U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Youth in Conservation Careers

Understanding the Public Lands Corps Act and the Youth Conservation Corps

The Department of the Interior is engaging young people across the country in conservation and energy efficiency projects on America's public lands, to inspire and provide career pathways in natural resource occupations and related sciences, and to become better educated about the nation's ecosystems.

To help implement the Secretary's Youth Initiative, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is committed to offering our nation's youth unparalleled experiences to conserve the nature of America on some of the most beautiful and awe-inspiring lands in our nation.

In 2010, the Department received $20.5 million to expand programs that engage, educate, and employ youth in exploring, connecting with, and preserving the shared natural and cultural heritage represented by the lands, waters, and physical assets of the Department. The Department aims to increase youth employment by 50% in 2010 by increasing its use of youth hiring authorities; leveraging partnerships; using targeted recruiting; and providing hands-on, meaningful work experiences. Specifically, the Secretary announced that together, Interior and its bureaus will directly employ at least 12,000 youth in 2010 - a 50 percent increase over the 8,000 in 2009. The importance of the Youth in the Great Outdoors Initiative is reflected in the FY 2011 budget proposal, which includes large increases not only in employment of teens and youth adults ages 16 - 25, but also in education and recreation programs that engage youth of all ages. Increases include $2 million for the FWS and Bureau of Land Management to join with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in public-private partnerships to promote priority

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A biological technician examines a sea turtle carcass that has washed ashore to help determine the cause of death.

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An SCA student monitors the nesting activities of a tortoise to help assess the species' population.

Your Employer of Choice

species conservation on both public and private lands.

The Public Land Corps

The Public Land Corps (PLC) Act of 1993, as amended in 2005, provides authority for the Federal government to utilize and expose youth to public service by hiring young adults (ages 16 to 25) to perform needed conservation activities and assist the Federal government with natural and cultural resources. The PLC allows qualified youth to apply and be considered for posted vacancy announcements without competing under internal merit staff procedures. These candidates will be considered with other noncompetitive candidates on a separate certificate. Eligibility for this noncompetitive authority is only good for 120 days after completion of PLC service, although pending legislation may extend this time frame. Participants can be recruited through non-profit organizations that partner with FWS.

The Youth Conservation Corps

The Youth Conservation Corps Act of 1970 (YCC), establishes permanent programs within the Departments of Interior and Agriculture for young adults who are between the ages of 15 and 18 to perform specific tasks on lands and waters administered under the jurisdiction of these Secretaries. The legislation also authorizes the Secretary of Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a joint grant program to assist States that employ young adults on non-Federal public lands and waters. YCC programs are conducted for 8-10 weeks during the summer. Environmental awareness is an integral aspect of the YCC program, with projects embracing both work and environmental learning goals. The participants spend most of their time in the outdoors. All participants are expected to gain an understanding and appreciation of the nation's environment and heritage equal to one full academic year of study.

For more information, please contact your servicing Human Resources Office or the Department of the Interior, Office of Youth and Natural Resources, at (202) 208-4417.

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A fish biologist and an SCA student monitor the status of inter-jurisdictional fisheries as part of a management plan.

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Migratory bird banding is an essential mangagment tool.

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An Outdoor Recreation Planner leads a school group on a wetland exploration.