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AT A GLANCE

Young adult programs, ages 18-25: all participants are enrolled in AmeriCorps and receive education awards after completing service

- 213 young adults serve in field crews across the state, completing natural resource work — restoring and protecting water quality, maintaining state parks, improving trails and restoring habitat.
- 51 serve in single placement positions with natural resource agencies and nonprofits, and conservation apprenticeships at Soil and Water Conservation Districts.
- 54 young adults serve as youth leaders for summer and afterschool programs.
- Youth programs, ages 15-18: all participants earn a stipend while restoring resources and gaining job and career-planning skills
- 135 youth unplug from modern intrusions to live, learn and work outdoors as part of the rural residential Summer Youth Corps. About 15 percent are deaf or hard-of-hearing.
- 131 youth take part in the afterschool Youth Outdoors program, which engages diverse urban high school students from low-income homes in job training, science education and outdoor service-learning. About 90 percent are people of color.

PURPOSE

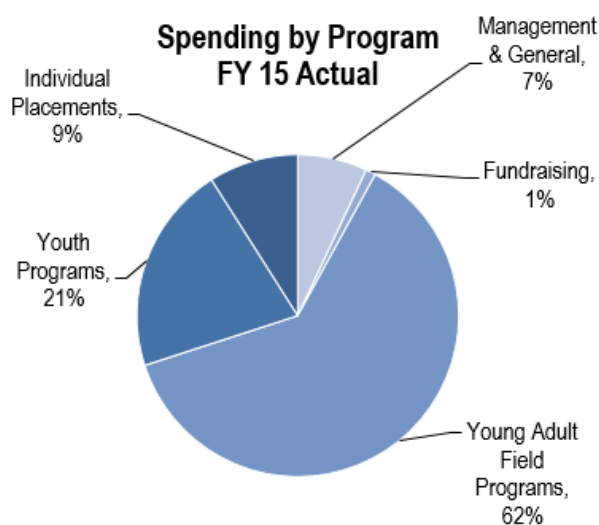
Conservation Corps Minnesota's mission is to provide hands-on environmental stewardship and service-learning opportunities to youth and young adults while accomplishing conservation, natural-resource management and emergency response work.

Our goals are to help young people from diverse backgrounds become more connected to the environment, engaged in conservation, involved in the community, and prepared for further education and future employment. We integrate young people from various socio-economic backgrounds and cultural communities, as well as deaf youth, into our programs and live up to our motto: Resources Restored. Lives Changed.

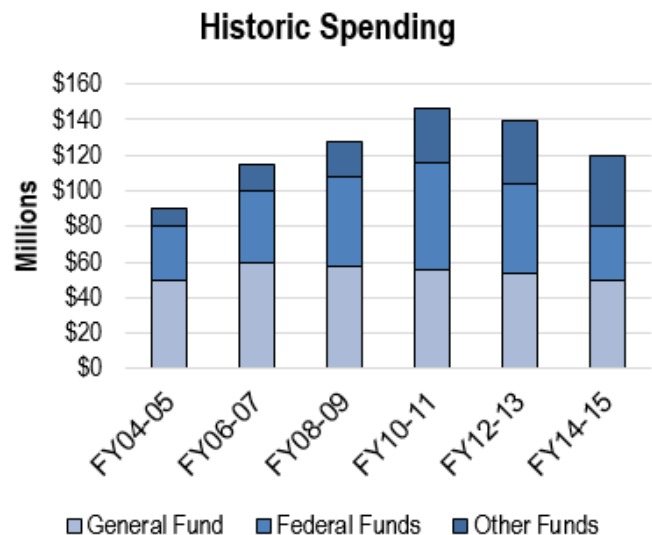
Our mission and goals support the statewide priorities:

- **Investing in Kids, Families, and Communities**
- **Building an Economy that Works for All Minnesotans**
- **Clean, Affordable Water for All Minnesotans**

BUDGET



Source: Conservation Corps' Audited Financial Statements



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

Conservation Corps Minnesota has a diverse funding base. Fee-for-service funds more than 55 percent of program costs and is the primary revenue source in the young adult programs, along with government grants. Youth programs also derive revenue from fee-for-service, but rely more heavily on private and government grants. Fee-for-service partners include federal, state, local and nonprofit partners and related service activities. Clean Water, Land and Legacy funds support nearly 20 percent of program costs through partnerships with different agencies.

STRATEGIES

Restoring resources

Throughout our programs, young people are involved in hands-on, service-learning activities that protect and enhance natural resources.

