

H.R. 1612, PUBLIC LANDS SERVICE CORPS ACT OF 2009

LEGISLATIVE HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS
AND PUBLIC LANDS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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**LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON H.R. 1612, TO
AMEND THE PUBLIC LANDS CORPS ACT
OF 1993 TO EXPAND THE AUTHORIZATION
OF THE SECRETARIES OF AGRICULTURE,
COMMERCE, AND THE INTERIOR TO PRO-
VIDE SERVICE-LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
ON PUBLIC LANDS, HELP RESTORE THE
NATION'S NATURAL, CULTURAL, HISTORIC,
ARCHAEOLOGICAL, RECREATIONAL, AND
SCENIC RESOURCES, TRAIN A NEW GEN-
ERATION OF PUBLIC LAND MANAGERS AND
ENTHUSIASTS, AND PROMOTE THE VALUE
OF PUBLIC SERVICE. (PUBLIC LANDS SERV-
ICE CORPS ACT OF 2009)**

**Thursday, April 2, 2009
U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, D.C.**

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:00 p.m. in Room 1324, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Raúl M. Grijalva, [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Grijalva, Bishop, Holt, Bordallo, Christensen, DeGette, Inslee and Sarbanes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, A REP-
RESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ARIZONA**

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. Let me call the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands to order on a hearing on the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2009. Today the Subcommittee will hear testimony on legislation I introduced two weeks ago, along with Chairman Rahall, to help repair and restore our nation's public lands while employing and training thousands of young Americans and promoting a culture of public service.

In 1993 when the Public Lands Corps was established through the good work of our late colleague, Bruce Vento of Minnesota, there were huge backlogs of labor-intensive work on national park

lands, forests, wildlife refuges, historic sites and Indian lands. Unfortunately, we still face those challenges and more. Years of inadequate funding have put these agencies further behind on vital maintenance work while infrastructure continues to crumble.

Despite the best efforts of these underfunded agencies, natural and cultural resources have been neglected, and in many places, the effects of climate change are magnifying earlier problems, such as fire risk, damage by insects and invasive species, coastal erosion and fragmented habitat. We have started to attack this problem with the recently passed stimulus legislation, but this is only a start.

Much remains to be done on our public lands. The bill, H.R. 1612, will expand and invigorate an existing program, the Public Lands Corps, by streamlining its management, modernizing its scope and providing new tools to help the program accomplish its mission.

This legislation not only takes a decisive step forward in finishing desperately needed work on our national park lands, forests, wildlife refuges, historic sites and Indian lands, but also recognizes the importance of our coastal and marine systems and our national marine sanctuaries. These lands and waters have not previously been eligible for Public Lands Corps projects.

Our legislation adds authority to participate in the program by offering Corps members a chance to work on restoring coastal and marine ecosystems along our oceans and Great Lakes. In addition, the legislation adds incentives and encourages the agencies to pursue an aggressive outreach program to attract new participants, especially from underrepresented populations, and prepare them for possible careers in those agencies or in conservation fields.

This expanded public service initiative will introduce people from a greater diversity of social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds to our nation's parks, forests and public lands—not only as possible future employees, but as lifelong enthusiasts and protectors.

The bill also includes language to ensure adequate housing, authorize participants in existing volunteer programs to contribute both as mentors and on Corps projects, expand the program for college and graduate students and broaden preferential hire provisions. This legislation takes advantage of an opportunity to provide meaningful employment and training to young people who need it while also improving the condition of our priceless natural and cultural resources.

I am pleased that President Obama and Interior Secretary Salazar have made national service a priority, and I look forward to the comments of our Administration witnesses today. I am proud to have the support of preeminent conservation groups, as well as the leading national parks advocacy groups, all of whom are here to testify today.

I also want to thank the gentleman from West Virginia, our Chairman, Mr. Rahall, for his support of this legislation. Other members have also indicated their interest in service learning on public lands, and I look forward to working with them and with members of the other body who have a long interest in the Public Lands Corps.

With this, I will hold further comments until Mr. Bishop arrives for his opening comments, but let me welcome our witnesses today and our first panel, Mr. Will Shafroth, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, U.S. Department of the Interior, and Mr. Hank Kashdan, Associate Chief of the U.S. Forest Service.

Gentlemen, your written statements will be made part of the record and your oral comments are limited to five minutes. Welcome. It is good to have you here. I look forward to your comments on this legislation. Sir, if you would like to begin. Thank you for being here.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Grijalva follows:]

**Statement of The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva, Chairman,
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands**

Today the Subcommittee will hear testimony on legislation I introduced two weeks ago, along with Chairman Rahall, to help repair and restore our nation's public lands while employing and training thousands of young Americans and promoting a culture of public service.

In 1993, when the Public Lands Corps was established through the good work of our late colleague Bruce Vento of Minnesota, there were huge backlogs of labor-intensive work on national park lands, forests, wildlife refuges, historic sites and Indian lands.

Unfortunately, we still face those challenges and more: years of inadequate funding have put these agencies further behind on vital maintenance work while infrastructure continues to crumble. Despite the best efforts of these underfunded agencies, natural and cultural resources have been neglected, and in many places the effects of climate change are magnifying earlier problems such as fire risk, damage by insects and invasive species, coastal erosion and fragmented habitat.

We have started to attack this problem with the recently passed stimulus legislation, but that is only a start. Much remains to be done on public lands.

Our bill, H.R. 1612, will expand and reinvigorate an existing program, the Public Lands Corps, by streamlining its management, modernizing its scope and providing new tools to help the program accomplish its mission.

This legislation not only takes a decisive step forward in finishing desperately needed work on our national park lands, forests, wildlife refuges, historic sites and Indian lands, but also recognizes the important are our coastal and marine systems, and our national marine sanctuaries.

These lands and waters have not previously been eligible for Public Lands Corps projects; our legislation adds authority for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to participate in the program by offering Corps members a chance to work on restoring coastal and marine ecosystems along our oceans and the Great Lakes.

In addition, the legislation adds incentives and encourages the agencies to pursue an aggressive outreach program to attract new participants, especially from under-represented populations, and prepare them for possible careers in those agencies or in conservation fields.

This expanded public service initiative will introduce people from a greater diversity of social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds to our nation's parks, forests and public lands not only as possible future employees but also as lifelong enthusiasts.

The bill also includes language to:

- ensure adequate housing,
- authorize participants in existing volunteer programs to contribute both as mentors and on Corps projects,
- expand the program for college and graduate students, and
- broaden preferential hire provisions.

This legislation takes advantage of an opportunity to provide meaningful employment and training to young people who need it, while also improving the condition of our priceless natural and cultural resources.

I am pleased that President Obama and Interior Secretary Salazar have made national service a priority and I look forward to the comments of our administration witnesses today.

I am proud to have the support of the pre-eminent conservation corps groups, as well as leading national parks advocacy groups, all of whom are here to testify today.

I also want to thank the gentleman from West Virginia, Chairman Rahall, the chairman of full committee, for his support of this legislation. Other members have also indicated their interest in service-learning on public lands, and I look forward to working with them, and with members of the other body who have a long interest in the Public Lands Corps.

With that, let me turn to Mr. Bishop for any opening comments he may have.

STATEMENT OF WILL SHAFROTH, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ACCOMPANIED BY CHRISTOPHER K. JARVI, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARTNERSHIP & VISITOR EXPERIENCE, OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. SHAFROTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Will Shafroth, I am the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior. Thank you for the opportunity to testify here on H.R. 1612, the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2009.

Before I begin, I would like to introduce the three people from the Department of the Interior who have key roles in youth service and conservation programs, and they are here to help answer any specific questions you or members of the Committee may have about their particular bureaus.

Christopher Jarvi of the National Park Service is Associate Director for Partnerships and Visitor Experience; Kevin Kilcullen of the Fish and Wildlife Service is Branch Chief for Visitor Services for the National Wildlife Refuge System; and Mary Tisdale is the Bureau of Land Management's Division Chief of Education, Interpretation and Partnerships. So when we get to the point where you are asking really specific questions, I am going to turn it over to them.

Mr. Chairman, the Department strongly supports H.R. 1612. You already acknowledged Secretary Salazar's commitment to this. This commitment goes back 20 years in his professional career to try to employ young people in our natural resources from all different aspects of our society.

This bill would strengthen and facilitate the use of the Public Lands Corps Program, helping to fulfill the vision that Secretary Salazar has for promoting ways to engage young people across America to serve their community and their country. While we are strongly supportive of the bill, there are a few areas where we would like to suggest some changes, and we will continue to work with your staff and the Committee to provide our recommended changes to you in writing in the very near future.

Congresswoman DeGette, nice to see you. Expanding the use of Public Lands Corps could be a particularly important part of our overall strategy for increasing opportunities and incentives for young people to become involved because this program serves other high priority goals as well.

Besides helping us get much needed work done on our public lands, it also provides a way to, first, reconnect young people with their natural environment and cultural heritage; second, it makes progress on energy conservation and the use of alternative sources of energies, another huge priority for Secretary Salazar; and third,

provide education, training and career building experiences, including a pathway to careers with Federal land management agencies.

The Department regards the Public Lands Corps program as an important and successful example of civic engagement in conservation. The National Park Service in particular has made widespread use of the program. Last year the Park Service had about 1,500 PLC members working on 178 projects in 99 different park units. All three bureaus have been extensively engaged in youth programs that have similar goals.

We think that the changes that would be made under H.R. 1612 would strengthen and improve the Public Lands Corps in ways that would encourage broader agency use of the program. We endorse adding the word "service" to the name of the program to emphasize that aspect of the program. Most PLC projects at national parks are designed to address maintenance and ecological restoration needs, and those types of projects would continue to be done under H.R. 1612.

However, this legislation specifies a broader range of potential projects making it likely that Corps members could become involved in more varied activities. We are used to thinking of Corps members building trails, but they could be doing all sorts of different kinds of projects, such as helping develop materials for junior ranger programs, or visitor handouts on safety, or working on historical documentation.

Corps participants would also be able to work for a partner organization so long as the work experience is directly related to the protection or management of public lands. The National Park Service and the Fish & Wildlife Service have a large number of partners that would be potential sponsors of young people interested in the type of work they might offer.

The addition of specific authority for agencies to pay transportation expenses for nonresidential Corps members is critically important because transportation costs may be a limiting factor in the participation of economically disadvantaged young people. This is something that we learned in our work in Colorado, particularly. We found it to be very, very important.

The Department would also benefit from the addition of a consulting intern as a new category of service employment under the PLC program. These interns would be graduate students who would help agencies carry out management analyses, development, business plans, things like that, which would also be quite important.

The provisions for hiring successful Corps members noncompetitively at the end of their appointment would provide the agency with an influx of knowledgeable employees, as well as career opportunities for those interested in the agencies' mission. The legislation would also encourage bureaus utilizing this program to expand the scope of corps programs to reflect modern day challenges, such as climate change.

It would also add incentives to attract new participants, especially from underrepresented populations. Mr. Chairman, H.R. 1612 proposes many changes to the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 that we strongly support because we think they would improve and revitalize the use of this program. However, as we have

looked closely at the bill, we have identified some areas of concern, such as provisions for cost sharing and hiring authority, that we want to talk to you more about.

We want to take a closer look at those areas before suggesting potential amendments. As I said at the outset, we look forward to working with you and the Committee on this bill. Just on a personal note, I want to again express the Secretary's strong interest and commitment to this program. When he talks to different groups he identifies three programs and priorities for him in his time as Interior Secretary: the area of energy, preserving our treasured landscapes and employing youth.

So it is one of his top priorities. Every staff meeting at 10:00 in the morning we talk about it, so it is on his mind. Personally, I have worked on these issues since the early 1990s. I oversaw the California Conservation Corps in my job there in the State of California, and since being back in Colorado in 1994 have been involved in expanding the Secretary's good work in creating the Youth and Natural Resources Program in the State of Colorado, but also helping to grow and expand a number of youth corps programs throughout our state, both at the county and the regional level.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions from the Committee.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. Mr. Kashdan?

[The prepared statement of Mr. Shafroth follows:]

**Statement of Will Shafroth, Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Fish, Wildlife and Parks, U.S. Department of the Interior**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 1612, a bill that would amend the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 to expand the authorization of the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture and Commerce to provide service-learning opportunities on public lands, help restore the Nation's natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational and scenic resources, train a new generation of public land managers and enthusiasts, and promote the value of public service.

The Department strongly supports H.R. 1612. This bill would strengthen and facilitate the use of the Public Land Corps (PLC) program, helping to fulfill the vision that Secretary Salazar has for promoting ways to engage young people across America to serve their community and their country. While we are strongly supportive of H.R. 1612, there are a few areas where we would like to suggest some changes. We will commit to work with the committee and to provide our recommended changes to you in writing in the near future.

Engaging America's Youth Through Service

While there are other Federal programs that promote service, expanding the use of the Public Land Corps could be a particularly important part of our overall strategy for increasing opportunities and incentives for young people to become involved because this program serves other high-priority goals as well. Through it, we could reconnect young people with their natural environment and cultural heritage; make progress on energy conservation and the use of alternative sources of energy; and provide education, training, and career-building experiences—and a pathway to careers in Federal land management agencies, which are in serious need of new, younger employees.

Secretary Salazar created the Youth in Natural Resources program during his tenure at the Colorado Department of Natural Resources as a way to educate thousands of young people about Colorado's natural resources, and he saw firsthand what a difference it made in their lives. From the day he was nominated as Secretary of the Interior, he has emphasized that it would be one of his top priorities to find more ways to introduce young Americans from all backgrounds to the beauty of our national parks, refuges, and public lands and to promote an ethic of volunteerism and conservation in the younger generation. Enactment of this legislation

could pave the way to meeting one of the Secretary's top priority goals—to develop a 21st Century Youth Civilian Conservation Corps.

Background on Public Land Corps Program

The Department regards the Public Land Corps program as an important and successful example of civic engagement and conservation. Authorized by the National and Community Service Trust Act on in 1993, the program uses non-profit organizations such as the Student Conservation Association (SCA) and other service and conservation corps organizations affiliated with the Corps Network as the primary partners in administering the Public Land Corps program. In addition, other non-profit youth organizations such as the YMCA also participate, as do local high schools and job-training youth organizations. The youth organizations assist the National Park Service (NPS) in its efforts to attract diverse participants to the parks by recruiting youth 16-25 years of age from all socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

The National Park Service makes extensive use of the PLC program. Projects are funded through recreational fee revenue, with the typical project receiving \$25,000 from NPS plus a 25 percent match from a partner organization. NPS spent \$4.1 million on the program in FY 2008, which funded about 1,500 young men and women working on 178 projects at 99 park units. Most PLC projects at parks are designed to address maintenance and ecological restoration needs. The NPS also conducts other youth service and conservation projects at larger parks which are funded out of the parks' own budgets.

NPS also spent more than \$3 million on the Youth Conservation Corps program which is a summer employment program for 15-18 year old youth. NPS in Fiscal Year 2008 employed 833 youth to work on conservation projects across the country. The YCC program has been administered by the National Park Service since 1974.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) have a long history of employing youth service and conservation corps participants from the SCA, Youth Conservation Corps and other organizations for a wide array of projects related to public lands resource enhancement and facility maintenance. Though most corps are affiliated with the nationwide Corps Network, they are often administered at the state, rather than national level. For example, the FWS and SCA have partnered for over 20 years to offer work and learning opportunities to students. In FY 2007, 122 Conservation Interns served at 45 FWS sites in 24 states, contributing more than 80,000 hours of work.

The BLM has engaged the services of SCA interns for many years under a long-standing national assistance agreement, then under individual state agreements. In 2006, the last year of BLM's national agreement, a total of 116 SCA members served at 16 BLM sites in eight states. The interns participated in a variety of conservation service activities such as recreation and river management, historic building restoration and maintenance, seed collection, and invasive species control. BLM's Salem Oregon District, for example, hires a mixture of Northwest Youth Corps, Clackamas County, and Columbia River Youth Corps members each year to perform a variety of activities such as trail maintenance and construction.

