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As part of his War on Poverty, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964. The law established Job Corps, which was designed to connect poverty-stricken young people to the land, just as the Civilian Conservation Corps had done a generation earlier. Fifty years later, Job Corps is more vital to the work of the Forest Service than ever.

TRANSFORMING AMERICA'S YOUTH

50 YEARS OF JOB CORPS CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CENTERS

This year marks the 50th anniversary of President Lyndon Johnson's call on Americans to build a "great society" and his sponsorship of the largest social and economic reform agenda since President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. Central to Johnson's sweeping Great Society domestic agenda were

the programs of his War on Poverty initiative. The Economic Opportunity Act, designed to eliminate poverty and expand educational opportunities, included the Job Corps to provide job training and education for disadvantaged young people ages 16 to 21.¹

As the preamble to the act declared, it was "the policy of the United States to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this Nation by opening to everyone the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity."² At the time he signed the law, much attention was focused on urban poverty, even though rural citizens made up 43 percent of the poor. Twenty-nine percent of Americans lived in rural areas and more than half of rural poverty was found in the South. Three out of four rural poor were white, but poverty was proportionately greater among African Americans and other nonwhite rural residents.³ Although sections

of the Equal Opportunity Act have since been rescinded and many programs from Johnson's War on Poverty dismantled or reduced in scope, Job Corps proved its value and continues today.

A NEW GENERATION'S CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

The birth of Job Corps coincided with the rise of the environmental movement and new legislative authorities for federal forest management, including the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 and the Wilderness Act of 1964, and later the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 and National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. These laws fundamentally changed land management planning and how national forest resources were used. Less widely known is the U.S. Forest Service's central role in designing the Job Corps program. Forest Service leaders like Chief Edward P.

BY ALICIA D. BENNETT



On the left, Wolf Creek Job Corps graduate and Construction Craft Laborer Apprentice Mercedes Thompson at work. On the right, Antonio Searles of the Blackwell Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center traveled to the Northern Research Station Institute for Applied Ecosystem Studies to clear brush and debris and remove fallen trees near the center's main building.

Cliff and Deputy Chief Clare Hendee and future leaders like Jack Deinema, Max Peterson, Ed Shultz, and Clayton Weaver saw Job Corps as a unique opportunity and seized it.⁴

The Forest Service's history of involvement in programs that combined employment with land stewardship dated back to the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) of the 1930s, which provided room, board, education, and work for millions of unemployed young men. For Forest Service leaders like Cliff and Hendee, Job Corps was their generation's opportunity to husband human resources as well as the nation's abundant natural resources. Tony Dorrell, the first director of Job Corps' Curlew Conservation Camp in Curlew, Washington, believed that Cliff and Hendee, having begun their Forest Service careers working with the CCC in the 1930s, recognized that the future of the Forest Service lay as much in people as in trees, and the two envisioned that Job Corps would train leaders skilled in dealing with people.⁵ Indeed, as an architect of the Forest Service Job Corps, Hendee recognized the singular opportunity that the program represented: "The immediate concern of Job Corps," he wrote, "is to salvage human lives now passing through a critical state, a period in which opportunity lost is lost forever. The added prospect of salvaging and developing neglected natural resources makes the program doubly worthy."⁶

Job Corps conservation camps were designed to "provide academic education and practical training in work-based learning to conserve, develop and manage, and enhance public natural resources and recreation areas, or to develop community projects in the public interest."⁷

A subset of the President's Task Force in the War Against Poverty was given responsibility for conceptualizing Job Corps.⁸ The Job Corps Planning Group included stakeholders from government agencies as well as education and sociology experts selected by Sargent Shriver, director of the Peace Corps. Jack Deinema, the personnel officer in the Forest Service's Region 4 (Intermountain Region) representing the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on the planning group, was able to ensure that the conservation centers remained a part of the Job Corps

model despite skepticism from other members of the group.⁹

In the days leading up to the vote on the Economic Opportunity Act, it remained unclear whether the legislation had enough votes to pass. A substantial number of rural members of Congress, predominantly Republican, had a strong interest in conservation, and many of them were on the fence. Spencer Stewart, a lobbyist for conservation causes, approached Shriver and assured him that he could deliver their votes if Shriver could promise that a certain percentage of Job Corps students would be engaged in conservation work.¹⁰ It was decided that 40 to 50 percent of the Job Corps enrollees would be assigned to conservation centers, with the balance enrolled at large urban residential centers. Language specifying work experience gathered through public lands conservation was included shortly before the legislation went to the House floor for approval, and Stewart delivered the promised votes.¹¹

