

**Testimony of Mary Ellen Sprenkel, President & CEO of The Corps Network**  
***Subcommittee on Federal Lands Legislative Hearing on H.R. 2167, H.R. 2333, H.R. 4387 and H.R. 5114***

Thursday, June 23, 2016 2:00 PM  
1324 Longworth House Office Building, Washington D.C. 20515

Chairman McClintock and Ranking Member Tsongas: Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony before the House Natural Resource Subcommittee on Federal Lands on two pieces of important legislation, HR 2167 and HR 5114. On behalf of the 130+ Corps across the country, we appreciate your willingness to offer a venue to provide you with additional information about this legislation and about Corps in general.

HR 2167, the Public Lands Service Corps (PLSC) Act was introduced by Ranking Member Grijlava (D-AZ) in the House back in April of 2015, and in the two previous Congresses, to make several important updates to the Public Lands Corps (PLC) Act. HR 2167 is supported by several committee members including Subcommittee Ranking Member Tsongas (D-MA) and Reps. Lowenthal (D-CA), Cartwright (D-PA), and Huffman (D-CA). Sen. Udall (D-NM) has introduced a companion bill in the Senate, S 1160, which is supported by Sens. Heinrich (D-NM), Tester (D-MT) and Bennet (D-CO).

More recently, Reps. Martha McSally (R-AZ) and Seth Moulton (D-MA) introduced HR 5114, the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) Act, which is bipartisan legislation that builds on both the PLC and the PLSC and includes several new provisions as well. HR 5114 is also supported by numerous members of this committee including Reps. Newhouse (R-WA), Gibson (R-NY), Zinke (R-MT), Huffman (D-CA), Matsui (D-CA), and Polis (D-CO). Senators McCain (R-AZ) and Bennet (D-CO) have introduced the Senate companion (S.1993).

## **CORPS HISTORY**

The idea for modern Corps started in the 1950's with the creation of the Student Conservation Association (SCA). Soon after, Senator Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson created the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) to demonstrate the scalability of the Corps model. At its height during the mid-1970s, the YCC was funded at the level of \$60 million and enrolled some 32,000 young people each summer in programs operated by the Departments of Interior and Agriculture, as well as some states.

Late in the 1970s, an even larger federal program was launched, the Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC), which provided young people with year-round conservation-related employment and education opportunities. With an annual appropriation of \$260 million, the YACC operated at both the Federal and state levels. Due to budget cuts in the 1980's, federal funding for Corps was eliminated but the idea lived on in a number of private non-profit organizations and several state-funded programs, such as those in California, Maryland, Washington, and Maine. Concurrently in the 1980's, a number of urban-focused Corps developed, starting in California, and were quickly replicated across the country.

With the success of the Corps model in these urban and public lands settings, the idea has spread to over 130 Corps around the country that have Corpsmembers working in every state, including the District of Columbia. Modern-day Corps engage with a variety of local, state, federal, and private sector partners on project-work.

## **CORPS BACKGROUND**

Today, The Corps Network represents our country's 130 Service and Conservation Corps (Corps). Corps provide youth (16-25) and veterans (up to age 35) with the opportunity to advance their education, obtain critical career-readiness and job skills, and earn a stipend while they perform important conservation service projects on public lands and in urban areas. Collectively, our Corps enroll 24,000 Corpsmembers, engage an additional 100,000 volunteers, and complete thousands of service projects valuing hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

In 2015 alone, our Corps: restored 567,000 acres of habitat; removed 365,000 acres of invasive species; reduced 32,000 acres of hazardous fire fuel; responded to 500 wildfire needs; built and maintained 11,000 miles of multi-modal trails; maintained and improved 16,000 parks and recreation spaces/facilities; and planted and maintained 2.8 million trees.

In regular surveys, virtually all federal project partners (99.6%) say they would work with Corps again and an independent study commissioned by the National Park Service found a cost savings of more than 50 percent when using a Corps on certain types of projects. I've included key portions of that study at the end of my testimony.

Corps also work with outdoor recreation and sporting to provide increased access and more opportunities for their members to hunt, fish, and recreate on public and private lands. For instance, Corps have worked with organizations like Trout Unlimited, the Mule Deer Association, Ducks Unlimited and multi-organizational partnerships that include the Wild Turkey Federation and Pheasants Forever.

In addition, the Corps Model has been rigorously tested and proven to be an effective youth development model and a recent study found that Corpsmembers gained significant career and leadership skills like teamwork, critical thinking, community engagement, and communication through their term of service.

