

Youth in the Great Outdoors



We have access in this Country to some of the greatest parks and recreation facilities. We just want to encourage kids to use the resources that are available to them. It's really a lot of fun. And it's not just a great way to get exercise. It's also a phenomenal way to come together as a family and spend some time together without spending a whole lot of money.

*Michelle Obama, First Lady of the United States
June 1, 2010*

Youth in the Great Outdoors is an integral component of the America's Great Outdoors initiative launched by President Obama on April 16, 2010. The Department of the Interior's youth initiative will employ, educate, and engage young people from all backgrounds to explore, connect with, and preserve America's natural and cultural heritage.

Interior's bureaus are uniquely positioned to make this connection with America's young people. Educational and employment opportunities offered by the Department provide a wide range of

opportunities for today's young people to experience and appreciate America's heritage hands-on. Youth employment programs across the Department engage thousands of young men and women. Youth participants are from diverse backgrounds in all States and Territories and include those from Tribes, under-served populations, and those who have little opportunity to experience the outdoors. Interior bureaus are implementing new, creative ways to engage America's young people and instill a life-long commitment to protect, preserve, and enjoy the natural environment and cultural treasures.

FROM CONVERSATION TO ACTION: CHANGING THE WAY INTERIOR DOES BUSINESS

In 21 youth specific America's Great Outdoors listening sessions, young people from all across the Country shared their passion, energy, and commitment to the great outdoors. They also expressed their opinions about environmental and other issues they care about most and provided a series of recommendations about the need to:

- Develop quality conservation jobs and service opportunities that protect and restore America's natural and cultural resources, while creating career pathways to green jobs.
- Increase and improve recreational access and opportunities.
- Cultivate environmental stewardship and appreciation of America's natural, cultural, and historic resources through innovative awareness campaigns and hands-on educational opportunities.
- Engage young people in the implementation of the America's Great Outdoors initiative.
- Create and enhance a new generation of safe, clean, accessible urban parks and community green spaces.
- Empower communities to connect with America's great outdoors through their rivers and other waterways.

YOUTH IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS THE SECRETARY'S AGENDA

To address the challenge of engaging youth with natural resources and the outdoors, Interior has an agenda for the 21st century. This agenda encom-



passes four key goals, largely influenced by what was learned from youth specific America's Great Outdoors listening sessions:

- Make the outdoors relevant to today's young people by making it inviting, exciting, and fun.
- Ensure that all young people have access to safe, clean, and close-to-home outdoor places.
- Empower and enable youth to work and volunteer in the outdoors.
- Educate youth in formal and informal settings through environmental and outdoor education activities.

In 2010 and 2011, Interior began expansive efforts to engage, educate, and employ youth to explore, connect with, and preserve America's shared natural and cultural heritage on the lands, waters, and unique assets that the Department protects. Many of these programs are accomplished with the aid of partner groups that provide additional financial resources and often match the funds made available by the bureaus. With the help of partners, these programs generated permanent and temporary employment opportunities for 45 percent more youth in 2010 than in 2009, an increase of almost 5,000 youth employed for a youth employment total of 21,874. This ambitious achievement involved bureaus and offices throughout the Department. The 2012 goal

PRIORITY GOAL YOUTH STEWARDSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

Youth engagement is a key component of the Department's vision to build a 21st century Department of the Interior. Youth involvement in Interior's stewardship agenda infuses energy and new thinking, educates a generation that has lost touch with nature in values surrounding conservation, and has the potential to improve the health of younger generations. To focus on this issue, the Department has a priority goal to increase youth employment through direct hires and partnerships. The goal as stated in the strategic plan:

Increase (from 2009 levels) in the employment of youth between the ages of 15-25 in the conservation mission of the Department. 2012 Target: +50 percent.

In 2010 the bureaus and offices of the Department increased employment of youth between the ages of 15 to 25 by 45 percent over 2009.

The Secretary has challenged the bureaus to exceed the 50 percent increase targeted for 2012 and increase employment of youth by 60 percent over 2009 in 2012.

is to increase youth employment at Interior by 60 percent over 2009 levels, primarily through programs in the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service.

