JULY 2026

THE COURIER

FOREST SERVICE JOB CORPS CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CENTERS

Creating the Next Generation of Conservation Stewards



Forest Service Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers posted strong results in the final Program Year 2025 Outcome Measurement System rankings. Off-center work-based learning was a particular strength, with several Forest Service centers placing among the nation's top performers.

OUR CENTERS DELIVER

Final Program Year 2025 Outcome Measurement System rankings released June 30, 2026, reflect an exceptional year for Forest Service Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers.

Although the Forest Service operates 24 of the nation's 116 Job Corps centers, our centers earned five of the top 10 national rankings in overall OMS performance, five of the top 10 in career technical training completion and three of the top 10 in high school diploma and equivalency attainment.

Our off-center work-based learning results were especially strong. Forest Service centers placed three in the top 10, nine in the top 25 and 16 in the top 50 nationally, with Fort Simcoe earning the No. 1 ranking. These results reflect the work employees do to prepare students for hands-on assignments that support national forests and grasslands.

Centers also performed well in 180-day retention, industry-recognized credential attainment and literacy and numeracy gains, with several earning No. 1 national rankings in individual categories.

Our fire program is another important example of students and employees supporting the Forest Service mission. Crews continue to assist wildfire response and camp operations across the country, giving students the opportunity to apply their training while supporting firefighters and incident personnel.

> "REMAIN FOCUSED ON SAFETY, SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER AND KEEP EXECUTING WITH THE PROFESSIONALISM THAT DEFINES THE FOREST SERVICE."
>
> – FOREST SERVICE CHIEF TOM SCHULTZ

As fire activity continues, please keep safety at the center of every assignment. Remain alert to changing conditions, fatigue and heat-related risks, maintain clear communication and continue looking out for one another. The work is demanding, and taking care of our students and employees must remain the priority.

These accomplishments belong to the employees who teach, mentor and support our students each day. They are especially meaningful because they show what our employees and students accomplished together this year.

Thank you for your professionalism, resilience and continued commitment to our students and the Forest Service mission.

Dr. Lisa Ramírez
National Director
Forest Service Job Corps

HIGHLIGHTS

- Oconaluftee Job Corps and Minnesota ICS
- Angell Students Explore Maritime Careers
- Flatwoods Students Help in Community Event
- Boxelder Students Use Drawing Techniques
- Cass Job Corps Makes KidsFest Event Successful

BUILDING STEWARDSHIP ALONG THE NORTH UMPQUA

At Wolf Creek Job Corps, stewardship shows up in the way our students and staff care for the center, support our neighbors and contribute to the Umpqua National Forest. For our students, stewardship begins with taking pride in their work and recognizing that what they do can benefit people well beyond the center.



Brian Shay, center director, Wolf Creek Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center, Oregon

That work can be seen across the center and throughout the community. Students help maintain and improve our facilities, assist local organizations and take part in projects that benefit the public. They have helped with campground and forest cleanup, tree planting, fish surveys, community events, Habitat for Humanity projects and firewood preparation for a local food pantry.

One project that represents stewardship especially well is the work now underway on the North Umpqua Trail. Several bridges along the trail were damaged or destroyed during the Archie Creek Fire. The Umpqua National Forest asked Wolf Creek Job Corps to help rebuild them so visitors could more fully use and enjoy the trail and the North Umpqua River corridor.

The project involves several of our training areas and requires our students and instructors to work together from start to finish. A retired Forest Service trails manager, Wayne Chevalier, helped outline the plans, safety expectations and timeline. From there, the center went to work.

Forestry and Advanced Forestry students first cleared access to the initial bridge site, which is about a mile from the trailhead. Large downed trees and overgrowth had to be removed so equipment and materials could be brought in safely. Cement Masonry students then built forms and poured concrete for the bridge abutments. The generator, mixer and other equipment and materials all had to be hauled to the site.

> "THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF PRIDE IN BUILDING SOMETHING WITH YOUR OWN HANDS."
>
> –BRIAN SHAY, CENTER DIRECTOR

Welding students are preparing the steel beams, and Carpentry students will install the decking and railings once the beams are set. When the first bridge is finished, the team will move on to the remaining bridges.

This project gives students the chance to apply their trade skills in a real setting while learning how much planning, cooperation and persistence are required to complete a public lands project. Each trade has a role, and every part of the work affects what comes next.

There is a great deal of pride in building something with your own hands, especially when the finished work will serve the public for years to come. Our students can see how their effort benefits the forest, the surrounding community and the visitors who come to experience this area.