Corps have support from a broad range of partners in addition to land managers, outdoor recreationalists, and sportsmen. For example, I have included at the end of my testimony Policy Resolution 11-12 from the Western Governors Association in support of Corps. The resolution states "Western Governors pledge to look within their own State public land agencies to identify and encourage opportunities for engaging Conservation Corps as a cost effective means to meet operational needs of public land agencies. Western Governors recognize Conservation Corps as essential partners in meeting ongoing demands for natural resource management needs and as effective workforce and career development programs for young people."

## **PUBLIC LANDS CORPS AUTHORITY HISTORY**

Many Corps currently work with Department of Interior agencies and the US Forest Service through the Public Lands Corps authority (16 USC 1721 et. seq.). The Public Lands Corps (PLC) authority was created in 1993 as a way for non-federally run Corps to engage with federal land management partners. The PLC was updated in 2005 through the Public Lands Corps Healthy Forests Restoration Act (PL-109-154) to establish a priority for projects designed to improve forest health, remove invasive species, and reduce the risk of wildfire. It also added disaster prevention and relief to the list of Corps-eligible projects and provided 120 days of non-competitive hiring status for qualified Corpsmembers.

## **21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CONSERVATION SERVICE CORPS HISTORY**

To address the increasing disconnection of Americans from the outdoors, and develop a 21st-century public lands and recreation agenda, the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative was launched in 2010. The AGO initiative was created with the idea that long-term conservation solutions should rise from the American people and that these ideas should be non-partisan and shared by all Americans. Key land management Administration officials held 51 listening sessions across the country to gather input about outdoor places and activities that a value most. These sessions drew more than 10,000 participants and more than 105,000 written comments which were used to develop the America's Great Outdoors Report.

The first recommendation of that report, was to “Catalyze the establishment of a 21st-Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) to engage young Americans in public lands and water restoration.” According to the report, “Many public comments recommended building on existing conservation service corps programs and promoted the idea for a 21st-Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) to provide job training and to maintain and preserve public lands. The 21CSC would provide the umbrella structure for the many existing federal, state, tribal, local, nonprofit, and private sector conservation corps programs and proposals. Its purpose would be to build on and leverage the experience and expertise of these programs and to encourage a new generation of outdoor enthusiasts and natural and cultural resource professionals. The 21CSC program would focus on helping young people, including low-income and disadvantaged youth, to earn valuable training and work experience and to accomplish needed conservation work on public lands in the great outdoors.”

Then-DOI Secretary Ken Salazar convened a federal advisory committee to develop a plan for the design and implementation of the 21CSC. After many months of analysis and deliberation, the federal advisory committee returned a plan that assumed the engagement of 100,000 youth and veterans – with a preference on diverse and underrepresented youth and veterans – a year helping federal, state, local and tribal land and water management agencies address backlogged maintenance needs in a cost effective manner, and utilizing existing funds, while at the same time developing the next generation of resources managers and stewards.

In the three years since that plan was released, Corps have engaged approximately 50,000 Corpsmembers and done more than \$150 million in project work for DOI and USDA, leveraging millions more through cost savings, matching funds, and private donations – and this does not factor in the value of the ancillary education and workforce benefits to the Corpsmembers or to tourism and the economy as a result of increased access to outdoor recreation. With the relatively modest fixes and additions included in the PLSC Act and the 21CSC Act, these numbers could easily be tripled or quadrupled.

## **CURRENT STATE OF PLC AUTHORITY AND 21CSC INITIATIVE**

Modern Corps have been building up their capacity, partnerships, and expertise for several decades – constantly working to find innovative ways to help land management agencies, states, communities, and Corpsmembers achieve their goals. However, the current statute has not kept pace. The improvements and expansions included in the Public Lands Service Corps Act and 21CSC Act combined would better address the needs of today Corps, Corpsmembers, and partners and better enable these partnerships reach their full potential – completing important work, saving money, and providing opportunities for diverse young people and veterans.

While the PLC authority has been in existence for some time, it has not been updated in over ten years limiting partner and project scope and agreement implementation, despite Corps' growing capacity, the mounting backlog of projects at land management agencies, and the increasing need to engage youth and veterans in meaningful physical outdoor activities and workforce development pathways. In addition there are a number of other limitations of this authority which I'll discuss later.