2012 BUDGET SUMMARY

The 2012 budget request includes \$46.8 million, an increase of \$7.6 million over the 2010 Enacted / 2011 CR level, for BLM, USGS, FWS, and NPS youth programs at national parks and national wildlife refuges, on public lands, and in partnerships with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Other Interior bureaus also contribute to the initiative through base operational funding.

Youth Programs on BLM Public Lands – The BLM currently sponsors many activities to educate the

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT GOALS

	Number of Youth Hires		Percent Change from 2009	
	2009 Actual	2010 Actual	2010 Actual	2012 Goal
BLM	2,218	3,106	+40%	+45%
BOEMRE	41	34	-17%	+35%
OSM	102	218	+114%	+115%
Reclamation	170	192	+13%	+40%
USGS	512	544	+6%	+35%
FWS	1,460	2,353	+61%	+70%
NPS	6,175	8,168	+32%	+60%
BIA	144	854	+493%	+500%
OS	102	410	+302%	+305%
SOL	2	1	-50%	+50%
OIG	15	21	+40%	+50%
TOTAL	10,941	15,901	+45%	+60%

Nation's youth about natural and cultural resource issues and inspire an ownership mentality to better assure the future protection of these resources. The 2010 Enacted/2011 CR BLM budget included \$7.6 million to support education, interpretation, and internship programs that offer young people and families opportunities to actively learn and participate in outdoor conservation programs. These programs help prepare the next generation of conservation professionals to meet BLM's current and future workforce needs. In 2009 BLM employed over 2,200 young people. In 2010 BLM youth employment increased by 40 percent over 2009 levels. In 2012 BLM will increase youth employment by 45 percent over 2009 levels. The 2012 budget directs \$1.0 million in base funding to engage additional youth through partnership programs with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation that leverage private sector contributions to engage and employ youth in conservation activities.

USGS Youth Internships – The USGS supports a variety of science education activities for a range of age levels, in both formal and informal settings. These engagement activities are made possible by coordinating student internships, conducting workshops and presentations at science and education meetings, representing USGS and Interior on interagency education and workforce development committees, maintaining and expanding the Bureau's educational website, and responding to science education requests from citizens and partners in professional science societies, schools, and aca-

demia. Many of these opportunities are consistent with the President's initiative to strengthen education in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, to help America's children thrive in the 21st century. The USGS employed over 500 young people in 2009 and increased that amount by six percent in 2010.



In the 2010 Enacted/2011 CR, USGS supported the Secretary's Youth initiative by expanding student internships through an integrated education and research program. This science center based program expanded opportunities for youth to conduct research alongside USGS scientists and staff. The USGS EDMAP program supports the training of a new generation of geologic mapmakers in universities and colleges through a competitive matching grant program. In 2012 due to reductions in lower priority and lower performing programs, USGS is reducing the internship program by \$1.5 million and will offer fewer internships. Funding for EDMAP will decrease by \$100,000 and provide fewer grants. The USGS will continue seeking opportunities to

YOUTH IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS (dollars in millions)

	2010		Change
	Enacted/ 2011 CR	2012	
BLM	7.6	8.6	+1.0
USGS	5.0	3.4	-1.6
FWS	13.2	15.7	+2.5
NPS	13.5	19.2	+5.7
TOTAL	39.2	46.8	+7.6
<i>[NPS Recreational Fees]</i>	<i>[4.4]</i>	<i>[4.4]</i>	<i>[0]</i>

engage youth and has set a goal to increase youth employment by 35 percent in 2012 relative to 2009 using available resources.

Youth Programs at the Fish and Wildlife Service – Hundreds of national wildlife refuges offer employment, education, and recreation opportunities that connect youth with the outdoors. In 2009 the refuge, fish hatchery, and other FWS programs employed over 1,400 youth. Funding increases between 2009 and 2010 in FWS operations were used to increase youth employment by over 60 percent. The 2012 budget proposes \$15.7 million for FWS youth programs, an increase of \$2.5 million over the 2010 Enacted/2011 CR level. In 2012 proposed increases for the Youth Conservation Corps program and a partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will help increase youth employment by 70 percent over 2009.

