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Conservation Corps Minnesota

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<https://www.conservationcorps.org/>

AT A GLANCE

Conservation Corps Minnesota, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, provides youth (ages 15-18) and young adults (ages 18 to 25), with hands-on service-learning opportunities that improve access to outdoor recreation, restore habitat, protect trails and waterways, and respond to natural disasters.

In 2023, 281 young adult participants eligible to receive education awards after completing service:

- 176 field crew participants working in natural resource management
- 44 individuals serving with various natural resource agencies and non-profits
- 61 participants serving as youth leaders for summer and afterschool youth programs

101 youth participants earned wages or a stipend restoring resources and gaining job skills:

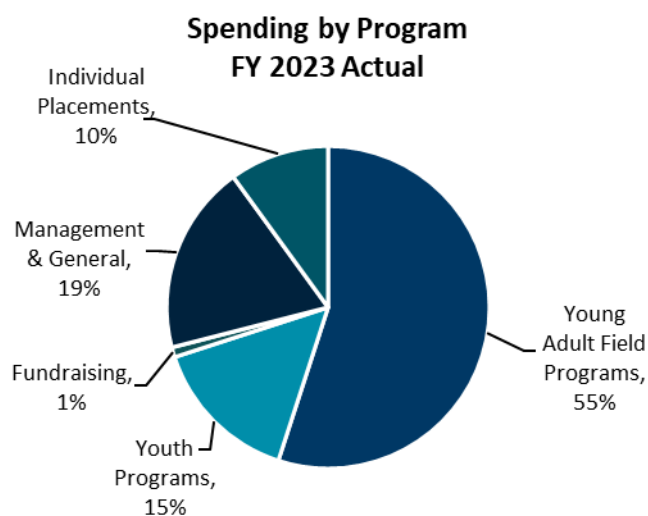
- 59 youth serving as part of the rural residential Summer Youth Corps
- 42 youth serving in an afterschool program providing job training, science education, and outdoor service-learning for participants from low-income urban communities

PURPOSE

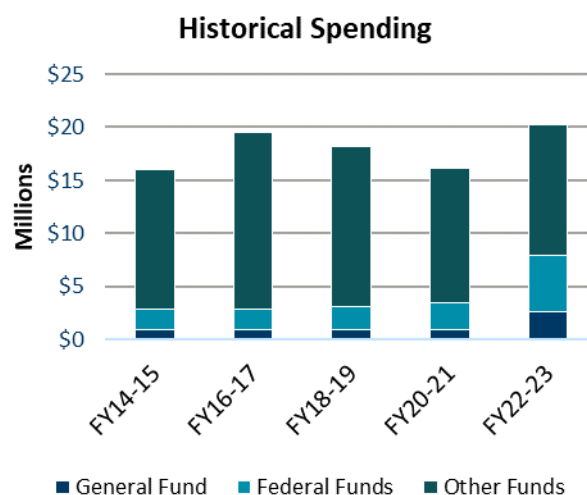
Conservation Corps Minnesota's purpose is to help young people from diverse backgrounds become more connected to natural resources and the environment, promote their equitable access to nature, equip them to succeed in career and life, and empower them to make a difference in conserving natural resources.

Conservation Corps Minnesota's mission is to cultivate a community of emerging leaders in service to people and the planet. The organization provides training to members in natural resource management, technical skills, and job readiness, and helps develop personal responsibility and a strong work ethic.

BUDGET



Source: Conservation Corps' Audited Financial Statements



Source: Conservation Corps' Audited Financial Statements

Conservation Corps Minnesota has a diverse funding base, with fee-for-service revenue supporting more than 58 percent of Conservation Corps' expenses and serve as the largest funding source for the young adult service

programs in combination with federal funding. Youth programs also derive revenue from fee-for-service contracts but rely more heavily on individual giving, private foundations, corporate contributions, and government grants. Fee-for-service partners include federal, state, local and nonprofit partners. General funds include state appropriations and grants. Federal funds include grants awarded through AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Other funding also includes fee-for-service revenue, various local grants and funding, private foundation, corporate and individual giving, and miscellaneous.