We were fortunate to have the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee recognize the need to update the PLC authority in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress and pass legislation, which is the Senate companion to the Public Lands Service Corps Act, with bi-partisan support. The same committee passed similar legislation in the 112<sup>th</sup> and 111<sup>th</sup> Congresses.

The 21CSC initiative also builds on the PLC authority and has relied on that authority for project-work to gain momentum, but reflects an evolution of the Corps movement and of the growing demand by additional land and water management agencies, such as the US Army Corps of Engineers and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to work with Corps. In addition, with the success we've demonstrated in working with the National Park Service and the US Forest Service on cost-effective backlog maintenance and recreation projects, other federal departments want to engage with Corps, so the 21CSC reflects the need to provide authority for additional federal departments to partner with Corps such as the Departments of Transportation and Veterans Affairs.

Resource management agencies face a mounting backlog of maintenance projects in the billions and a growing demand for wildfire/disaster response and resiliency projects - 21CSC programs stand ready to help address these needs. In addition, more 21CSC projects mean more opportunities for fishing and hunting and other types of outdoor recreation which increase tourism, help local outdoor industry retailers, create jobs and spur economic development. And

more 21CSC Corpsmembers means more young people and veterans have an opportunity to experience and form a connection to the outdoors while they develop job skills and get on career pathways. But, we need recognition of these cost-effective partnerships in law, and we need a way to partner more easily and effectively with the federal agencies that want to engage Corps to complete mission-critical work.

Both the Department of Interior and US Forest Service included language in support of the 21CSC in their budgets. The Forest Service stated “Our 21st Century Service Corp (21CSC) partnership provides an enormous return on investment, allowing the Forest Service to address critical conservation restoration needs and simultaneously have a deep and lasting impact on the people who participate, thereby building the next generation of natural resource professionals.” DOI continued “Collaborative efforts across all levels of government and mobilization of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps resulted in several high impact initiatives... These initiatives enabled significant progress towards Interior’s goal to provide 100,000 work and training opportunities to young people and veterans by the end of 2017.”

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks also held a hearing on the 21CSC Act, during which the National Park Service testified in favor of the bill. The US Forest Service also referenced their support for the 21CSC in testimony before this committee in relation to engaging Corps as a key way to support more project work being accomplished.

Further, we’re grateful for such wide bi-partisan support for the 21CSC Act which includes the bill’s sponsors, Reps. McSally (R-AZ) and Moulton (D-MA), both of whom are veterans, and numerous Republican and Democrat members of this committee. We’re privileged to have the support of the past four most recent Secretaries of the Interior – two Republicans and two Democrats and I’ve included a statement by former Secretaries Ken Salazar, Dirk Kempthorne, Gale Norton, and Bruce Babbitt to that effect. Army General (Ret.) Stanley McChrystal and President Bush’s Domestic Policy Advisor, John Bridgeland, are also key supporters of 21CSC.

In addition, there are 80 different national and regional corporations and organizations that are supportive like KEEN, the Outdoor Industry Association, the Vet Voice Foundation, the American Recreation Coalition, and the National Parks Conservation Association. The 21CSC initiative has also been supported by businesses like the North Face, American Eagle Outfitters, REI, and Coca-Cola.

## **PROJECT AND CORPSMEMBER SUCCESS STORIES**

While clearer authority for partnerships and other updates are needed to fully engage Corps in helping land management agencies, we have some successes we would like to highlight that would be expanded upon with passage of the 21CSC Act and key portions of the PLSC Act included.

The California Conservation Corps (CCC) recently provided flood control training to 200 crews from around the state. Crews learned how to prevent floods on California’s numerous private and Army Corps of Engineers levees on the Delta. More recently, the CCC deployed 130

Corpsmembers to help fight California wildfires. The largest contingent is working on the Sherpa Fire which is currently burning in Santa Barbara County. With funding from the US Forest Service, six crews are assisting with both firefighting and logistical support at the fire camp. In addition, the CCC and other Corps operate Veterans Fire Corps to prepare veterans for firefighting career paths, which my colleague from Southwest Conservation Corps will address in his testimony.

Several Corps are also working to engage Indian youth. Anthony “Chako” Ciacco is one example of a success story. Chako leads ecological restoration crews on the Navajo Nation through the Ancestral Lands program in partnership with Bureau of Indian Affairs. Under Anthony’s leadership, crews of local Indian youth work to combat invasive species and build trails to provide outdoor access to local communities. He has also worked extensively in restoring Native food systems and received the Live Real Food Fellowship. The University of Colorado Public Interest Internship Experience (PIIE) awarded Chako a grant to fund his work with the Indigenous Training and Resource Council. In addition, Chako was recently recognized by the White House and the North Face for his work.

