



America’s Great Outdoors: Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists

America’s Great Outdoors: Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists is part of a new Youth Initiative launched by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) with support from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the USDA Forest Service (FS). The goal of the Initiative is to provide competitive grants to organizations that are developing innovative conservation job opportunities for youth which expose young people, particularly urban and minority youth, to the natural world and career opportunities available in conservation. Projects must also have a strong nexus with the National Forest System, National Grasslands, and/or BLM lands and the missions of the agencies. In cooperation with its federal partners and the Council on Environmental Quality, NFWF launched the Youth Initiative in December 2011 with an announcement of \$300,000 in funding for pilot projects in Alaska, California, and Maryland to serve as examples of projects competitive for funding.

An additional \$1,135,672 in project funds are now ready to be awarded to the 17 projects listed below. This brings the total funding awarded through the first year of this Initiative to more than \$1.4 million. This federal investment is being leveraged into a total of \$3.7 million and will support more than 500 new youth conservation jobs through the award of 20 grants.

The 17 new projects are being supported with \$648,430 provided by BLM, \$387,242 provided by FS and \$100,000 provided by NFWF. The 17 new projects were selected from over 100 applications that were received which requested more than \$8.5 million in funding. The new projects are:

BLM-FS COSPONSORED PROJECTS

Restoring the Future: Pathways to Careers in Conservation	BLM Funds:	\$35,243.00
<i>Mt. Hood Community College/Project YESS</i>	Forest Service Funds:	\$35,000.00
NFWF Project #: 31536	<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$107,000.00</u>
	Total Project:	\$177,243.00

This project integrates a Youth Conservation Crew job program and a Conservation Career and College Exploration program for at-risk minority youth (ages 16-21). The Mt. Hood Community College will hire and train 30 urban youth and 2 crew leaders to complete essential restoration projects over two summers in the Sandy River Basin, just east of metropolitan Portland, primarily on FS and BLM land and lands ecologically linked to them. During this field-based phase, youth will network with agency professionals and basin partners and gain job-readiness skills and hands-on experience in salmon habitat restoration, trail work, native plant restoration, project management, and invasive-plant removal. Funding for the project will also support a regional Conservation Education conference, a series of panels and seminars, and a job fair in natural resources open to all where students will have access to fish/wildlife biologists, foresters, research technicians, and other natural resource professionals to explore career pathways.

**Crown of the Continent and Prairie Next
Generation Stewards**

Montana Conservation Corps
NFWF Project #: 31249

BLM Funds:	\$42,000.00
Forest Service Funds:	\$38,000.00
<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$149,450.00</u>
Total Project:	\$229,450.00

The Montana Conservation Corps will engage youth and young adults from urban communities, rural Montana, and Native American tribes to accomplish 43 weeks of stewardship, restoration, and monitoring projects throughout the state and develop skills for conservation careers. Tiered programs will provide opportunities for different age level youth to engage for two weeks, one month, or a five to nine month project implementation that will enhance the Crown of the Continent ecosystem and Northern Prairie grasslands of eastern Montana. Working in partnership with the BLM, USFS, Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative, Watershed Education Network, and World Wildlife Fund, MCC will recruit and train more than 100 youth. Crews will be deployed in portions of the Flathead, Lolo, and Helena National Forests, the BLM’s Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument , and Northern Prairie landscapes. This project will benefit an AGO priority landscape and two NFWF Keystone Initiatives in development.

Sierra Native Youth Conservation Corps

Native Alliance of the Sierra Nevada Foothills
NFWF Project #: 31987

BLM Funds:	\$37,500.00
Forest Service Funds:	\$37,500.00
<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$75,000.00</u>
Total Project:	\$150,000.00

This project will provide environmental job training and educational experiences for at least 12 Sierra Native American youth in design, restoration, and monitoring at four sites, Hope Valley Meadow and Indian Valley Meadow, both FS sites, floodplain restoration on BLM’s Stocking Flat, and trail and bridge site improvements along the Tribute Trail in Nevada City. Interns will engage in removal of invasive species, restoration of native plants, trail design and construction, fish survey monitoring, and groundwater and water quality data collection, analysis, and reporting. In-class training will focus on acquiring tribal language skills associated with native plants, birds, and fish; learning native restoration techniques; developing skill in media and outreach around conservation issues; researching traditional use of resources and ceremonial significance of sites; and understanding the range of conservation professional opportunities. The project is a collaborative effort involving the Sierra Nevada Alliance, American Rivers and Americorps members, the USFS, and the BLM and supports NFWF’s Sierra Meadows Keystone Initiative.