Initially, the conservation camps were designed exclusively for young men who needed to complete basic education and develop skills and work habits necessary to find and hold jobs in the mainstream of society. (Today's centers are coeducational and offer nontraditional vocational training to female students.) The intent was that on graduation, they would enroll in large urban centers for focused vocational training. Once Job Corps had launched, the parallels with the CCC emerged, particularly the need for medical and dental care along with adequate food and shelter. Briefing Agriculture Secretary Orville Freeman's staff, Hendee reported on the progress corpsmen had made as of December 1, 1966. Along with observations regarding enrollees' improved reading skills and fewer brushes with law enforcement, Hendee stated that the typical enrollee entered Job Corps seven pounds underweight but had gained ten pounds within the first five months of enrollment, figures comparable to those for the CCC boys.¹²

The boys' poor health, due to a lack of medical treatment and poor nutrition, was often the reason for their educational failures. Tony Dorrell recalled the connection between corpsmen's health and education. "For me, it was a very personal learning lesson about the human misery and problems inflicted on young people



COURTESY OF THE VERN HAMRE PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF FOREST SERVICE HISTORY

Nineteen corpsmen and two residential staff from Schenck Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center visited with Chief Edward P. Cliff of the Forest Service in Washington, D.C., on December 30, 1965.

born and growing up in poverty.” Dorrell remembered taking a busload of corpsmen to church in Republic, Washington. “When it came time for the first hymn, the congregation was expecting strong and vibrant young voices to join in the singing. It did not happen because the corpsmen were not able to read the words in the hymn books.”¹³

Forest Service Job Corps vocational training aligned with the varied conservation needs on national forests and grasslands. Enrollees planted trees, installed water systems, built recreation facilities and small erosion control dams, fought wildfires, and constructed roads, trails, and firebreaks. The work projects at the conservation centers addressed two issues facing America—natural resources degradation and job skills training. In addition to addressing work on public lands that might not otherwise have been accomplished, the land stewardship projects exposed Job Corps students to career pathways in conservation and resource management and, for many, instilled lasting and meaningful connections to the land.

The Equal Opportunity Act authorized “conservation camps and training centers.” Official Forest Service correspondence designated the civilian conservation centers as “camps”; however, directors and camp staff commonly referred to them as “centers” to avoid confusion with the many other kinds of camps operated

by the Forest Service. On December 23, 1967, Public Law 90-222 renamed the Youth Conservation Corps as Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers.¹⁴ This redesignation occurred because the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), fearing closures should Democrats lose the 1968 election, wanted to associate the conservation centers with the positive public recognition of the CCC.¹⁵ Regardless of the name, the corpsmen became an important tool for developing and maintaining the public’s natural resources.

“WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH A JOB LIKE THIS?”

Jack Deinema represented USDA at the Equal Opportunity Act signing ceremony in the White House Rose Garden on August 20, 1964. It was a just reward for Deinema, who had been detailed to the Washington headquarters and worked long days, evenings, and weekends in an old hotel off Dupont Circle to get the legislation passed.¹⁶ Little did he realize while watching the president sign the bill that he was in for more of the same. Following the signing, the Forest Service created the Division of Job Corps Administration. Deinema and Jack Large were appointed as director and deputy director, respectively, reporting to Clare Hendee, the deputy chief of administration.

Because of pressure from Sargent Shriver, now director of OEO, to get the Job Corps up and running quickly, the conservation



Frenchburg Job Corps students Demitri James, left, and Alex Fochtmann cut a board for scaffolding at the historic Gladie Cabin on the Daniel Boone National Forest in Kentucky. Job Corps students helped the U.S. Forest Service restore the historic cabin's shake shingle roof in 2013.

camp program's conceptualization and implementation developed simultaneously.¹⁷ Comparatively speaking, the Forest Service had an easy time opening its conservation camps; the Department of the Interior, having to coordinate five internal agencies (Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Sport Fish and Wildlife), struggled to get its camps operational.¹⁸