Utah Conservation Corps recently completed a project in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management to construct Mill Canyon Dinosaur Tracksite Trail. The new trail enables families to see more than 200 dinosaur tracks, representing eight different types of tracks and six different dinosaurs.

Highlighting the depth of work Corps can engage in, the Montana Conservation Corps partnered with the National Park Service on a historic preservation project, known as the Hands-On Preservation Experience (HOPE) Crew, to preserve Custer National Cemetery inside the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. The crew worked on the cemetery’s headstones, which mark the graves of soldiers from the Battle of Little Bighorn, the Spanish-American War, both World Wars, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

Not only are Corps showing great success in project work, but we’re also helping youth and veterans move on to employment and post-secondary education. As one example, the Colorado Youth Corps Association has been working with support from the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management along with the Colorado Department of Natural Resources to develop the Careers in Natural Resources Initiative. The initiative creates pathways into a variety of careers in Colorado including with federal land management agencies, but also with the growing oil and natural gas industry. They have developed a career and jobs guide, a Colorado natural resource jobs website, and a hands-on career fair for 8<sup>th</sup> graders which includes experiential learning trips such as to Rocky Mountain National Park to learn about firefighting.

## **PLC AUTHORITY ISSUES & 21CSC/PLSC ACT SOLUTIONS**

These success stories are indeed impressive, and we could have hundreds, if not thousands more each year with some minor improvements through the PLSC Act and additions through the 21CSC Act and improve and expand upon Corps’ ability to partner with federal agencies and include new partners, youth, and veterans in our work.

Broadly, the PLC authority only allows for Corpsmembers up to age 25, meaning many young people and returning veterans cannot participate. The 21CSC Act increases the age to 28 for all Corpsmembers and both the PLSC Act and 21CSC Act raise the age to 35 for veterans. Additionally, the 21CSC Act includes a priority for engaging veterans in Corps, and encourages collaboration with the Veterans Affairs Department to ensure veterans' needs are being met.

On cooperative agreements, even though the authority to enter into agreements has been utilized with a number of DOI agencies and the US Forest Service, the current PLC authority does not recognize a number of other land management partners and federal partners that would like to engage Corps through the 21CSC initiative. The 21CSC Act will expand the number of partners to include the Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA, along with the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs and ensure they have the flexibility needed to enter into agreements with a group of Corps, or Corps individually, on a project-level and provide Corps with a longer-term recognition of 21CSC program status. We recommend additional language be included to encourage land management and other partners to develop a uniform interpretation of this authority from the respective Secretaries offices to ensure streamlined implementation and project agreements and lessen red-tape and bureaucratic obstacles like differing interpretations and utilization by region or local offices.

The PLC authority also included an important provision to put Corpsmembers on a career pathway by providing non-competitive hiring authority for 120 days. Unfortunately, this has proven far too short of a time period to get hired by the federal government, and implementation is not consistent across the applicable agencies. The 21CSC and PLSC Act both extending that non-competitive hiring authority to two years. We would also support the inclusion of language for the Secretaries implementing this authority to develop uniform guidance to eliminate differing interpretations and sporadic implementation at different field offices or for different Corps.

There have also been questions raised around the employment status of Corpsmembers, and their required rate of pay when working on federal projects. Since Corps are national service and workforce development programs, Corpsmembers should not be considered employees of Corps or the federal government, and should not be subject to prevailing wage laws. The 21CSC Act clarifies Corpsmember status as non-employees and as such, not subject to prevailing wage laws, just as with other national service participants.

Additionally, as partnerships and project work are expanded with land management agencies, it becomes increasingly challenging to track the project and Corpsmember data needed to determine an accurate picture of impact, outcomes, and success without federal input. The 21CSC Act requires new outcomes and data tracking from 21CSC organizations, and also provides for GAO oversight.

## **ADDITIONAL 21CSC & PLSC ACT EXPLANATION**

While the 21CSC Act and PLSC Act address several issues that have arisen over the years, they also include a number of improvements to the status quo. The 21CSC Act and PLSC Act should be viewed as complimentary legislation, whereas the PLSC Act was developed well before the 21CSC Act, with the 21CSC Act reflecting the most current needs of Corps in working with land management and other federal agencies.

