FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Corps Network Celebrates Biden Administration Executive Order Establishing a Civilian Climate Corps. Urges Inclusion and Opportunity for Historically Underserved Communities.

National Association of Service and Conservation Corps stands ready to assist the Administration in providing work opportunities, engaging Americans in addressing climate change, building community resiliency.

WASHINGTON, DC – The Corps Network, the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, applauds President Joseph R. Biden’s establishment of a Civilian Climate Corps initiative through an executive order, signed yesterday, January 27, 2021.

Specifically, the executive order directs the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to develop a strategy to mobilize the next generation of conservation workers to restore public lands and waters, increase access to outdoor recreation, improve community resilience, and more broadly address climate change.

U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.):
“There is so much work we need to do to tackle the climate crisis and to rebuild our country. During times of crisis, Americans have always embraced service to their nation. As an AmeriCorps alum, I know first-hand that there is no venture more rewarding than working to improve the lives of those around us. This is an opportunity to mobilize the next generation of conservation workers. We will be a stronger country if we both ask Americans to serve and give them meaningful opportunities to do so.”

Mary Ellen Sprenkel, President and CEO, The Corps Network:
“On behalf of the national Corps community, I extend deep appreciation to President Biden for recognizing the critical role Service and Conservation Corps can play in helping our country address national challenges such as climate change, unemployment, and racial inequity.”
During the Great Depression, President Roosevelt’s Civilian Conservation Corps provided millions of young men the opportunity to develop skills and earn a paycheck through responding to environmental crises such as erosion, flooding, and wildfires. Their work created outdoor infrastructure still used today. For decades, state and local Corps programs across the country have continued this spirit, annually engaging thousands of diverse young Americans in projects to improve the environment and build more resilient communities. Unlike the CCC of the 1930s, however, today’s Corps are community-based, modeled on public-private partnerships, and provide equal opportunity to women, people of color, and other historically underrepresented populations in the outdoors.

Building on the existing national network of community-based Corps programs, the Civilian Climate Corps initiative offers an opportunity to not only address climate change, but address racial inequity through providing opportunities for young people of color in communities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and decades of environmental injustice.”

Tonya Gayle, Executive Director, Green City Force, Brooklyn, NY:
“Green City Force is thrilled to see the Biden Administration take action to build a Civilian Climate Corps. Investment in young people, particularly young people in frontline communities that are hardest hit by economic, environmental, and racial inequities, is a necessary and viable path towards justice. Urban Conservation Corps such as Green City Force and others are proven service and workforce models that provide a platform for real systems change. More investment in growing and replicating these smart city solutions is a much needed and important start to national recovery and economic mobility for millions of Americans.”

Jono McKinney, President and CEO, Montana Conservation Corps, Bozeman, MT:
“We celebrate the President’s vision to mobilize a new generation of Americans to strengthen the resilience of our country and our sense of common purpose. Young people are eager to step forward to the frontlines of conservation service to combat the climate crisis in practical ways. By serving to mitigate wildfire risks, increase ecosystem resilience, protect watershed health, combat the spread of invasive species, and ensure safe access on public lands, youth are finding hope and purpose and gaining skills as leaders and effective citizens to solve our nation’s problems.”

In December 2020, The Corps Network released a proposal for how to scale the existing Corps community to engage 500,000 diverse young people and recent veterans over the next five years to complete conservation, clean energy, resilience, and
sustainable infrastructure projects. The Corps Network proposes a model in which projects will be completed through public-private partnerships between various agencies and existing and new community-based Corps. The proposal emphasizes that investments in expanding Corps should be equitable, with a focus on intentionally enrolling and supporting women, young people of color, urban and rural youth, and others from historically disenfranchised communities.

Established in 1985, The Corps Network provides leadership and support to more than 130 Corps programs across the United States. Corps are community-based organizations that engage young adults (generally ages 16 – 25) and veterans (up to age 35) in service projects that address conservation and community needs. Through a term of service, Corps participants – or “Corpsmembers” – gain work experience and develop in-demand skills. Corpsmembers are compensated with a stipend or living allowance and often receive an education award or scholarship upon completing their service. Additionally, Corps provide participants educational programming, mentoring, and access to career and personal counseling.

Collectively, Corps annually enroll roughly 25,000 young people. Through partnerships with local, state and federal resource managers, Corps complete a range of projects. Among other projects, Corps help restore habitats; build outdoor recreation infrastructure; grow fresh food in under-resourced communities; install energy and water-saving retrofits in low-income homes; preserve historic structures; respond to wildfires and other natural disasters; and mitigate the threat of future disasters. In 2019, Corps restored more than 1.4 million acres of habitat, planted more than 1 million trees, treated nearly 67,000 acres of invasive species, and built or improved more than 13,300 miles of trails.

In 2020, Corps across the United States shifted their project priorities to help communities respond to COVID-19. Among other efforts, Corps have helped operate food pantries, deliver necessities to the homebound, distribute emergency medical supplies, and set up temporary medical facilities.

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**The Corps Network**
The Corps Network, the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, provides leadership and support to over 130 Corps across the United States. Through advocacy, and providing Corps access to funding opportunities and expert guidance, The Corps Network annually enables 25,000 Corpsmembers to strengthen communities, improve the environment and transform their lives through service. To learn more about The Corps Network, please visit [www.corpsnetwork.org](http://www.corpsnetwork.org).