



## NEWS RELEASE



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### **GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO ANNOUNCES \$500,000 FOR YOUTH CORPS LAND STEWARDSHIP JOBS**

#### *Project Bid Process is Open to Local Government, Open Space Agencies until Sept. 24*

**DENVER, Colo., AUGUST 1, 2012** – Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and the Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) announced today that applications are available for \$500,000 in GOCO/Lottery funds for awards to local government and open space organizations to hire youth conservation corps. These funds will create more than 200 outdoor jobs statewide for young adults through youth corps and their project partners. Young people hired with these funds will generate an estimated 27,000 hours of labor on construction and stewardship projects for Colorado’s trails, parks, open spaces and wildlife habitat.

Local government and open space organizations may compete for projects through a Request-for-Proposal process conducted by GOCO and CYCA. Agencies may obtain the Request-for-Proposal application at [www.cyca.org/wp-content/cycauploads/GOCO-Youth-Corps-RFP-2012-FINAL.pdf](http://www.cyca.org/wp-content/cycauploads/GOCO-Youth-Corps-RFP-2012-FINAL.pdf); the application deadline is September 24, 2012. Successful projects will be announced in December 2012 and crews will complete the proposed work in 2013.

“Our mission here at the Colorado Lottery is to improve the quality of life in Colorado by enhancing our great outdoors,” said Abel J. Tapia, director of the Colorado Lottery. “The Colorado Youth Corps Association is not only providing needed jobs for our state’s youth, they are also helping make our outdoor spaces more inviting for Colorado residents – that’s what I call a win, win!”

GOCO funds spent on youth corps work have a proven record of success. In 2011, GOCO authorized \$500,000 for local government and open space for youth corps crews. “Those projects were so successful that GOCO is anxious to solicit additional project ideas quickly,” said Lise Aangeenbrug, GOCO executive director. Project accomplishments through December 31, 2011 included the construction or repair of 15.84 miles of trail; clearing of 6.6 miles of trail corridor; construction or repair of 6,455 feet of fence; and planting or transplanting of 5,279 trees. Corpsmembers and crewleaders performed 16,928 hours of direct labor and obtained 1,792 hours of

environmental education. Project sponsors were pleased with the work--100 percent said they would use a youth corps again. Of the 16 completed projects, 15 will have benefits that last more than 10 years.

The funding initiative announced today provides jobs for a segment of the population with high unemployment. In 2011, the unemployment rate for 16-to 24-year-olds was 25.8 percent in Colorado, compared to an overall statewide rate of 8.3 percent.

Youth corps teaches job readiness and leadership skills with the goal of preparing young citizens to be productive and ready for the workforce. It also gives young people important time in the outdoors and educates them about a range of stewardship issues, including water conservation, land use, fire danger and the impact of invasive species. While in the corps, members can receive high school or college credits or prepare to take their GED. They are also eligible to receive funding for college, trade school or student loans.

“We are thrilled that Great Outdoors Colorado has chosen to dedicate funds to employ and train young people who are eager and willing to work hard to improve our public and privately conserved lands,” said Jennifer Freeman, CYCA’s executive director.

Youth corps is traditionally a popular employment opportunity, and has become more so since the economic crisis. Prior to the recession, youth corps received an average of three applications for every one job available; every year since 2009, it has received nine applications for every job. Youth corps is the first job for more than half of the participants. Youth corps has also represented an important opportunity for minority and low-income youth. In 2011, 70 percent of corps members had low-income status and 38 percent were non-white or Hispanic.

Justin Quintana-Scott of Mile High Youth Corps-Pueblo exemplifies the impact of youth corps on Colorado’s young people: “I like that in youth corps, we’re helping out the community and setting a positive role model for the youth of Pueblo. We’re always smiling, not because it’s a job, but because everyone on my team wants to be there,” he said. Justin is studying wildlife biology at Colorado State University in Pueblo, and dreams of working for the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife.

“The GOCO board has adopted among its top three priorities the engagement of youth and families in the outdoors,” said Aangeenbrug. “This initiative is a significant investment toward that goal by providing opportunities and jobs for the next generation in taking care of Colorado.”

The latest funding initiative follows a proud history. GOCO first provided money for the expansion of youth corps in 1996 when only five local corps existed in the state. The result of that seed

funding was the creation of the Colorado Youth Corps Association, a statewide coalition of 10 accredited youth conservation corps that employ 1,800 young people annually.

### **About Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)**

Great Outdoors Colorado is the result of a citizens' initiative passed by voters in 1992. It receives up to one-half of Lottery proceeds annually. Entities eligible to receive GOCO funds are local governments, land trusts and the Colorado Division of Parks & Wildlife. To date, GOCO has provided funding for more than 3,400 projects in all of Colorado's 64 counties. Since 1996, GOCO has invested \$5.5 million in youth corps efforts. For more information about GOCO, visit [www.goco.org](http://www.goco.org).

### **About Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA)**

The Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) is a statewide coalition of 10 accredited youth conservation corps that employ and train youth and young adults on land, water and energy conservation projects. Youth corps is a proven strategy for engaging young people in service to their communities and stewardship of their environment while cultivating valuable skills to meet the challenges of the 21st century. For more information about CYCA or the statewide youth corps coalition, visit [www.CYCA.org](http://www.CYCA.org). Visit CYCA on [Facebook](#).

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