year of Birding
R4 / North Mississippi Refuges Complex (NMRC), Grenada, Mississippi
The NMRC helped coordinate the Mississippi River Connections Collaborative’s (MRCC) “2016 Year of Birding” initiative. The MRCC annually selects a project to promote conservation and recreation along the Mississippi River. This year, approximately 500 students, grades 2-11 at sites throughout Western New York, experienced nature through a camera lens during our SNaP! Program. Students talked with Lower Great Lakes FWCO staff while learning about some of the bugs, mammals, and other critters found on the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and across western New York. They fared from Buffalo Public Schools-Math & Science Technology, North Tonawanda Schools (Ohio Street and Meadow Elementary), Batavia Middle School, Niagara Arts & Cultural Center, Cradle Beach Camp, and the City of Rochester Recreation Center Summer Program. Students received a copy of their favorite photo framed with reflections from the day to share with their families. Other New York program sites included Pinewood Park (North Tonawanda), Cazenovia Creek Park (Buffalo) and New York State Parks’ DeVeaux Woods (Niagara Falls). These events were great opportunities to explore little known parks right in their cities and region.

Students, Nature and Photography (SNaP!)
R5 / Lower Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO), Basson, New York
This year, approximately 500 students, grades 2-11 at sites throughout Western New York, experienced nature through a camera lens during our SNaP! Program. Students talked with Lower Great Lakes FWCO staff while learning about some of the bugs, mammals, and other critters found on the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and across western New York. They fared from Buffalo Public Schools-Math & Science Technology, North Tonawanda Schools (Ohio Street and Meadow Elementary), Batavia Middle School, Niagara Arts & Cultural Center, Cradle Beach Camp, and the City of Rochester Recreation Center Summer Program. Students received a copy of their favorite photo framed with reflections from the day to share with their families. Other New York program sites included Pinewood Park (North Tonawanda), Cazenovia Creek Park (Buffalo) and New York State Parks’ DeVeaux Woods (Niagara Falls). These events were great opportunities to explore little known parks right in their cities and region.

Students get a close up view of nature during a SNaP! session. USFWS

Urban Youth Explore Nature
R6 / Valentine National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Valentine, Nebraska
Getting urban youth out of the city to experience the beauty and expanse of national wildlife refuges is an integral step in empowering the next generation of conservationists. The Valentine NWR worked with Groundwork Denver, an organization dedicated to promoting partnerships in underserved communities, to expose urban youth to a much different environment and promote conservation work. A group of 8 crew members travelled 400 miles to camp and work on Valentine NWR in the Sandhills of Nebraska. The team worked for 10 days cutting invasive black locust and eastern red cedar trees to improve the refuge habitat for native prairie wildlife. While working with the Refuge invasive species and prairie management intern, the team took time each day to study prairie flora and fauna and to learn about refuge habitat management and careers in the Service.

Groundwork Denver crew with Valentine NWR intern next to a large invasive eastern red cedar tree the team cut down.

Camp Qungaayux: Passing on Native Wildlife Traditions
R7 / Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Homer, Alaska
The Qawalangin Tribe hosted the 19th Annual Camp Qungaayux (Camp Q), one of 17 culture and science camps the Service sponsors around Alaska. Camp Q brings together nearly 60 youth, elders, and community members to Humuy Cove for a weeklong celebration of Unangan tradition. Youth are instructed in a variety of subjects, with Refuge staff teaching seabird biology, marine mammal physiology and orienteering. This year, students took a boat out to visit the Alaska Maritime NWR’s Research Yacht the Tiglax (TEKH-lah)—Aleut for Eagle. Local media chronicled the very Alaskan field trip with an impromptu dip in the sea clad in survival suits. See and learn more by logging in at: http://tinyurl.com/hz5fyle, and hear more at: http://tinyurl.com/zdfze23.

Camper making her traditional bentwood hat similar to a modern visor. Camper's finished bentwood hat. Camper's finished bentwood hat. Camper’s finished bentwood hat. Camper making her traditional bentwood hat similar to a modern visor. Campers learning traditional dancing on the beach at camp.
A second grader explores the pond area.

Lois Craig Elementary school's 670 students speak English as a second language. Given the school's urban location, some might guess it unlikely for classrooms here to produce wildlife and nature artwork. But that is exactly what is happening at this school thanks to art teacher Kirsten Hutchinson. She is getting her K-5th-grade students in on the Service’s Junior Duck Stamp program. The program includes a curriculum and an art competition. “I admit that the students surprise me with their level of interest in the science-based curriculum,” Hutchinson said. Her students further surprise her when they work on their duck stamp art projects, showing every detail in their drawings. The younger students also build duck habitats with construction paper, while the older children make clay models of their ducks.

Learn more: http://tinyurl.com/1B8eW
Learn more about FWS’ Junior Duck Stamp Program on page 16.

Lois Craig Elementary School Art Teacher Kirsten Hutchinson.

Dan Balduini/USFWS

Youth Forum for People and Wildlife participants. © IFAW

Youth Forum for People and Wildlife
HO / International Affairs,
Falls Church, Virginia

Thirty-four youth from 25 countries participated in the Youth Forum for People and Wildlife in South Africa, which was organized by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) with the CITES Secretariat, South Africa, the United States of America, the Disney Conservation Fund, the Jane Goodall Institute, and the Global Youth Biodiversity Network. The Forum directly preceded the 17th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Although diverse in culture, experiences, and skills, participants were united in their commitment to wildlife, conservation, and the environment. They participated in workshops, field trips, and debates, and were so inspired by their experience, they formed Youth for Wildlife Conservation (YW4C), a network to equip young conservationists with the training, support, and tools needed to become better leaders, find innovative solutions, and develop a native pollinator garden with funding from the SYH Program. The garden, filled with drought-tolerant plants requiring less water than the former grass lawn, serves as an outdoor classroom all year round to learn about monarchs and other pollinators. “Over the year as we were working on planting the garden, the students shared with me stories of El Dia de los Muertos told by their grandmother or grandfather, or their mom and dad. They were beautiful stories,” Service biologist Michael Glenn said. Teachers at Curwen and Service staff used the student’s interest to organize the first Dia de los Muertos Monarch Butterfly Festival at the school in the fall after the garden had matured. Learn more: http://tinyurl.com/j5f538n. See more photos at: https://flic.kr/s/aHskMrY74G.

Schoolyard Habitat Program (SYH)
HO / National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, West Virginia

One of the Service’s few national environmental education programs, The SYH Program’s mission is to orient students to regional ecosystems and impart greater knowledge and experience of wildlife resources through the implementation of habitat restoration projects; education, outreach, and interpretation of ecological systems; and support formal and informal educators by offering quality teaching resources and programs. The Program’s primary role is to coordinate schools, Service offices, and other conservation and community organizations to establish ecologically sound restoration projects on school sites that function as sustainable outdoor learning areas.