For instance, the 21CSC Act encourages private fundraising to support additional project work; allows Corpsmembers to earn college credit for terms of service, requires regular collaboration, data collection and reporting across all of the federal partners; and restricts federal agencies implementing 21CSC to using existing appropriated funding, meaning this should have no new costs or appropriations. Similarly, the PLSC establishes the Indian Youth Service Corps; adds visitor services and interpretation to the list of Corps eligible projects and; makes improvements to the Resource Assistants program

We believe the 21CSC Act should have no CBO score, and know that the PLSC Act has no score based on CBO analysis from the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee consideration in the last Congress which stated that “CBO estimates that implementing the bill would have no impact on the federal budget over the 2014-2018 period. Enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.”

## **CLOSING**

Corps have long been cost-effective partners of federal land management agencies and have been working to generate excitement and new ways to engage youth and veterans in in outdoor service while helping to accomplish much-needed project work.

The 21CSC Act, along with key provisions of the PLSC Act translates to a win-win-win for land management agencies – not only are they getting mission critical work done, they’re leveraging their budgets through cost-savings, match and private donations, and engaging the next generation of youth and veteran leaders – FOR NO NEW MONEY! In fact, these changes could potentially result in a cost savings for the federal land and water management agencies.

We thank you again for your consideration of both of these pieces of legislation and hope the subcommittee will soon move toward passage of these important bills.



## **Joint Statement of U.S. Secretaries of the Interior on the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps**

We, the four most recent Secretaries of the U.S. Department of the Interior, strongly support the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21 CSC). We served in Republican and Democratic Administrations for the past 20 years and represent strong bi-partisan support for this important initiative.

The 21CSC is a bold national effort to put thousands of America's young people and veterans to work protecting, restoring, and enhancing America's great outdoors at a time when existing federal resources must be used more efficiently.

Our country faces a myriad of critical issues: many public lands, waterways, natural resources, and cultural and historic treasures need maintenance and restoration to fulfill their full value as natural and cultural resources and as national recreation assets; thousands of young people want to serve their country but lack opportunities to be engaged; unemployment rates among America's youth and returning veterans stand at record highs; and, many Americans, particularly children and youth, are disengaged and disconnected from the outdoors leading to growing physical and emotional health issues. The 21CSC is a solution to these issues and will result in service, training, education and employment opportunities for thousands of young Americans and veterans, and significant work accomplishments that preserve, protect, and promote America's greatest natural and cultural treasures. As importantly, the 21CSC will help develop a generation of skilled workers, educated and active citizens, future leaders, and stewards of our nation's natural and cultural resources.

The 21CSC is a natural fit in: 1) the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative, where development of a 21CSC is the first recommendation of the AGO Report; 2) the Aspen Institute's Franklin Project to provide 1 million civilian national service opportunities to 18-28 year olds every year as a rite of passage and to bring Americans from all backgrounds together to address challenges in conservation, education, health, poverty and re-integration of veterans; 3) the White House Task Force on National Service; 4) the White House Council for Community Solutions recommendations to engage Opportunity Youth; 5) the National Park Service's Centennial Initiative and Challenge; and, 6) the Take Pride in America and Cooperative Conservation initiatives.

We support the Administration in launching this important effort and fostering a strong public-private partnership to support the 21 CSC, so that it can reach its goal of engaging 100,000 young people and veterans per year in important conservation service to our country.

Sincerely,

Ken Salazar  
Secretary, 09'-13'

Dirk Kempthorne  
Secretary, 06'-09'

Gale Norton  
Secretary, 01'-06'

Bruce Babbitt  
Secretary, 93'-01'

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## **Western Governors' Association Policy Resolution 11-12**