The FWS manages 587 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System that cover over 150 million acres, as well as 70 National Fish Hatcheries, which would directly benefit from programs authorized under H.R. 1612. National Wildlife Refuges and National Fish Hatcheries enjoy strong relationships with the local communities in which they are located, and are involved in many community-based projects that help maintain sustainable landscapes. The FWS's work is also supported by over 200 non-profit Friends organizations that assist in offering quality education programs, mentoring, and work experience for youth.

In 2007, the FWS employed 496 Youth Conservation Corps enrollees and 177 individuals through the Student Conservation Association program. Last year, over 39,000 volunteers contributed their time and talents to a variety of programs including support for youth education projects. Over the past two years the FWS has provided funding for a YCC program involving the Mescalero Apache youth at the Mescalero Tribal Hatchery in New Mexico. The FWS has working relationships with numerous colleges and universities for students interested in pursuing careers in fish and wildlife management.

The Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2009

H.R. 1612 would make several administrative and programmatic changes that, in our view, would strengthen and improve the Public Land Corps Act. These changes would encourage broader agency use of the program, make more varied opportunities available for young men and women, and provide more support for participants during and after their service. Appropriately, H.R. 1612 would change the pro-

gram's name to Public Lands Service Corps, reflecting the emphasis on "service" that is the hallmark of the program. President Obama is committed to providing young people with greater opportunities and incentives to serve their community and country. Through an enhanced Public Lands Service Corps, we would be taking a critical first step that direction.

Key changes that the legislation would make to existing law include:

- Adding the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which administers national marine sanctuaries, as an agency authorized to use the program;
- Authorizing a departmental-level office at the Department of the Interior to coordinate Corps activities within the three land management bureaus;
- Requiring each of the three relevant departments to undertake a contract for a recruiting program for the Corps;
- Requiring each of the three relevant departments to establish a training program for Corps members, and identifying specific components the training must include;
- Identifying more specific types of projects that could be conducted under this authority;
- Allowing participants in other volunteer programs to participate in PLC projects;
- Allowing agencies to make arrangements with other Federal, state, or local agencies, or private organizations, to provide temporary housing for Corps members;
- Providing explicit authority for the establishment of residential conservation centers, and encouraging those centers to be constructed using solar and other green technology with the involvement of Corps participants;
- Authorizing agencies to recruit experienced volunteers from other programs to serve as mentors to Corps members;
- Adding "consulting intern" as a new category of service employment under the PLC program;
- Allowing agencies to apply a cost-of-living differential in the provision of living allowances and to reimburse travel expenses;
- Allowing agencies to provide noncompetitive hiring status for Corps members for two years after completing service, rather than only 120 days, if certain terms are met;
- Allowing agencies to provide job and education counseling, referrals, and other appropriate services to Corps members who have completed their service; and
- Eliminating the \$12 million authorization ceiling for the program.

We believe that the Department's program would benefit from enactment of this legislation. As noted above, most PLC projects at national parks are designed to address maintenance and ecological restoration needs, and those types of projects would continue to be done under H.R.1612. However, this legislation specifies a broader range of potential projects, making it likely that Corps members could become involved in such varied activities as historical and cultural research, museum curatorial work, oral history projects and programs, documentary photography, public information and orientation services that promote visitor safety, and activities that support the creation of public works of art. Participants might assist employees in the delivery of interpretive or educational programs and create interpretive products such as website content, Junior Ranger program books, printed handouts, and audiovisual programs.

PLC participants would also be able to work for a park partner organization where the work might involve sales, office work, accounting, and management, so long as the work experience is directly related to the protection and management of public lands. The NPS and the FWS have a large number of partner organizations that would be potential sponsors of young people interested in the type of work they might offer.

An important change for the Department is the addition of specific authority for agencies to pay transportation expenses for non-residential Corps members. Transportation costs may be a limiting factor in program participation of economically disadvantaged young people.

Another important change is the addition of "consulting intern" as a new category of service employment under the PLC program, expanding on the use of mostly college-student "resource assistants," provided for under existing law. The consulting interns would be graduate students who would help agencies carry out management analysis activities. NPS has successfully used business and public management graduate student interns to write business plans for parks for several years, and this addition would bring these interns under the PLC umbrella.

The Public Lands Service Corps would also offer agencies the ability to hire successful corps members non-competitively at the end of their appointment, which

would provide the agency with an influx of knowledgeable employees as well as career opportunities for those interested in the agencies' mission. Refuges and hatcheries, for example, are uniquely qualified to connect with local communities since the Service has so many refuges across the country that are located near smaller communities and can directly engage urban, inner city, and rural youth. For example, partnering academic institutions could offer educational programs to enhance the students' work experience, thereby providing orientation and exposure to a broad range of career options.

The legislation would also give the Department's other bureaus that would utilize this program the authority to expand the scope of existing corps programs to reflect modern day challenges, such as climate change and add incentives to attract new participants, especially from underrepresented populations.

An expanded Public Lands Service Corps program would provide more opportunities for thousands of young Americans to participate in public service while we address the critical maintenance, restoration, repair and rehabilitation needs on our public lands and gain a better understanding of the impacts of climate change on these treasured landscapes.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions you or the other members of the subcommittee have.

**STATEMENT OF HANK KASHDAN, ASSOCIATE CHIEF,
FOREST SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Mr. KASHDAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Bishop, other members of the Subcommittee, it is a pleasure to be here today to talk about amending the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993. It is also a pleasure to be here with Mr. Shafroth and the Committee that follows, especially Sally Prouty, who has been a key member of the corps network and has been a privilege to work with.

I also want to note that there is a class from Montreat College in North Carolina in outdoor recreation. That is certainly a topic pertinent to this hearing, and we will be looking forward to visiting with that class tomorrow in our respective offices. Mr. Chairman, let me summarize briefly the remarks contained in my testimony.

First, let me say how proud the Forest Service has been and what a strong commitment it has to working with America's youth and young adults. I think this has been exemplified in how we have worked with the Job Corps Civilian Conservation Program for more than 40 years. We will soon be the sole operator of all 28 Civilian Conservation Corps centers in the country. It is part of that commitment to the nation's young adults.

We have also worked extensively with other conservation corps, and in fact, one of the first projects rolled out under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was a California Conservation Corps project on the San Bernardino which was featured last week on prime time nightly news. We have touched close to a million young adults with the programs that we have been involved in. It is something we have been very proud of.

We really feel that as the Nation becomes more urban, more technology-oriented, there is even a greater need for the authority that would be provided in this act. We think we can expose tens of thousands of young people each year to the issues of climate change.

We can help people internalize corps facts that we don't feel in the heart, and that is that, you know, water comes from the natural world, not from the faucet; that the air we breathe can be purified by healthy forest ecosystems and even thriving trees in big urban environments; that wildfire, although dangerous and threat-

ening, can also be good for the land; and that the relationship with science and active management can work with nature to offer greater opportunities to improve the health of our ecosystems.

I think those broad values are reflected in the amendment being considered today. This amendment contains a noticeable shift from shovel and maintenance work to emphasis on conservation education, green jobs, research and science, leadership in the natural resource programs, work and policy and analysis, and a particular attention to cultural and heritage assets that are so important to the future of our country.

No doubt that this amendment will also help the Forest Service with its long-term employment in addressing issues of attrition. It is clearly a potential source for many new employees. In fact, I might note that Jack Lewis, a district silviculturist in Colorado who is here with us on a detail, got his start in one of these conservation corps.

It shows how important these conservation corps can be to our future workforce, and a workforce that is highly diverse and represents the diverse population of this country, and it is just an ideal source for us to tap future employees from. So we look forward to continuing to work in this environment with both Job Corps and other conservation corps.

Speaking of Job Corps, the Forest Service has a strong capability in the residential aspects that are discussed in this bill. Job Corps centers are 24/7 environments serving the needs of young adults, and we have a very good capability in that area to provide residential experiences as might come from this authority. We look forward to particularly lending that expertise.

So we are very supportive, from the Department of Agriculture and from the Forest Service, very supportive of this amendment. We would be happy to look at and work with you on future details, particularly focusing on the direct hire authority, length of service requirements and better interfaces with the Job Corps Civilian Conservation Program. So, Mr. Chairman, that concludes my verbal remarks. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kashdan follows:]

**Statement of Hank Kashdan, Associate Chief, Forest Service,
U.S. Department of Agriculture**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on H.R. 1612, the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2009.

INTRODUCTION

We think that H.R. 1612 is a timely amendment to the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993. The Nation's forests and grasslands are unique and special ecosystems that the Forest Service manages to meet the needs of present and future generations. These lands yield abundant sustainable goods and ecosystem services for the American people. The National Forest System lands, managed for multiple-use, sustained-yield is indeed a place for the Public Lands Service Corps participants to learn and practice an array of conservation, preservation, interpretation and cultural resource activities, and take advantage of outstanding and unique educational opportunities. Indeed, in West Virginia, Arizona and in scores of other states the Forest Service has benefited greatly from the services of the Public Lands Corps project work on National Forest System lands.

PUBLIC LANDS SERVICE CORPS ACT OF 2009

The Forest Service, while not a prolific user of the 1993 Act, would be better positioned to increase its use of the Corps under H.R. 1612. We believe the expanded authority of that would be provided by H.R. 1612 will improve the Act by removing the authorization of appropriation ceiling and increasing our ability to engage young men and women in performing critical work for the Nation.

The Department strongly supports H.R. 1612. This bill would strengthen and facilitate the use of the Public Land Corps (PLC) program, helping to fulfill the vision that Secretary Vilsak has for promoting ways to engage young people across America to serve their community and their country. While we are strongly supportive of H.R. 1612, there are a few areas where we would like to suggest some changes. We will commit to work with the committee and to provide our recommended changes to you in writing in the near future.

By including conservation education, service learning, training and promoting the value of public service in addition to “shovel work,” we are likely to be able to increase our use of Public Land Service Corps in a variety of program areas. The expanded authority can give us new tools to engage young people in a variety of professional careers including resource management, green jobs, visitor and interpretative services, conservation education, media production and business skills. This authority will further assist the Forest Service in providing opportunities on a continuum of outdoor experiences from appreciation to employment. It will support understanding of scientific principles to enhance environmental literacy—the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions and become engaged citizen stewards. This investment will assist us in our work to provide quality settings, services, and programs that maximize the benefits of our public lands for the ever-changing needs of Americans, now and into the future.

This amendment is timely and welcomed. Evidence shows that children today are growing up increasingly disconnected from nature. They are gravitating away from developing personal connections to their forests and grasslands. Researchers report that the gap between kids and nature, the “nature deficit disorder”, has far-reaching and negative implications for the health and well-being of our Nation’s children and the future stewardship of public lands and natural resources. Along with responding to climate change and forest water yield and storage, the Forest Service is also addressing the issue of “reconnecting people with nature” especially our children. History will judge the conservation leaders of our age, including our own leadership in the Forest Service, by how well we inspire our Nation’s youth to accept the mantle of conservation and natural resource management for posterity. Through this amendment, young people will have the opportunity to connect with public lands and the natural world and increase their understanding of the value of trees, forests, grasslands and the conservation management of public lands. Corps members will gain the knowledge, skills or inspiration to seek careers in natural resource management as well as making informed decisions relevant to forests and grasslands in their role for mitigating the looming challenges of climate change and prospective water shortages. The Public Land Service Corps can be invaluable in our efforts to nurture and to grow the next generation of conservation stewards and resource professionals, who will have to address and meet these sustainability challenges.

Forests and grasslands are the natural backyards for many communities throughout the United States. The Forest Service is uniquely placed to link people with forests and grasslands in order to strengthen the economic health of communities over the long-term. The Forest Service’s programs provide federal leadership in technical and financial assistance to landowners and resource managers to help sustain the Nation’s forests and protect communities and the environment from wildland fires. Conservation Education helps people of all ages understand and appreciate the Nation’s natural and heritage resources and how to conserve those resources for future generations.

Forest Service technical and financial assistance help bring communities, groups and businesses together to create diversified economic and social activity built on forest resources management and conservation. Community-based partnerships, of which the Public Lands Service Corps is an example, offer the flexibility and capacity building for finding long-term solutions to vexing natural and cultural resource challenges. Cooperative and Urban Forestry programs help communities become more economically self-sufficient by improving competitiveness and offering service learning and employment opportunities through stimulating markets for more diverse natural resource management, use and conservation.

National Forest System lands are located in 42 States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. These lands and our infrastructure of trails, roads and recreation facilities provide opportunities for solace and solitude, challenge and risk, hunting and

fishing and outlets for physical and mental fitness. They connect society to the natural world. However, many of our sites and much of our land base and infrastructure is in need of restoration or repair and maintenance. For example, we currently have an estimated \$280 million backlog in deferred trail maintenance work. The Public Lands Service Corps can assist the agency by addressing this backlog.

The Forest Service is fully committed to the advancement of young people through a variety of conservation projects, training, and service learning and conservation education. Along with the Bureau of Land Management, we can provide participants with an understanding of the agency's history and training on multiple-use and sustained-yield management of natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational and scenic resources. Our mission, "To sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations," can only be achieved by educating future generations and training the future public and private land managers. In turn, they will promote the value of public service and continue the conservation legacy of natural resource management for the United States.

The Forest Service has in place offices to play a key role in the coordination of the Public Lands Service Corps through its National Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers program and other staff. The Forest Service National Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers would likely be the coordinating office for Public Lands Service Corps in the Forest Service.

The broader definition of natural, cultural and historic resource work under the amendment is beneficial to the Nation's forests and grasslands as it provides for a wide variety of different types of work across diverse landscapes. This expansion enhances the Forest Service ability to instill in a new generation of young men and women, including those from diverse backgrounds, the desire to seek careers in natural and cultural resource stewardship and public service by allowing them to work directly with conservation professionals in land management, agencies. This would promote public understanding and appreciation of the mission and work of the federal land, coastal and ocean management agencies.

Our history of program delivery through Forest Service Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers and conservation education centers for training young people has been a vital tool in reaching more than 6 million youth of all ages. We appreciate the flexibility of the expanded authority in section 205, which would authorize the use of residential facilities. The Forest Service Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers have the institutional capacity to operate residential facilities successfully. However, there are a number of implementation issues that need to be considered in establishing new residential conservation centers. These include the costs of operating and maintaining the facilities, potential liability issues, and questions about the impact on contract and labor laws. We would like to work with the committee on addressing these types of issues.

The U.S. Forest Service has been operating residential Civilian Conservation Centers for more than 40 years through the interagency agreement with the Department of Labor Job Corps Programs. The 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act authorized the Forest Service to operate six additional Job Corps Centers formerly run by the Bureau of Reclamation in addition to our 22 residential Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers.

Because the Forest Service has a long history of successfully operating residential centers, our employees have extensive experience with the unique opportunities and challenges found in youth training programs. With our partners, we can confidently leverage our resources and expand our ability to develop a well-trained and responsible workforce in natural resources and business. Youth will participate in community service and restoration and stewardship projects, leadership and self-government programs, recreation and team-building and independent living skills training.

The bringing together of diverse backgrounds, ages, cultures, education and training skills provides the participants with multi-cultural experiences and develops awareness and sensitivity for other people and cultures that would not be available in a non-residential program. Residential centers also create the need for a structured behavior management program to ensure the health and safety of students and staff.

DEFINITIONS

The amendment would increase the opportunity for Public Lands Service Corps members to leverage their education and work experience in obtaining permanent full-time employment with Federal agencies.

We respectfully suggest that the Forest Service Job Corps at Civilian Conservation Centers be recognized as an entity that may carry out appropriate natural and cultural resources conservation projects. This recognition would clearly link the

work and training of the Forest Service Job Corps at Civilian Conservation Centers with projects that assist in the management of the National Forest System.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee this concludes my prepared statement. I am happy to answer any questions that you or Members of the Committee may have.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. I have questions but let me first of all turn to our Ranking Member, Mr. Bishop, for any opening comments that he might have. Thank you. We are going to be called to vote in a little while, so hopefully we can get through the questions for this first panel so they won't have to wait for us. Let me forego my first questions and ask Dr. Christensen if you have any questions you might want to ask or comments.