Celebra las Playeras (Celebrate Shorebirds)

Environment for the Americas’s Inc.
NFWF Project #: 31835

BLM Funds:	\$40,000.00
Forest Service Funds:	\$40,000.00
<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$169,440.00</u>
Total Project:	\$249,440.00

Environment for the Americas (EFTA) will collaborate with U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management on Celebra las Playeras (Celebrate Shorebirds), a comprehensive approach to engaging Latinos in natural resource careers and conservation action through internships at five sites. EFTA will recruit 8 Latino interns (ages 18-25) from colleges and local communities, giving preference to youth who live near research sites to help create long-term relationships between agencies and nearby Latino communities, serve as role models, and increase awareness of conservation issues and careers in conservation. One intern will serve as liaison to recruit other interns, promote education, and track participant field experience and a second will work with USFS NatureWatch to develop online program materials and encourage awareness and future participation. The remaining 6 interns will engage in field research, training, and data collection at sites in California, Colorado, and Alaska where monitoring shorebird populations is a priority.

Sangre de Cristo Youth for Conservation
 USDA – Forest Service
 NFWF Project #: 31297

BLM Funds:	\$11,000.00
Forest Service Funds:	\$12,769.00
<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$23,769.00</u>
Total Project:	\$47,538.00

The USDA Forest Service (FS) will hire at least 20 youth from predominantly Hispanic, underserved counties in Colorado (Costilla and Conejos) with few conservation or work opportunities for conservation work on lands managed by the Rio Grande National Forest and San Luis Valley Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Two groups of 10 – 12 youth will spend ten days learning about and participating in conservation activities performed by the FS, BLM, Colorado Division of Wildlife, local conservation organizations, and private landowners and work on 4 – 5 diverse conservation projects. The students will provide the agencies with much needed help and gain a broad perspective on ecosystems and types of work done by resource management agencies by locating and mapping *osha*, a culturally significant herbal plant; collecting, identifying and counting macro-invertebrates in wetlands; planting willow plugs along a river bank; measuring, assessing and recording grazing range forage; and surveying and recording bark beetle disturbance and marking salvage trees.

BLM SPONSORED PROJECTS

Klamath Basin Stewardship Project
 Northwest Youth Corps
 NFWF Project #: 31395

BLM Funds:	\$99,995.00
<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$108,073.00</u>
Total Project:	\$208,068.00

This project builds upon a successful pilot program and will provide support for NFWF’s Upper Klamath Basin Keystone Initiative by implementing high priority stewardship projects near the city of Klamath Falls, the Wood and Sprague River systems and the Williamson Delta. The Northwest Youth Corps will hire fifty local youth, at least 40% of whom will be a member of a local Klamath Tribe, to work on riparian fence building, invasive species removal, native plantings, survey completions and data management, and public lands access management. The project will be carried out in collaboration with the BLM, USFWS, and local partners who will prioritize conservation needs and provide mentorship, oversight, and materials to crews working on the ground. Crews will work with a new project sponsor for 30 hours each week for five weeks and spend an additional five hours participating in an accredited field education program which includes conservation education and job skills training. An additional 50 youth will participate in one-day volunteer events during the school year.

Employment and Mentorship of Urban Youth (CA)
 Bureau of Land Management
 NFWF Project #: 31841

BLM Funds:	\$75,000.00
NFWF Funds:	\$25,000.00
<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$100,000.00</u>
Total Project:	\$200,000.00

BLM-California, in partnership with the Student Conservation Association (SCA), California Conservation Corps (CCC) and Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC), will recruit and select ten young adults (ages 18-25) from underserved communities for employment in the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP). Selected interns will have proven potential in public land and resource management as youth corps team member under the guidance of LACC, CCC and SCA with on-the-ground restoration and related conservation projects. Interns will cover a 14-week assignment in one of 15 BLM field offices in California to carry out seasonal work on BLM lands and benefit from a professional mentoring relationship with an experienced natural resource manager and training at the

National Training Center in Phoenix or Shepherdstown. Successful STEP interns will be placed in career-conditional positions under the Student Temporary Employment Program (SCEP).