As OEO's director of conservation centers, Deinema oversaw the establishment of both Forest Service and Interior camps, with Interior's full support.¹⁹ "Personnel at OEO came from the fields of education, business, and politics and had very little federal management experience," Deinema stated. "Consequently, they were constantly in turmoil and upheaval and had difficulty dealing with their governmental partners."²⁰

Deputy Chief Hendee directed that he wanted the "very best people" to staff the Forest Service conservation camps and set particularly rigorous standards for selecting camp directors. "The Forest Service nominated their best men and we quickly gained prestige with Shriver and his top circles," recalled Deinema. "I pirated Bob Shrake, and Barbara Yessel, from the Forest Service and both were instrumental in gaining OEO staff support." Shrake would eventually be appointed the regional director in Denver, and Yessel would serve as the administrative officer for Weber Basin Job Corps in Ogden, Utah. Observed John Baker, assistant secretary of Agriculture for rural development and conservation during Job Corps' first two years, "[A]s distinct from the urban centers, the Forest Service centers had tried-and-true leadership of very high caliber—the Forest Service officers—in terms of

knowing human nature and all those kinds of things."²¹

Not everyone came from the Forest Service, however. Mike O'Callaghan was serving as Nevada's health and welfare director when President Johnson selected him to serve as a regional director of the conservation camps.²² Camp directors like Zane Smith and Tony Dorrell credit O'Callaghan with much of the early success of the civilian conservation camps. O'Callaghan, who would eventually serve under Deinema in the OEO headquarters to direct the national conservation center field supervisor program, was the first OEO field supervisor for the Job Corps' western region.²³ "We center directors had two bosses—our forest supervisor and Mike O'Callaghan," said Tony Dorrell. "The forest supervisors were responsible for center administration and the work program. Mike was responsible for education, vocational training, counseling, and all other OEO interests. Mike was an outstanding leader, a strong personal supporter, and a friend to all of us working in Job Corps for the Forest Service."²⁴ O'Callaghan would later serve two terms as governor of Nevada and remained a strong friend and supporter of the Forest Service.

Job Corps proved a way for the Forest Service to develop leadership and administration skills among its emerging leaders. Tours in OEO generally lasted 24 months, and career Forest Service employees who accepted Job Corps assignments were assured they could return to the Forest Service.²⁵ The majority of the first camp directors were promoted to leadership positions—forest supervisor, assistant regional forester, regional forester—and a handful went on to become deputy chief, associate chief, and in the case of Max Peterson, chief. After serving as a regional forester

in Region 5 (Pacific Southwest), Deinema concluded his Forest Service career as deputy chief of administration. "I've had a full and rewarding career with the Forest Service from smokejumper to deputy chief; but the highlight and probably most fulfilling role was my participation in the Civilian Conservation Centers," recalled Deinema.²⁶

Hendee instructed each Forest Service region to nominate two qualified candidates for every camp, and special guidelines were created to facilitate the selection of camp directors.²⁷ Early in the program, the typical camp director was a district ranger between 30 and 40 years old with 10 to 20 years of professional experience.²⁸ Conservation camp directors endured a strict selection process following nomination, including evaluations by OEO, panel interviews with OEO and Forest Service representatives, and the satisfactory completion of training. The first few groups of camp directors were personally interviewed by Shriver and often found it an intimidating experience.²⁹ Of one nominee Shriver demanded, "What do you want with a job like this? Why don't you continue with forests and trees? They don't talk back!"³⁰

"I was fortunate to survive the Sargent Shriver interview and the great training that followed in preparation to be a center director," said Zane Smith, a district ranger on the Okanogan National Forest prior to his appointment as the first director of the Cispus (Washington) Conservation Camp. Smith would go on to assignments in the Office of Youth Opportunity and multiple appointments as a forest supervisor and in the Office of the Chief, and ultimately served as Region 5's regional forester.³¹ Smith pointed to his advancement as evidence of Chief Cliff's commitment to staff who served in Job Corps.³²

BUILDING COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Conservation camp locations were selected based on factors that included political considerations, population density, location, local poverty rates, and the availability of existing facilities.³³ Conceived primarily as a residential program, the camps necessitated the construction of student housing and cafeterias, in addition to education and vocational classrooms; some camps, including Blackwell, Ouachita, and the Lyndon B. Johnson, were at former CCC locations. Max Peterson, at the time an engineer in the Division of Administrative Management, advised the Job Corps Planning Group on locations, design, and building construction budgets.³⁴ Peterson asked Region 5's architectural staff to develop design concepts for the centers, designs that ultimately served as the model for both Forest Service and Interior camps.