Ms. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just think that, you know, this bill is very timely. We have had some experience with some of the conservation corps students in the Virgin Islands, and I know that my superintendents at home would really welcome the passage of this bill and the upgrade, updating of the corps. I do have a question. Just, based on my experience with the corps, most of the young people have been college students.

Of course we have a need, as Mr. Kashdan has said, for all kinds of skills. I was wondering if there were plans to work with technical schools and any collaboration with skill centers, technical schools in providing training for some of those entry-level positions that these corps students or young people might employ in the parks? My superintendent in St. John has been interested in starting a job corps, for example, to provide him with some young people who could begin to volunteer in the parks, perhaps later to move into jobs and then move up into the system.

Mr. GRIJALVA. If I may, sir. Just for the record—

Mr. JARVI. Yes. My name is Chris Jarvi, I am the Associate Director for the National Park Service for Partnerships and Visitor Experience.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you.

Mr. JARVI. I also have youth programs. Through the PLC program we actually do get not only college students but we work through the corps network and 131 conservation corps throughout the United States, we get quite a wide variety of students and kids out of the inner city that participate in these programs. If there are other approaches that we can use to recruit participants, we will certainly look into it.

Mr. KASHDAN. And, Ms. Christensen, I might just add that, like Mr. Jarvi, there is a wide variety of participants in many of the corps networks. I might add that in the Job Corps, of the 4,000 to 5,000 enrollees we have, the vast majority would not have college degrees. In fact, they would be very exceptional if that were the case. So it is very much oriented toward creating new directions in their life, as well as new and emerging skills that would be so important for future careers.

Ms. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you. In interest of time, I yield back my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. Mr. Bishop?

Mr. BISHOP. Yes. Let me ask just three simple questions, Mr. Shafroth, if I could. I would like to know about the programs as far as supervision takes place. I have heard some very positive reviews, but I have also heard some concerns that the kids who are in this need some kind of supervision, sometimes close supervision, and that regular employees are taken from their duties to do that. How would this legislation address that sort of issue?

Mr. SHAFROTH. Want me to take a little stab at that first?

Mr. BISHOP. Go ahead.

Mr. SHAFROTH. Mr. Bishop, thank you for that question. Most of the work that is done through the Public Lands Corps Program is in a way outsourced to a partner organization, like Student Conservation Association or one of the other corps networks, and the supervision is generally done by those organizations that our agencies are partnering with, and so there is a relatively small amount of actual supervision that occurs by the staff of the National Park Service or the Fish & Wildlife Service. Chris, do you want to elaborate on that?

Mr. JARVI. Well, that is generally true. With the more talented, the more skilled college educated folks, we might work directly with them, but for the most part, the supervision comes through the various service providers that we work with. We have been very satisfied with that and gotten good results.

Mr. BISHOP. Let me talk liability issues with you on a later date, if that is OK.

Mr. JARVI. OK.

Mr. BISHOP. How would the cost to operate this program change under the legislation?

Mr. SHAFROTH. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Bishop, we have not done our fiscal analysis of the bill at this point. We certainly will be doing that as it progresses through the process, but I don't have a specific answer for you as we haven't done that analysis yet.

Mr. BISHOP. OK. I am only the Ranking Member, I am not the Chairman—

Mr. SHAFROTH. I know.

Mr. BISHOP.—unless these guys their budget passed. All right. Let me ask one last question. In February, I sent the Department a request for certain National Park Service documents. To date, I have yet to receive any response from that request. When will I get that response?

Mr. SHAFROTH. I was just made aware of that earlier today, Mr. Bishop, and I will make it my business this afternoon to go back and talk to the director of the Park Service to expedite that process as quickly as possible.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you. That is all.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Ms. DeGette?

Ms. DEGETTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know it seems like Colorado is taking over the Interior Department, and that is our goal, just so you know. I will say, though, we have some excellent, excellent folks going over there and I have known Will Shafroth for many years. He is a dedicated public servant. I urge everyone on this Subcommittee to get to know him and work with him over the following years. I want to welcome you, Will, to your new position. We are thrilled to have you.

I just have one question for the whole panel. I have been reading some studies lately that indicate a disturbing trend in the last few years where even though our population is increasing, and certainly in the western United States our population is increasing, nevertheless, usage of our public lands is decreasing, in particular by young people. There are some worries about this as we go into the years ahead.

I spent a lot of time talking to George Miller about this, in fact. I am wondering if any of our witnesses would think that legislation like this bill might bring young people back into our public lands, re, or not re, but invest them into these areas and start a whole new generation of commitment? For any of you.

Mr. SHAFROTH. Well, Representative DeGette, first of all, I want to thank you for your welcome and thank you for your great service to our State of Colorado. Both here and when I first met you when you were a member of the State Legislature, you have been a great champion for conservation of our natural resources. What you talk about is very important, I think. There is a book written by a guy named Richard Louv you may have read, *Last Child in the Woods*, that talks about sort of the phenomena.

Like you, I have high school age children, and although I make it a point of getting them out in nature, a lot of their friends don't. I think we have a generation of young people who are not as connected to the outdoors as many in our generation were. Chairman and I talked earlier about his interest in this subject matter and his own connection to the land. My boss, Ken Salazar, has the same kind of connection having grown up in the San Luis Valley on a ranch.

I think it is our duty in many ways to do all the different things that we can do to reconnect this next generation of Americans back to the land. I think expanding opportunities, like the Public Lands Corps, is one way to do it. I think we would like to do it in a pretty big way to try to recreate that connection, but also, obviously, to do the many things that need to be done in our public lands at the same time and training young people in these careers and about natural resources.

Mr. KASHDAN. I might add, ma'am, that although the Forest Service is in the Department of Agriculture, Secretary Vilsack's son lives in Colorado, so we are certainly loving Colorado too. What you cited is exactly right and it is what makes our Kids in the Woods Program and our attention to this program so essential because the natural world is so critical in meeting the basic needs that are really being challenged and that young people, frankly, have such little exposure to.

I know so many employees in the U.S. Forest Service got their interest in working for the Forest Service by some contact or some encounter with somebody in the woods, either through a conservation corps, or ranger, or that kind of thing, and it is just so important, and so it is a major emphasis area for the Forest Service and key to, I think, some of our future as a nation.

Ms. DEGETTE. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Ms. Bordallo?

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I want to go on record as saying that this is a great program, and I like to learn today

that expanding the authorities of the Secretary to build upon it is certainly something I support. I notice that the Secretary of Commerce and NOAA will be included now under this expansion authority. How are you going to be working with, in particular NOAA, since I am Chair of the Subcommittee on Fisheries and Oceans?

Mr. SHAFROTH. Well, Representative, they are not able to be here today, obviously, but especially I think with the Fish & Wildlife Service there is a strong connection in many areas along our coasts. The Fish & Wildlife Service's jurisdiction and the National Marine and Fisheries Service jurisdiction isn't that different.

We care about spawning areas for fish, or we care about restoration of wetlands, we care about restoration of rivers and streams. So I think that it will be our duty to make sure that we work closely together with them to try to bring them into this program so that we are working jointly together on accomplishing our mutual ends.

Ms. BORDALLO. So this is occurring now? You are working with them?

Mr. SHAFROTH. Yes, in many, many ways. On endangered species implementation in particular we work closely with them, but I also think that to date there hasn't been a strong partnership on youth engagement, but I think we need to step up and do that.

Mr. KASHDAN. And I would echo that we have obviously a very close working relationship with the Department of the Interior, but we also work with the National Marine Fisheries Service, and this is another partnership we would look forward to having develop under this act.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Mr. Sarbanes?

Mr. SARBANES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you, in particular, for this proposal because reinvigorating any program that is getting our young people out into nature is one I am a thousand percent behind. As you know, and you have been very helpful with this, we have been pushing hard with this No Child Left Inside legislation and there is a coalition now of about 1,200 organizations across the country supporting that, including many who are promoting getting our kids into our parks and into that kind of recreational space.

So I really just want to thank you for joining this effort, and supporting it and working hard to make it successful. It is as though at a time when there is so much coming at our young people from the virtual world in terms of the internet, and video games, and television and everything, we are trying to bring them squinting out into the light of day to enjoy nature.

Once they get out there they are going to become engaged, and excited and jazzed, and they are actually going to lead the rest of us out into our natural spaces, which is what is so tremendously exciting. So I am so pleased at this legislation, and thank you all for what you are doing to support it. Thank you.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you, Mr. Sarbanes. Let me thank the panelists. Mr. Shafroth, I appreciate you being here today and appreciate your comments. There were some additional comments, but rather than keep you here after the break when we go to vote, they

had to do with the question about the expanding the program to include older Americans, I would love your reaction in writing about that.

Mr. SHAFROTH. OK.

Mr. GRIJALVA. And the Department level coordinator, why we feel that is important, and your perspective and reaction to that. Mr. Kashdan, the preferential hiring provisions under this legislation, expanding that, redefining the language, your reactions and your comments on that. It is a working product, as I indicated to you earlier, and we look forward to working with you and your staff on the suggestions that you outlined today and moving toward mutual accommodations so this legislation can go forward.

Please thank the Secretary for his encouragement on it, and thank you very much. We are going to be recessed until after votes. Thank you.

Mr. SHAFROTH. Thank you.

Mr. KASHDAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Recess.]

Mr. GRIJALVA. Let me reconvene the Subcommittee. Thank you very much. Appreciate your patience. We will be being yanked, well, maybe right now just me will be being yanked out of here every hour or so, but I appreciate your indulgence. Let me begin with our first panelist, Dale Penny, President & CEO of Student Conservation Association and ask for your comments. Appreciate you being here. I know you have a guest with you that you want to have introduce himself or you can introduce him, sir.

STATEMENT OF DALE M. PENNY, PRESIDENT & CEO, STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION, ACCOMPANIED BY MARCUS HENDRICKS, SCA PARTICIPANT

Mr. PENNY. Well thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate very much being able to speak with you today and to share this with the colleagues on the panel, particularly Sally Prouty, who is President of The Corps Network with which SCA does a lot of work. My name is Dale Penny, I am President of the Student Conservation Association, or SCA. It is a nationwide nonprofit organization that since 1957 has engaged more than 50,000 diverse college and high school students in hands on conservation service on America's public lands.

I applaud the Committee for recognizing both potential and the need for an expanded Public Lands Service Corps and for hearing testimony on what SCA believes is a particularly timely and effective legislative initiative. This act will benefit the Nation in three profound ways: by preserving our natural, cultural and historical heritage; by providing jobs and job training for thousands of deserving young people; and by helping a new generation develop the skills and commitment to become tomorrow's conservation and environmental leaders.

I should note that SCA was originally modeled after the old Civilian Conservation Corps. It was founded by a young woman in college in the 1950s who saw young volunteers as a solution to helping the overburdened national parks. She wrote her senior thesis on a proposed student conservation corps. The first corps mem-

bers reported to service at Grand Teton and Olympic National Parks in 1957.

Today, SCA is America's leading national conservation service corps, annually engaging thousands of young adults and teens in parks, sanctuaries and urban communities in all 50 states. This year alone, SCA members will render more than two million hours of service to their nation and their communities. Mr. Chairman, the impact that these young people have on the land is profound and immediate, but their influence extends well beyond the here and now.

The evidence that conservation service does indeed produce ardent stewards and citizens is convincing. A few facts. SCA's alumni surveys reveal that some 60 percent of our members move into conservation related professions and volunteer in conservation endeavors in their home communities. A landmark study of SCA and other outdoor programs by Dr. Stephen Kellert at Yale showed that 78 percent of participants declared themselves more environmentally aware, responsible and active as a result of their experience.

A review of the workforce at the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture and others throughout the public and private sectors reveals that thousands of SCA alumni are employed as rangers, scientists, environmental educators and more. In fact, the National Park Service alone has estimated that as many as 12 percent of its uniformed employees launched their careers through SCA internships.

No one in this room needs to be reminded that our economy and our environment are in crisis. Today's generation knows unless we are able to address these issues, and soon, they will inherit a host of problems that grow more acute by the day. I want to assure you that there is also ample reason for hope. Growing numbers of young people across the Nation are eager and prepared to respond to a renewed call to service.

Applications to SCA are now at all time highs; more than 40 percent ahead of this point last year. Many other conservation corps and service organizations are experiencing similar growths and surges. An expanded Public Lands Service Corps, along with President Obama's Give Act and the bipartisan Kennedy/Hatch Serve America Act, when fully funded have the potential to chart a new era of citizen service at a time when our country and our people need it the most.

I know this bill is focused on Federal public lands; however, to ensure nature's wonders and opportunities are available to all populations and to bring a more inclusive conservation community, SCA has for many decades focused on engaging underserved urban populations. In cooperation with city authorities we introduce African-American, Latino, Asian-American and other young people to their hometown parks and encourage them to explore their own unique connections with nature.

We furnish them stipends to make our programs more accessible and provide innovative roots to their education and to provide them tangible job skills that lead to promising, productive careers. I encourage this Committee to join SCA, other conservation corps and

other youth service programs in building bridges between local communities and Federal lands.

As a proven partner of the bureaus within Interior, Agriculture and Commerce and other Federal departments, SCA is ready to help fulfill the objectives of this legislation by engaging more young people in conservation service, reaching out to diverse populations and providing tens of thousands of emerging citizens with a direct pipeline to green jobs and lifelong stewardship. I have a number of specific comments to highlight on key components of this legislation which I will submit in my written testimony.

I wish now to share my time with Marcus Hendricks who is a recent SCA member and who is a fine example of the thousands of young men and women who will benefit from this bill. We are very proud of what Marcus has done and what he is going to do with his life, and I would like for you to meet Marcus right now.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Welcome, Mr. Hendricks, and look forward to your comments.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Penny follows:]

**Statement of Dale M. Penny, President & CEO,
The Student Conservation Association [SCA]**

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and the other distinguished members of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands.

My name is Dale Penny, and I am president of the Student Conservation Association—SCA—a nationwide nonprofit organization which since 1957 has engaged more than 50-thousand diverse college and high school students in meaningful, hands-on conservation service in the very parks, forests, and other public lands within the purview of this committee.

I am grateful for the opportunity to speak with you today. I applaud the committee for recognizing both the potential and the need for an expanded Public Lands Service Corps and for hearing testimony on what SCA believes is a particularly timely and effective legislative initiative.

I should begin by noting that SCA was originally modeled after the old Civilian Conservation Corps. More than a half century ago, a college student who would become SCA's founder, Elizabeth Cushman Titus Putnam, saw young volunteers as the solution to helping overburdened national parks. Liz wrote her senior thesis on "A Proposed Student Conservation Corps" and soon, with the aid of allies including Horace Albright, the then-retired director of the National Park Service, the first SCA corps members reported for service at Grand Teton and Olympic National Parks.

Today, SCA is America's leading national conservation service corps, annually engaging thousands of young adults and teenagers in national parks, marine sanctuaries, and urban communities in all 50 states. This year alone, SCA members will render more than two million hours of service to their nation and neighborhoods: aiding endangered species, restoring threatened habitats, and addressing the factors behind climate change, among many other practices, all to preserve our natural and cultural treasures.

The impact these young people have on the land is as profound as it is immediate, but their influence extends well beyond the here-and-now. SCA exists to inspire lifelong stewardship in new generations of conservation leaders—and with a track record that stretches for more than five decades, the evidence that conservation services does, indeed, produce ardent stewards is quite convincing.

SCA's alumni surveys reveal some 60% of our members move into conservation-related professions and/or volunteer in conservation endeavors in their home communities.

A landmark study of SCA programs and those of other outdoor organizations by Dr. Stephen Kellert of Yale University showed that 78% of participants declared themselves "more environmentally aware" as a result of their experience and 72% noted becoming "more environmentally responsible."