Wolf Creek Job Corps students participate in hands-on community projects supporting local natural resources and public lands. (Forest Service photo)

At Wolf Creek, we want students to leave with more than employability skills. We want them to understand what it means to care for the places, resources and communities entrusted to them. The bridge project puts that lesson into practice. It is stewardship in action, and I am proud of the students and staff helping make it happen.



Harpers Ferry Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center students support an America 250 community engagement event in partnership with the Monongahela National Forest. During the eight-day assignment, students helped set up displays, welcomed visitors and answered questions while representing the Forest Service and serving the public. (Forest Service photo)

STEWARDSHIP ON DISPLAY

Harpers Ferry Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center students and staff put stewardship into practice during an eight-day assignment supporting an America 250 community engagement event in partnership with the Monongahela National Forest.

Members of the center's camp crew helped set up and take down tents and displays, welcomed visitors and answered questions throughout the event. The assignment gave students an opportunity to serve the public while demonstrating skills developed through their training at the center.

> "THE MOST MEMORABLE PART WAS MEETING THE LEADERSHIP TEAM AND THEY THANKED US FOR THE WORK WE DID."
>
> – CHANELLE MONZON, OFFICE ADMINISTRATION STUDENT

Shawn Miller, center director at Harpers Ferry Job Corps, said the assignment allowed the crew to support the Forest Service while building confidence and professional experience.

"Harpers Ferry became involved through communication with the Monongahela National Forest," said Miller. "The center was able to logistically provide services requested by the Forest Service. The camp crew displayed teamwork, dedication, and employability skills."

The assignment also connected the students' training with the Forest Service's public service mission. Students saw how their work could serve visitors, strengthen community relationships and build confidence.

"Participating in this event enables students to showcase their talents which are fine-tuned while enrolled in the Job Corps program," said Miller. "The unique attribute of being a Forest Service Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center, this reiterates the mission of public service, a skill which is engrained in the culture of the Civilian Conservation Centers."

Chanelle Monzon, an office administration student at Harpers Ferry Job Corps, helped set up displays, welcomed visitors and documented families' experiences at the event.

"I contributed to setting up displays, interacted with the public and took pictures of families to document their experience," said Monzon. "The most memorable part was meeting the whole leadership team in the Sidney R. Yates Federal Building and they thanked us for the work we did."

Monzon said the assignment also helped her understand the patience and cooperation required to serve the public as part of a team.

"It taught me patience when working with others," said Monzon. "Learning there is no 'I' in team. People really appreciate what the Forest Service does, and it was good to hear stories from public servants."

Somona Bowens, residential manager and camp crew boss at Harpers Ferry Job Corps, supervised the crew throughout the eight-day assignment.

"Harpers Ferry camp crew was responsible daily for the assembly and disassembly of tents and displays, interacting with the public and answering questions," said Bowens.



Civilian Conservation Center students strengthen their surrounding communities by supporting local events and contributing their time, skills and teamwork where they are needed. (Forest Service photo)

Serving the public for eight days required the crew to adapt to difficult conditions while looking after one another. Bowens said intense heat was the primary challenge.

"The main challenge the students encountered was the intense heat," said Bowens. "We all continued to check in with one another to ensure that we were hydrated and that no one was overexerting themselves."

Despite the intense heat, the assignment gave students an opportunity to practice stewardship by looking after one another while carrying out work that served the public.

"During this period of intense weather, the students maintained a positive attitude and encouraged each other," said Bowens. "They took great pride in their part at the fair."

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Boxelder Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center student Laura Stee supports fire operations as an initial attack dispatcher at Great Plains Interagency Dispatch Center in Rapid City, South Dakota. Stee helps relay weather information, track resources and provide crews with accurate updates as conditions change. (Forest Service photo)

A STEADY VOICE FOR THE FIRELINE

From the radio console at Great Plains Interagency Dispatch Center in Rapid City, South Dakota, Boxelder Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center Natural Resources trade student Laura Stee helps relay information that firefighters and emergency personnel need to respond safely. Her assignment places her in a public service role where accuracy, composure and clear communication can directly affect operations in the field.

One incident showed Stee how much could depend on the information moving through the dispatch center.

“One moment that really stuck with me was when a fire had broken out on a steep cliff, creating a dangerous situation for the responding crews,” said Stee. “I had to help direct firefighters to the safest access route and communicate critical information as conditions changed.”