The FWS has existing partnerships with friends organizations, volunteers, educational institutions, and local conservation organizations. For example,



the FWS long-standing Shorebird Sister Schools Program engages students in learning about the mechanics of the shorebird's annual migration along the Pacific Flyway. These connections foster understanding and appreciation of the need to conserve America's migratory birds and their natural habitats. The FWS youth programs also provide career and public service opportunities to promote a life-long commitment to natural resource conservation.

The 2012 budget will build upon existing proven programs and offer public service opportunities on refuges, science based education, and outdoor learning laboratories to engage young Americans in wildlife conservation activities, such as species monitoring. The 2012 budget includes an increase of \$2.0 million for the Youth Conservation Corps program to provide opportunities for young adults from varied backgrounds to work together on conservation projects such as maintenance and construction, habitat management, and visitor services.

Youth Programs at the National Parks – With long-standing traditions of preserving and protecting national treasures, NPS works to ensure young Americans ages five to 25 from different economic, ethnic, social, and cultural backgrounds learn about and enjoy park resources. In the 2010 Enacted / 2011 CR, NPS will invest more than \$17.9 million, including \$4.4 million from the Recreational Fee program, in programs that directly expand opportunities for America's children and families. The NPS increased youth employment through partners, such as the Student Conservation Association and Corps Network. In 2009 NPS employed over 6,100 individuals in Youth Conservation Corps projects, internships, and temporary positions. Funding increases between 2009 and 2010 for youth internships generated a 32 percent growth in youth employment. The 2012

YOUTH IN PUBLIC SERVICE

In 2010, Interior launched partnerships with other Federal agencies that target youth involvement with the outdoors. Interior is working with the:

- Departments of Labor and Agriculture to support a grant initiative designed to help prepare disadvantaged youth for jobs in the outdoors. The effort will enable ex-offenders to give back to their communities through service and conservation work.
- Department of Labor to leverage Workforce Investment Act funding to support summer youth employment.
- Environmental Protection Agency on funding for a Native youth employment program in fish hatcheries.
- Department of Education to support and promote learning at national parks using their unique resources to enhance educational experiences for students and teachers.



budget for NPS youth programs is \$23.6 million, including \$4.4 million from the Recreational Fee program, an increase of \$5.7 million over the 2010 Enacted/2011 CR level. In 2012 NPS will increase youth employment by 60 percent over the 2009 level.

The NPS youth programs foster a strong relationship between youth and the natural and cultural resources they manage. Participants learn valuable natural and cultural resource management skills and develop a greater appreciation of American history and the Nation's most renowned ecosystems. There are numerous park managers, past and present, who developed a life-long commitment to parks through these programs. The cadre includes Robert Stanton, former Director of the National Park Service, who began his career as a Youth Conservation Corps participant and now is a Senior Advisor to Secretary Salazar.

The 2012 NPS budget includes a net increase of \$5.7 million. The increase in park operations funding will establish or enhance programs that introduce youth to the NPS mission of conserving and preserving the Nation's treasures. With few exceptions, the parks receiving increases are located in or very near major metropolitan areas, which would facilitate easier engagement of urban youth from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Over half of the increases are for youth employment programs designed to engage under-served populations. The programs involve work in resource management, interpretation and visitor services, maintenance, and special events.

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act authorizes NPS to collect recreation fees at select parks. Fees are used to improve visitor services and enhance the visitor experience. The majority of the revenues return directly to the park where

EXAMPLES OF PROPOSED PARK YOUTH PROGRAMS

- An increase of \$220,000 at Canyonlands National Park will lead to the expansion and enhancement of curriculum-based youth education programs at four parks in southeast Utah. The four parks are located in large rural counties, with significant communities of Hispanic and Navajo populations. The increase will fund both the Canyon Country Outdoor Education program and the educational element of the Canyon Country Conservation Corps.
- An increase of \$313,000 for 15 National Capital Region parks in and around Washington, D.C. will enhance a youth employment program which attracts an urban minority population and provides job readiness training, progressive work assignments, skill development, and educational and vocational experiences.
- An increase of \$129,000 at Lowell National Historical Park in Massachusetts will foster partnerships that will engage urban youth from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds within communities surrounding Lowell and three other parks in New England. The program will engage 75 youth in experiential learning using park resources, leadership development, and occupational skills training. In addition, eight to 16 interns will be recruited for jobs in resource management, interpretation, and visitor services annually.

they were collected. The NPS estimates that it will collect \$168.2 million in revenues in 2012. In 2012 NPS will dedicate \$4.4 million in recreation fees to youth projects that benefit the visitor experience.