And a review of the workforce at the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture and others, and throughout the private sector, reveals thousands of SCA alumni employed as rangers, scientists, environmental educators and more. In fact, the National Park Service alone estimates that 12% of its uniformed employees launched

their careers through SCA internships, and just last year then-NPS Director Mary Bomar declared that “SCA is a real movement in America.”

Ensuring our young people enjoy a healthy, informed and enduring connection to their natural and cultural heritage is essential for their own continued well being as well as that of nature itself. Thus, the current call for an expanded Public Land Service Corps could not be more relevant or responsive. Yet this legislation stands to yield many other benefits as well.

One does not have to spend too much time surveying the American landscape to conclude that our economy, as well as our environment, is in crisis. Young people, in particular, face suddenly daunting odds. Family savings have eroded, household incomes are in jeopardy, and student loans are difficult to obtain. All this has put a college education—the very foundation of a prosperous adulthood—beyond the reach of many. And those fortunate enough to be able to go to school are at once confronting the most competitive job market in recent memory.

These same young men and women face bleak environmental prospects as well, with the increasing effects of climate change; continuous threats to clean air, water and wildlands; and increasing competition for our finite resources. Today’s generation knows unless we are able to address these issues, and soon, they will inherit a host of problems that grow more acute by the day.

At the same time, however, there is ample hope. We know, for example, that young people across our nation are eager and prepared to respond to a renewed call to service. Applications to SCA are now at all-time highs—more than 40% ahead of this point last year—and many other service organizations are experiencing similar surges. An expanded Public Land Service Corps, along with President Obama’s Give Act and the bipartisan Kennedy-Hatch Serve America Act, have the potential to chart a new era in citizen service at a time when our country and our people need it most.

Conservation service sustains resources, enriches lives, strengthens character, and deepens one’s commitment to American values. It instills a powerful sense of ownership that keeps the “public” in public lands. And it is a vital leadership model to the country and the rest of the world as we broadly foster responsible, participatory adulthood.

SCA is conservation service—and at the same time we are service-learning. The word “educate” comes from the Latin word “Educatus”, meaning to draw or lead out. In the dictionary, the first definition of education is “to develop the person’s natural powers through experience and example.” The secondary definition is “to teach.”

SCA believes that young people best “develop their natural powers” in nature, through service—by giving back and working toward a goal bigger than self.

Just as important, expanded conservation service stands to provide a new generation with the contemporary green job skills and experiences they need to advance toward an emerging green economy—and to advance America toward energy independence, a cleaner environment, and more responsible consumerism.

In this area, too, SCA has both the ability to help and the perspective to see that conservation service works. By engaging young Americans in the stewardship of public lands, we are building lifelong conservation leaders, voters, and citizens. We accomplish this across all youth constituencies through outdoor service opportunities, career-focused internships, and skill-building conservation jobs.

The sponsors and other supporters of this bill deserve tremendous credit for seeking to strengthen the Public Land Corps and effectively expand it beyond parks to include forests, seashores and other public lands. Federal lands have long been—and will continue to be—among the largest of SCA partners.

However, to ensure nature’s wonders and opportunities are available to all populations, and to bring about a more inclusive conservation community, SCA has for some time focused on engaging underserved, often ethnic, urban populations. In cooperation with city authorities and with the support of corporations and foundations, we introduce African-American, Latino, Asian-American and other young people of color to their hometown parks and encourage them to explore their own unique connections with nature. We furnish them with stipends to make our programs more accessible, with new innovative routes to extend their education, and with tangible job skills that lead to long, promising, productive careers.

Although the city parks of Pittsburgh, Detroit, Oakland, and the dozen other municipalities served by SCA are presently beyond the scope of this legislation, I want you to know that each year SCA draws thousands of diverse participants from these communities, and at every step we are engaging, training, and opening professional doors for them.

I further encourage the committee to join SCA in building bridges between local communities and federal lands. This could be achieved by funding local training programs for city and county parks, with a commitment to paid public lands placement

in continued training or apprenticeships. By initiating engagement with nature at home, the individual flourishes, the community benefits, and the participant is empowered to go further afield into federal public lands management and take their place within an agency workforce that, like many of us, is widely approaching retirement.

SCA is a proven partner of the bureaus within Interior; among other roles, we contributed significantly to the implementation of the National Park Service's existing Public Land Corps Program. We also work closely with Agriculture, Commerce and other federal departments. Amid a burgeoning list of needs across the public landscape, SCA is qualified and ready to help fulfill the objectives of this legislation by engaging more young people in conservation service, reaching out to diverse populations, and providing tens of thousands of emerging citizens with a direct pipeline to green jobs and lifelong stewardship.

In closing, there are several specific aspects of the expanded Public Land Corps Service Act deserving of special attention.

- This bill recognizes that conservation service benefits more than the land. It benefits the communities in which those who serve live, the communities surrounding the park or forest, and most of all the community at large as conservation service fosters an extended practice of selflessness and helping those in need.
- If we are to engage more young people in conservation service, we must redouble our recruitment efforts and redouble them again. SCA applauds the authors of this bill for including additional outreach and we stand ready to assist in this effort in any way we can.
- A lot has changed since passage of the original legislation and this is acknowledged through this bill's inclusion of educational products such as web content and audiovisual programs. Technology can be viewed as the antithesis of nature, but at SCA we know today's generation has grown up with cell phones and laptops and quite naturally Facebooks, YouTubes and Twitters as part of daily life. We must use these modern tools as a bridge to our natural and cultural heritage.
- I believe the consulting intern provision of this bill has as much potential as any other. For some years, SCA's Business Planning Intern program has sent MBA candidates as well as other graduate students to national parks as business consultants. Increasingly, these students postpone the green that Wall Street offers—until recently, anyway—for the green of our national parks, bringing with them enhanced efficiency and productivity.
- The provision referencing residential centers addresses a significant opportunity to furthering conservation service. At Mount Rainier National Park, Delaware Water Gap NRA, and even the historic "Blister Rust Camps" at Yellowstone National Park, SCA restoration corps have operated out of existing but closed camps. Utilizing these facilities allows park units to mount large-scale service operations with small-scale impacts on the environment, augmenting the effort staged from more traditional tent camps.
- The explicit expansion of "public lands" to include seashores, marine estuaries and like resources, as well the specific inclusion of the Commerce Department and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are wise and worthy additions. They represent irreplaceable economic, environmental and cultural resources and enabling these places to benefit from the efforts of the Public Lands Service Corps will ensure their health and vitality for many years to come.
- The further expansion to the U.S. Geological Survey and the Natural Resources Conservation Services is similarly important in that it better facilitates the conservation of working lands such as farms and ranches: iconic pieces of the tapestry that is the American landscape.
- Retaining and expanding AmeriCorps education awards is an important factor in allowing middle- and low-income Americans to participate on conservation service. From my vantage point, the value rendered by these young people is many times that of the award's face value, making this modest investment in America's future a monumental bargain.
- I am also pleased to see that alumni of the Public Lands Service Corps will be afforded a noncompetitive hiring status for two years following 960 hours of service which is critical to moving PLSC alumni into paid positions. Building on our experience, SCA would welcome the opportunity to provide alumni services such as job and education counseling to alumni of the Public Lands Service Corps.

In conclusion, I am in strong support of the aims of this bill, as I suspect are the more than 50,000 SCA alumni who have benefited in very personal and profound

ways from their own conservation service. To achieve the legislation's objectives, SCA is prepared to grow to the extent that funding will allow. Our recruiting, training, mentoring and career counseling services are both proven and scalable. And SCA's existing Cooperative Agreements with federal agencies will facilitate a simple, rapid, and effective deployment.

National service is the greatest calling a citizen will ever hear—and conservation service enables one to make both today and tomorrow better for all. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to such a sterling and urgent imperative.

**STATEMENT OF MARCUS HENDRICKS,
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

Mr. HENDRICKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and thank you, ma'am, as well. My name is Marcus Hendricks and I am a sophomore studying mechanical engineering at the George Washington University. I grew up in the D.C. area, and I went to high school at the School Without Walls. I started working with the SCA as a sophomore in high school in order to gain the community service hours that I needed for graduation.

I have since accumulated over 400 hours and strongly believe that that community service helped me to get into GW. I have now worked on three crews, as well as participated in the Conservation Leadership Corps with the SCA. Some of the happiest moments of my life took place on those crews, not only because of the people that I was working with, but also because of the natural environment that I was working in that allowed me to take my mind off of stressful things, such as homework and school.

In school, students have the opportunity to enhance their classroom learning with outdoor experiences so that they can develop a personal attachment to what is learned in the textbook or in educational videos. When I proposed going to a local national park to my senior class for a field trip they said it would be boring, they didn't want to get dirty and they were afraid of bugs.

I believe they missed a valuable opportunity to experience a sense of connection that comes with exploring the outdoors or taking in the scenery on a hike that one of my crews worked on. There is a real potential to connect students with a classroom learning in fields such as geography and biology. Instead of looking at illustrations of tributaries and ecosystems, it is a lot more thrilling to be a part of an ecosystem if you are not too careful in a national park.

If I had my way, this Committee would support any program that would expand opportunities for young people to have meaningful experiences and connections with the parks and public lands that I had with SCA. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have for me.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Let me now ask Ms. Sally Prouty, President & CEO of The Corps Network, and also, you are accompanied by a guest that—

Ms. PROUTY. I am. Thank you.

Mr. GRIJALVA.—you will introduce. Thank you very much. Look forward to your comments.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hendricks follows:]

Statement of Marcus Hendricks, George Washington University

Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Marcus Hendricks. I am a sophomore at George Washington University, majoring in Mechanical Engineering.

I grew up in the D.C. area, and went to high school at the School Without Walls. I started working with SCA as a sophomore in high school to gain community service hours that I needed for high school graduation. I have now worked on three crews, as well as participated in the Conservation Leadership Corps program with SCA. Some of the happiest moments of my life took place in my service in the parks with SCA, not only because of the people that I was with, but also because the natural environment brought me to a place where we did not consider things at home like school- or work-related stress.

Before my SCA experience, I had very few field trips to national or state parks. The ability to work in the parks allowed me to connect what I was learning in the classroom with the work I did in the parks. For example, I learned that the mountains of Guadalupe Mountains National Park in Texas were carved out by large seas that existed thousands of years ago, evidenced by fossil remains of sea-based animals found in the now desert-like area. Watching videos in my high school geography class could not compare with seeing and hearing it with my own eyes and ears.

After planting trees and restoring trails in parks in Texas, West Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, DC, I developed a connection to the parks that I worked in and those like it. I believe that my service was valuable to me for a number of reasons. First, the fresh air found in national and state parks is simply amazing compared to the air I am used to breathing where I attend college in downtown Washington, DC. Also, parks offer a peaceful respite from the everyday stress and commotion of the city.

Second, my desire to protect the parks has increased. I now recycle more, refuse to litter, and always want to make sure that I take care of green spaces that we all must share. When I participated in a Potomac River clean-up event, my crew took several empty trash bags with us to the bank of the Potomac and we went to our cleanup site. When I got there, I saw so much trash that I was shocked. I could not believe that so much trash was left in such a small area along the bank. After everyone on our team collected about 3 bags of trash each, there was so much more left that I knew that it would take at least 100 people filling at least 3 bags to make a significant difference in the amount of trash that was piled up along the shore. Since that experience, I have become a recycling "junkie"—not only at home, but also at school.

In school, students should have the opportunity to enhance their classroom learning with outdoor field trips so that they can experience the personal attachment to what is learned in a textbook or in educational videos. When I proposed going to a local national park for my senior class field trip, several members of my senior class immediately turned it down. They said it would be boring, they would not want to get dirty, or they would not like being around bugs. I believe that they missed an opportunity to experience that sense of connection and attachment that comes with exploring outside or taking in the scenery on a hike on one of the trails I worked on.

If I had my way, this Committee would support any program that expands opportunities for young people to have meaningful experiences and connections to the parks and public lands the way I had with SCA. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

**STATEMENT OF SALLY T. PROUTY, PRESIDENT & CEO,
THE CORPS NETWORK**

Ms. PROUTY. Thank you. It is a privilege to be here, and we appreciate you, Chairman Grijalva, and the members of the Committee for the tremendous work. We are delighted with the bill that is before us today. My name is Sally Prouty and I am President & CEO of The Corps Network. It is my privilege to speak strongly in support of this Public Lands Service Corps Act.

I am here on behalf of The Corps Network and the 136 service and conservation corps it represents and the 26,000 young people enrolled in those corps. I wanted to note that over half of the young

people involved in the corps that we represent enter the corps without a high school diploma or GED, so there is a very wide range of young people that we represent.

I have submitted comments but in the brief time I have this afternoon I would like to emphasize why this bill is so important, and certainly important to the world of corps that we represent. First of all, it will bring much needed resources to the tremendous backlogged projects that you all know about. It will increase utilization of service and service learning as strategies for accomplishing work on public lands.

It will also introduce more and more diverse young people to America's public lands, instilling in them an appreciation for nature and enjoyment of healthy recreation and a sense of stewardship for our natural resources and the environment. In addition, by expanding the noncompetitive hiring status of Public Lands Corps members it will bring youth and diversity to the land management agency workforce and provide additional opportunities for young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to pursue good careers in land and natural resource management.

It will raise the profile of the Public Lands Service Corps within the relevant agencies and establish coordinators making it easier for corps and other youth service organizations to participate, and it will help bring corps a proven youth development strategy to scale. Today's corps are a proven strategy for giving young men and women, many of whom are economically or otherwise disadvantaged and out of work, out of school, the chance to have a positive impact on their own lives and the communities and the environment.

I would note that we know from random assignment evaluation that young people enrolled in corps have substantial earnings and employment gains, that risk behaviors decrease and we know that findings are most significant for young, African-American men. Very interesting that I am sitting here with you today.

Of the 26,000 corps members currently enrolled, 55 percent have no high school diploma, 64 percent report family income being below the Federal poverty level, 30 percent have had previous Court involvement and at least 10 percent have been in foster care.

Contemporary corps provide thousands of 16 to 25 year olds the opportunity to earn a second chance in life through hard work and service to their communities. The most important part of my being here is that I am seated with James Childress, and it is my pleasure to have you meet him as a representative of the 26,000 young people that we represent. James?

Mr. GRIJALVA. Welcome, Mr. Childress. Thank you for being here.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Prouty follows:]

**Statement of Sally T. Prouty, President and CEO,
The Corps Network**

Good afternoon Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Bishop, and Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee.

My name is Sally Prouty and I am the President and CEO of The Corps Network. It is my pleasure to be here today to speak in strong support of Chairman Grijalva's bill, H.R. 1612, the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2009. I am here on behalf of The Corps Network, the 136 Service and Conservation Corps it represents, and the 26,000 young people who serve in Corps each year.

Mr. Chairman, with your approval, I will submit a more complete statement for the record. In the brief time I have this afternoon, however, I would like to emphasize why this bill is so important:

- It will bring much-needed resources to the tremendous backlog of projects needing to be accomplished on public lands;
- It will increase the utilization of service and service-learning as strategies for accomplishing work on public lands;
- It will introduce more, and more diverse, young people to America's public lands—instilling in them an appreciation for nature, an enjoyment of healthy recreation, and a sense of stewardship for our natural resources and the environment;
- By expanding the non-competitive hiring status of Public Lands Corpsmembers, it will bring youth and diversity to the land management agency workforces and provide additional opportunities for young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to pursue good careers in land and natural resource management.
- It will raise the profile of the Public Lands Service Corps (PLSC) within the relevant agencies and establish a PLSC coordinator, making it easier for Corps and other youth service organizations to participate; and
- It will help bring Corps, a proven youth development strategy, to scale.

Service and Conservation Corps

History

As you know, Service and Conservation Corps are direct descendents of the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) that provided work and vocational training for unemployed single young men by conserving and developing the country's natural resources. Between 1933 and 1942 when it was disbanded, the CCC employed almost 3.5 million men who planted an estimated 2.5 billion trees, protected 40 million acres of farmland from erosion, drained 248,000 acres of swamp land, replanted almost a million acres of grazing land, built 125,000 miles of roads, fought fires, and created 800 state parks and 52,000 acres of campgrounds. But the biggest legacy of the CCC may have been the hope it provided both the young men and their families.