1. **Restoring and Protecting Water Quality:** Corps members restore and protect water ways and shorelines that are vital to the region's water supply by stabilizing shorelines, installing buffers and rain gardens, and removing debris and other pollutants.
2. **Habitat Restoration:** Corps members restore habitat on public lands throughout Minnesota by removing non-native invasive species, conducting prescribed burns and planting native trees and plants.
3. **Improving Access to Outdoor Recreation:** Corps members build and maintain motorized and non-motorized trails, boardwalks, campsites, park facilities and other recreational structures.
4. **Energy Conservation:** Corps members install energy-saving measures in Twin Cities homes and provide education and outreach on renewable energy technologies.

Changing Lives

Conservation Corps Minnesota prepares nearly 650 young people for further education and future employment each year with personal development, technical and work-skills training and education.

1. **Educational curriculum for youth (ages 15-18):** focuses on science and technology and job-search skills. More than 20% of program time is devoted to education and skills training. Eighty-five percent of youth participants report in post-program surveys that their work skills have improved.
 - **Summer Youth Corps** – Youth begin at a St. Croix State Park base camp, then spike camp throughout the region, working in crews of eight youth and two AmeriCorps leaders each as they restore natural resources and lead volunteers during two summer sessions, each four weeks long.
 - **Youth Outdoors** – Diverse urban teens from low-income neighborhoods engage in out-of-school environmental science education, civic leadership and outdoor service-learning as they complete neighborhood improvement projects and lead volunteers during 11-week fall and spring school semesters and an eight-week summer session.
2. **Skills training for young adults (ages 18-25):** includes hands-on training in habitat restoration, trail building, prescribed burning, energy conservation, leadership, communication and other skills. Field crew members receive professional certifications in wildfire suppression, chain-saw safety and first aid.
 - **Non-residential Field Crews** – Young adults, working in five-member crews, conduct natural resource, conservation and emergency response work from February to December.
 - **Seasonal crews** – Young adults from diverse ethnic communities, working in six-member crews, receive intensive job training in natural resource management and work in the Superior National Forest "Faces of Tomorrow" initiative from May through August.
 - **Single placements** – Individual corps members are based at the Department of Natural Resources, Neighborhood Energy Connection in Saint Paul and other agencies and nonprofits. During the summer, apprentices serve in soil and water conservation districts throughout Minnesota.

RESULTS

<i>Type</i>	<i>Performance Measures</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2015</i>
Quantity	Number of youth and young adults engaged in job skills training, education and natural resource and conservation work.	596	584
Result	Percent of young adult participants who gained or improved technical skills.	98%	98%
Result	Percent of youth participants who are better prepared for their next job	96%	97%
Quantity	Acres of habitat restored or improved	37,353	60,116
Quantity	Hours of work on recreational access improvements (trails, park facilities, campsites, docks, piers, etc.)	88,747	80,391

**Performance measures follow the calendar year in alignment with our 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>).

Expenditures By Fund

	Actual FY14	Actual FY15	Actual FY16	Estimate FY17	Forecasted Base		Governor's Recommendation	
					FY18	FY19	FY18	FY19
1000 - General	455	455	455	455	455	455	840	840
2100 - Water Recreation	175	175	50	50	50	50	50	50
2101 - Snowmobile	65	65	75	75	75	75	75	75
2102 - All-Terrain Vehicle	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
2103 - Off-Highway Motorcycle	0	0	10	10	10	10	10	10
2104 - Off-Road Vehicle	0	0	30	30	30	30	30	30
2106 - State Park	120	120	150	150	150	150	150	150
2107 - State Pks & Trls Lott In Lieu	30	30	25	25	25	25	25	25
2112 - Invasive Species	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
2113 - Forest Management Investment	25	25	50	50	50	50	50	50
2116 - Cross Country Ski	0	0	15	15	15	15	15	15
2117 - Natural Resource Misc Statutry	0	0	10	10	10	10	10	10
Total	945	945	945	945	945	945	1,330	1,330
<i>Biennial Change</i>				0		0		770
<i>Biennial % Change</i>				0		0		41
<i>Governor's Change from Base</i>								770
<i>Governor's % Change from Base</i>								41

Expenditures by Program

Program: Conservation Corps Mn	945	945	945	945	945	945	1,330	1,330
Total	945	945	945	945	945	945	1,330	1,330

Expenditures by Category

Grants, Aids and Subsidies	945	945	945	945	945	945	1,330	1,330
Total	945	945	945	945	945	945	1,330	1,330

