

Engaging the Next Generation



When we spark a fire of passion for the outdoors in our children, we give them a lifelong gift of being able to enjoy nature and live healthier lives. We also lay the foundation for the next generation of conservationists, scientists, business leaders, teachers, and beyond that will understand the key role that national parks and public lands play in local communities, drawing visitors and boosting the economy.

*Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior
April 25, 2013*

A key priority for Secretary Jewell is the engagement of the public in Interior's mission, particularly America's young people. The future of the public lands depends upon young people becoming active stewards of the environment throughout their lives. Interior has a unique opportunity to harness the strong spirit of community service and volunteerism alive within the Nation's youth, and encourage them to use their time, energy, and talent to enjoy and conserve natural and cultural treasures.

The Department of the Interior plays a key role in improving the Nation's future by introducing, involving, and encouraging the next generation as stewards of cultures, history, lands, waters, and wildlife. In this dynamic and changing Nation, more and more people are isolated from the outdoors in cities and large urban areas. Young people are increasingly drawn indoors and are becoming inactive and disconnected from nature and the outdoors. The Department's unique assets provide great opportunities to connect this generation to the outdoors and the Nation's natural and cultural resources, in exciting and meaningful ways.

To address the growing disconnect between young people and the outdoors, Interior has developed strategies to promote public-private partnerships and collaborative efforts across all levels of government to connect young people with the land and inspire them to play, learn, serve, and work outdoors. The result will maximize opportunities for youth through visitor and educational programs, partnerships, volunteerism, and employment. These efforts can also tap into technological enhancements that could expand opportunities for travel and tourism and life-long learning.

In 2009, the Department established a comprehensive youth program with strong performance goals to engage, educate, and employ youth. Since then, Interior has built one of the largest and most visible youth programs at the national level, providing employment opportunities for more than 93,000 young people and veterans through direct hires and partnerships on public lands. These efforts have complemented the First Lady's *Let's Move America* initiative by encouraging young people to spend time outside. Building on this vision, Secretary Jewell challenged the Department to expand these efforts in new ways including new applications and other technological tools, an emphasis on cities and population centers, and incorporating youth activities into the core operations of Interior's bureaus.

Partnerships are an essential aspect of Interior's youth activities. The Department's bureaus partner with a broad spectrum of youth and conservation-oriented organizations and communities, leveraging resources to multiply the benefits of the Federal investment. For example, in May 2013, Secretary Jewell announced awards for 22 projects in ten States to support conservation employment and mentoring opportunities for more than 600 young people across the Country. Grants totaling \$4.2 million helped leverage \$2.9 million from the private sector for projects, including the San Joaquin River Weed Management and Jobs Creation Project. Located in an area with high unemployment and poverty rates as well as high rates of childhood obesity and asthma, this partnership with River Partners and the San Joaquin Regional Conservation Corps employed local youth, ages 18 to 25. The project involved invasive species mapping, monitoring, and management along the San Joaquin River in Merced County,

California to restore a self-sustaining population of native fish to the highly degraded San Joaquin River. The project was supported with \$72,000 from the Bureau of Reclamation and \$50,000 in non-Federal funds from companies including Wells Fargo.

As part of the national response to Hurricane Sandy, Secretary Jewell launched the National Parks of New York Harbor Conservation and Resiliency Corps, a partnership with the City of New York and the Student Conservation Association providing approximately 200 jobs for young people in 2013 to participate in Hurricane Sandy recovery and clean-up efforts. This pilot will serve as a blueprint for what is expected to be a multi-year program for young adults from around the region to assist in the response, recovery, and mitigation of Hurricane Sandy damage within national parks, refuges, and their partner sites in New York City and New Jersey. The Corps will initially focus on Gateway National Recreation Area and adjoining New York City parklands at Jamaica Bay. The Corps will strengthen high priority Hurricane Sandy recovery and mitigation efforts and serve as a model of the power of public-private partnerships to boost youth employment and connect young people to the great outdoors.

The Department is a Federal leader for land and resource based youth programs, working with the U.S. Forest Service and other agencies to plan and implement the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps. The 21CSC is a bold, national effort designed to put America's youth and veterans to work restoring and enhancing the great outdoors. As a dynamic and innovative initiative, the Corps inspires and engages youth in communities across the Nation. On November 7, 2013, the Department announced an initial group of 91 approved organizations to partner and help the Obama Administration implement the 21CSC. From the Anchorage Park Foundation in Alaska, to Sonoma County Youth Ecology Corps in Santa Rosa, California, to Vermillion Community College in Ely, Minnesota, to Virginia's Office on Community Services in Richmond, Virginia, to the Chesapeake Conservation Corps in Annapolis, Maryland, the initial 91 organizations will serve as models of the values that 21CSC represents.

These organizations will be important partners hosting young people and veterans in supervised crews or small teams to improve and protect the Nation's natural, cultural, and historic resources. In the coming months, the 21CSC National Council, consisting of eight Federal departments, will focus on recruiting additional member organizations in

**PRIORITY GOAL
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT
AND TRAINING**

GOAL: Build the next generation of conservation and community leaders by supporting youth employment at the Department of the Interior.

METRIC: By September 30, 2015, the Department of the Interior will provide 40,000 work and training opportunities over two fiscal years, 2014 and 2015, for individuals ages 15 to 25 to support the mission of the Department.

urban areas and investing in training and career pathways for a diverse group of participants.