Nick's Interns	BLM Funds:	\$50,050.00
<i>Mattole Restoration Council</i>	<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$50,000.00</u>
NFWF Project #: 31190	Total Project:	\$100,050.00

The Mattole Restoration Council (MRC) has been leading community-based watershed restoration in rural Humboldt County to restore native salmon runs for over twenty years in collaboration with the BLM which provides mentoring, technical, and other support for their efforts. Funding for this project will enable MRC to provide 30 paid conservation internships for high school and college age youth to cultivate stewardship and carry out meaningful conservation projects on the King's Range National Conservation Area and adjacent lands. Project activities will be guided by established management plans and improve grassland, estuarine, and forest habitats as well as riparian and instream conditions on the Mattole River and its headwaters tributaries. The interns will work alongside professional natural resource mentors from MRC, BLM, and other project partners to carry out native seed collection, stream flow and steelhead monitoring, in-stream improvements, forest and grassland restoration, invasive weed removal, and trail construction and maintenance.

Tillamook Coho Stream Restoration Project	BLM Funds:	\$42,570.00
<i>Tillamook School District</i>	<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$77,500.00</u>
NFWF Project #: 31597	Total Project:	\$120,070.00

The Tillamook School District will partner with the BLM to monitor coho salmon stream restoration sites and collect data to assess the effectiveness of ongoing stream restoration on the Wilson, Nestucca, and Trask Rivers. A crew of one adult leader and five youth members, selected from a pool of current high school and recent graduate applicants, will be employed for an eight week season during two summer sessions. During the school year, Biology, Chemistry, and Natural Resource classes from Tillamook High School will assist with data collection and analysis. Activities include aquatic invertebrate sampling, riparian fence monitoring, fish habitat evaluation, water quality sampling and analysis, and photopoint monitoring. A BLM fish biologist will oversee data collection protocol design to ensure that the collected data will provide agencies with needed information about the impact of restoration practices. In addition, the project will provide a rich context for meaningful curriculum design for students.

Inventory & Stewardship of Wisconsin River Islands	BLM Funds:	\$55,072.00
<i>Operation Fresh Start</i>	<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$94,714.00</u>
NFWF Project #: 31672	Total Project:	\$149,786.00

Operation Fresh Start (OFS) will engage 60 young people (ages 16–24), largely from disadvantaged urban backgrounds, in inventory, planning, and restoration activities to identify and conserve the natural resources on 64 islands owned by the Bureau of Land Management within the lower Wisconsin River. The islands range in size from less than one acre to over 183 acres and together total 890 acres. Project outcomes will include GIS mapping of plant communities and observed wildlife, natural features, and human use and development and implementation of stewardship plans that address conservation needs including invasive species control and site enhancements such as bird boxes and signage. BLM staff will provide crew training in water and canoe safety, chain saw and other tool use, herbicide application, plant identification, data collection, GPS mapping and island navigation, and facilitate a workshop on career opportunities in environmental ecology. OFS will assist Americorps graduates with finding jobs and higher education upon completion of service.

Southwest Conservation Corps, Dolores River Restoration	BLM Funds:	\$80,000.00
<i>Southwest Conservation Corps</i>	<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$412,000.00</u>
NFWF Project #: 31179	Total Project:	\$492,000.00

The Southwest Conservation Corps is partnering with the Dolores River Restoration Partnership, a three-year old private/public collaboration, as part of the Walton Family Foundation’s Freshwater Conservation Initiative to provide job training and education for young adults that results in riparian restoration along the main stem of the Dolores in the Uncompahgre District and along Disappointment Creek, a major tributary. The project will engage 50-60 crew members and 18-20 crew leaders for 100 weeks of conservation work at these sites. Eight person crews will use chain saws and herbicides to remove invasive tamarisk and plant willow and cottonwood saplings and stem cuttings and grasses and forbs to stabilize banks. This watershed is one of four priority systems where Walton has committed to restoring river health and building stakeholder alliances to ensure long-term stewardship of the Colorado River. Restoration will be continually monitored and evaluated to ensure project sustainability.