Today

Today's Corps are a proven strategy for giving young men and women, many of whom are economically or otherwise disadvantaged and out-of-work and/or out-of-school, the chance to have a positive impact on their own lives, their communities, and the environment.

Of the 26,000 Corpsmembers currently enrolled, approximately 55 percent have no High School diploma, 64 percent report family income below the federal poverty level, 30 percent have had previous court involvement and at least 10 percent have been in foster care. Contemporary Corps provide thousands of 16-25 year olds the opportunity to earn a second chance in life through hard work and service to their communities.

In the Corps model, Corpsmembers are organized into crews of six to 10 people to carry out labor-intensive service projects while being guided by adult leaders who serve as mentors and role models as well as technical trainers and supervisors. In return for their efforts to restore and strengthen their communities, Corpsmembers receive: 1) a living allowance; 2) classroom training to improve basic competencies and, if necessary, to secure a GED or high school diploma; 3) experiential and environmental service-learning based education; 4) generic and technical skills training; and 5) a wide range of supportive services. Those Corpsmembers who are co-enrolled in AmeriCorps also receive a Segal Education Award upon the completion of their service.

Most importantly, these young men and women learn to value their personal contribution, and the importance of teamwork. They experience the recognition and pride that comes from making a positive investment in their community.

A Research-Supported Strategy

In February 1997, Abt Associates published a groundbreaking study, funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, on the value of youth Corps. The study, "Youth Corps: Promising Practices for Young People and Their Communities" used rigorous multi-site random assignment methodology to document key outcomes, including:

- Significant employment and earning gains for young people who join a Corps;
- Positive outcomes that are particularly striking for young African-American men;

- A significant reduction in arrest rates among all Corpsmembers; and
- A significant reduction in the number of unplanned pregnancies among female Corpsmembers.

The study concludes that, “Youth Corps are rare among youth-serving programs in their ability to demonstrate significant and positive impacts on participants.”

The Public Lands Corps

Background and Examples

For nearly three decades Service and Conservation Corps have worked in partnership with land management agencies to accomplish important work on public lands. Like the CCC of the 1930s, they have introduced young people to the great outdoors and provided them with various education and economic opportunities.

Presently, the Department of Interior agencies spend between \$5-6 million on nearly 200 PLC projects with Corps annually. This investment in turn, supports nearly 600 corpmembers. Because Corps often bring a match, as well as unpaid volunteers from local communities, much more work is actually being supported.

PLC crews do everything from building trails and wheelchair accessible facilities to providing visitor services and environmental education to local school children. In recent years, due to an intentional focus on wildland fire mitigation, many crews have done a significant amount of hazardous fuels reduction, invasive species removal, and habitat restoration. Some specific examples of these projects include:

For over 15 years, the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) has partnered with Olympic National Park on a variety of fire abatement activities. Each year, WCC crews remove hundreds of downed old growth trees in an effort to reduce fire fuels and increase access.

The *California Conservation Corps* (CCC), has a dedicated 18-person fire crew that partners with Whiskey Town National Park located outside of Redding, CA. For eight years, under the guidance and training of the National Park Service, this crew has performed controlled burns, removed hazardous fuels and cuts fuel breaks.

The *Southwest Conservation Corps* (SCC), based in Durango, CO, works with Mesa Verde National Park on wildfire mitigation. Mesa Verde has a significant history of wildfire, especially in recent years. When the Park needed assistance in removing hazardous fuels from key areas in advance of the Park’s 100th anniversary celebration, the entire SCC crew received 40 hour chainsaw training and certification.

The *Coconino Rural Environment Corps* (CREC), based in Flagstaff, AZ, thins hundreds of acres of federal, state, county, city, and private lands every year. Much of this wood is then turned over to local Native American communities for firewood.

The *Alaska Service Corps* (ASC) was tasked with a week-long invasive removal project in one of Alaska’s premiere National Parks, Wrangell St. Elias. The ASC crew help eradicate White Sea Clover & other invasive plants from key areas near the Slana Visitor Center. The ASC crews’ efforts allow native plants opportunities to reseed and enhance the experience for residents and tourists.

The *Western Colorado Conservation Corps* (WCCC), based in Grand Junction, Colorado, has been actively involved in Tamarisk removal for several years. The WCCC has partnered with the Colorado State Parks Department and the state Division of Wildlife, the Audubon Society, and the Tamarisk Coalition to control acres of Tamarisk and Russian Olive, Hounds Tongue, Canada Thistle and other species, as well as 15 miles of Salsafy, Russian Thistle, and Storks Bill.

The Need for Expansion

Despite all of the important work currently being supported by PLC funds, much more needs to be done. Estimates of the backlog on public lands (controlled by both the Department of Interior and the Forest Service) now reach up to \$16 billion. In addition, according to the Forest Service, nearly 200 million acres of public land are at increased risk of catastrophic wildfire and according to the Department of Agriculture, invasive alien plant infestations cover 100 million acres (an area twice the size of Delaware) and are spreading at a rate of 14 percent per year. At the same time, a large percent of public land agency professionals are nearing retirement.

Potential exists in today’s young people. They want to give back. The Southwest Conservation Corps, which received 20 applications a week in 2008, is receiving 100 applications a week in 2009. The Coconino Rural Environment Corps is getting three to five times more applications than it has spaces available. Some of the interest is the result of high unemployment—but some is the desire to do work that makes a positive difference for communities and the environment. H.R. 1612 recognizes the need to offer opportunities to those young people, as well as to those who are part of the high school dropout epidemic.

Nearly one-half of minority students and almost one-third of all public high school students fail to graduate with their class. Research strongly suggests that public land opportunities can make a significant difference for these young people. According to a 2006 report by Civic Enterprises, *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*, dropouts want “real world opportunities” and a more challenging curriculum to keep them engaged in school. A follow up study, *Engaged for Success*, showed that students believe service learning would keep potential dropouts engaged in school. Our public lands can provide such experiences for students in underperforming districts.

Engaging these young people, many of them from low-income and minority communities, can be a way to help to diversify public lands personnel, to develop the ethic of stewardship among these populations, and to attract larger numbers of minorities as visitors, enabling them to embrace their natural patrimony.

Conclusion

The Public Lands Service Corps Act would simultaneously address these problems as well as others. Expanded authority would enable PLC work to be done on more public lands. Increased funding would support many more Corpsmembers, reduce the backlog of deferred maintenance projects, and help prepare our public lands for the 21st century.

Meanwhile, the Corpsmembers could, in turn, utilize their AmeriCorps Education awards and the expanded non-competitive hiring authority contained in this bill to pursue careers in land management—thus building and diversifying the next generation of the resource management workforce.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify. On behalf of the entire Corps Network, I again want to express our appreciation and support for H.R. 1612. We look forward to working with you to see it enacted into law.

STATEMENT OF JAMES CHILDRESS, CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS OF WEST VIRGINIA

Mr. CHILDRESS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. First, I would like to thank you for inviting me and allowing me to be here with you today. My name is James Childress and I am a corps member with the Citizens Conservation Corps of West Virginia. Prior to coming to the corps, I was in the wrong crowd. Smoking, drinking, staying out late and sometimes not even coming home had me going down a dark path fast.

I found myself at a time not wanting to get up in the morning. My home life was stressful. My parents were going through a divorce. My two younger brothers needed somebody to look to and I was not there. I had just graduated from high school in Beckley and I needed to figure out what was I going to do next. A friend of mine from a local church knowing my situation and wanting to help me avoid a total disaster suggested I should apply for a position with the corps.

I had thought about the military but I was not ready to take that step yet and I thought I was needed at home. I joined the corps in June of 2007, and little did I know what time and impact it would have on my way of thinking about my future. I began with the CCCWV working in the New River Gorge National Park working in teams of four, and sometimes five. Under the direction of a crew leader we planted trees, maintained many trails, restored historical buildings and built many bridges.

The following year I was placed on a spray crew. Being on this crew was a new experience for me but I learned a lot, like about invasive plants and species and the damage they can cause the native species and their habitats. I also learned about pesticides and how to apply them safely. While I was in high school it became clear that I did not do my best in a traditional classroom setting,

but I was a sight learner, and I learned best by having people show me because everything I do at the CCCWV involves hands-on or sight learning and so far I have been able to excel.

Prior to joining the CCCWV I spent little time outdoors. Now I love nature. By being in this organization I was able to see places that many people my age are not able to see today, and it is important to me and I know how to take care of it. Before joining the corps the only kind of power tool I have ever used was a push mower in my front and back yard. I am now excited if I was to use a chainsaw, pesticide spray, a zero turn commercial grade lawnmower and other tools.

These certifications and all of this experience will make me an attractive future to future employers. I have also developed a number of skills that will help me in the workforce, such as teamwork, problem solving, personal responsibility and pride in workmanship. Perhaps, but most importantly, I have learned a lot more about myself as to what I like, and what I want to do and what I can achieve if I focus and push myself to do it.

I am still currently working for the CCCWV and through my corps service I have successfully earned an Americorps education award to help me pay for higher education. In the future, I hope to use that award to study for mechanical engineering. I have benefited so much from my experience and working on the Public Lands Corps projects because I was challenged and exposed to all kinds of things.

Because of this experience I have now a greater respect for the natural beauty in or public lands which will make me a better steward of those lands. I hope that this bill passes so more young people like me can have the same opportunity. Thank you.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. It seems that based on the experience that the young people that work on this end up going into mechanical engineering. Let me now pass on Ms. Sally Jewell, President & CEO, Recreational Equipment, Inc., National Parks Conservation Association. Thank you for being here and looking forward to your comments.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Childress follows:]

**Statement of James Childress, Civilian Conservation Corps
of West Virginia**

Good afternoon,

First I would like to thank you for inviting me and allowing me to be here today.

My name is James Childress and I am a corps member with the Citizens Conservation Corps of West Virginia. Prior to coming to the Corps I was in the wrong crowd. Smoking, drinking, staying out late and at times not even coming home, had me going down a dark path fast. I found myself not wanting to get up in the morning, my home life was stressful, my parents were going through a divorce, my two younger brothers needed someone to look up to and I was not there for them. I had just graduated from high school in Beckley and needed to figure out what I was going to do next. A friend of mine from a local church, knowing my situation and wanting to help me avoid total disaster; suggested I apply for a position with the Corps. I had thought about the military but I was not ready to take that step and I felt I was needed at home. I joined the Corps in June of 2007 and little did I know at that time what an impact it would have on my way of thinking and my future.

I began with the CCCWV working in the New River Gorge National Park. Working in teams of four and sometimes five, under the direction of a crew leader, we planted trees, maintained many trails, resorted historical buildings, and built bridges.

The following year, I was placed on a spray crew. Being on this crew was a new experience for me, but I learned a lot, like about invasive species and the damage they can cause to native species and their habitats. I also learned about pesticides and how to apply them safely.

While I was in high school, it became clear that I did not do my best in a traditional classroom setting—I was a sight learner and I learned best by having people show me. Because everything I do at CCCWV involves hands on or sight learning, and so far I have been able to excel.

Prior to joining the CCCWV, I spent little time outdoors. Now I love nature, and by being in this organization I was able to see places that many young people my age do not to see and I understand its importance and I know how to take care of it. Before joining the Corps the only kind of power tool I had ever used was a push mower on my front and back yard. I am now certified to use a chain saw, a pesticide sprayer, a zero-turn commercial grade lawnmower, and other tools. These certifications and all of this experience will make me attractive to future employers.

I have also developed a number of skills that will help me in the work force, such as teamwork, problem solving, personal responsibility, and pride in workmanship. Perhaps most importantly, I've learned a lot more about myself—what I like and want to do, and what I can achieve if I focus and push myself to do it.

I am currently still working for the CCCWV. Through my corps service have I successfully earned an AmeriCorps Education Award to help me pay for higher education, and in the future I hope to use that award to study mechanical engineering.

I have benefitted so much from my experience in working on public land corps projects because I was challenged and exposed to all kinds of new things. And because of this experience I now have a greater respect for the natural beauty in our public lands which will make me a better steward of those lands. I hope that this bill passes so more young people like me can have the same opportunity.

Thank you!

**STATEMENT OF SALLY JEWELL, PRESIDENT & CEO,
RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT, INC., NATIONAL PARKS
CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION**

Ms. JEWELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am a mechanical engineer, and I am delighted that Marcus and James have picked that as their profession. It is a great degree. I am here representing the 340,000 members of the National Parks Conservation Association, but in my day job as CEO of REI, we sell a lot of outdoor equipment to people who love and enjoy a healthy environment for renewal and recreation so this is tremendously important to us.

I will also say that at REI we work with a lot of nonprofit organizations, like the Student Conservation Association and many members of The Corps Network in states across this country, to do service on public lands. Last year about 1.5 million hours of service on public lands. So these organizations the young people represented up here are represented by organizations like them across this country and the amount of work that they do is nothing short of amazing.

You can go back to our wonderful national park network from Mt. Rainier National Park in my neck of the woods, to Grand Canyon, to Shenandoah, and see the work that was done by young people in the 1930s. You can see it in places like Moran State Park near me in the San Juan Islands, or even Sherman Rock, which is a climbing rock built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in a local city park very close to my house in Seattle.

These kinds of projects connect people for life to the places. James and I were talking a minute ago, and I saw Marcus a week and a half ago as we were working on the future of the national parks, and they both talk about that bridge they built being their

bridge and the connection that you get to that place that you work on.

Dan Evans, probably the most famous politician ever—sorry, Jay, you are not there yet, but you will be—from the State of Washington, three term Governor and replaced Scoop Jackson as Senator, told me not too long ago that when he drove along I-90 in what we call the Mountains to Sound Greenway he always looked for his tree. I said your tree? He said, yes. I planted the tree as a Boy Scout when I was 10 years old and that tree is now 73 years old.

So stories like that give people a connection to place. I so appreciate, Chairman Grijalva, you and Chairman Rahall for introducing this bill and making public lands a part of the service corps acts that are currently going through, or have just passed, Congress. My son, Peter, worked for three years as a volunteer climbing ranger alongside Mike Gauthier, a former climbing ranger who is actually sitting in the corner of the room over there.

Mike is on the Bevinetto Fellowship for two years here. His work in Mt. Rainier National Park engaging young volunteers changes lives and the budget, and the support for those kinds of programs do make an enormous difference. So we are in an interesting time right now with a tough economy, with increasing levels of unemployment and underemployment, both young people and older Americans.

We have a dearth of diversity on our public lands, our public lands are not represented by the people who represent this country, and we have parks, public lands and open spaces that are desperately in need of help, and so this bill, I think, represents a trifecta of opportunity to solve this.

It engages the incredible diversity of this nation by making a connection to public lands, it provides opportunities for employment when we really need them, not only for young people, but also for older Americans who have a tremendous amount of skill, and labor and love of this land to give back, and it brings our national parks and our public lands back with some chronically needed tender loving care. They are in fact falling apart.

If you prepare for the centennial of our national parks in 2016, there is nothing, I think, that could be more impactful than putting young people alongside older people to work on these important places to really start this second century of the National Park Service in the time when our public lands is so important on the radar for all Americans. So I appreciate very much the tremendous effort you have made in putting this bill forward, and I give it my wholehearted support and look forward to helping get it passed. Thank you.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Mr. John Reynolds, Coalition of National Park Service Retirees. Welcome.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Jewell follows:]

**Statement of Sally Jewell, Trustee,
National Parks Conservation Association**

Good afternoon. My name is Sally Jewell, and I am pleased to be invited to testify as a trustee of the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) to discuss H.R. 1612, the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2009. For the information of the subcommittee, in addition to my position as a member of the NPCA Board of Trust-

ees, I am President and CEO of outdoor retailer Recreational Equipment, Inc., so our National Park System and public lands have a great deal of significance to me personally and professionally. As you know, the nonprofit National Parks Conservation Association has served as the leading citizen voice on behalf of our national parks since 1919. It is a privilege to be here today on behalf of NPCA's 340,000 members to express our strong support for H.R. 1612, the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2009.