As USDA's representative on the Job Corps Planning Group, Deinema sought a balance between work and education at the conservation camps. Deputy Director Jack Large advised on the design of the training programs; he wanted the conservation projects to impart the technical vocational skills the corpsmen needed.³⁵ Thus, a typical conservation project, such as the construction of a water system for a recreation area, would include training in heavy equipment operations, surveying, carpentry, plumbing, and cement masonry.

Early in the program, the performance of Job Corps centers was primarily judged by how rapidly they could graduate students. Students were encouraged to quickly move through the program and enter the workforce after having reached a moderate level of employability. At Forest Service conservation centers, however, training was heavily concentrated in the construction trades,

which required lengthier stays. Jack Large introduced union-operated preapprenticeship programs in 1966, and the role of these programs was expanded after 1969.³⁶ "Unions added a dimension of technical professionalism to the process," recalled Tony Dorrell. "We went from being education and work centers to education and work training centers."³⁷

The camps functioned as small communities. The earliest Forest Service camp directors had wide latitude to govern in a manner that addressed a camp's particular challenges and often emphasized cultivating responsibility and leadership qualities in the students. Learning leadership, personal accountability, and responsibility were integrated into all camp activities.³⁸ Practically from program inception, students were involved in the operation and maintenance of their centers. Learned responsibility also partly explain why it was not uncommon for students to graduate and be hired into staff positions: "Camp staff must be trained to replace itself so that Job Corps enrollees in time and after proven readiness can become staff members themselves."³⁹

Deputy Chief Hendee knew that the program's success started with properly preparing his staff for the task ahead. He mandated that all conservation camp staff receive college-level training lasting from four to six weeks focused on specific areas, such as counseling, education, or work skills, and he emphasized the joint responsibility of the entire staff for the success of each part of the program. "All camp employees, down to the cooks and administrative clerks, were held responsible for teaching and counseling students and monitoring their performance."⁴⁰

As with the CCC, some rural communities opposed the establishment of conservation camps because of the racial composition of the young male students. Depending on a center's location, up to 70 percent of the enrollees were African American and non-white Hispanics. Forest Service leaders, realizing that the attitudes of local communities would determine Job Corps' success, crafted a comprehensive public relations plan.⁴¹ The agency's strategy, put into operation even before camps opened, had two prongs, recalled Deinema:

The reputation and caliber of our local rangers and forest supervisors, as well as their advance ground work, was instrumental in gaining public support.... Pat Healy [OEO's head of the rural conservation centers], Barney Old Coyote [Interior's coordinator], and I set off on a national whirlwind trip in the USDA turbo jet airplane inspecting proposed sites and meeting with local townspeople to measure their reaction.

He realized that "racial fears were very much in evidence" in the predominantly white small towns close to the proposed conservation centers. According to Deinema, it was the advocacy of Civilian Conservation Corps graduates who appeared in force that turned community opinions toward acceptance of the camps.⁴²

To ensure good relations with the communities, moral standards and ethical conduct were expected of staff members as well as corpsmen.⁴³ After a few years of operation, personal exposure to the Job Corps students and favorable publicity generated by the camps led to peaceful coexistence, despite occasional acts of student misconduct. Community relations councils, made up of representatives from local communities, also assisted in involving students in community life and resolving difficulties that arose.



Timber Lake Job Corps welding students work together to determine the best way to join pieces of metal. Welding is a popular vocational trade for female Job Corps enrollees.

WILDERNESS AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

President Johnson described the Great Society as “a place where man can renew contact with nature.” An original Job Corps orientation pamphlet stated,

Working and living in the outdoors, close to nature, often brings a beneficial effect to the individual—in his attitude, outlook, and philosophy, even in his mental and physical health. Although this benefit or “change” may not be specifically pinpointed at any given time, we know this is so, because people of all ages seek out nature and natural surroundings for change, refreshment, recreation, and meditation.⁴⁴

Much like the Civilian Conservation Corps three decades earlier, the conservation camps’ placement in a forest setting was seen as correlating with students’ fresh starts toward new lives. Arrival at a Civilian Conservation Center was (and still is) often a student’s first exposure to national forests and grasslands. The conservation center model for Job Corps was incorporated into the program’s structure at the insistence of prominent political leaders. Hubert Humphrey, for example, had been a strong advocate for a new CCC program while a U.S. senator and remained a Job Corps supporter after becoming vice president in 1965.