With more than 500 SYH sites throughout the country, the Program continues to grow annually, and in FY16 has been a leader for the Service in the “Save the Monarch” campaign. Region 8 (California, Nevada, and Klamath Basin) provides staffing support for national program coordination, and NCTC trains employees and partners in the SYH methodology. Region 8, one of the strongest supporters, dedicates five full-time SYH coordinators who work with students, teachers, and community volunteers to implement more than 20 habitat restoration projects on school grounds each year that engage hundreds of students with the Service’s conservation priorities. The following example highlights the work of this innovative program in the Pacific Southwest Region. For more stories from around the country, sign in at: http://www.facebook.com/schoolyard.habitat.

• Schoolyard Habitat Project at Curwen School, Oxnard, California

In the spring of 2015, Curwen School teachers and students worked with the Service’s Fish and Wildlife Office biologists in Ventura, California to design and develop a native pollinator garden with funding from the SYH Program. The garden, filled with drought-tolerant plants requiring less water than the former grass lawn, serves as an outdoor classroom all year round to learn about monarchs and other pollinators. “Over the year as we were working on planting the garden, the students shared with me stories of El Dia de los Muertos told by their grandmother or grandfather, or their mom and dad. They were beautiful stories,” Service biologist Michael Glenn said. Teachers at Curwen and Service staff used the student’s interest to organize the first Dia de los Muertos Monarch Butterfly Festival at the school in the fall after the garden had matured. Learn more: http://tinyurl.com/j5f538n. See more photos at: https://flic.kr/s/aHskMrY74G.

Bernice Curren students examine one of their arrowroot-wildweed plants at their Schoolyard Habitat. Ashley Spratt/USFWS

World Fish Migration Day
HQ / Fish and Aquatic Conservation (FAC)

FAC's National Fish Passage Program was a sponsor of the second biennial World Fish Migration Day (WFMD) on May 21, 2016. Numerous projects, events and activities occurred throughout the month leading up to and on May 21, 2016 to raise awareness of migratory fish and celebrate this international outreach campaign. Not only was FAC a sponsor of WFMD, the FAC national education team composed of representatives from each region, created numerous educational products that are now available on the new Migration Station web page. Products were designed to help others better understand the many challenges fish face to fish passage, like dams and poorly designed road culverts, that keep fish from getting to important spawning, feeding, and nursery habitats. A national social media plan also was developed with input and participation from all Service regions, many of which conducted their own activities (see example below). Visit the Migration Station to learn more, http://bit.ly/FishMigration_Station.

Fish need to move, they’ve always got some place to go!

• R1 / Regional Office, Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program—Hawaii’s Fish Habitat Partnership, Honolulu, Hawaii

R1 / Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office (FWO), Honolulu, Hawaii

Fish Migration Day (WFMD) 2016 was a sponsor of the second biennial World Fish Migration Day (WFMD) on May 21, 2016. Numerous projects, events and activities occurred throughout the month leading up to and on May 21, 2016 to raise awareness of migratory fish and celebrate this international outreach campaign. Not only was FAC a sponsor of WFMD, the FAC national education team composed of representatives from each region, created numerous educational products that are now available on the new Migration Station web page. Products were designed to help others better understand the many challenges fish face to fish passage, like dams and poorly designed road culverts, that keep fish from getting to important spawning, feeding, and nursery habitats. A national social media plan also was developed with input and participation from all Service regions, many of which conducted their own activities (see example below). Visit the Migration Station to learn more, http://bit.ly/FishMigration_Station.

Hawaiian Goby, a migratory fish.

ManKe Productions/Hawaii Conservation Alliance/USFWS

A youth volunteer at World Fish Migration Day 2016’s closing ceremony in Hawai‘i looks for—and learns about—native migratory fish.

Hawaa‘i Conservation Alliance/USFWS
The Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program is a dynamic art- and science-based curriculum that teaches wetland and waterfowl conservation to students in kindergarten through high school. The program encourages students to explore their natural world, invites them to investigate biology and wildlife management principles, and challenges them to express and share what they have learned with others. Students, educators, and parents use the curriculum as a year-round study plan to aid in exploring science in real-life situations. The Program has curriculum guides for youth, home schools, and formal and non-formal educators. The Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest is the culmination of the Junior Duck Stamp educational program. After studying waterfowl anatomy and habit, students express their knowledge by drawing or painting a picture of an eligible North American waterfowl species. The winning artwork from the national contest serves as the design for the Junior Duck Stamp that the Service produces annually. Learn more at: https://www.everykidinapark.gov/

Learn more about the Junior Duck Stamp Program:

HQ / Migratory Bird Program, Falls Church, Virginia
The Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program is a dynamic art- and science-based curriculum that teaches wetland and waterfowl conservation to students in kindergarten through high school. The program encourages students to explore their natural world, invites them to investigate biology and wildlife management principles, and challenges them to express and share what they have learned with others. Students, educators, and parents use the curriculum as a year-round study plan to aid in exploring science in real-life situations. The Program has curriculum guides for youth, home schools, and formal and non-formal educators. The Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest is the culmination of the Junior Duck Stamp educational program. After studying waterfowl anatomy and habit, students express their knowledge by drawing or painting a picture of an eligible North American waterfowl species. The winning artwork from the national contest serves as the design for the Junior Duck Stamp that the Service produces annually. Learn more at: https://www.everykidinapark.gov/

Conservation Careers Symposium (CCS)
HQ / Office of Diversity and Inclusive Workforce Management (ODIWM), Falls Church, Virginia
The Conservation Careers Symposium (CCS) is a college youth engagement program collaboratively developed by the Service’s ODIWM and NCTC’s Division of Education and Outreach (DEO). The Service conducts Conservation Career Symposia at targeted institutions of higher education, with an emphasis on minority serving institutions, to reach and inform minority students in undergraduate and graduate conservation programs interested in public service careers in natural resources and wildlife management. Students and faculty were introduced to the Service and its mission, provided an in-depth review of the federal hiring process and how to navigate USAJobs, and information on special hiring authorities, student internships and career opportunities in the Service. Often they had the opportunity to participate in a tour of a National Wildlife Refuge. Symposia were held for students participating in intern positions through the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) and the Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership (CAPAL).