1000 - General

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY18	FY19
Direct Appropriation	455	455	455	455	455	455	840	840
Expenditures	455	455	455	455	455	455	840	840
<i>Biennial Change in Expenditures</i>				0		0		770
<i>Biennial % Change in Expenditures</i>				0		0		85
<i>Gov's Exp Change from Base</i>								770
<i>Gov's Exp % Change from Base</i>								85

2100 - Water Recreation

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY18	FY19
Direct Appropriation	175	175	50	50	50	50	50	50
Expenditures	175	175	50	50	50	50	50	50
<i>Biennial Change in Expenditures</i>				(250)		0		0
<i>Biennial % Change in Expenditures</i>				(71)		0		0
<i>Gov's Exp Change from Base</i>								0
<i>Gov's Exp % Change from Base</i>								0

2101 - Snowmobile

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY18	FY19
Direct Appropriation	65	65	75	75	75	75	75	75
Expenditures	65	65	75	75	75	75	75	75
<i>Biennial Change in Expenditures</i>				20		0		0
<i>Biennial % Change in Expenditures</i>				15		0		0
<i>Gov's Exp Change from Base</i>								0
<i>Gov's Exp % Change from Base</i>								0

2102 - All-Terrain Vehicle

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY18	FY19
Direct Appropriation	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Expenditures	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50

2102 - All-Terrain Vehicle

<i>Biennial Change in Expenditures</i>	0	0	0
<i>Biennial % Change in Expenditures</i>	0	0	0
<i>Gov's Exp Change from Base</i>			0
<i>Gov's Exp % Change from Base</i>			0

2103 - Off-Highway Motorcycle

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY18	FY19
Direct Appropriation	0	0	10	10	10	10	10	10
Expenditures	0	0	10	10	10	10	10	10
<i>Biennial Change in Expenditures</i>				20		0		0
<i>Biennial % Change in Expenditures</i>						0		0
<i>Gov's Exp Change from Base</i>								0
<i>Gov's Exp % Change from Base</i>								0

2104 - Off-Road Vehicle

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY18	FY19
Direct Appropriation	0	0	30	30	30	30	30	30
Expenditures	0	0	30	30	30	30	30	30
<i>Biennial Change in Expenditures</i>				60		0		0
<i>Biennial % Change in Expenditures</i>						0		0
<i>Gov's Exp Change from Base</i>								0
<i>Gov's Exp % Change from Base</i>								0

2106 - State Park

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY18	FY19
Direct Appropriation	120	120	150	150	150	150	150	150
Expenditures	120	120	150	150	150	150	150	150
<i>Biennial Change in Expenditures</i>				60		0		0
<i>Biennial % Change in Expenditures</i>				25		0		0
<i>Gov's Exp Change from Base</i>								0
<i>Gov's Exp % Change from Base</i>								0

2107 - State Pks & Trls Lott In Lieu

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY18	FY19
Direct Appropriation	30	30	25	25	25	25	25	25
Expenditures	30	30	25	25	25	25	25	25
<i>Biennial Change in Expenditures</i>				(10)		0		0
<i>Biennial % Change in Expenditures</i>				(17)		0		0
<i>Gov's Exp Change from Base</i>								0
<i>Gov's Exp % Change from Base</i>								0

2112 - Invasive Species

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY18	FY19
Direct Appropriation	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
Expenditures	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
<i>Biennial Change in Expenditures</i>				0		0		0
<i>Biennial % Change in Expenditures</i>				0		0		0
<i>Gov's Exp Change from Base</i>								0
<i>Gov's Exp % Change from Base</i>								0

2113 - Forest Management Investment

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY18	FY19
Direct Appropriation	25	25	50	50	50	50	50	50
Expenditures	25	25	50	50	50	50	50	50
<i>Biennial Change in Expenditures</i>				50		0		0
<i>Biennial % Change in Expenditures</i>				100		0		0
<i>Gov's Exp Change from Base</i>								0
<i>Gov's Exp % Change from Base</i>								0

2116 - Cross Country Ski

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY18	FY19
Direct Appropriation	0	0	15	15	15	15	15	15
Expenditures	0	0	15	15	15	15	15	15
<i>Biennial Change in Expenditures</i>				30		0		0

2116 - Cross Country Ski

<i>Biennial % Change in Expenditures</i>		0	0
<i>Gov's Exp Change from Base</i>			0
<i>Gov's Exp % Change from Base</i>			0