I want to begin by first thanking Chairman Grijalva and Chairman Rahall for introducing this important legislation. H.R. 1612 seeks to benefit our national parks and other public lands by unleashing the spirit and energy of committed Americans who, working with their government and non-profit organizations, can help our nation capitalize on the potential for our national parks to produce significant civic benefits, stimulate local economies, educate Americans about our shared heritage, and protect our national treasures for the use and enjoyment of our children and grandchildren. The Act builds upon the Public Land Corps Act of 1993 by facilitating valuable new service-learning opportunities, enhancing mechanisms to help restore the nation's natural, cultural, archaeological, recreational, and scenic resources, providing for the training of a new generation of public land managers and enthusiasts, and by promoting the value of community and national service. H.R. 1612 complements the GIVE Act and Serve America Act, which passed the House and Senate and is on its way to the President, which includes a Clean Energy Corps that will work in partnership with the Public Lands Service Corps.

NPCA has been calling for the creation of a new National Parks Service Corps in order to foster additional national and community service in our national parks and help ready the national parks for another century of service to our nation and the world. H.R. 1612 responds to and expands this vision to include all Interior and National Forest-managed lands, and areas under the jurisdiction of the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration. The legislation also rounds out the expansion of national and community service under the GIVE and Serve America Acts with a robust commitment to service that would help the National Park Service to address the needs of our national treasures and would foster stronger connections between national parks, visitors, and our national community.

Enhanced Service Opportunities Help Address Critical Economic Needs

These are challenging times for our National Park System and our country. This subcommittee is well aware that an annual operating shortfall, estimated at \$750 million, and a maintenance backlog of approximately \$9 billion, continue to undermine the ability of national park managers to protect the natural and cultural resources in their charge. We have begun to make some progress in the last couple years, but there remains much more to do. Furthermore, as our troubled economy staggers, unemployment rates are continuing to rise.

In February, nationwide unemployment reached 8.1%, with youth unemployment at 21%. Unemployment rates for African-American youth hovered around 39%, with rates for Hispanic and Latino youth at about 25%—both up 7 points from February 2008. Unemployment rates for college graduates are increasing significantly, as they are with Americans over age 55. National service cannot cure these problems. However, the tight job market, coupled with the president's call for people to serve, is already creating tremendous demand for meaningful service opportunities, and H.R. 1612 can provide such opportunities in a manner that helps address continuing, significant needs on our public lands. Such levels of unemployment remind us of the days of the Great Depression, when Franklin Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps to marry two destabilized resources—young men out of work and school and diminished natural resources on our public lands and in agriculture.

In tough economic times, our nation has mobilized millions of people to conserve and protect its most vital resources, producing lasting benefits for society and providing individuals with opportunities and new skills. The Public Lands Service Corps can do this and more, by employing people from the most vulnerable sectors of our economy in jobs that would enhance their future employability, invigorating them with an enhanced sense of civic pride, and supporting President Obama's call for people to serve.

American Public Supports Service in Our National Parks, Public Lands

The American people are ready for this kind of commitment. Americans strongly support our national parks, and want to engage in their protection. In fact, an extensive poll by Peter D. Hart Research Associates and McLaughlin & Associates, which NPCA commissioned in 2008, found that more than four in five voters believe that it is important for the federal government to protect and support national parks and national historic places. That poll also found significant concern about the

failure of funding of our national parks to keep up with what's needed, the shortage of needed staff at parks and historic sites, and the need to be sure parks could serve school groups. Finally, it showed that more than 1 out of every 3 Americans are motivated to roll up their sleeves and get involved—a tremendous finding for a poll of this type, and one that shows the continuing affection of our society for our national treasures.

NPCA has called for the addition of at least 10,000 new, full-time equivalent service positions to be devoted to work in our national parks within the next few years, through an expansion of the Public Land Service Corps and through a cooperative agreement between the Department of the Interior and the Corporation for National and Community Service. H.R. 1612 broadens this vision to also include other public lands, and we support that breadth so as to provide a broader geographic distribution of service opportunities and to help address needs and opportunities on all public lands—as long as it maintains the commitment to our national heritage.

Service in Public Lands Improves Individual Lives, Communities, National Heritage

NPCA believes that service legislation relating to our national parks should focus on five basic principles: (1) addressing resource protection and fiscal needs in the parks; (2) enhancing multi-generational service opportunities; (3) building strong community partnerships; (4) developing the next generation of diverse National Park Service leaders; and (5) a strong emphasis on cultural, historic, and civic impacts. H.R. 1612 takes important steps in this direction, and we have several modest suggestions to make it even stronger.

With the addition of significantly more service employment opportunities in national parks, along with supervisory capacity for the National Park Service, we can make genuine headway on a variety of maintenance and conservation-related projects. For example, service and volunteerism are ideally suited to projects designed to eradicate many invasive species, replant native vegetation, and control erosion. The human power brought to bear under the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, when CCC participants planted over 3 billion trees and built over 97,000 miles of roads in national parks and on public lands throughout the nation, provides a compelling example. Service Corps members can rehabilitate campgrounds and deteriorating structures throughout the National Park System, renovate and help maintain historic sites, and help conduct natural and cultural resource management, science and research projects. In addition, the Act provides an important focus on marine resources and climate change.

By expanding the potential duration of service corps participation to two years, H.R. 1612 enhances the ability of the National Park Service to manage and capitalize on the opportunities service presents through fostering non-episodic volunteering to the greatest extent possible. The GIVE Act and its Senate counterpart, the Serve America Act, are designed to with the goal of fostering long-term, consistent service work, and H.R. 1612 can accomplish the same. That means fostering service work that lasts more than a couple days. The longer individuals serve, the more highly trained they may become. This means greater impact on parks and communities, both over the short- and long-term. In addition, service corps participants can and should leverage and help manage additional volunteerism. To the extent such individuals can be trained to coordinate additional volunteers, the service corps will facilitate even more community engagement capacity than stipended corps members, alone, will provide.

Many community organizations, including those testifying today, have excellent track records running programs that provide supervised opportunities for many weeks or months. Their capacity and infrastructure are also scalable, allowing them to ramp up the number of participants in the service corps without the need for costly new bureaucracy. In addition, some also run residential operations, and could do so at some facilities rehabilitated in the national parks for this purpose.

It is hard to overemphasize the effect service can have on the lives of those who undertake it, not to mention the people and resources who directly benefit from it. The youth of today are in danger of becoming the most disconnected generation from nature in our history as a nation. They are not benefiting from the magic of national parks and other natural areas that comes from experiencing them first-hand. There are many reasons for this: over-scheduling of activities, economics, the decline in the time families have to travel, lack of outside play, and more. But when young people are given an opportunity to work in a park, they develop a very deep sense of ownership and connection to that place, to other national parks, and to the natural world, as well as experience many other benefits.

A few years ago, Washington State's former governor and senator, Dan Evans, told me how he always looks for "his tree" when he drives along I-90 in the Moun-

tains to Sound Greenway. He planted that tree as a boy scout at 10 years old and the tree is now 73 years old. To me, that is a powerful example of the strong connectedness we feel when we work on behalf a special place. There are countless other stories of those who have undertaken some form of service work, from the bonds participants in the Civilian Conservation Corps forged with our national parks and forests, to the volunteers who already give of themselves to make our national parks what they ought to be.

Nearly 170,000 people volunteer to work for the Park Service each year. The hours these individuals render and the contributions they make are of an invaluable service to our national parks, and yield tremendous pride and connectedness to our parks and to our country. Yet, when parks lack sufficient funding, they often find themselves without the staff to recruit, train, and manage volunteers. Leveraging additional volunteer support and engagement is exactly the kind of utility that Public Lands Service Corps members, once trained, could bring to the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and NOAA. It is also fundamentally important that adequate funding and support personnel be provided to ensure that component of the Service Act succeeds.

One way to augment this capacity, and an opportunity for enhancing H.R. 1612, relates to so-called “experienced Americans.” H.R. 1612 attempts to get at this through a new mentorship authorization, which we strongly support. Encouraging older Americans like Volunteers in Parks, military retirees and veterans to help train service corps members and lead crews will tap the know-how of many thousands of able individuals who have much to contribute. Yet, we see additional opportunity to encourage service work by experienced Americans.

AARP recently commissioned a report, entitled *More to Give*, which details the tremendous untapped potential of older Americans for service. An extensive survey of 44-79 year olds, whom the survey dubbed “experienced Americans”, found that “55 percent believe they will leave the world in worse condition than they inherited it, while only 20 percent believe they are leaving the world in better condition.” It also found that those most engaged in volunteer work feel more optimistic about the future. The survey also found that financial wherewithal can be an important barrier to older Americans serving as volunteers.

As is the case with youth, stipends can enable older Americans to serve. In addition, according to the survey, “more than half of all Experienced Americans (51 percent), including 55 percent of Baby Boomers, said that education awards they can earn and give to a child in exchange for significant levels of volunteer service would have a big or moderate impact on their participation in volunteer activities.” Such incentives were particularly appealing to Hispanics and African-Americans.

As a consequence, the GIVE and Serve America Acts authorized a transferable education award for older Americans who participate in 1-year “Encore Fellowships” to carry out projects in areas of national need. Fellowships go to individuals 55 and older who engage in full- or part-time service in the nonprofit sector or government, and are designed to capitalize on the additional skills set and experience that participants have to offer. NPCA believes that the Public Lands Service Corps Act should encourage greater participation among older Americans, including eligibility for Encore Fellowships or some other means of making transferable education awards available to them, which they can use themselves or transfer to a grandchild. The existing law already provides for AmeriCorps education awards in approved Public Land Corps positions. The addition of an Encore-like provision would ensure that the Public Lands Service Corps tracks the opportunities that are being made available in other national volunteer programs. Importantly, the *More to Give* survey showed “volunteer senior ranger” to be among the most popular volunteer activities for Experienced Americans. When asked what kind of service they would like to do, millions of Experienced Americans chose serving in our national parks.

The Public Lands Service Corps Act clearly contemplates valuable service learning opportunities—an emphasis NPCA strongly supports. Nonetheless, we would also like to see this role further emphasized. Providing for greater participation of experienced Americans, together with the creative deployment of younger participants, creates additional opportunity to enhance service learning capacity and opportunities in national parks. For example, the service corps should be expected to foster the greater use of service-learning projects linked to classroom learning in history, biology and civics. While the authorization contemplates a preference for service learning activities, it should be made clear that such efforts are a central purpose of the service corps, in addition to its important resource protection and restoration mandates. In addition, the law can provide for greater use of service corps participants in serving the public. While NPCA agrees that individuals without sufficient training should not be providing interpretation that should be provided by

experts, it is important to provide a reasonable measure of flexibility in appropriate circumstances.

NPCA also believes that the bill's well-intended restrictions on how service corps participants can engage in interpretation-related activities go a bit too far. We agree that interpretive programs should be conducted by trained professionals, and we support the bill's reference to properly supervised corps members providing orientation and information services, and playing other appropriate interpretive roles. Something that is not apparent from the language of the bill, however, is the degree to which service corps members would be authorized to reach out to schools and afterschool and youth-serving community-based organizations, provided they are properly supervised. Clearly, there is no substitute for trained Park Service personnel. However, the service corps can do more to augment that capacity. Some older members of the corps may very well have training that could be capitalized upon, rather than artificially restricted. In addition, by expanding the breadth of participation for older Americans in this area, H.R. 1612 could further enhance capacity and service. In addition, we suggest that the bill be amended to encourage the use of appropriately trained service corps members for multilingual services to visitors and outreach to diverse communities.

Among the most important elements of the Public Lands Service Corps for the National Park Service is its placement and training provisions. First, as the organization that worked to initiate business planning within the national parks in the late 1990s, we are very pleased to see the consulting intern provision, which placement of graduate students to continue that program, which is now run through a partnership between the National Park Service and the Student Conservation Association. Well-trained consulting interns can provide useful assistance in areas beyond business planning as well, given the increasing demand for highly technical work in a variety of fields within the National Park Service.

Second, the Park Service needs to replace retiring personnel with a high diversity of individuals, in order for the parks to adequately serve an increasingly diverse national community. The Act provides an important means to diversify the ranks of the National Park Service by recruiting and training individuals from a variety of backgrounds. The Act requires the National Park Service and other federal agencies to augment the training corps participants receive from nonprofit partners with appropriate training in resource stewardship, health & safety, ethics for public service, teamwork and leadership, and interpersonal communications. Corps members would also receive instruction about the agency's core values, history, and standards for natural and cultural resource preservation. NPCA wholeheartedly supports these training provisions, as well as providing noncompetitive hiring status for up to two years after completion of service for qualified candidates. We do suggest, however, that the bill be clarified to ensure the contemplated training requirement, in fact, augments rather than replaces the other high quality training participants receive.

Finally, we are pleased that H.R. 1612 increases the prominence of service work related to historic and cultural resources. NPCA strongly believes that national service in our national parks should be sufficiently broad to encompass the tremendous civic, historical, and scientific resources and learning opportunities that our national parks have to offer. H.R. 1612 makes it clear that projects related to history and culture should have a prominent role in service corps efforts, including historical and cultural research, museum curatorial work, oral history projects and other cultural and historic preservation activities. In light of the significant backlog of archival work in the National Park System, we also suggest adding "archival work" to the list of referenced activities. In addition, we suggest that the bill be modified to refer to the "heritage" mission of the National Park Service, in addition to the "public lands" mission.

Mr. Chairman, the end of my written testimony includes several specific recommendations related to the issues I have raised, for the benefit of the committee. NPCA again wishes to thank you for introducing this important legislation, and to offer our assistance as the bill moves through the legislative process. Thank you once again for the opportunity to testify today.

Specific Recommendations

- Purpose Section: Add references to "heritage agencies" in (5) and (6)
- Purpose Section: add "and other" after "conservation" in (5)
- Purpose Section: Expand (6) to read, "help promote public understanding and appreciation of the individual missions and work of the respective land management agencies, through training opportunities, service-learning, community outreach, and other appropriate means"

- Residential Conservation Centers: Clarify the ability to partner with nonprofit service organizations to run the centers, and provide for placement on and outside public lands where appropriate
- Training: Clarify that training established by the Secretary supplements training provided by private sector partners
- Interpretation: Authorize corps participants to conduct appropriately supervised outreach to schools and afterschool and youth-serving community-based organizations
- Interpretation: add multilingual services to list of authorized activities
- Mentors: Expand participation of older Americans beyond what is contemplated in the mentorship section, either by changing overall age eligibility for the corps or through greater leveraging of Volunteers in Parks or Senior Corps. Authorize "Encore Fellowships" with transferrable education awards for participants 55 and older.
- Cultural Resources: Add archival work to list of authorized activities

**STATEMENT OF JOHN REYNOLDS,
COALITION OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RETIREES**

Mr. REYNOLDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Bill Wade sends his personal regards. Thank you for holding this hearing and for inviting the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees to testify. My name is John Reynolds, I am a landscape architect. I am a member of the coalition having served nearly 40 years with the National Park Service, including in positions as Park Superintendent, Regional Director and Deputy Director.

Since retirement, I have served on the boards of directors of the Student Conservation Association and Yosemite National Institutes, both serving young people in parks and other public lands. I currently am retained by the Student Conservation Association as an advisor. Dale is my boss. I am also through the National Parks Conservation Association a contract advisor to the Connecting People and Parks Committee of the National Parks Second Century Commission. Sally is my boss.

Mr. Chairman, I will summarize my testimony and have submitted the full testimony for the record. Today you have brought before us an opportunity to combine some of the very best of American ideals into one very important act, an act that will benefit the nation's treasured lands and which will inspire and empower people who have inherited these lands as either their birth right or as a result of choosing citizenship in this nation.

The National Park Service from its very beginning in 1916 has benefitted greatly from service by individuals to their nation. The service has also seen itself from that time beginning as important in the education of the American people. This act will serve to make the traditions of the service's past even more relevant to the needs of today and the future.