Every Kid in the Park
HQ / National Wildlife Refuge System, Falls Church, Virginia
The White House launched The Every Kid in the Park (EKIP) initiative in September 2015. The initiative connects 4th graders and their families to our federal lands and waters by offering them a free pass for access to over 2,000 federally managed sites nationwide. The National Wildlife Refuge System HQ staff worked closely with Department of the Interior and other agency staff to implement the program, including the creation of the Fourth Grade Pass and an educational website to help educators and parents plan trips and locate available educational materials from the various agencies. For the first year of the program, Service offices issued over 10,700 EKIP passes and worked closely with the National Park Foundation on 23 transportation grants involving schools and organizations supporting underserved communities. The Service is currently implementing the second year of the EKIP program for the 2016/2017 school year. Learn more at: https://www.everykidinapark.gov/

Inter-Tribal Youth Climate Leadership Congress
HQ / National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), Shepherdstown, West Virginia
The Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Service, National Park Service, US Forest Service, US Geological Survey, US Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, South Central Climate Science Center, and Conservation Legacy, a national youth service organization, hosted the Second Annual Inter-Tribal Youth Climate Leadership Congress at NCTC in the summer of 2016. The Congress engaged over 100 Native American, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian high school student conservation leaders and their mentors, representing over 30 indigenous communities—many on or near Service and other public lands. The Congress encouraged students to focus on climate-related issues they were passionate about, and to champion strategies to address those issues. Participating students will help ensure a healthy natural environment for their communities, many of which are heavily dependent on wildlife as an essential part of their traditional way of life.

Inter-Tribal Youth Climate Leadership Congress students and faculty gathered in the NCTC Auditorium with the Sampson Brothers, award-winning Seneca hoop dancers and drummer.
Learn Hands on the Land (HOL)
HQ / National Conservation Training Center (NCTC)
Shepherdstown, West Virginia
HOL is a nationwide network of partnerships among school and public land sites focused on improving academic performance and building environmental literacy. With partnerships at more than 200 sites from Alaska to Florida, HOL is America’s largest classroom. NCTC coordinates the HOL Network for the Service in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, US Forest Service, and the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF). HOL partnerships deliver high-quality, sustained outdoor K-12 education focused on public land natural and cultural resource conservation and management, and conservation careers. While HOL sites are primarily locally resourced, HOL mini-grants enhance these partnerships, thanks to funding from the Environmental Protection Agency and NEEF. Learn more: www.handsonthe_land.org.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Hands on the Land Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Site Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 2</td>
<td>Cabreza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 4</td>
<td>Necedah National Wildlife Refuge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 5</td>
<td>Elizabeth Hartwell Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 6</td>
<td>Alamosa, Monte Vista and Baca National Wildlife Refuge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 7</td>
<td>Alaska Peninsula &amp; Becharof National Wildlife Refuge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 8</td>
<td>Modoc National Wildlife Refuge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These HOL sites received mini grants in FY2016.

Conservation Connect
HQ / National Conservation Training Center (NCTC)
Shepherdstown, West Virginia
Students find meaning and relevance in their learning when they connect lessons to real-world issues and possible career paths. The Conservation Connect video series connects learners to wildlife, technology, and careers. Videos and supplementary resources serve middle school youth, though elementary and high school educators, even retirees, report they use the tools. To extend learning, NCTC worked with National Science Teachers Association volunteers who paired episodes with literature they recommended on species or habitats. One volunteer developed lessons plans that align with science standards and the Environmental Education Standards of Excellence. In FY2016, NCTC launched Conservation Connect LIVE! broadcasts to engage students on a more personal and deeper level. Classrooms tuned in on their computers to interact with conservation professionals live, using a chat box for questions and answers. Learn more: http://tinyurl.com/gr9dz35.

Students work with Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge biologist, Dawn Washington, to collect data on the endangered Cheat Mountain Salamander. Brett Billings/USFWS

Journaling—a critical part of outdoor schools are field notes at Alaska and Becharof NWR. USFWS

Students discover the importance of prescribed burning at Minnesota Valley NWR. USFWS

Students work with Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge biologist, Dawn Washington, to collect data on the endangered Cheat Mountain Salamander. Brett Billings/USFWS
Volunteers, Friends Groups, and partners are valuable allies and vital to fulfilling our mission, bringing critically important resources for youth programming throughout the Service. Each year these individuals and groups give generously of their time, expertise, and resources to the National Wildlife Refuge System, the National Fish Hatchery System, the Migratory Bird Program, the Office of Law Enforcement, Ecological Services, and the National Conservation Training Center. They play an important role in serving the more than 47 million visitors who enjoy public lands managed by the Service. The following examples highlight a few of the successes in FY 2016.

**Girl Scouts of America Trail Maintenance Project**

R2 / Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Albuquerque, New Mexico

Girl Scouts of Troop 10080 is a group of eighth graders attending various schools and home schools in Los Lunas and Belen, New Mexico. For their Backpacking Badge, they chose a trail maintenance project on a Valle de Oro trail used for education programs. This trail also serves as the bird banding trail for research conducted by Rio Grande Bird Research. The girls also learned about other public lands by doing a wilderness hike in the Santa Fe National Forest. Valle de Oro serves as a gateway to the refuge system and other public lands throughout the state. Collaborations like this allow for connections between our urban public lands and our rural public lands allowing youth groups to take what they have learned and experienced on remote lands and put it to use on a regular basis on the public lands in their backyard.

**Midwest Region Fisheries & Aquatic Conservation Program Volunteers**

R3 / Jordan River National Fish Hatchery (NFH), Elmira, Michigan

The Service’s Midwest Region Fisheries stations provide great opportunities each year for youth to serve and integrate themselves into the important work that takes place there. Nearly 60 youth volunteers contributed valuable service this year, not only to the Service fisheries stations, but to their communities and to our future generations. The youth volunteers supported and participated in environmental and conservation education, aquatic and terrestrial habitat projects, and outdoor recreation activities and events, logging nearly 150 hours of service. The really encouraging aspect of youth volunteers is that they bring their friends and often participate with their families. Midwest Region Fisheries program stations and staff also benefit from the experience of working with fresh young minds and young people eager to learn and make a difference.

**Girl Scouts of America Trail Maintenance Project**

R2 / Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Albuquerque, New Mexico

Girl Scouts of Troop 10080 have taken pride in their work and service to Valle de Oro Urban Refuge in Albuquerque, NM.

**Girl Scouts take a picture break while helping establish and maintain new trails at Valle do Oro NWR.**

**Midwest Region Fisheries & Aquatic Conservation Program Volunteers**

R3 / Jordan River National Fish Hatchery (NFH), Elmira, Michigan

The Service’s Midwest Region Fisheries stations provide great opportunities each year for youth to serve and integrate themselves into the important work that takes place there. Nearly 60 youth volunteers contributed valuable service this year, not only to the Service fisheries stations, but to their communities and to our future generations. The youth volunteers supported and participated in environmental and conservation education, aquatic and terrestrial habitat projects, and outdoor recreation activities and events, logging nearly 150 hours of service. The really encouraging aspect of youth volunteers is that they bring their friends and often participate with their families. Midwest Region Fisheries program stations and staff also benefit from the experience of working with fresh young minds and young people eager to learn and make a difference.