Secretary Jewell has established ambitious goals to engage and employ the next generation in America's great outdoors. To support the goal of providing 100,000 work and training opportunities to young people and veterans on public lands, Secretary Jewell plans to raise \$20 million from private partners by 2017 to support the 21CSC. On January 8, 2014, Secretary Jewell announced a \$1.0 million commitment by American Eagle Outfitters, Inc. to a public-private partnership that will provide positive experiences for young people and veterans on the public lands to offer both employment and meaningful connections to the outdoors.

In 2015, the budget seeks to increase or maintain funding for the Department's youth programs. The budget proposes to fund \$50.6 million for youth programs in the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Geological Survey, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Bureau of Reclamation, a collective \$13.6 million increase in programs over 2014 enacted funding levels. Youth programs are particularly sensitive to variations in funding levels because of the extensive matching and leveraging of funds by Interior's bureaus. In 2013, the Department's cadre of youth offered employment opportunities through direct hiring and partnerships declined by 29 percent below 2010, significantly below the levels set for Interior's agency priority goal.

The proposed 2015 funding level includes a \$2.5 million increase within FWS for the Urban Wildlife Refuges Partnership. At least one wildlife refuge

is within an hour's drive of most major cities and more than 260 wildlife refuges are near smaller cities. Through partnerships, FWS will invite city dwellers to enjoy outdoor adventures by creating "stepping stones of engagement" to allow new audiences to connect easily with the outdoors. Through this effort, FWS will partner with local communities and education organizations, such as minority-serving colleges and universities, to develop skilled local volunteers to support programs at urban wildlife refuges. In addition, funding will be used to expand urban focused conservation education programs to reach out to young people from all backgrounds and walks of life and provide the training and experience necessary for America's future conservation leaders.

An additional \$8.0 million is proposed to expand opportunities for youth education and employment across NPS parks and programs. The Park Service will use these funds to partner with organizations with a historic preservation focus to support positions for young people and veterans, ages 18-25, related to the preservation of historic structures, sites, artifacts, and landscapes. Additionally, NPS will provide opportunities for youth to work and learn in the great outdoors while contributing valuable work hours towards maintaining critically needed infrastructure in national parks. Funding also will support partnerships that advance both conservation and recreation in national parks and will target economically disadvantaged groups, youth in tribal Nations, and students at the high school and

university level for employment and education. The NPS also will target funding to engage young people and veterans as seasonal employees to help prepare the parks for the centennial. In total, approximately 800 new opportunities for youth will be supported.

Indian Affairs youth programs and partnerships promote quality participant experiences and pathways to careers and accomplish high priority projects on tribal lands. The 2015 budget will continue programs initiated in 2014, including \$2.5 million focused on projects that engage youth in the natural sciences and for an office to coordinate youth programs in Indian Affairs. In 2014, BIA established a youth biological inventory program designed for up to 20 tribally sponsored summer youth crews within Landscape Conservation Cooperative boundaries. The crews inventory indicator species vulnerable to climate change and plants used in traditional practices to develop ecoregion baseline data for use by tribal Trust land managers and partners. Previous and existing internships in BIA have been successful in leveraging resources and forming alliances with academia, other Federal agencies, and tribal Nations. Field internships have worked with conservation projects through the Agricultural/Rangeland, Forestry, and Water Resources programs within Trust Services. Several programs also currently are funded and operated by tribal natural resources programs to teach youth cultural awareness and natural resource preservation and restoration.

| ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| (dollars in millions) | | | |
| | 2014 | 2015 | |
| | Enacted | Request | Change |
| Bureau of Land Management | 3.5 | 4.8 | +1.3 |
| Bureau of Reclamation..... | 3.8 | 3.5 | -0.3 |
| U.S. Geological Survey | 1.9 | 3.1 | +1.2 |
| Fish and Wildlife Service..... | 11.0 | 13.5 | +2.5 |
| National Park Service | 13.5 | 21.5 | +8.0 |
| Bureau of Indian Affairs..... | 3.3 | 4.2 | +1.0 |
| TOTAL | 37.0 | 50.6 | +13.6 |
| <i>[NPS Recreation Fees]</i> | <i>[6.4]</i> | <i>[6.4]</i> | <i>[0]</i> |

EXPANDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

I set some ambitious goals for this Department to engage the next generation through education, employment, and volunteer opportunities on public lands. For the health of our economy and our public lands, it is critical that we work now to establish meaningful and deep connections between young people— from every background and every community—and the great outdoors.

*Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior
October 31, 2013*

The Department of the Interior provides grants to support conservation employment and mentoring opportunities for young people on public lands across the Country. The grants support public-private partnerships that both conserve the land and provide opportunities for young people to obtain job skills and broaden their horizons by connecting with the great outdoors. These partnerships foster economic and volunteer opportunities that create a connection with nature for young people that lasts a lifetime. Partnership projects include:

64 DEGREES NORTH RESTORATION

The Salcha Delta Soil and Water Conservation District, housed in Delta Junction, Alaska, is working with BLM and other Federal agencies in environmental stewardship programs to connect the land and people by providing technical guidance and resource management assistance to rural communities. This project connects youth to the environment by hiring rural Alaskan youth for a hands-on conservation program, working with BLM field staff and wildlife biologists to develop skills for conservation careers.

CELEBRATE SHOREBIRDS (CELEBRA LAS AVES PLAYERAS)

The Environment for the Americas provides training and mentoring for Latino youth in natural resource careers and conservation activities, addressing challenges agencies face recruiting and retaining underserved populations. This project involves youth in gathering valuable data on migratory shorebirds in Colorado, California, and Oregon in collaboration with BLM. The project introduces Latino youth to birds, their migration habits, and the conservation issues that threaten them.