Some have called the national parks the best idea America ever had because of our nation's democratic impulse to save these parks for all of us regardless of who we are or where we are from. Today, the need to provide opportunity to connect Americans in the places they live to the richness of our national parks, public lands and cultural heritage is ever more evident.

This act will be a permanent beneficial bridge between Americans and their nation. This bill is thoughtfully crafted. In my written testimony I list many provisions that the coalition wants especially to support, but which I will not now enumerate. The coalition

wishes by that testimony to help ensure that these provisions are retained when this bill is enacted into law.

The coalition requests that the Committee entertain the following possible additional amendments: 1] agency needs for multilingual front line assistants and qualified assistants in classrooms or outdoor learning programs be specifically included; 2] specific authorization for operation of residential centers by qualified, experienced nonprofit organizations; 3] addition of agency retirees to the mentoring program; 4] provision made for certain older Americans to serve, as well as youths; and 5] experience over the last several years in obtaining approval of a cooperative agreements in many agencies has been very discouraging to nonprofit partners with long, some over 50 years, and productive relationships with agencies.

The enormous time and effort spent with lawyers and contracting officers has meant large outlays of money and time by nonprofit personnel. Agencies have had to waste precious funds and time detracting from their corps missions. This debilitating and detrimental condition still exists. It has the potential to create difficulties in implementation of this act.

Section 206 could be greatly strengthened and efficient implementation materially improved by adding the following language: The Secretary is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements noncompetitively with the Student Conservation Association, conservation corps, or any other qualified nonprofit organizations, to perform any authorized function or purpose of the Department and its bureaus if the agreement will: 1] serve a mutual interest of the parties to the agreement in carrying out the programs administered by the Department; and 2] all parties contribute resources to the accomplishment of these programs.

Both fairness and efficiency can, and need, be achieved. The coalition is deeply appreciative of the work of the Committee and its staff in preparing this bill. The benefits which will accrue to members of the corps, to the national parks, other public lands and to the Nation itself though difficult to quantify are truly important to our entire society.

This bill positively affects the future of our youth and may well contribute to the future of their families. In so doing, it will be the nation, our society and our environment which will benefit from the investments made in the men and women who will have the opportunity of their lifetime. In summary, lives will be more joyful and productive, character will be honed, America will benefit.

The testimony of Marcus and James is the most crucial of all. It is for their future and future generations that this bill is for. The Coalition of National Park Service Retirees is honored to have been asked to testify today, stands ready to assist and looks forward to the enactment of this bill. The coalition strongly and enthusiastically supports it. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Reynolds follows:]

**Statement of John J. Reynolds on behalf of
The Coalition of National Park Service Retirees**

Mr. Chairman and other distinguished Members of the Subcommittee: thank you for holding this hearing on H.R. 1612, the Public Land Corps Service Act of 2009, and for inviting the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees to testify on this

Act. We are deeply appreciative of the opportunity, and of your commitment to this Act.

The Coalition now consists of more than 700 individuals, all former employees of the National Park Service, with more joining us regularly. Together we bring to this hearing over 21,000 years of accumulated experience. Many of us were senior leaders and many received awards for stewardship of our country's natural and cultural resources and making them available to people for their enjoyment. As rangers, executives, park managers, biologists, historians, interpreters, planners and specialists in other disciplines, we devoted our professional lives to maintaining and protecting the national parks for the benefit of all Americans—those now living and those yet to be born. In our personal lives we come from a broad spectrum of political affiliations and we count among our members four former Directors or Deputy Directors of the National Park Service, twenty-three former Regional Directors or Deputy Regional Directors, twenty-eight former Associate or Assistant Directors and over one hundred and seventy former Park Superintendents or Assistant Superintendents; as well as a large number of other former employees, including seasonal employees.

I am a member of the Coalition, having served nearly 40 years with the National Park Service including in positions as park superintendent, regional director and deputy director. Since retirement I have served on the Boards of Directors of the Student Conservation Association (SCA) and Yosemite National Institutes, both serving young people in parks and other public lands. I currently am retained by SCA as an advisor.

The National Park Service, from its very beginning in 1916 has benefited greatly from service by individuals to their nation. The Service has also seen itself from that same beginning as important in the education of the American people. This Act will serve to make the traditions of the Service's past even more relevant to the needs of today and the future.

Our nation finds itself today working to address many crisis—environmental, economic and educational among them. It is also a time in our history when young people have often grown up with little opportunity for connection to either the outdoors or to our common history. Nor has personal service to the nation been at the forefront of the lives of most of them. Yet, today, you have brought before us an opportunity to combine some of the very best of American ideals into one very important Act, an Act that will benefit the national parks and other public lands. In addition, it will inspire and empower people who have inherited these same lands as either their birthright or as a result of choosing citizenship in this nation.

Some have called the national parks “The Best Idea America Ever Had.” It has been labeled so not because of the wonderful natural, scenic, historic or recreational resources which comprise the parks, but because of our nation's democratic impulse to save these parks for all of us, regardless of who we are or where we are from. Today, the need to provide meaningful opportunity to connect Americans in the places they live to the richness of our national parks, public lands and waters and cultural heritage is ever more evident. This Act will be a permanent, beneficial bridge between Americans and their nation.

The National Park Service has valued the service of the members of the Public Land Corps since the Corps' inception. It has been a natural marriage of ideals held dear in our nation—preservation of the finest of our patrimony combined with service and opportunity for education which will further benefit both the individual and the nation for years beyond the service given.

This bill, H.R. 1612, is an excellent bill. Its enactment with a few amendments will provide important assistance to the National Park Service as it carries out its mission in the future.

The Coalition wants especially to support the following provisions in the bill, and wishes by this testimony to help ensure that they are included in the ensuing public law when it is finally enacted:

1. The amendments to Sec. 202(a) and 202(b) which recognize the equality of importance of work relating both to natural and cultural resources. Our national patrimony as included in the National Park System and other public lands is comprised of both, and both are important to our national fabric.
2. The amendments Sections 202(a)(4) and (5), which recognize and elucidate the value of national service to the participants themselves and the potential benefits to communities.
3. The amendment at Section 204(b) extending the service time to up to two years.
4. The amendments adding Section 202(b)(5) which recognizes the importance of seeking participants from diverse backgrounds and (6) which promotes public appreciation of the work of federal land, coastal and ocean management agencies.

5. The amendment of the definition in Section 203 to expand the inclusiveness of the kinds of projects that are appropriate under this Act.
 6. The amendment that expands the definition of "public lands" in Section 203.
 7. The amendments which add the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the Department of Commerce to the coverage of this Act, and specifically referencing "the National Marine Sanctuary System, coral reefs, and other coastal, estuarine and marine habitats", all of which are important to the success of the mission of the National Park Service.
 8. The amendments in Section 204 which relate to recruitment and training. It is highly commendable that the committee has included the requirements that training standards include, in addition to resource stewardship and health and safety, ethics, teamwork, leadership, and interpersonal communications as hallmarks for future civic responsibility of participants in the Public Land Corps, and that participants understand the history, core values and management policies and standards of the agency for which they are providing service.
 9. The amendments at Section 205(f) relating to the use of mentors from agency programs, veterans groups, military retirees and active duty personnel.
 10. The amendment adding Section 206(a)(2) authorizing "consulting interns" is of great value to the National Park Service. Internships and volunteerism have long been primarily related to physical labor kinds of work, which has been appropriate and remains necessary. However, as management of national parks and other public lands and waters has matured over the years, the need for highly educated, intellectual work has increased dramatically in all fields. The specific recognition of that essential need through the authorization of "consulting interns" in this legislation is to be commended.
 11. The amendment at Section 206(b)(2) authorizing implementation of the recruitment and placement requirements of carrying out the provisions of this Act through the use of qualified nonprofit organizations is crucial to effectively finding and placing highly qualified, diverse participants.
- The Coalition requests the Committee to entertain possible additional amendments, as follows:
1. Section 204: The Coalition is mindful that older Americans may wish to provide service and acquire educational opportunity which they may not previously have had. Therefore, the Coalition suggests that provision be made for older Americans to serve as well as youth.
 2. Section 204: The national parks, and other public lands agencies, need front line individuals who are multilingual. They also need well qualified people to assist in classroom or outdoor learning programs. The Coalition suggests that these needs be recognized in the final legislation by specific mention of them in the Interpretation or Visitor Services subsections.
 3. Section 205: The Coalition suggests that the legislation should specifically authorize operation of residential centers by qualified, experienced nonprofit organizations, such as the Student Conservation Association.
 4. Section 205(f): The Coalition suggests that the committee add authorization of the use of agency retirees to the mentoring program authorized in this section, noting that the Coalition of NPS Retirees could help facilitate recruitment of such mentors from its membership.
 5. Experience over the last several years in obtaining approval of cooperative agreements in many agencies has been discouraging, at best, to a wide array of nonprofit partners with long and productive relationships with agencies. The enormous time and effort spent with lawyers and contracting officers has meant large outlays of money and time by nonprofit personnel. Similarly, agencies have had to use precious funds and time themselves that could have been used for more productive purposes. This condition has operated to the detriment of the missions of both the nonprofit partners and the agencies. This situation still exists and has the potential to create difficulties in implementation of this Act. The Coalition suggests, therefore, that Section 206 of the legislation could be greatly strengthened and the efficient implementation of the Act materially improved by adding the following language:
 "The Secretary is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements non-competitively with the Student Conservation Association or any other qualified nonprofit organization to perform any authorized function or purpose of the Department and its bureaus, if the agreement will: (1) serve a mutual interest of the parties to the agreement in carrying out the programs administered by the department; and (2) all parties contribute resources to the accomplishment of these programs."

In addition, the Act could be strengthened, when contracting is needed, by directing the Secretary to use efficient sole source acquisition methods when the Secretary can demonstrate that there is only one organization qualified to do the job required.

The Committee could also help insure that unnecessary and unduly burdensome acquisition procedures not be imposed in carrying out the provisions of this Act by writing report language clearly specifying the intent of the Committee (and ultimately the Congress) in these regards. It is the experience of the Coalition that contracting officers and agency attorneys often opt for the most complex approaches rather than the using those that are most efficient, while ensuring fairness to all.

The foregoing listing of exemplary benefits to the national parks and other public lands agencies is not exhaustive. This initial bill is exceptionally well written, and the Coalition is deeply appreciative of the work of the Committee and its staff in preparing it.

The benefits which will accrue to the national parks, to the other public lands, to the participants in the Corps and to the nation itself are difficult to quantify. They are, however, truly important, and will run through our entire society. As others are testifying, young people today are in a unique and not entirely favorable situation. The opportunity inherent in this bill greatly affects their future, and may well contribute to the future of their families. In so doing, it will be the nation, our society and our environment which will benefit the most from the investments made in the young men and women who will have the opportunity of their lifetime as a result of this bill. The national parks will benefit greatly, as will the other public lands. Such benefit will not accrue only in the short term of each Corps member's service, but in the long term as well. In summary, lives will be more joyful and productive, character will be honed, America will benefit.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Committee's inspired action to support both national service and the public lands, including the national parks, through this bill, H.R. 1612. The Coalition of National Park Service Retirees is honored to have been asked to testify today, stands ready to assist your efforts in this regard in any way which we can, and looks forward to the enactment of this bill.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Thank all of you for your comments. Let me begin with you, if I may, Mr. Reynolds. Among the amendments that the coalition suggested is the one to make it possible for older Americans, as well as youth, to serve in the Public Lands Service Corps. We accomplish that how? Would you suggest that we keep any mention of a target age out of the legislation or continue to have that target age of 16 to 25 as still part of the legislation?

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that we keep the target age, but in addition, add opportunities for older Americans who had never had the opportunity to go on to school to be able to qualify under certain circumstances. We would be more than willing to help work on trying to define what that means.

Mr. GRIJALVA. OK. Thank you. We look forward to that discussion. The intent is that target age but I think your point is well-taken about the mentoring and the possibility of some cross-generational understanding that we need very desperately as well, and so your point is well-taken. I look forward to discussing that point with you.

Mr. REYNOLDS. Thank you.

Mr. GRIJALVA. I know, Ms. Jewell, you have to get going to catch—

Ms. JEWELL. I am OK for now.

Mr. GRIJALVA. OK. I was going to ask Mr. Childress a question, if I may. Thank you for your comments and sharing your experiences with us. Chairman of the full Committee, Mr. Rahall, is unable to be here. He wanted to make sure that I extended his welcome to you. Beckley is his home town also, and he asked me to extend his best wishes. The New River Gorge National Park is also

very near and dear to the Chairman. He welcomes you, and he said it is good to have a hometown boy in the house, so he is happy.

You know, you mentioned your two brothers as part of the discussion, I think. Do you think your siblings, and I am going to ask the same question to all of you, watching you going through this program and the experience that you have gone through with the corps, what effect has it had on them?

Mr. CHILDRESS. The effect it has on them is back then they looked at me as somebody to look up to during our hard time, and now that I have been in the corps, they are looking at me now like, hey, I could actually look up to him and do something with my life instead of being here like many other children.

I think through this corps it is going to help my two brothers learn that there is more out there than just sitting inside playing video games all day, which, I mean, it is not bad, but sometimes we have to go outside and do stuff, and learn to work, and learn responsibility and put with teamwork. So I am thinking by me doing this it is showing them that there is something outside of just sitting in the house all day.

Mr. GRIJALVA. After you complete your college education, do you see yourself pursuing a career in the National Park Service public land area?

Mr. CHILDRESS. After I finish I want to attend the military, but outside of that, I want to still help outside national park and everything and help pursue in the Public Lands Corps if that is able to me to be able to help them.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. Ms. Prouty, I understand that many corps members do not work full-time because, you know, they can't afford to or prefer not to go too far from home. This is one of the critical populations that we hope to capture with this legislation, as you know. Do you have any concerns that the preferential hiring language requiring 960 hours of service might be a disincentive to some members that would want to participate? If so, do you have any suggestions about how to deal with that concern?

Ms. PROUTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a concern for us. I would say that all of our corps are full-time, but they are for varying lengths of time. So some are a short number of weeks or months so that getting to the 960 hours is not possible for them. I would really appreciate the opportunity for us to work with you to think about whether there is a tiered opportunity within the noncompetitive hire which for lesser number of hours.

Many of our young people would be qualified for entry-level jobs that would not be ready for more advanced positions with Federal agencies, so we appreciate the chance to work with you on that.

Mr. GRIJALVA. OK. Just a quick follow-up. In your testimony you list a very impressive list of achievement of the service corps. Just for the sake of my understanding, what do you think of the program? Is it a land management program? Is it a human resource development program? Is it an intervention program for at risk kids? I mention that because it is rare to have something as successful having all those ingredients. If you were to classify it or put a definition on it, what would it be?

Ms. PROUTY. Well, it would be all of the above. It is interesting, we have wonderful corps that have college students, college grad-

uates, SCA and a number of others. We also have corps that are fully concentrated on young people who are not making it in their community. We have corps that concentrate on young people who have been formerly incarcerated and Court involved.

So we have two areas in which we feel strongly about evaluation and one is in member development, and it is member development based on the point of entry, and the other is impact in the community and the environment. We see corps as unique to the communities in which they live and breathe. They have grown up in communities, they are different and they set their own standards for enrollment. We see benefit across the board, and most dramatic benefit in terms of education and workforce development is for those who come in at a much lower level.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Let me thank you for your comments today. Also, Mr. Hendricks, let me follow-up and thank you as well for being here and sharing your experiences with us. Let me follow-up on the question that I asked Mr. Childress. When you are done with the career goal that you have to finish college do you see park service, public lands service as potentially a career down the road?

Mr. HENDRICKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I initially intend to be a medical doctor once I graduate and also have my mechanical engineering degree to be a source of education where I can do some research in space propulsion since that is another big interest of mine. However, I don't intend to be a medical doctor—

Mr. GRIJALVA. However.

Mr. HENDRICKS.—and an engineer forever. It would be nice to be able to find a quiet job working in a national or a state park as I get to my gray years. And to also answer your earlier question of my siblings being inspired by the work I do—

Mr. GRIJALVA. Yes?