**Girl Scouts of America Trail Maintenance Project**

R2 / Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Albuquerque, New Mexico

Girl Scouts of Troop 10080 have taken pride in their work and service to Valle de Oro Urban Refuge in Albuquerque, NM.

**Girl Scouts of America Trail Maintenance Project**

R2 / Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Albuquerque, New Mexico

Girl Scouts of Troop 10080 have taken pride in their work and service to Valle de Oro Urban Refuge in Albuquerque, NM.

**Boy Scouts from Gaylord, Michigan gather over 300,000 milkweed and other native flower seeds for pollinator gardens on and off the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery grounds.**

**Serve:**

Expanding volunteer opportunities by leveraging the expertise of partners.
Marine Debris Program
R4 / Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Hobe Sound, Florida

The Marine Debris Program encourages teenagers to keep beaches clean in order to provide healthy habitat for plants and wildlife. Each volunteer day includes driving teens to different sections of the Refuge beach to pick up trash. Afterwards, our teens participate in interactive presentations about different aspects of the Refuge, such as the global consequences of marine debris, rare sand pine scrub habitat, sea turtle biology, and ecosystem services. Martin County Boys & Girls Club participated in this program since its start last summer. We’re excited to have them back again this year as the program continues into the fall. Learn more: http://tinyurl.com/ztnt28a.

Pollinator Habitat Restoration
R5 / Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland

When looking for a long-term service project, Girl Scout Troop 542 chose to install pollinator gardens on unsightly overgrown plots of ground at the Refuge’s Cash Lake fishing parking lot. After discussing project possibilities with the refuge volunteer coordinator and a Master Gardener volunteer, they began researching and planning. They began with a technique called lasagna layering to kill and compost unwanted grass and weeds in the areas. With assistance from the Master Gardener, they chose a variety of suitable native plants, then designed and planted the layout for the garden sections. The result: a paradise for pollinators and an opportunity for visitors to observe pollinators in their natural habitat. Other youth projects included benches for placement along the trails for wildlife observation, boardwalk repair, debris removal, and information kiosks. These youth projects help the refuge make access to the outdoors very easy for our visitors. (photo pg. 20)

Young Women in Science Help Endangered Wildlife in Ventura
R8 / Ventura Fish & Wildlife Office (FWO), Ventura, California

The Girls Scouts of California mobilized up to the sledders in February to help create nesting habitat for an endangered marsh bird in coastal lagoons in Ventura County. The girls and their parents joined Service and US Navy biologists to launch hand-made nest platforms at low tide throughout the shallow lagoons at Point Mugu. The platforms encourage nesting of the endangered Ridgway’s rail, a secretive marsh bird whose numbers have dwindled since the 1980s due to habitat loss. “Our hope is that this handful of platforms, which directly supports the recovery of a local endangered species, will inspire these young girls to pursue careers in the sciences and become active stewards of these unique coastal environments and species,” said Mary Root, the Service’s Coastal Program coordinator in Ventura. “It’s so rewarding to see young women interested in science and actively making a difference for wildlife in our local community.” Learn more: http://tinyurl.com/R8serve.

Endangered Wildlife in Ventura

Environmental Education for the Conservation of the Monarch Butterfly in Central Mexico
HQ / International Affairs, Falls Church, Virginia

The Service’s Mexico Program launched a partnership project with Ecosistemica, A.C. to increase the awareness of citizens in Central Mexico about the importance, threats, and conservation needs of the monarch butterfly and other pollinators. Three hundred and fifty elementary school children will participate in the project, as well as nonprofit groups and gardening clubs across several Mexican states that are located on the monarchs’ migratory route. Two thousand pollinator garden guides will be produced and distributed, and 50 pollinator gardens will also be constructed as part of the project. In addition, project participants will be encouraged to participate in Central Mexico’s first monarch butterfly monitoring network.

Students in Mexico plant pollinator gardens and raise awareness about the monarch butterfly and other pollinators. Ecosistemica, A.C.

Arctic Youth Ambassadors Program
R7 / External Affairs, Anchorage, Alaska

Twenty-one Arctic Youth Ambassadors (AYA) from all over Alaska traveled the globe in 2016 building awareness at home and abroad about Arctic life. Their travels took them to Washington DC, France, Norway, Greenland, Iceland, and elsewhere where they spoke eloquently and often about Arctic issues with their peers, the media, and world leaders. Four AYA’s have shared their stories on the Department of the Interior’s blog. Others were featured on National Public Radio, local television and other media outlets. The AYA program was established by the Service’s Alaska Region and US Department of State with nonprofit partner Alaska Geographic. Other supporters include Alaska Office of the Department of the Interior, the National Wildlife Refuge Association, Wilburforce Foundation, and the Service’s National Native American Programs. Follow their lives and stories here and across social media by tracking #ThisArcticLife #USArcticYouth or at: http://algeo.org/youth-programs/arctic-youth-ambassadors/

1. Arctic Youth Ambassador’s in Shishmaref, Alaska for a successful week of interviews and cultural exchanges with the community.
2. Arctic Youth Ambassador Macy Rae Kenworthy is in Reykjavik, Iceland for the Arctic Circle Assembly.
3. Four Arctic Youth Ambassadors open the Aleutian Life Forum alongside Dr. Jim Gamble from Aleut International.

Students in Mexico plant pollinator gardens and raise awareness about the monarch butterfly and other pollinators. Ecosistemica, A.C.

For more information contact: Headquarters / External Affairs, Anchorage, Alaska

Marin County Boys & Girls Club members at the Refuge for the last summer marine debris scavenger hunt on the beach.

Battling strong winds and high tides, teens removed a great deal of debris that washed up due to the storm surge from Hurricane Matthew.

Arcitc Youth Ambassadors Program

Pollinator Habitat Restoration

Young Women in Science Help Endangered Wildlife in Ventura

Environmental Education for the Conservation of the Monarch Butterfly in Central Mexico

Endangered Wildlife in Ventura

Environmental Education for the Conservation of the Monarch Butterfly in Central Mexico
Work:
Develop opportunities for the next generation of lifelong conservation stewards through public and private partnerships in support of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps.

Young people are the conservation leaders of tomorrow, and the Service uses a variety of employment programs and authorities to provide them with conservation career opportunities. In addition to directly hiring young people, the Service worked with 111 nonprofit partners to employ 3,159 youth ages 15–35 in FY 2016. The following highlights describe these efforts.