Stee’s interest in wildland fire first drew her to the assignment and gave her a way to contribute from the dispatch side of emergency response.

“I became interested in the wildland fire program early on,” said Stee. “When I heard there was an opportunity to work at the dispatch center, I knew right away it was something I wanted to be a part of.”

Bonnie Fuller, center director at Boxelder Job Corps, said Stee earned the opportunity through maturity, judgment and initiative she demonstrated at the center.

“Laura is extremely capable,” said Fuller. “Her maturity and ability to make good decisions earned our respect. She mentors new students when they come into the program.”

Fuller said the concern Stee shows for her peers also carries into the way she supports firefighters and emergency personnel through dispatch.

“Laura is a people person,” said Fuller. “She looks out for her friends and the ladies in the dorm. This personality trait directly relates to her taking care of the firefighters and emergency services people that she works with as a dispatcher at Great Plains Dispatch.”

> “I BECAME INTERESTED IN THE WILDLAND FIRE PROGRAM EARLY ON. I KNEW RIGHT AWAY IT WAS SOMETHING I WANTED TO BE A PART OF.”
>
> – LAURA STEE, NATURAL RESOURCES TRADE STUDENT

Before beginning the assignment, Stee developed foundational radio skills and completed selected certifications through Boxelder’s Natural Resources training program. Seth McCann, Natural Resources trade instructor, said Stee sometimes approaches unfamiliar work cautiously, but that hesitation does not keep her from taking on new challenges.

“She is always nervous to start something new,” said McCann. “She’s concerned that she is going to be bad at it. However, once she starts a new task whether it be operating radios, hand tools, or even chainsaws, she not only enjoys the new challenge, but she is also very proficient.”

McCann said those experiences have helped Stee learn how to contribute as both a team member and a leader.

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“She has gained multiple skills in trade that will help her to be successful,” said McCann. “She has learned how to work as a group and how to be a team leader.”

At Great Plains Interagency Dispatch Center, Stee moved from classroom preparation into an operational role. Leith McAuley, center manager at the dispatch center, said Stee works as an initial attack dispatcher supporting firefighters, agency personnel and the public.

“Laura is an initial attack dispatcher,” said McAuley. “During her shift, she reads and delivers weather information over the radio, provides customer service to both the public and agency personnel, and uses the Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC) system to mobilize resources at the local, geographic, and national levels.”

A typical shift requires Stee to track changing conditions and move information quickly between dispatchers, engines and crews.

“A typical shift starts with getting briefed on current fire activity, weather conditions, and any ongoing incidents and then relaying that information to the engines and crews,” said Stee. “Throughout the day, I help monitor radio traffic, track the locations and status of crews and equipment and make sure information is passed along accurately and quickly.”

The work has also required her to learn a complex radio system serving public lands across the region.

“Laura had to learn how the radio system operates,” said McAuley. “The Motorola radio console includes 13 different repeaters that cover the Black Hills, the Nebraska National Forest, and the surrounding grasslands. As resources move across the area, the dispatcher must know which repeater to use in order to communicate effectively.”

McAuley said Stee’s ability to remain composed has become one of her strengths when activity increases or circumstances change quickly.

“Laura stays level-headed when the workload increases or circumstances change quickly,” said McAuley. “It takes a lot to rattle her, and she consistently maintains a positive, steady attitude.”

Stee said her leadership experience at Boxelder prepared her to communicate clearly when others depend on accurate information.

“My experiences at Boxelder helped prepare me for this,” said Stee. “Having a leadership role here taught me the importance of clear communication and making sure information is shared accurately. Those skills carried over into dispatch, where effective communication is essential and can make a real difference in keeping people safe and operations running smoothly.”

The assignment has also strengthened Stee’s confidence and helped her connect dispatch work with a longer-term interest in stewardship.



Boxelder Job Corps student Laura Stee applies her Natural Resources training during hands-on fieldwork supporting the care and management of forest resources. (Forest Service photo)

“I’ve gained confidence in my communication skills and ability to stay calm when things are moving quickly,” said Stee. “Moving forward, I hope to continue developing my skills in environmental stewardship and find opportunities where I can help protect natural resources.”

Fuller said Stee’s enthusiasm for dispatch suggests the assignment may be the beginning of a lasting career path.

“Laura has made it clear that dispatching is her passion,” said Fuller. “Her face lights up whenever she starts speaking about her experiences working at Great Plains Dispatch and job shadowing the Lawrence County Dispatch. She has already said that this is something she will do long after she graduates from Boxelder Job Corps.”

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