STRATEGIES

Throughout Conservation Corps' five program areas, young people are involved in hands-on, service-learning activities that protect and enhance natural resources, and promote workforce skills and readiness.

1. **AmeriCorps Field Crew program** includes crews throughout Minnesota that engage young adults in natural resource management and disaster response work year-round with options for service from 3-12 months in length. Participants receive a living allowance, an AmeriCorps education award and have access to additional benefits including health insurance, employee assistance programs and more. Training for participants includes career and work-skills and may include certifications in wildfire suppression, defensive driving, chainsaw safety, and first aid in addition to many other skills trainings and networking opportunities.
2. **AmeriCorps Individual Placement program** for young adults, ages 18-25, provides positions in natural resources management and community outreach at a variety of agencies and nonprofit organizations, from January to December. Individual Placement members receive a monthly stipend, health insurance, and an education award for college expenses. In addition to skill development, these members benefit from mentorship relationships and collaborative community partnerships.
3. The **Youth Outdoors program** connects Twin Cities youth, ages 15-18, to the natural environment through conservation and community improvement projects while they gain job experience and college/career skills for the future. Youth participate during the school year, meeting two days a week after school and on Saturdays to explore science and the environment and complete projects with their crew while earning an hourly training-wage. Youth in this program, over 50% percent of whom are people of color, are predominantly from low-income households in the Twin Cities. Young adult AmeriCorps members serve as Youth Leaders in the program, receiving a monthly stipend, health insurance, and an education award for college expenses.
4. **Summer Youth Corps** residential program serves youth, (ages 15-18), and engages young adult AmeriCorps members (18-24) as youth leaders, in environmental restoration field crew-oriented work in national and state forests for two summer sessions. Participants, about 10 percent of whom are deaf or hard of hearing, receive a living stipend as well as room and board. Young adult AmeriCorps members serve as Youth Leaders at the residential program, receiving a monthly stipend, health insurance, and an education award for college expenses.
5. **Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC)** engages college students pursuing STEM degrees who are interested in a career in natural resources. Established in 2018 and initiated in 2019, through partnership between the Conservation Corps, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, students participate in fellowships, mentorships, and paid internships. The program targets students from backgrounds typically underrepresented in natural resource careers, including women, people of color, and individuals with disabilities. Participants receive a fellowship payment to support academic expenses for the school year.

RESULTS

Measure name	Measure type	Measure data source	Most recent data - 2023
Hours of education/training provided to program participants	Quantity	Time tracking system	41,279
Acres of habitat restored	Quantity	Field reports submitted daily and reviewed by managers.	28,869
Miles of trail restored	Quantity	Field reports submitted daily and reviewed by managers.	624
Percent of project partners who would partner again with the Corps	Quality	Project partner evaluation	99%
Percent of young people who would recommend the program to others	Quality	Participant exit surveys	95.5%
Number of college-age participants, from underrepresented communities, provided fellowships, mentorships, and paid internships served through IDEC program	Result	Programs database	31
Percent of young people who gained workforce readiness skills	Result	Participant exit surveys	85.1%
Percent of young people who gained/improved technical skills	Result	Participant exit surveys	96.5%
Percent of young people who reported a stronger sense of on-the-job safety	Result	Participant exit surveys	93.9%

Performance measures follow the calendar year in alignment with Conservation Corps' program schedule and fiscal year.

The legal authority for the Minnesota Conservation Corps is found in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 84, Section 991 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=84.991>).