Mr. HENDRICKS.—my sister is interested in working with the SCA. It is going to be hard convincing her that she can work with the SCA and have a fun summer instead of doing something else and earning money to pay for an iPod, for example. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Mr. Penny, your suggestion that the legislation potentially could go further, you know, to fund local training programs, city/county parks, I am assuming you would include state parks in that example.

Mr. PENNY. Right.

Mr. GRIJALVA. What role do you envision then for the Federal government in this more collaborative effort that you are suggesting?

Mr. PENNY. Well, thank you for the question, and, yes, I do. What we have found is that one of the great things about young people in urban centers is that they are more drawn to conserve their own land than they are to go onto Federal lands. I think all of the bureaus, all of the agencies are going to help diversify their workforce and represent and be friendly to diverse populations. We need to find some way to extend the reach beyond the park boundaries and into communities.

So what we see is collaborating with organizations, like SCA, the various conservation corps, and seeking matching funds, and if the Federal government could help provide training programs for

young people once they have gone through a certain level of program in their local community, if the Park Service, for instance, would then provide those students with a secondary experience on the Federal lands then help them qualify for preferential hiring, then I think we could more readily attract more diverse young people into Federal lands and public lands.

Mr. GRIJALVA. I have completely gone way over the time before they call us to vote again, but in going way over time I have been neglectful of my two colleagues that are here as well. One more question. Ms. Jewell, you talked about the need for experienced folk to be part of the corp.

Ms. JEWELL. Correct.

Mr. GRIJALVA. How do you envision this process? Is that a training capacity, mentoring capacity or participant capacity?

Ms. JEWELL. Well, it could be all of the above but I was thinking of it in terms of a participant capacity, and I will give you some great examples. REI's oldest employee is 92, our youngest employee is 16. Our 92 year old employee works on the sales floor in Reno, Nevada, and there isn't a service project that that store does out in the community that Mountain Bob, our 92 year old, isn't a part of.

I think what we have found, and this is true when we work outdoors with, for example, Earth Corps or the Washington Trails Association, you frequently have experienced Americans working alongside young people and the richness of exchange is amazing. So I would say it is at a participant capacity, but you also have skills that have been learned over a lifetime that can be applied and so it could also be in training. We see that at both ends.

Mr. GRIJALVA. I will follow-up on another question, we would like to get it in writing for the Committee, having to do with the issue of flexibility in a schedule, because I try to accommodate both participant, experienced folk as part of the corps, and I am glad. I think that age mixture is good, and when Dr. Hendricks retires there will be a place for him in the corps. Let me now turn to Ms. Bordallo for any questions. Thank you for being patient.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity. I want to thank all the witnesses here. I was very interested in listening to your statements, and I especially enjoyed hearing the testimonies of Marcus and James. You know, when you think about it, programs like these can make such a difference in your life.

I speak to students about careers on many occasions and I always say what you have in mind may not be in your earlier years what you really are going to end up doing. It may even have something to do with someone you married. I married a politician so that is why I am here today. I truly appreciate, you know, all of the volunteers and what they are doing in this program.

Mr. Chairman, I applaud you for sponsoring this bill. I want to ask the young men first, what do we need to have in this program to make it as attractive as possible to the young people? How do we go about doing outreach? Advertising? I mean, are we doing enough? So I will begin with you, Marcus.

Mr. HENDRICKS. Sure. Thank you. I think that one great way to reach young people is to provide an incentive. A lot of young people

are interested in being independent, and one way that they can be independent is to have their own source of money.

Now, I also think that a lot of people are interested in working in public lands for the betterment of their community in order to improve the lands as they are or to create a sense of community responsibility to take care of the national environment that they live in, and I think there is a lot more that you can do than to just give students money.

You can also in terms of advertising reach out to a lot of high school students because high school students are looking forward to going to college, and they also have to face that decision what are they going to do with the next, 40, 50, 60 years of their life? If you start marketing to them when they are in their sophomore or junior year when they are making the decisions about where they want to go to college and what they want to do, then that is when you can——

Ms. BORDALLO. So perhaps this legislation should address that, Mr. Chairman, as well as to do a little more marketing for this program so that, you know, now these students, their siblings know about it, but how do we outreach to the rest? James, do you have any comments on that?

Mr. CHILDRESS. Yes. Just like Marcus said, the same thing. I have a brother that is about to graduate high school and so by me being in this he is wanting to do the same thing. It is a way to be independent, too, and make sure he is going on the right path, like I am. So by advertising this out to younger students, especially from their sophomore year, if we get to them now, there is a better chance that they will probably change their whole career outlook and the rest of their life.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you, thank you. Now, I have question for Mr. Penny. H.R. 1612 would amend the Public Lands Corps Act to allow the United States Fish & Wildlife Service to participate as an eligible bureau under the Public Lands Corps Act. Now, I believe this is a very excellent idea. As you may be aware, two other separate laws facilitate the contributions of volunteers at our national wildlife refuges and at our national fish hatcheries.

Through these two laws, one is the National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Act and the other is the National Fish Hatcheries Systems Volunteer Act, now, the Fish & Wildlife Service has established nearly 190 friend organizations through these programs. The service also has received thousands of hours of invaluable volunteer labor and in kind services which have helped alleviate cut backs in Federal staff levels at our refuges and hatcheries.

My questions are: has your organization ever provided any volunteers to support operations at our national wildlife refuges or the national fish hatcheries, and, if not, is there some impediment preventing it? The second question is do you anticipate that the passage of H.R. 1612 will make it easier for your organization to place volunteers within the refuge and hatchery systems?

Mr. PENNY. Well, thank you for the question, and the response is, yes, we have worked with the Fish & Wildlife Service on numerous occasions for many years. SCA has had a cooperative agreement with Fish & Wildlife Service for about the last 30 years. So

the only thing that keeps us from doing more of it is money and the authority for them to work more closely with us and other youth serving organizations.

I think it is an absolutely fabulous inclusion to have Fish & Wildlife Service as a part of this. I might also say that also having NOAA and Commerce involved with this is really important.

What we do know is that increasing numbers of young people, particularly college students, are very interested in serving on our shore lands, and marine sanctuaries and marine lands, and so the more we can do with both Fish & Wildlife Service and NOAA, the more opportunities and the more young people will be interested in being involved. So I think that is an excellent inclusion.

Ms. BORDALLO. Very good, and I do agree. One last question, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PENNY. Ma'am, may I just respond to the question you asked Marcus and James?

Ms. BORDALLO. Yes.

Mr. PENNY. I would say the best way to recruit more young people into working on public lands is to get young people out talking to them. I would say the best way to do that is to work with cooperating organizations, like SCA, like the various corps, and get their members visiting schools and sharing their experience. It is not those of us with gray hairs that recruit them or even a green and gray uniform with the Park Service, it is somebody that shares their experience and their age.

Ms. BORDALLO. I agree. I agree with that wholeheartedly. One last question, and this could be Ms. Prouty or Mr. Penny. Do your organizations have any programs on Guam or in any of the other insular areas, and, if not, what can we do to get SCA and corps volunteers in the Guam National Wildlife Refuge?

Mr. PENNY. Well, I can respond. On occasion we have had some college interns serving in Guam and also in the Virgin Islands. We certainly work with the parks in the Virgin Islands there, and we would like to do more.

Ms. BORDALLO. Good. Well, I would certainly like to invite you to do more.

Ms. PROUTY. And we would like to work with you to do more, and we have not.

Ms. BORDALLO. I have been assured by the Chairman that the territories are included in this legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you, and thank you for those suggestions, Ms. Bordallo. I think the issue of outreach and how it is done and the importance of that is important and the insular areas and territories to be included in the overall scope of the legislation as vital, and necessary and fair, and thank you for both of those. Mr. Inslee?

Mr. INSLEE. Thank you, and particularly thanks to Dale Penny and Sally Prouty for your help with developing a clean energy corps which is a somewhat allied effort. We really appreciate it. We think we have a good product. We have a suite of these opportunities for young people now, so whatever their vision is, they can take advantage of it.

I want to ask Sally Jewell, and welcome her as a leader in our community in Washington State, and she has been a very successful business leader in a variety of contexts, and I just wonder, Sally, if you can give us any thoughts about if you were looking at this from a business perspective, do you have any suggestions on how to operate these particular endeavors? Do you have any suggestions, any criticisms? You certainly know how to run an operation, so if you have any thoughts, I would solicit them.

Ms. JEWELL. Thanks, Congressman. I have a lot of suggestions, and I will make them brief. REI engages with lots of nonprofit organizations. We are very, very committed to supporting our public lands. SCA and many of the members of the corps network are organizations that we work closely with. I would say that while they are very committed to their work, they are always short of money.

It is not uncommon for them to run into bureaucracy when they work on public lands. I think one of the things that could be facilitated to help move these things forward is a clear commitment on the part of the public agencies from all the ones that have been mentioned, certainly national parks, but U.S. Forest Service, Fish & Wildlife Service, NOAA and so on, to really help create a supportive infrastructure to bring in organizations that are very, very effective in engaging young people, and older people, in service, as well as volunteers.

So I think that you end up with national park superintendents and national forest supervisors who are really supportive in some cases, and in other cases it is more difficult to bring the volunteer resources to bear I think sometimes because of the challenges they face within their own agencies.

Mr. INSLEE. This may be a little controversial, but we might want to think about specific appropriations and allocations for volunteer infrastructure. You know, to get volunteers in, you have to have the personnel to organize, supervise, recruit. Maybe that is something we can think about more in the appropriation side of this. Let me ask you, my son works for a group called Outdoors for All. They take people with challenges, quadriplegics and blind people, skiing and kayaking. It is a pretty amazing group.

Would this bill allow folks to essentially be detailed to organizations like that, or at least work arm in arm with them? How flexible would this allow these corps to be? It is an open question to anyone. I see Dale Penny shaking his head. Do you have any thoughts about that, Dale?

Mr. PENNY. Sure. We would like to be able to include groups like that for appropriate level of work to be done. I think you would have to be very clear about where they could work and what is appropriate from a risk management point of view, but I think it should be open to all of those groups.

Mr. INSLEE. Yes. I was thinking actually more of the question of the relationship between these volunteers, these corps members, with nonprofits. In other words, can you actually sort of lend out a person on this corps to a nonprofit organization like this for a week or a month or under their supervision?

Mr. PENNY. Sure.

Mr. INSLEE. Is that workable? Does the statute as we have drafted it allow sufficient flexibility in that regard?

Ms. PROUTY. Thank you for the question, and thank you for your leadership from Community Service Corps. We owe you big time. We appreciate you. If the money from the bill is in fact as I understand it for projects, and if the cooperative agreement with the corps is to complete a particular project or a series of projects, then the corps would have to be focused on those projects. So it sounds to me like the line of reasoning that you are engaged in might not sit or we might need to think about that.

We, both Bill and I, have corps around the country who have individual placements of members doing particular work, but it is different from what we would normally see in a public lands corps, project funded corps.

Mr. INSLEE. Well, I might actually ask the staff to help me look at that issue because I think it is a force multiplier when we can get these groups working. Sally, did you have any thought?

Ms. JEWELL. Well, I was just going to make a comment. I think that the legislation to do that and the public service acts that passed recently accommodate some of what you are discussing. What this is specifically looking at is really around public lands, which weren't explicitly called out in the earlier legislation, so I do think that there is a benefit of focus that Chairman Grijalva has put into this legislation around public lands because the need is so great.

I think if you go back to the testimony of Will Shafroth a little bit earlier, he talked about, you know, the opportunity not just, say, in a national park, but all the way down to city parks and public lands. It is a great way to engage people in public service close to where they live.

In my conversation with James as we were waiting for the session to start, you know, a lot of his work, he stays at home and he goes to the site during the day and then he comes back, and I think that really addresses these kinds of opportunities and service learning close to home as well as more remote destinations, like SCA does. I think that the GIVE Act and the equivalent act in the other body do help address what you are talking about. That is my understanding.

Mr. INSLEE. Yes. I appreciate it. Mr. Reynolds?

Mr. REYNOLDS. May I return to a comment that Sally Jewell made about the bureaucratic hurdles to be overcome to get through some of these things? There is an example at the Fish & Wildlife Service and it is the creation of a new agreement with the SCA. Took less than six months. It went very quickly. It was very easy.

As a counterpart, and the Fish & Wildlife Service has specific legislation that allows for cooperative agreements so it doesn't have to have the same interpretations of solicitors and contracting officers that the Park Service is faced with because it doesn't have the similar legislation. The Park Service agreement, which should be done in about a month, has been going on for two years, 11 months, and it is still counting to get this agreement.

The reason I made the recommendation in my testimony about legislation was to eliminate that kind of bottleneck for all of the agencies. It is not because the agencies don't want to make things happen, it is because the advisors to the agencies in contracting and attorneys have different interpretations of law. If we want this

act and other cooperative acts to get used in the parks and the other public lands to work efficiently, these authorities need to be addressed.

Mr. INSLEE. Well, I know many would seek to outlaw attorneys in this country but I do not favor that approach. Being one, and being proudly a lawyer, a won't favor that issue.

Mr. REYNOLDS. Fish & Wildlife Service has an excellent approach at authorities.

Mr. INSLEE. I appreciate that. Just, I really want to thank Mr. Hendricks and Mr. Childress for being here. You guys are exactly what we had in mind, and it is just wonderful to see your futures developing. I want to give you a warning, though. I know a couple guys who were involved in SCA and doing this kind of work. One of them ended up a very wealthy investment banker and one ended up a congressman, so you have to be careful when you get into these things. I am giving you warnings about that. Good luck. Thank you.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you, Mr. Inslee. Mr. Holt?

Mr. HOLT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I commend you and Mr. Rahall for pursuing this legislation. I am pleased to have worked to get national parks included in the recent volunteer service legislation. All of you have spoken about how much the potential is, in fact, Sally Prouty specifically said potential exists in today's young people. I would like to look from the other side what the potential is.

Sally Jewell I know heard the Secretary of the Interior say just last night that he would like to greatly increase the volunteer opportunities in the parks. I wanted to get some idea of what is the upper limit? What could the system absorb? How large scale might we go to? Perhaps you have covered this already in today's hearing, but I think it is an important enough question it wouldn't hurt covering it again.

Ms. JEWELL. Well, let me take a stab at it, and I am sure Sally Prouty and Dale perhaps would have things to add as well. In the hundreds of organizations that REI—

Mr. GRIJALVA. If I may just, and not to interrupt, well, yes, I guess it is—

Ms. JEWELL. You are the Chairman.

Mr. GRIJALVA. We have been called to a vote. We have about five, six minutes, so as we wrap up, I am just urging you to be as succinct as you can.

Mr. HOLT. Yes. I mean, if you can just give us your estimate in a sentence to why.

Ms. JEWELL. Well, I would say that the potential is hundreds of thousands, and I will say why, and that is because right now many, many programs are being cut and there is infrastructure and the people in the organizations ready to step forward but they don't have funding right now to be able to do it. So I think it could be enlarged dramatically.

Ms. PROUTY. I would say that we have recently been in communication when working with Department of the Interior, and we have given them basic information around the 200,000 number. So those discussions would be continuing obviously and they are not hard and fast, but that is the number we are thinking.

Mr. PENNY. I would agree with both. The capacity of all of the organizations collectively is huge if the money is there to support the buildup of that capacity and the young people are there. I think that is important, too.

Mr. HOLT. Thank you. I wish we could continue the discussion. Again, I commend the Chair for pursuing this legislation.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. So let me thank all of you for being here. It has been very informative with some very good suggestions. We will follow up with you on them. In terms of the legislation, it is a vehicle—a vehicle to promote the three things that I asked the question about: intervention in one area, human resource development in another, and our public lands. That is the intent of the legislation, to try to accomplish those three—as some of the fine organizations that are here have been doing for a long time.

We look forward to moving this legislation ahead, and with the input of my colleagues as well as from you, I think we will have a good vehicle for accomplishing those three goals. So thank you very much. Very informative and a good hearing. Thank you. The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:50 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