Partnership Employment

One hundred eleven nonprofit organizations—working in partnership with field stations, regional, and headquarters’ offices—employed over 1,200 youth, more than 40 percent of the youth who worked on Service-related projects in FY 2016. Some of these positions involved multiple organizations and funding sources to provide opportunities for youth that otherwise could not be supported. Our partners come in all shapes and sizes, from the large, nationally known Student Conservation Association (SCA) and AmeriCorps, to our small, locally based non-profit refuge associations, from high schools to regional, state, and headquarters’ offices—employed over 1,200 youth, more than 40 percent of the youth who worked on Service-related projects in FY 2016. Some of these positions involved multiple organizations and funding sources to provide opportunities for youth that otherwise could not be supported. Our partners come in all shapes and sizes, from the large, nationally known Student Conservation Association (SCA) and AmeriCorps, to our small, locally based non-profit refuge associations, from high schools to universities; and from state and local programs to tribal entities. Please see the side bar for a list of our youth employment partners in FY 2016.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Youth Employment Partners

Abilene Christian University
Alaska Bird Observatory
Alaska Geographic
American Conservation Experience
American Littoral Society
AmeriCorps
Amigos de la Selvicultura
Anahuac Independent School District
Ampepe Corporate Work Study Program
Auburn University
Audubon Society of NH
Bristol Bay Native Association
Chesapeake Volunteers in Youth Services
Chicago Botanic Garden
Christopher Newport University
Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society
College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse
Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa
Conservation Legacy
Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey
Crystal Cabinets
Department of Labor
Deer Isle Conservancy
Ding Darling Wildlife Society
Fairfax Families 4 Kids
Friends of Clark River NWRA
Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Lake Sammamish State Park
Friends of Louisiana Wildlife Refuge, Inc.
Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Middle Columbia River NWRA
Friends of Mississippian Lighthouse Museums Group
Friends of Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Pool 9
Friends of Rokeby National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of St. Croix Wetland Management District
Friends of the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center
Friends of the Pinedale Refugio Association
Friends of the Yuksa River National Wildlife Refuge
Great River Greening
Greening Youth Foundation
Groundwork Denver
Groundwork Hudson Valley
Gulf of Maine Institute
Hadlow College
Hamline University
Hispanic Access Foundation
International Wildlife Refuge Alliance
Iowa STEM Teacher Externships
James River Association
Kilauea Point Natural History Association
Klamath Tribes
KUAP, Hawaii Youth Conservation Corps
Manomet Center for Conservation Science
Meade Natural Heritage Association
Michigan Audubon Society
Michigan State University
Michigan Technological University
Mile High Youth Corps
Mississippi State University - Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit
Missouri Western State University
Montana Conservation Corps
National Audubon Society
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Native Village of Eyak
Northwest Youth Corps
Northwoods Stewardship Center
Oregon City Service Learning Academy
Providence Department of Parks and Recreation
Refuge Friends Inc.
Rutgers University
Saint Michael’s College
Salmon Valley Stewardship
Seney National History Association
SER - Jobs for Progress of the Texas Gulf Coast, Inc.
Shoreline Education for Awareness
Soul River-Runs Deep
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Cooperative
Southwestern Oklahoma State University
St. Joseph the Worker Corp
St. Marks Refuge Association
State of Massachusetts
State University of New York Buffalo
Student Conservation Association
Tanana Chiefs Conference
The Corps Network
The National Great Rivers Research & Education Center
The Nature Conservancy
Tokaiti Smart (Chickasaw Nation)
UAA-Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program
UAA-Archangel University of Alaska - Fairbanks
University of Delaware
University of Florida
University of Massachusetts
University of Puerto Rico - Mayaguez Campus
University of Vermont
University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point
Upper Tennessee River Roundtable
US Air Force
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
Vilteco University
Wakasha University
Washington Conservation Corps
Washington Service Corps
Washington State University
Western Maryland Resource Conservation & Development Council
Wisconsin’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Juneau County
YMCAs of Klamath Falls
Youth Conservation Corps Crew

Additional funding came from federal agencies (a total of 30 positions in FY 2016) such as the Department of Labor and U.S. Air Force, state and regional partnerships and friends’ groups; from state and local governments; and from high schools to universities; and from state and local programs to tribal entities. Please see the side bar for a list of our youth employment partners in FY 2016.
Members of the NYC crew remove invasive Purple Loosestrife from the Julia Butler Hansen National Wildlife Refuge. USFWS

Northwest Youth Corps Refuge Habitat Improvement
R1 / Willapa National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Julia Butler Hansen (JBH) National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Ilwaco, Washington

The Northwest Youth Corps (NYC) completed multiple habitat improvement projects at the Refuges. They removed invasive species, such as tansy ragwort, purple loosestrife, and Canada thistle; approximately 10 acres of plastic tree protectors from established tree plantings; and more than 0.5 miles of elk-proof fencing. Seven different NYC crews from Eugene and Portland, Oregon spent a total of seven weeks camping on the Refuges in order to focus on habitat improvement projects, and learn about refuge management, endangered species management, Columbia white-tailed deer, and other local wildlife and ecosystems. They also helped with endangered species conservation and habitat restoration, while still having time to enjoy some bird watching and beach combing.

The Northwest Youth Corps crew on the beach at Leadbetter Point Unit of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge. USFWS

Partnership with the Hispanic Access Foundation Adds Diversity to Summer Nature Camps at an Urban Neighborhood Park
R5 / Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership, Providence, Rhode Island

Hispanic Access Foundation Student Michael Bonilla helped the Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership reach under-represented communities in Providence. He helped facilitate youth programming, including camps in Spanish, that promoted outdoor exploration and play within the Providence Parks. Michael’s goals were to inspire kids to wonder, learn, and experience nature. He also helped the community understand their natural environment and to develop an environmental stewardship ethic. He developed nature camps, "Ven y Unete a Nosotros! Nature Investigators!” at Peace and Plenty Providence Park. They encompassed fun family adventures with programs on insects, plants and pollinators, scavenger hunts, and BZZZ and S’mores.

left: Michael Bonilla, Hispanic Access Foundation Intern, talking to a parent about summer fun family nature camps at Peace and Plenty Park in Providence, Rhode Island. Janis Nepshinsky/USFWS

right: Michael Bonilla’s Nature Investigators’ flyer showing the fun nature camps in Spanish to engage the Latino communities in Providence, Rhode Island. Janis Nepshinsky/USFWS

Tallgrass Prairie Reconstruction and Habitat Improvement
R6 / Madison Wetland Management District (WMD), Madison, South Dakota
R6 / Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge Complex (NWRC), Lake Andes, South Dakota

The tallgrass prairie reconstruction and habitat improvement project connects youth, with conservation professionals and provides them with habitat management experience and an ecological understanding of prairies. The Minnesota Conservation Corps (MNCC) works with Refuge personnel to collect and process native grasses and forbs needed for reconstructing grasslands. The youth learn plant identification skills, how to use procuring equipment, and about habitat management practices and landscape-scale planning. The Service emphasizes the role of pollinators and their habitats, especially monarch butterflies and prairie endemic invertebrates. The MNCC crew is a critical component of the effort to collect and process native forbs seed that serves the prairie reconstruction needs of FWS refuges. Partners for Fish and Wildlife, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, and local community butterfly gardens. This year the MNCC assisted with the collection and processing of 150 pounds of common milkweed.