2117 - Natural Resource Misc Statutory

	Actual FY14	Actual FY15	Actual FY16	Estimate FY17	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
					FY18	FY19	FY18	FY19
Direct Appropriation	0	0	10	10	10	10	10	10
Expenditures	0	0	10	10	10	10	10	10
<i>Biennial Change in Expenditures</i>				20		0		0
<i>Biennial % Change in Expenditures</i>						0		0
<i>Gov's Exp Change from Base</i>								0
<i>Gov's Exp % Change from Base</i>								0

Conservation Corps Minnesota

FY18-19 Biennial Budget Change Item

Change Item Title: Bridges Project to Prepare Diverse Youth for Natural Resource Jobs

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
General Fund				
Expenditures	385	385	385	385
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Other Funds				
Expenditures	0	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact = (Expenditures – Revenues)	385	385	385	385
FTEs				

Recommendation:

The Governor recommends an additional general fund appropriation of \$385,000 per year for Conservation Corps to create STEM natural resource and clean water career paths for underrepresented youth in Minnesota.

Rationale/Background:

Participation of racial and ethnic minorities in the natural resource workforce remains low. Additionally, Minnesota's natural resource professional workforce is much less diverse than its citizenry. The natural resource and environmental field lacks racial and ethnic diversity, especially at decision-making levels. While other sectors are seeing increases in racially and ethnically diverse employees, natural resource and environment fields are still not seeing people from diverse communities come into the field, particularly in positions that can lead to higher-level responsibilities. Employment opportunities in sustainability and natural resources, both in the public and private sectors, are climbing and expected to continue for several years into the future.

Unfortunately, many of our youth, especially among underserved communities, are not aware of the promising careers in these fields and are not enrolling in college degree programs that align with open positions. Research has shown that youth participants from underserved communities require more counseling and mentorship to achieve career path retention and completion. Enhanced programming is needed to ensure retention and completion of education and associated career opportunities in natural resources. This proposal is designed to increase the potential that minority and underserved populations participate in natural resource and sustainability career opportunities.

Proposal:

The proposal will provide underserved youth with greater potential to succeed in STEM related natural resource careers, leading to increased career paths for diverse communities and positively impacting our environment for decades to come. Through the Bridges Project, youth will work and learn alongside professionals and scientists to gain in-depth experiences and advanced training in natural resource management, science, technology, and environmental conservation, along with extensive college and career planning skills.

The Bridges Project builds on the success of the Conservation Corps and focuses a larger share of our efforts on addressing career building opportunities for diverse individuals to assume leadership positions. It dovetails with work being done by the DNR, U.S. Forestry Service and other agencies and organizations.

This request supports three staff members in the programming area to support youth counseling prior to high school graduation, program planning in diverse communities and increased mentorship and career planning for those while in college and just after completion. This funding will be used to continue educational and natural resource activities for 320 diverse youth over the course of the biennium. The effective implementation date will be July 1, 2017 at the beginning of the new biennium and when the current ENRTF award sunsets. The Bridges Project is ready to start and just needs funding to do so. The Conservation Corps will continue to seek on-going funding, based on a strong implementation and performance measurements.

Equity and Inclusion:

The Bridges Project engages diverse youth in activities to help train and prepare the next generation of conservation professionals who will look more like the population they serve. The potential positive impacts include training, education and hands-on experience that may lead to a career. Participants identify as:

- African American/African – 29%
- Asian (primarily Hmong) – 38%
- Caucasian – 12%
- Hispanic/Latino – 8%
- Native American – 7%
- Multiracial/Other – 6%

In order to best serve these populations, participants complete program evaluations each year and that information is used to make program improvements. In addition, the University of Minnesota completed two studies on our alumni and found a need to build more robust college and career pathways, especially as it relates to training that leads to a career in the field.

Results:

<i>Type of Measure</i>	<i>Name of Measure</i>	<i>Previous</i>	<i>Current</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Quantity	Number of youth participants	242	320	07/01/2017 – 06/30/2019
Quality	Number of youth more prepared to pursue college and a career in the natural resources field	132	240	07/01/2017 – 06/30/2019
Results	Number of youth who earn additional high school or college credit as a direct result of participation	164	240	07/01/2017 – 06/30/2019

Youth participation, outcomes and enrollment/retention/graduation will be tracked through annual alumni surveys for at least five years to measure impact of programming on retention and completion. Data is collected throughout each project, submitted twice monthly, and uploaded to an accomplishments tracking database. Information is communicated through the Corps website, annual report, and customized reports for partners.