What is a Corps?

Service & Conservation Corps (Corps) provide young adults and veterans the opportunity to serve their country, advance their education and obtain in-demand skills. Serving in crews and individual placements, Corpsmembers perform important conservation, recreation, infrastructure, wildfire, disaster response, and community development service projects on public lands and in rural and urban communities. Corps enroll over 25,000 youth and veterans annually in all 50 states and DC, Puerto Rico, and American Samoa.

Corpsmembers work on important projects that...

- ensure productive fish and wildlife habitats
- increase access to public lands and waters
- improve recreational opportunities, enhance multi-use trails
- restore communities after disasters and prevent wildfires
- remediate and prevent invasive species
- address the maintenance backlog on public lands
- create and maintain urban parks and recreational spaces
- mitigate the threat of future disasters

What is the 21CSC?

The 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) is a public-private partnership that engages young Americans and returning veterans in service to strengthen our infrastructure and public lands, boost local economies, and multiply returns on our country’s most valuable assets – it’s unmatched landscapes and people.

The bipartisan 21CSC is supported by the past four Secretaries of Interior (two Democrats and two Republicans) and has been supported by private sector businesses such as KEEN, the North Face, American Eagle Outfitters, Thule, REI, and Coca-Cola. In addition, there are over 80 different national and regional corporations and organizations supporting 21CSC, including the Outdoor Industry Association, the Vet Voice Foundation, the American Recreation Coalition, and the National Parks Conservation Association.

The 21CSC is an easy-to-implement solution to America's aging infrastructure and public lands needs. It also develops the next generation of outdoor stewards, recreationists, sportsmen and women, and resource managers. While gaining in-demand skills through service, Corpsmembers build respect for our country, hard work, and the outdoors.

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

The Western Governors’ Association
The 21CSC Act

The no-cost 21CSC Act would simply update existing law to reflect this new effort to put thousands more youth and veterans to work on public lands, waterways, and our cultural heritage sites across the country.

The 21CSC Act will enable Corps to build rural and urban economies, strengthen America’s infrastructure, provide opportunities for thousands of Americans to serve our country, and modernize the way government works.

Bipartisan Movement on 21CSC Act

The bipartisan 21CSC Act was introduced in the U.S. Senate (S.1403) and House of Representatives (H.R. 2987) In June 2017. The bill was introduced in the Senate by Sens. John McCain (R-AZ), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), and Tom Udall (D-NM). It was introduced in the House by Reps. Martha McSally (R-AZ), Seth Moulton (D-MA), Scott Tipton (R-CO), and Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ). The 21CSC Act was previously introduced in the Senate in 2015 by Sens. McCain and Bennett, and in the House in 2016 by Reps. McSally and Moulton. Now Secretary of the Interior, Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-MT) was a co-sponsor of the 2016 House bill.

The 21CSC Act would:

• Give relevant federal agencies and departments enhanced, and less burdensome, ability to engage Corps through public-private partnerships to complete pressing projects.
• Encourage coordination across the federal government to identify ways agencies can leverage existing resources to expand partnerships with Corps to meet their missions in a cost effective manner.
• Participating Agencies and Departments: the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Transportation, Defense, Veterans Affairs, Labor, Energy, and NOAA, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and Corporation for National and Community Service.
• Ensure efficiency, cost effectiveness and avoid duplication with GAO reporting requirements on outcomes and performance.
• Engage disconnected youth, native youth, and veterans. Corpsmembers gain in-demand skills, earn a wage or stipend, and gain career pathway tools like non-competitive hiring.

By more efficiently allocating limited resources and using innovative funding strategies, including private support and crowd-sourcing, the goal of growing the 21CSC to 100,000 youth and veterans will be accomplished with existing funding.

How land & water managers benefit from Corps

• 1,498 nationwide Corps project partners evaluated the work that Conservation Corps completed in 2012. 90% rated the quality of work as “good or outstanding.”
• Virtually all federal project partners (99.6%) said they would work with Corps again.
• The National Park Service commissioned a cost evaluation which found that engaging a Corps resulted in a cost savings to the agency of more than 50%.