Minnesota Conservation Corps crewmember harvesting common milkweed. USFWS

Togiak Refuge Partners / Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation Youth Internship Program
R7 / Togiak National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Kodiak, Alaska

The Togiak NWR hosted four Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation interns to maintain remote cabins, rebuild a float plane dock, and support other maintenance projects. Interns tallied walrus numbers from images downloaded from remote cameras, explored Arctic char genetic research, and helped remove trash from Wilderness lakes. One intern, following in the footsteps of his grandfather, worked as a River Ranger, shuttling an artist-in-residence and scientists doing water temperature monitoring. He also facilitated the Ranger-for-a-Day program that works with youth volunteers to clean up the river and learn about its natural and cultural resources. One of the interns represented the Refuge and his community serving as an Arctic Youth Ambassador (see page 22 for more information on the Arctic Youth Ambassador Program).

Entire intern crew at Togiak Refuge. BBEFDC
One thousand and thirty-four high school students served in the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) at the Service’s national wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries, field stations, regional offices, and Headquarters in Falls Church, Virginia in FY 2016. These summer jobs are available to students ages 15-18, and for many, it is the first paying job they have ever had. The Service typically recruits students in local communities through newspaper announcements, high school job fairs, science classes, clubs, state labor offices, or during special visits to the schools.

YCC Crew Work Project R1 / Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Ridgefield, Washington

The YCC is a very valuable program for managing the Refuge’s public use, invasive species, and biological programs. YCC represented the “first job” experience for all crew members this summer. The uniqueness of this program afforded other “firsts” including bird banding, birdwatching, research, and exploring illegal wildlife refuges. The crew developed an in-depth knowledge of wildlife refuges and an appreciation of conservation. Members of the YCC crew had the following words to say about their experience. “The experience I had this summer was amazing. I have a new appreciation for the people that work to help our environment. I now aspire to do it in a similar way.” And, “Joining this program was something I looked forward to doing since I was in elementary school. It was worth every minute, and I’d join this program again in a heartbeat.”

YCC Leader, Caty Kunz, bands and releases an American Kestrel, USFWS

YCC Fellows present about USFWS’s role in controlling illegal wildlife trafficking, USFWS

YCC enrolls a bench on a refuge trail and celebrate a job well done, USFWS

YCC enrolls a bench on a refuge trail and celebrate a job well done, USFWS

YCC Crew Work Project R3 / Necedah National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Necedah, Wisconsin

The Mora NFH partnered with local community colleges, the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (RMYC), and the Directorate Fellows Program (DFP) to provide unique career development opportunities for high school-aged youth through the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program. The Hatchery gave 16 students practical work experience in Gila trout recovery efforts. In the past several years, program results have been achieved through the recruitment of new student interns, the direct hire of DFP alumni, and the impetus for two students to switch their focus to Fishery Biology degrees. In 2016 the DFP program students took on day-to-day work guiding the YCC and RMYC programs. They did a great job, gaining valuable team leadership experience. We’re excited to see these students growing professionally and personally towards their goals of starting careers in conservation.

2016 Necedah National Wildlife Refuge’s Youth Conservation Corps builds a pollinator garden trail, USFWS

Mora National Fish Hatchery Student Programs R2 / Mora National Fish Hatchery (NFH), Mora, New Mexico

The Mora NFH partnered with local community colleges, the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, and the Directorate Fellows Program (DFP) to provide unique career development opportunities for high school-aged youth through the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program. The Hatchery gave 16 students practical work experience in Gila trout recovery efforts. In the past several years, program results have been achieved through the recruitment of new student interns, the direct hire of DFP alumni, and the impetus for two students to switch their focus to Fishery Biology degrees. In 2016 the DFP program students took on day-to-day work guiding the YCC and RMYC programs. They did a great job, gaining valuable team leadership experience. We’re excited to see these students growing professionally and personally towards their goals of starting careers in conservation.

2016 Necedah National Wildlife Refuge’s Youth Conservation Corps builds a pollinator garden trail, USFWS

RMYC programs. They did a great job, gaining valuable team leadership experience. We’re excited to see these students growing professionally and personally towards their goals of starting careers in conservation.

Student Interns from Luna Community College get some real hands on experience at the Mora National Fish Hatchery in New Mexico.

Youth Conservation Corps program at Necedah is committed to creating a diverse learning atmosphere. Enrollees are exposed to banding, biological surveys, public use programs, and maintenance.

2016 Necedah National Wildlife Refuge’s Youth Conservation Corps builds a pollinator garden trail, USFWS

Mora National Fish Hatchery Student Programs R2 / Mora National Fish Hatchery (NFH), Mora, New Mexico

The Mora NFH partnered with local community colleges, the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, and the Directorate Fellows Program (DFP) to provide unique career development opportunities for high school-aged youth through the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program. The Hatchery gave 16 students practical work experience in Gila trout recovery efforts. In the past several years, program results have been achieved through the recruitment of new student interns, the direct hire of DFP alumni, and the impetus for two students to switch their focus to Fishery Biology degrees. In 2016 the DFP program students took on day-to-day work guiding the YCC and RMYC programs. They did a great job, gaining valuable team leadership experience. We’re excited to see these students growing professionally and personally towards their goals of starting careers in conservation.
Summer Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program
R4 / Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery (NFH), Jamestown, Kentucky

Providing youth with outdoor engagement opportunities in Kentucky is an important part of the Wolf Creek NFH’s mission. This summer, the Hatchery engaged four YCC participants in hands-on experience and gainful employment where they became valuable members of our staff providing assistance with the day-to-day operations of the Hatchery. Their duties included feeding fish, cleaning raceways, fish distribution, grounds keeping, building and equipment maintenance, special projects such as trail maintenance, and events such as Wolf Creek NFH’s Catch a Rainbow Kid’s Fishing Derby. At the end of the summer, the YCC students left with a greater appreciation for the work required to keep a national fish hatchery operating smoothly.