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base	
					FY26	FY27
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>						
1000 - General	455	455	580	580	580	580
2100 - Water Recreation	35	35	105	217	150	150
2101 - Snowmobile	75	75				
2102 - All-Terrain Vehicle	20	20	29			
2103 - Off-Highway Motorcycle	5	5				
2104 - Off-Road Vehicle			16			
2106 - State Park	150	150	216	206	200	200
2107 - State Pks & Trls Lott In Lieu	75	75	13	67	50	50
2112 - Invasive Species	25	25				
2113 - Forest Management Investment	60	60	30	80	90	90
2116 - Cross Country Ski	10	10				
2117 - Natural Resource Misc Statutory	35	35				
Total	945	945	989	1,150	1,070	1,070
Biennial Change				249		1
Biennial % Change				13		0

Expenditures by Program

Conservation Corps Mn	945	945	989	1,150	1,070	1,070
Total	945	945	989	1,150	1,070	1,070

Expenditures by Category

Operating Expenses			409	1,150	1,070	1,070
Grants, Aids and Subsidies	945	945	580			
Total	945	945	989	1,150	1,070	1,070

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base FY26 FY27	
1000 - General						
Direct Appropriation	455	455	580	580	580	580
Expenditures	455	455	580	580	580	580
Biennial Change in Expenditures				250		0
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				27		0

2100 - Water Recreation

Balance Forward In				46		
Direct Appropriation	35	35	151	171	150	150
Balance Forward Out			46			
Expenditures	35	35	105	217	150	150
Biennial Change in Expenditures				252		(22)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				360		(7)

2101 - Snowmobile

Direct Appropriation	75	75				
Expenditures	75	75				
Biennial Change in Expenditures				(150)		0
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				(100)		

2102 - All-Terrain Vehicle

Direct Appropriation	20	20	29			
Expenditures	20	20	29			
Biennial Change in Expenditures				(11)		(29)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				(27)		

2103 - Off-Highway Motorcycle

Direct Appropriation	5	5				
Expenditures	5	5				
Biennial Change in Expenditures				(10)		0
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				(100)		

2104 - Off-Road Vehicle

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base FY26 FY27	
Direct Appropriation			16			
Expenditures			16			
Biennial Change in Expenditures				16		(16)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures						

2106 - State Park

Balance Forward In				24		
Direct Appropriation	150	150	240	182	200	200
Balance Forward Out			24			
Expenditures	150	150	216	206	200	200
Biennial Change in Expenditures				122		(22)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				41		(5)

2107 - State Pks & Trls Lott In Lieu

Balance Forward In				5		
Direct Appropriation	75	75	18	62	50	50
Balance Forward Out			5			
Expenditures	75	75	13	67	50	50
Biennial Change in Expenditures				(70)		20
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				(47)		25

2112 - Invasive Species

Direct Appropriation	25	25				
Expenditures	25	25				
Biennial Change in Expenditures				(50)		0
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				(100)		

2113 - Forest Management Investment

Balance Forward In				5		
Direct Appropriation	60	60	35	75	90	90
Balance Forward Out			5			
Expenditures	60	60	30	80	90	90
Biennial Change in Expenditures				(10)		70

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base FY26 FY27
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				(9)	64

2116 - Cross Country Ski

Direct Appropriation	10				
Transfers In		10			
Expenditures	10	10			
Biennial Change in Expenditures				(20)	0
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				(100)	

2117 - Natural Resource Misc Statutory

Direct Appropriation	35	35			
Expenditures	35	35			
Biennial Change in Expenditures				(70)	0
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				(100)	

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY25	FY26	FY27	Biennium 2026-27
Direct				
Fund: 1000 - General				
FY2025 Appropriations	580	580	580	1,160
Forecast Base	580	580	580	1,160
Fund: 2100 - Water Recreation				
FY2025 Appropriations	171	171	171	342
Base Adjustments				
Approved Transfer Between Appropriation		(21)	(21)	(42)
Forecast Base	171	150	150	300
Fund: 2106 - State Park				
FY2025 Appropriations	182	182	182	364
Base Adjustments				
Approved Transfer Between Appropriation		18	18	36
Forecast Base	182	200	200	400
Fund: 2107 - State Pks & Trls Lott In Lieu				
FY2025 Appropriations	62	62	62	124
Base Adjustments				
Approved Transfer Between Appropriation		(12)	(12)	(24)
Forecast Base	62	50	50	100
Fund: 2113 - Forest Management Investment				
FY2025 Appropriations	75	75	75	150
Base Adjustments				
Approved Transfer Between Appropriation		15	15	30
Forecast Base	75	90	90	180