### ***Western Conservation Corps***

#### **A. BACKGROUND**

1. Western Governors recently launched a “Get Out West” Initiative with a goal “to get families and children outdoors and enjoying the grandeur of the West.” Among the Initiative’s goals are to, “improve the availability and accessibility of open lands and waterways in the West for outdoor recreation by encouraging public-private partnerships, volunteer efforts, and good stewardship among users.”
2. The population in the West is projected to grow nearly twice the national average over the next 30 years and recreation is the fastest growing use of federal, state and private lands. Aside from the impacts of growth, public lands also face a myriad of environmental assaults including: drought (18% of the western U.S. in drought compared to just 6% a year ago); wildfires (over 7 million acres burned since the beginning of 2011); and invasive and noxious weeds (44 million acres of public lands in the West are already impacted and invasive weeds are spreading at about 2,400 acres per day on western federal lands).
3. Conservation Corps in the West currently employ young people in land stewardship and disaster response activities in partnership with local, state, and federal agencies. In addition, Corps provide youth with access to high quality alternative education and job training and provide youth with AmeriCorps Education Awards. There are currently 35 Conservation Corps serving more than 12,000 youth annually in the West.
4. Conservation Corps are helping address:
  - a. The incredibly high youth unemployment rate that currently stands at over 18%
  - b. The \$25 billion of backlogged maintenance and resource management needs on public/tribal lands and waters
  - c. The disengagement of youth from the great American outdoors
  - d. Obesity, especially youth obesity which is high and increasing
  - e. The need for future natural resource, outdoor industry and land manager employees
  - f. Youth poverty rates which are at 45%
5. The US House of Representatives passed the bi-partisan, non-controversial Public Lands Service Corps Act in 2010. The reintroduced bill (HR587, S896) has support from the Majority and Minority leadership on the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands and has bipartisan co-sponsors in the Senate.

6. The National Park Service Chief of Maintenance conducted an analysis on Conservation Corps that found that using a Conservation Corps resulted in a 44% cost savings for the NPS in addition to the benefits of engaging young people.

### **B. GOVERNORS' POLICY STATEMENT**

1. Western Governors urge Congress to pass the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2011 (S896, HR587), a bipartisan, non-controversial bill to engage young people through Conservation Corps to address significant natural resource issues in the West.

2. Western Governors urge the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture to identify and encourage opportunities to engage Conservation Corps to meet Departmental needs on public lands in a cost effective manner.

3. Similarly, Western Governors pledge to look within their own State public land agencies to identify and encourage opportunities for engaging Conservation Corps as a cost effective means to meet operational needs of public land agencies.

4. Western Governors recognize Conservation Corps as essential partners in meeting ongoing demands for natural resource management needs and as effective workforce and career development programs for young people.

### **C. GOVERNORS' MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE**

1. WGA shall post this resolution to its Web site to be referred to and transmitted as necessary.

2. WGA is directed to monitor progress toward achieving the policy objectives specified in this resolution and to report its findings to the Western Governors on a regular basis.

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*National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Park Facility Management Division*

### **Conservation Corps Project Analysis, Fall 2012**

The National Park Service (NPS) Park Facility Maintenance Division (PFMD) conducted a project analysis to determine how the costs of engaging a conservation corps to accomplish cyclic maintenance activities at national parks compared with the costs of using contractor or NPS crews. The project analysis determined that, on average, using conservation crews instead of NPS crews saved 65% with the minimum savings just 3% and the maximum savings 87%. The analysis found that the savings using conservation corps instead of contractor crews were even more significant with average savings of 83% and over \$130,000 per project.

The NPS PFMD together with the Public Lands Service Coalition (PLSC) performed an earlier analysis in the summer of 2011 which investigated the costs and potential savings from utilizing conservation corps crews to accomplish cyclic maintenance activities at national parks. Utilizing crew composition and costs provided by one typical conservation corps and some high level assumptions about the type of work in the NPS 5-year cyclic work plan, the analysis found that using conservation corps crews could save up to 44% over using NPS crews. The conservation corps are continually faced with the issue of being able to defensibly describe the benefits of corps projects so additional analysis that utilized specific projects to estimate savings was performed. With actual completed project information and costs provided by the PLSC, estimates for performing the same project work using contractor and NPS crews were completed using the NPS Cost Estimating Software System (CESS). The CESS is based on published, industry standard cost data from R.S. Means, built on an industry standard platform known as Timberline Estimating, relies on a robust database of over 65,000 line items and 9,000 assemblies, and can be used to estimate small and large projects of a wide range of types.

The final results analyzed 15 geographically dispersed projects ranging in complexity with general focus on trail related projects. On average, using conservation corps crews instead of NPS crews saved 65% with the minimum savings just 3% and the maximum savings 87%. The analysis found that the savings using conservation corps instead of contractor crews were even more significant with average savings of 83% and over \$130,000 per project. In general, the conservation corps crews were consistently the least expensive alternative. In dollars, for all 15 selected projects the average savings was over \$50,000 over NPS crew costs (or \$131,000 over contractor crews) with a minimum savings of just \$237 and a maximum savings over \$224,000.