Some education leaders who dominated the original Job Corps Planning Group voiced skepticism about the value of training enrollees in conservation work. Christopher Weeks, who served as program troubleshooter and special assistant to Shriver from

February 1964 to July 1966, later remembered: “I’ve been out to several Job Corps conservation centers there in beautiful areas, and the kids were pretty well-behaved. They stayed in line. They didn’t learn a heck of a lot out there either. They were out there chopping brush and clearing paths and doing fairly menial work... Whether they came back with really usable skills is very questionable.” Others from the Washington office during the same time period, like assistant secretary John Baker, came away with more favorable personal impressions from visits: “I was greatly impressed with the educational component of Job Corps. Instead of working all day chopping trees, Job Corps would spend, say, the morning learning basic arithmetic and reading and so on.”⁴⁵ With time the curriculum improved and expanded.

Nonetheless, USDA and Forest Service leaders were confident that along with job skills, Job Corps students would gain critical citizenship, leadership, and teamwork skills from working on the nation’s public lands.⁴⁶ Even as it has evolved, the curriculum of the conservation centers has sought to build physical health through activities on the national forests and grasslands while developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Job Corps students are particularly known for their work in firefighting and forestry. Around the country, conservation centers provide camp crews, who support the work of fire and other incident management crews, and Type II fire crews, composed of students and led by staff who are certified wildland firefighters. The Advanced Pre-Forestry program was established in 1992 to cultivate students for careers in natural resources. Graduates have

the option of continuing their forestry education at a four-year college, joining the Forest Service as entry-level forestry technicians, or entering the Wildland Firefighter Apprenticeship program. Appropriately, the Advanced Pre-Forestry program is at the Schenck Job Corps Center on the Pisgah National Forest, near the site of the first forestry school in the United States, founded by Carl A. Schenck.

Also at the Schenck Job Corps Center is the Advanced Fire Management Training program. Here, students learn wildland and prescribed fire tactics and strategies while working on a full-time initial attack crew. This program has its origins in 2003, when Mike Coren, the Schenck center's maintenance supervisor, Rick Kiel, the works program officer, and Greg Philipp, the fire management officer on the Grandfather Ranger District on the Pisgah National Forest, wanted to expand the Schenck forestry program to include a fire management component with an associated Type II Initial Attack resource—a goal that would be realized with the formation of the Davidson River IA Crew.⁴⁷ Coren, Kiel, and Philipp designed a training program that would engage Job Corps students from across the country in providing local and national wildland fire and all-hazards incident support. The core team they formed worked with management personnel from Regions 1 and 8, the Washington Office, the national forests in North Carolina, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The first nine students arrived at the Schenck Job Corps center in October 2007. The program now graduates around 18 students each year and has close to a 100 percent employment placement rate with public and private entities.⁴⁸

On March 15, 2013, partially in response to the success of the Advanced Fire Management Training Program, Chief Tom Tidwell announced a partnership between Job Corps and Fire and Aviation Management (F&AM). This partnership established a national fire management apprentice program that helps transition entry-level students into full-time positions while providing a foundation in Forest Service training, values, and leadership skills.

During the relatively slow fire season of 2014, 2,368 Job Corps students worked a total of 1,987 days and contributed 160,327 hours on wildfire and prescribed fire assignments—surpassing the 124,009 hours worked on 2013 assignments. Students at eleven conservation centers participating in hazardous fuels reduction projects spent 19,393 hours treating 57,276 acres, mostly in the wildland-urban interface. When fully implemented in 2018, the program will have the capacity to dispatch more than 800 firefighter Type II-qualified Job Corps students nationwide for any

type of service needed by the Forest Service, and every center will be able to support all-hazard emergencies, hazardous fuels, and forest health programs nationwide. Participating Job Corps students will have the opportunity to compete for permanent or seasonal appointments, helping fulfill the Forest Service's goal of a highly skilled and diverse wildland fire management workforce.