Southwest Tribal Youth Employment Project
HQ / Fish and Aquatic Conservation (FAC), Falls Church, Virginia
R2 / New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, Albuquerque, New Mexico

FAC supported employment for tribal youth in two separate eight-week Tribal Youth Conservation Corps (TYCC) summer projects in the Southwest. In one project, staff at the New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office employed students from the Cochiti Pueblo in New Mexico in work that helped them gain valuable insights into forestry, wildlife management, water quality testing methods and strategies, geomorphology, hydrology, habitat enhancement and restoration concepts, and tribal history. They also assisted with High Water Mark LLC’s post fire mitigation monitoring efforts from two major wildfires that ravaged the upper watersheds of ancestral lands. In the second project, the Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission engaged youth at the Mescalero Apache Tribal Fish Hatchery in Mescalero, New Mexico, in work that emphasized conservation education, ecosystem management, and the culture and propagation of rainbow trout to enhance the economic development of the Mescalero Apache Tribe, thereby supporting self-determination.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Conservation 4 Youth Summer Internship Program (C4Y)
HQ / Budget, Planning, and Human Capital (BPHC), Falls Church, Virginia

HQ employees provided 12 at-risk youth the chance to gain confidence through work experience, network opportunities, and mentoring—all while learning the value of conservation and connecting with nature. Envisioned by Denise Sheehan, Assistant Director, BPHC, the award-winning C4Y Program involves local youth from Fairfax County and DC’s Department of Child and Family Services. Highlights included a service project at University of DC’s Urban Farm, where our students braved record temperatures to assemble and paint rain barrels and remove noxious weeds from the site’s natural playscape. The interns also learned about and met a few endangered species who live at the Maryland Zoo and attended a conservation career presentation and exploration at the Baltimore Aquarium. C4Y continued its strong tradition of providing Service employees the opportunity to foster a connection between nature and young people, all while making a difference in the world around them.
Coordination, Communication, and Training

Coordination and Communication

Urban Wildlife Conservation Program (UWCP)

How does the Service connect urban America with our wild places? We coordinate the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program to connect with the 80 percent of Americans living in cities. The UWCP engages urban communities as partners in wildlife conservation. There are two components to the program: Urban Wildlife Refuges and Urban Partnerships. Urban Partnerships are in turn comprised of Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnerships and Urban Bird Treaty Program Cities. By reaching beyond our managed lands and waters, the Service inspires children with the nature all around them, increases our relevancy, and fosters a sense of stewardship. Learn more at http://tinyurl.com/zjw86hn.

Urban Wildlife Refuges and Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnerships
HQ / National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), Falls Church, Virginia

Service staff, along with local and national partners, developed Standards of Excellence that serve as a framework for collaboration among the Service and urban communities, on and off Service lands. Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnerships are long-term, place-based partnerships that engage urban communities in conservation on lands the Service neither owns nor governs. By the end of FY 2016, NWRS established 14 Urban Wildlife Refuges and supported 21 Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnerships.

- Cops and Bobbers, Hooks and Ladders

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, Sunderland, Massachusetts

Hook, Line and Sinker: Cops and kids connect through fishing! The Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge held its inaugural Cops and Bobbers, Hooks and Ladders, urban youth fishing program in the city of Hartford, Connecticut. The goal of the program is to teach kids to fish, connect them to the outdoors and develop positive relationships with law enforcement and safety professionals in their communities. More than 40 city youth participated in the event, and all received a rod and reel to take home, courtesy of Bass Pro Shops. After this year’s successful event, plans are underway to expand the program into other urban areas in the region.

Standards of Excellence

1. Know and Relate to the Community
2. Connect Urban People with Nature via Stepping Stones of Engagement
3. Build Partnerships
4. Be a Community Asset
5. Ensure Adequate Long-Term Resources
6. Provide Equitable Access
7. Ensure Visitors Feel Safe and Welcome
8. Model Sustainability

Learn more: https://www.fws.gov/urban/soe.php
Urban Oases: A collaborative, community-wide restoration, revitalization, and education initiative, New Haven, CT

New Haven is the second city in Connecticut to be designated as an Urban Bird Treaty (UBT) city, and is a leader in demonstrating how providing important habitat for birds and other wildlife makes our neighborhoods healthier and more beautiful places for people to live. The designation is the result of efforts to create Urban Oases—patches of healthy habitats that benefit both wildlife and people in schools, parks, and yards across New Haven. Through a Community Advisory Council made up of local residents and community stakeholders, partners are engaging community representatives in the decision-making process of urban oasis site selection. The Council is also working to develop strategies to overcome cultural barriers to engagement and help local residents gain equitable access to natural resources. “The vision of a city that’s a refuge—for people as well as for all living things—is a really powerful one,” said Joel Tolman, Common Ground’s Director of Impact and Engagement.

Connecting People with Nature (CPWN) National Working Group

The CPWN Working Group (CPWN: WG) continues to carry out its priority to address the American public’s declining interactions with nature by creating opportunities for people to have enjoyable and meaningful experiences in the outdoors. The Working Group responds to the needs of the field in providing resources, sharing best practices, and most headquarters programs, the group meets monthly on conference calls.

Youth Coordination Team (YCT)

The YCT coordinates the Service’s youth employment programs for ages 15-35. Key programs include Youth Conservation Corps, Pathways, and most headquarters programs. The PLC is the underlying authority for the majority of youth we hire through partnering organizations (see page 25 for more information on partnership employment). The Guidance outlined in this document applies to all applicants.

Connecting People with Nature National Working Group Members

**Regions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Virginia Parks</th>
<th><a href="mailto:Virginia_parks@fws.gov">Virginia_parks@fws.gov</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>Art Needleman</td>
<td><a href="mailto:art_a_needleman@fws.gov">art_a_needleman@fws.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 2</td>
<td>Tim Smigieliski</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tim_smigieliski@fws.gov">tim_smigieliski@fws.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>Kevin Lowry</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kevin_lowry@fws.gov">kevin_lowry@fws.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 4</td>
<td>Kate Tonio</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kate_tonio@fws.gov">kate_tonio@fws.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 5</td>
<td>Kristine Askerooth</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kristine_askerooth@fws.gov">kristine_askerooth@fws.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 6</td>
<td>Mary Price</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mary_price@fws.gov">mary_price@fws.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 7</td>
<td>DC Carr</td>
<td><a href="mailto:derek_carr@fws.gov">derek_carr@fws.gov</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Headquarters**

- Fish and Aquatic Conservation: Denise Wagner, denise_wagner@fws.gov
- Law Enforcement: Michael Lacomin, michael_lacomin@fws.gov
- Migratory Birds: Rachel Levin, rachel_levin@fws.gov
- National Conservation Training Center: Georgia Jeppesen, georgia_jeppesen@fws.gov

Youth Coordination Team Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Chris Logan</th>
<th><a href="mailto:christopher_logan@fws.gov">christopher_logan@fws.gov</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>Gary Hutchison</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gary_hutchison@fws.gov">gary_hutchison@fws.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 2</td>
<td>Megan Wandag</td>
<td><a href="mailto:megan_wandag@fws.gov">megan_wandag@fws.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>Sharon Fuller-Barnes</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sharon_fuller-barnes@fws.gov">sharon_fuller-barnes@fws.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 4</td>
<td>Kevin Lowry</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kevin_lowry@fws.gov">kevin_lowry@fws.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 5</td>
<td>Kate Tonio</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kate_tonio@fws.gov">kate_tonio@fws.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 6</td>
<td>Amy Thomburg</td>
<td><a href="mailto:amy_thomburg@fws.gov">amy_thomburg@fws.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 7</td>
<td>Kristen Gilbert</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kristen_gilbert@fws.gov">kristen_gilbert@fws.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 8</td>
<td>DC Carr</td>
<td><a href="mailto:derek_carr@fws.gov">derek_carr@fws.gov</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Headquarters**