Youth Opportunities in Other Interior Bureaus – The Office of Surface Mining programs employed 218 youth in 2010, doubling the 2009 OSM youth employment total. Along with partners, OSM employs youth in its watershed assistance program to restore

lands that were degraded from historic mining. The primary partners are a coalition of community improvement groups in rural communities and the Corporation for National and Community Service, which includes Volunteers in Service to America, commonly referred to as VISTA. The OSM 2012 employment goal is to raise the number of youth employed by 115 percent over the 2009 level.

The Bureau of Reclamation youth programs include Catch a Special Thrill events. Reclamation sponsored 22 of these events in 2010 providing 900 disabled or disadvantaged youth fishing experiences and drawing over 2,300 volunteers. Participants were



also provided information on healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. The Bureau of Reclamation employed 192 youth in 2010 and has established a 2012 goal of increasing youth employment by 40 percent over the 2009 level, either through a temporary position with the Bureau or in a conservation capacity with a partnering organization.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Partnerships – Congress created the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to foster private sector-government partnerships for the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, and plant resources. The 2012 request includes an increase of \$2.0 million for this purpose. This includes \$1.0 million in new funds for FWS and \$1.0 million of \$3.0 million in existing BLM funding for activities that foster youth programs through public-private partnerships managed by the Foundation. The two bureaus had

both previously engaged in partnership programs with the Foundation, but this is the first time the partnerships will focus on engaging youth.

The partnership activities will leverage the Federal funding with at least an equal amount of privately financed contributions. Funds will be competitively awarded to friends groups, the Youth Conservation Corps, non-governmental organizations, and others who will work with FWS and BLM managers to develop innovative conservation employment opportunities for youth. The primary focus of the grant program will be to preserve and protect priority species and their habitats on both public and private lands. Summer employment opportunities will be specifically targeted, but after school and weekend employment programs will also be considered.

The Foundation will also seek matching funds for Federal grants through partnerships with corporations who participate in the commerce of recreational goods and services. By collaborating with private partners, the Foundation, BLM, and FWS will be able to engage a broader audience of participants and incorporate programs that can attract youth from urban areas and sectors of the population not necessarily acquainted with Interior's youth programs. Historically, the Foundation has leveraged Federal funds with non-Federal matching contributions at a two to one or greater ratio.

Environmental education will be an integral aspect of the grant program. Eligible grantee organizations will need to demonstrate how environmental learning goals have been incorporated into each youth hire opportunity. To assist potential grantee organizations, the National Conservation Training Center will work with the Foundation to develop learning goals, curricula, and other training material that can be made available through the web or through a handbook. The material will include both lessons and suggestions for hands-on educational activities that can be conducted outdoors.

LET'S MOVE!

The National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management are all taking an active role in First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move* initiative to combat the problem of childhood obesity.

- The NPS is promoting outdoor physical activity for children and families through its *Let's Move Outside Junior Rangers!* program which encourages kids and families to engage in outdoor activity that gets hearts pumping and bodies moving. Kids who complete at least one physical activity in pursuit of their Junior Ranger badge receive a sticker that designates them as a Let's Move Outside Junior Ranger.
- The BLM *Take It Outside* program promotes and supports outdoor activities and experiences on public lands. The program strives to improve the health of the Nation's children, families, and communities, while at the same time developing the next generation of public land stewards.
- The FWS *Let's Go Outside* website is a repository of activities hosted by national wildlife refuges with links to partners that connect children and families to nature through outdoor activities.

Many Interior outdoor activities are easily accessible from urban areas. For example, NPS employed 767 students in the National Capital region as part of its 4E's program – Environment, Education, Exercise, and Eating Choices. Young people from diverse backgrounds participated in more than 100 projects from restoring wetlands and building hiking trails, to creating digital media documentaries and protecting endangered species.

Rural communities are also served by Interior programs that take youth outside. For example, the FWS Fisheries program supported Tribal Youth Conservation Corps projects in New Mexico, Arizona, and Montana. These projects offered tribal youth training and employment in natural resource conservation.