THE JOB CORPS TODAY

The Forest Service initially operated 29 conservation camps and the Department of the Interior had 26.⁴⁹ Today, there are 125 Job Corps centers nationwide, the majority of which are operated by private contractors and nonprofit organizations; 28 conservation centers operate on public lands under an interagency agreement between the U.S. Department of Labor and USDA. Although concentrated in the Southeast and the Pacific Northwest, conservation centers are located across the country on 24 forests and grasslands, national parks, and wilderness refuges in 18 states.

Forest Service Job Corps centers house, educate, and train more than 5,200 young people at a time. Students from ages 16 to 24 can obtain a high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma while receiving hands-on vocational training in more



Senator Hubert Humphrey congratulates a Job Corps graduate in 1965. Humphrey was instrumental in shaping the language of the Job Corps bill passed in 1964. On the left is Sargent Shriver, director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, the federal agency that oversaw Job Corps.

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than 30 trades. Forest Service centers graduate approximately 4,200 students a year, each with the skills necessary to obtain a living-wage job and adapt to a changing workforce. Historically, 80 percent of Job Corps graduates start new careers, enroll in higher education programs, or enlist in the military.

The Forest Service considers the program part of its core mission. Over the past nine years, the agency has assumed leadership of centers managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the Bureau of Reclamation. The agency is now the only public land management agency that operates civilian conservation centers and is the largest single operator of Job Corps centers nationwide.

For an agency facing \$5.56 billion in deferred maintenance costs,⁵⁰ the Civilian Conservation Centers provided a cost-effective method to complete essential conservation projects on national forests and grasslands that otherwise would not receive the necessary resources or manpower. In the past two fiscal years, Forest Service Job Corps students have contributed more than 500,000 hours of service work on public lands. Data entry technicians, heavy equipment operators, and mechanics are all critical workers for modern natural resources management. Local communities, national forests, and other public land management agencies often turn to local Job Corps centers for help in restoring campgrounds and trails, improving wildlife habitat areas, and building infrastructure that supports recreational access to people with disabilities. In 2014—the golden anniversary year of the Wilderness Act—more than 60 students constructed and installed kiosks and wilderness backpack scales in wilderness areas and assisted with trail construction and maintenance.

Conservation centers continue to perform public service. As first responders during local, state, and national disasters, Job Corps students and staff have conducted hurricane cleanups, assisted with reconstruction after storms and floods, and even participated in the recovery efforts after the *Challenger* and *Columbia* space shuttle disasters. Such projects integrate the students' vocational and educational training with practical activities while teaching the responsibilities that come with being a citizen.

Forest Service Job Corps students often travel for construction projects—restoring the Mount Roosevelt Friendship Tower on the Black Hills National Forest, remodeling the Challenge Visitor Center on the Plumas National Forest, and restoring Grey Towers National Historic Site, the home of the agency's founding chief, Gifford Pinchot. Perhaps the best example is the construction of the Camino Real Ranger Station in New Mexico, completed in 2011. This project entailed demolishing the existing 2,000-square-foot station and constructing a 6,500-square-foot, energy-efficient structure that met the Forest Service principle of sustainable operations. More than 500 students from all 28 Job Corps conservation centers participated.

Not all the work involves national forests. Five centers—Angell, Golconda, Great Onyx, Ouachita, and Pine Knot—train students in urban forestry. In 2014, Angell Job Corps urban forestry students partnered with the Siuslaw National Forest (California) and the Forest Service State & Private Forestry Office to perform 7,560 volunteer hours on urban ecosystem management, rehabilitation, heritage resources, and campground and trail maintenance projects. Annually, the centers provide an estimated \$2 million to \$4 million in support for urban forestry community service projects.

The conservation centers are a source for the Forest Service to recruit entry-level employees who reflect diversity, thus helping

the agency provide opportunities for underserved populations to pursue natural resources careers. Job Corps students' vocational training in forestry, natural resource management, and firefighting can lead directly to careers at a federal land management agency.

President Obama's Twenty-first Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) will put both veterans and young people to work and designate Job Corps centers as Public Lands Corps. This new hiring authority will allow federal land management agencies to hire Job Corps graduates for entry-level positions noncompetitively. Job Corps has connected nearly 1,500 enrollees with training opportunities in the 21CSC, giving these students career-path federal employment opportunities.

CONCLUSION

Forest Service Job Corps, a direct heir of the Civilian Conservation Corps, is a rare alignment of solutions to the challenges of youth unemployment and the urgent need to protect our nation's natural resources. It visibly embodies the Forest Service mission, "To care for the land and serve people."