Virgin River SWFL Habitat Restoration	BLM Funds:	\$80,000.00
<i>Great Basin Institute</i>	<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$252,515.00</u>
NFWF Project #: 31532	Total Project:	\$332,515.00

The Great Basin Institute (GBI) will partner with Nevada Conservation Corps (NCC) members and Partners in Conservation (PIC) student volunteers to restore 40 acres of BLM land along the Virgin River near the city of Mesquite, Nevada. This project will expand on-going restoration in the watershed as part of a collaborative effort for coordinated restoration of Southwestern Willow Flycatcher habitat supported by the Walton Family Foundation. Native plants will be re-established for increased likelihood that natives will reclaim an area where tamarisk was eradicated by recent flooding and weakened by leaf beetle bio-control and increase SWFL nesting and foraging habitat at the site. 25 Americorps members serving NCC will make up crews of 4 plus a supervisor and will be employed by GBI for 20 four-day work tours in the field, planting and seeding sites with native species. PIC will recruit 70 young people for 2 volunteer days to engage in hands-on restoration and monitoring and visit with hydrologists, biologists, and other natural resource professionals to learn about conservation career pathways. PIC volunteers will also assume long-term site stewardship and monitoring.

FOREST SERVICE SPONSORED PROJECTS

Yampa River Basin Youth Conservation Career Development	Forest Service Funds:	\$50,000.00
<i>USDA-Forest Service - Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest</i>	<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$100,000.00</u>
NFWF Project #: 31468	Total Project:	\$150,000.00

The Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests, in partnership with, the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, The Nature Conservancy, and Yampatika Outdoor Awareness Association, will employ 14 youth across a single landscape of public lands in the Yampa River Basin in Northwest Colorado. Three different youth crews will be mentored by Forest Service staff and their non-profit partners and these crews, in turn, will mentor youth ages 9-14. Project activities include wildlife habitat improvements, stream restoration, trail maintenance, seed collection and potential dispersal, and youth naturalist training and leadership. The

project location is primarily the California and Slater Parks Special Interest Areas on the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and also BLM and other public lands in the Basin.

Collaborative Forest Restoration and Education in New Mexico <i>Forest Guild</i> NFWF Project #: 31418	Forest Service Funds:	\$50,482.00
	NFWF Funds:	\$25,000.00
	<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$75,482.00</u>
	Total Project:	\$150,964.00

Support for this project will enable the Forest Guild (FG) and the Cibola National Forest (CNF) to hire and train 12 low-income and Tribal youth from Cibola and McKinley Counties for 6 part-time seasonal jobs a year for two years. CNF, which manages hundreds of thousands of forest acres at risk from uncharacteristic wildfire, droughts, insects, and disease, needs assistance acquiring habitat structure data to carry out ecologically based management of a landscape which also is habitat for keystone species such as northern goshawk, Mexican spotted owl, and Abert's squirrel, species affected by catastrophic events at a meta-population scale. The youth crews will collect quantitative data needed for planning and development of a forest restoration landscape scale strategy to mitigate the extreme risk of catastrophic wildfires. Other priority project activities in the Zuni Mountains will include the protection of springs from livestock and horses and maintenance and improvement of wildlife troughs and earthen tanks for wildlife. Each six member Youth Conservation Corps Crew will attend a week-long orientation field seminar, work as a FS seasonal employee for 9 weeks a year for two years, and have access to college credit through Northern New Mexico College.