- Diversity Inclusive Workforce Management: Bryan Acton, bryan_acton@fws.gov
- Ecological Services: Robin Nims Elliott, robin_nimselliott@fws.gov
- Fish and Aquatic Conservation: Robert Pos, robert_pos@fws.gov
- Human Capital Management: Jessie Cheek, jessie_cheek@fws.gov
- Migratory Birds: Chris Deets, christopher_deets@fws.gov
- National Conservation Training Center: Drew Burnett, drew Burnett@fws.gov
- National Wildlife Refuge System: Phil LePelch, phil_lepelch@fws.gov

Public Land Corps Program Coordination HJ / National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), Falls Church, Virginia

HJ / Budget Planning and Human Capital (BPHC), Falls Church, Virginia

HJ / National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), Shepherdstown, West Virginia

In FY 2016 the Service published the Public Land Corps (PLC) Program Guidance which outlines the process for certifying non-competitive status to qualified corps members for certain Federal positions. The PLC is in the underlying authority for the majority of youth we hire through partnering organizations (see page 25 for more information on partnership employment). The Guidance required each Regional and Assistant Director to identify a PLC Coordinator responsible for overseeing the process of certifying non-competitive status to qualified candidates in their respective organizations.
Public Land Corps Program Coordinators

VOICES (Visitor Outreach, Interpretation, Communication, and Educational Services) HQ / National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), West Virginia

Training

Youth Outdoor Skills Webinar Series

The Educator Climate & Conservation Colloquium (EC3)

Building Urban Wildlife Habitat with Youth and Creating a Schoolyard Habitat

HQ / National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), Shepherdstown, West Virginia

R8 / San Jose, California and R3 / Chicago, Illinois

The Building Urban Wildlife Habitat with Youth and Creating a Schoolyard Habitat blended learning courses were successfully delivered in San Jose, CA, and Chicago, IL in 2016. NCTC worked with site hosts in each region to develop and build community partnerships that involve youth working in schoolyard and urban wildlife habitats. Participants from multiple Service programs presented final class projects that demonstrated and integrated their knowledge gained from the training. NCTC provided small implementation grants for the class projects, which included science activities focused on reaching underserved youth and community members.

NCTC's Division of Education and Outreach (NCTC), Shepherdstown, West Virginia

Schoolyard Habitat: Building Urban Wildlife Habitat with Youth and Creating a Schoolyard Habitat.

VOICES (Visitor Outreach, Interpretation, Communication, and Educational Services)

Training

The Division of Education and Outreach Professional Development (PD) Branch builds the Service’s capacity for Engaging the Next Generation programming by providing training and supporting communities of practice for Service employees and their partners in environmental education, youth outdoor skills, creating schoolyard habitats, and youth leadership and supervision. Working with our partners, the PD Branch also provides web and social media tools to help youth learn about outdoor experiences, as well as conservation internships, job opportunities, and careers. The Branch manages grants, cooperative agreements, and intra-governmental agreements, and where applicable, builds diversity and inclusion into all trainings, programs, and products.

Youth Outdoor Skills Webinar Series

The Educator Climate & Conservation Colloquium (EC3)

HQ / National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), Shepherdstown, West Virginia

EC3 is an educator training program that helps teachers prepare students for future conservation challenges and position their schools as beacons for conservation. In FY2016, EC3 brought 17 K-12 educators, staff, and administrators together to develop a sustainability toolkit and to begin building a network of colleagues to empower campus-wide sustainability efforts. Participants shared with and learned from national experts in the field of sustainability education, facilities management, curriculum design, and behavioral change to bring sustainability to their campuses and classrooms. Keynote plenary session included Leith Sharp, Harvard University Center for Health and Global Environment; Tim Cole, Sustainability Officer, VA Beach City Public Schools; Dr. David Orr, the Paul Sears Distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies and Politics, Oberlin College; and USFWS staff for the Urban Initiative, Monarch Initiative, International Wildlife Trade, Youth Outdoor Skills, and Conservation Careers.

Public Land Corps Program Coordinators

Regions

Region 1 Sylvia Pelizzi sylvia_pelizzi@fws.gov
Refuge Supervisor
Region 2 Monica Kimbrough monica_kimbrough@fws.gov
Assistant Refuge Supervisor
Ken Garahan ken_garahan@fws.gov
Chief, Visitor Services
Region 3 Megan Wandaeg meagan_wandaeg@fws.gov
Visitor Services Manager
Region 4 Sharon Fuller-Barnes sharon_fuller-barnes@fws.gov
Education Specialist & Workforce Recruiter
Region 5 Jacob Forst jacob_forst@fws.gov
Human Resources Specialist
Region 6 Amy Thornburg amy_thornburg@fws.gov
Regional Refuge Planning
Region 7 Kristen Gilbert kristen_gilbert@fws.gov
Park Ranger
Region 8 Derek Carr derek_carr@fws.gov
Visitor Services Planner
Artur Stygler artur_stygler@fws.gov
Chief Refuge Operations
Headquarters
BPHC Jessie Cheek jessie_cheek@fws.gov
Human Resources Specialist
NWRS Kevin Kilcullen kevin_kilcullen@fws.gov
Branch Chief Visitor Services
NCTC Drew Burnett drew_burnett@fws.gov
Branch Chief Intergency Coordination
Conclusion

This FY 2016 report demonstrates how deeply integrated youth programs are throughout the Service, from ecological services field stations, fish hatcheries, national wildlife refuges, wetland management districts, waterfowl production areas, as well as regional and national program offices. As the Service confronts the decreasing interest in the outdoor environment among our nation’s young people, the importance of building the next generation of conservation leaders to join our ranks and tackle future, complex conservation challenges becomes all the more important. The Service is proud of the comprehensive nature of our programs that reached millions of young people, their educators, and their families this year.

We will build on this success, improve our FY 2016 programs, and continue to share our experiences more broadly, always with the goal of involving more young people in the important mission we strive to meet: working with people to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

 “…the most important thing I took away from the Congress was getting to know a lot more indigenous youth that are as passionate about Mother Earth as I am. It really warms my heart knowing that other people, especially young people, care as much about the climate and Mother Earth as I do.”

Eastu Sinnok, Alaska Youth Ambassador and participant in the Inter-Tribal Youth Climate Leadership Congress