The Economic Opportunity Act was intended to help the poor pull themselves up from poverty. As President Johnson acknowledged in his March 16, 1964, message to Congress recommending its creation, the program "is not a simple or an easy program."⁵¹ But despite fifty years of challenges, including different bureaucratic homes, changing presidential administrations, shifting budget priorities, and center closures, Job Corps still gives America's youth an opportunity to escape poverty and improve their lives. In program year 2013, Job Corps served more than 109,000 students, 70 percent of graduates joined the workforce or enlisted in the military, and more than 12 percent pursued further education. More than 60 percent completed Job Corps career technical training.⁵² The centers emphasize professional credentials and certifications, allowing students to graduate fully skilled in their vocations. The rigorous training provided by national trade unions—United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, International Masonry Institute, International Union of Operating Engineers—facilitates job placement after a student graduates. The centers continually adapt their programs to provide the training necessary to place student in jobs.

In an era of shrinking federal budgets and resources, the Job Corps is still giving individuals "the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity," as President Johnson said. Consider the case of Sergio A. Gutierrez. Born in Mexico in 1954, as an impoverished 16-year-old living with his grandmother in Carlsbad, California, he was drifting into a life on the streets. "I came from a low-income family, had no familial support, and literally confronted death in the streets," he said. After enrolling in a Job Corps civilian conservation center, he earned his high school equivalency diploma. "Quite simply, Job Corps saved my life. The Wolf Creek Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center in Glide, Oregon, immediately provided me a safe place and gave me a reason to care about living.... Beyond job training, the center provided a positive way to look at yourself and opportunities.... As a result, I have been able to give back to our country."⁵³ Today Gutierrez is the chief judge of the Idaho Court of Appeals. His achievements are exceptional, yet every day the Job Corps program gives opportunities to youngsters at risk and makes possible outcomes like those of Sergio Gutierrez. □

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NOTES

1. Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. Public Law 88-452, U.S. Statutes at Large 78 (1964): 508.
2. Ibid.
3. Memorandum from Edward P. Cliff, Chief, U.S. Forest Service to Regional Foresters, Directors and Area Directors, U.S. Forest Service (July 26, 1967), on file with author.
4. "A Brief History of the Creation of the Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers" (2009), unpublished government document on the role of the U.S. Forest Service in creating and implementing the Job Corps program, on file with author.
5. E-mail message from Tony Dorrell to author, April 1, 2014, 09:39 MST.
6. Job Corps White Paper "Job Corps—Conservation Camp Program, Clare Hendee, Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service (undated), on file with author.
7. Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.
8. The phrase "War Against Poverty" was in the task force's name but the program and agenda are known as the "War on Poverty."
9. "Brief History of the Creation of the Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers."
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Memorandum to file Job Corps: Forest Service History, Emergency Projects from Clare Hendee, Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service (undated), on file with author. CCC enrollees gained on average eleven to fifteen pounds after the first three to four months in camp. See Neil M. Maher, *Nature's New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Roots of the American Environmental Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 98–100.
13. E-mail message, Tony Dorrell to author, April 1, 2014, 10:39 MST.
14. Economic Opportunity Act Amendments of 1967. Public Law 90-222. U.S. Statutes at Large 81 (1967): 672.
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16. E-mail message, John Deinema to author, March 22, 2014, 15:41 MST.
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19. Ibid.
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21. Michael L. Gillette, *Launching the War on Poverty: An Oral History*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 228.
22. "Mike O'Callaghan, 74, Nevada Governor, Is Dead," *New York Times*, March 8, 2004, accessed at <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/08/national/08OCAL.html>.
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24. Ibid.
25. Job Corps White Paper, "Job Corps—Conservation Camp Program, Clare Hendee, Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service," (undated), on file with author.
26. E-mail message, John Deinema to author.
27. Memorandum from Clare Hendee, Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service to Regional Foresters, U.S. Forest Service (July 9, 1964), on file with author.
28. Job Corps White Paper, "Job Corps—Conservation Camp Program," Clare Hendee, Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service, undated, on file with author.
29. Memorandum to file Job Corps: Forest Service History, Emergency Projects from Clare Hendee, Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service (undated), on file with author.
30. Ibid.
31. E-mail message, Zane G. Smith, Jr., to author, March 30, 2014, 10:58 MST.
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33. "Brief History of the Creation of the Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers."
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