Utah Conservation Corps Bilingual Youth Corps <i>Utah State University/Utah Conservation Corps</i> NFWF Project #: 31518	Forest Service Funds:	\$70,000.00
	NFWF Funds:	\$25,000.00
	<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$96,436.00</u>
	Total Project:	\$191,436.00

The Utah Conservation Corps (UCC), based at Utah State University (USU) will expand its Bilingual Youth Corps (BYC) program by employing 36 bilingual (Spanish-English) youth recruited from area high schools for four weeks over a two year period to complete 50 miles of wilderness trail maintenance and habitat restoration on 135 acres of public lands. Project activities will take place on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, in the Salt Lake Watershed, and along the Jordan River Parkway. All program materials will be available in Spanish and English and all BYC leadership will be bilingual, lifting the language barrier that often prevents Latino families from becoming involved. During a one-week training period, participants will take part in a College & Careers Day at USU with topics including college application, Latino support services, scholarships, resume writing, and federal internship opportunities. Upon exit of the program and drafting of resumes, BYC members will hear from and network with a panel of federal employers and USU faculty.

Bridging the Forestry Diversity Gap <i>Groundwork Hudson Valley, Inc.</i> NFWF Project #: 31915	Forest Service Funds:	\$25,091.00
	NFWF Funds:	\$25,000.00
	<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$51,672.00</u>
	Total Project:	\$101,763.00

Through a creative collaboration among Groundwork (GWHV), The Wilderness Society (TWS), and 3 National Forests, sixteen disadvantaged youth (ages 18-21) will be recruited from the award-winning youth Green Team (GT), which combines environmental education with service projects in Yonkers and at State/National Parks. GWHV will work with the selected youth for one month prior to field work to introduce participants to camping, develop job readiness, leadership, and team-building skills, and TWS will provide more specialized conservation training on Forest Service (FS) lands. The eight member

youth crews will restore 24+ miles of wilderness trails to standard over two years in areas prioritized by the FS. Through workshops, participants will learn about the purpose/responsibilities of the FS and TWS and about employment opportunities with both. The project will provide these youth with key, professional connections that are rarely available to them. Job readiness training will be carried out in Yonkers, NY, and on-site training and projects will be completed in the Chatahoochee, Cherokee, and Nantahala-Pisgah National Forests, respectively.

Conservation Career Training in the Ohio River Watershed	Forest Service Funds:	\$28,300.00
<i>Ohio River Foundation</i>	<u>Matching Funds:</u>	<u>\$37,000.00</u>
NFWF Project #: 31875	Total Project:	\$65,300.00

The Ohio River Foundation (ORF) will hire two crews of 6 high school students for three weeks of summer work in the Ohio River Watershed on conservation projects in the Boone and Hoosier National Forests near Red River Gorge, Kentucky and Norman, Indiana respectively. Project activities are geared to protect native species and habitat and improve and protect water quality by reducing erosion and runoff and may include removing invasive species, planting trees and shrubs along streams and lakeshores, installing stream crossings, removing winter sand dune from ditches, culverts, and settling basins, rock lining ditches and culverts, and installing water bars and other diversions to direct water from dirt roads and paths to vegetated areas. Students will also engage in education days (one day per week) where forest service personnel and ORF staff will lead hands-on experiential field research. ORF will advertise and recruit students from area high schools in Kentucky and Indiana.

PILOT PROJECTS PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED IN DECEMBER 2011

Potomac River Conservation Job Training Program: The Maryland Department of Natural Resources, in partnership with the BLM, will expand the Maryland Conservation Corps and the Civic Justice Corps to involve students and young adults in conservation projects along the Potomac River at Douglas Point, Md. Participants will be guided and instructed by professionals in park planning and natural resource restoration science and will tackle high-priority restoration work. The grant is being supported with \$100,000 in BLM funds that are being matched by \$100,000 non-federal funds.

Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program: The University of Alaska and several partners will expand the program to encourage high school and college-age Alaska Native youth to pursue conservation careers via mentorship programs and hands-on internship opportunities on Forest Service and BLM lands in Alaska. The grant is being supported with \$50,000 in Forest Service funds and \$50,000 in Bureau of Land Management funds and is being matched with 100,000 in non-federal funds.

Promoting Careers in Southern California: At-risk youth from the Los Angeles Conservation Corps will learn about conservation by helping to remove invasive species and plant native species on the San Bernardino and Angeles National Forests and on BLM preserves within the Coachella Valley in Southern California. The grant is being supported by \$50,000 in Forest Service and \$50,000 in BLM and is being matched with \$100,000 in non-federal funds provided by Southern California Edison.