



the greenway



Touched by Tiny Turtles

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Message from the President

LIDIA SOTO-HARMON, PRESIDENT AND CEO



SUMMER IS A GREAT TIME TO GET OUTDOORS and enjoy the sights and sounds of the season, from hiking and biking, fishing and swimming to everything in between.

Our crew members get a unique summer experience at remarkable locations while at work for the planet by building trails, planting trees, removing

invasive species, preserving historic sites, educating park visitors, preventing wildland fires and more.

While our crew members were completing their projects, some were confronted with extreme weather events, including record-breaking temperatures, persistent poor air quality

following the ongoing wildfires in Canada and flooding across the Northeast. Research shows that these extreme weather events are tied to climate change, making our work at the Student Conservation Association even more critical.

The SCA has a long history of environmental protection and remains committed to equitable access to the outdoors for all. We are also dedicated to building the next generation of conservation leaders who not only learn valuable life lessons and job readiness skills during their time with us, but who are inspired to enter careers where they can help preserve and protect our amazing natural resources while making our communities more resilient against the impacts of climate change.

We are grateful to donors like you and our many partners that help us continue our mission. Read on for an array of intriguing stories from the field that you help make possible and that bring us hope for a better tomorrow.

Lidia Soto-Harmon



Sun's Out, Crews Out

Summer is peak busy season for our crew members at work for the planet. You will find SCA members in all 50 states this year, as well as Washington D.C., Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. With 1,450 crew members and leaders in the field this summer—an 11% increase from this time last year—more members in the field means more lives transformed and greater conservation impact, from tree planting and trail building to historic preservation and environmental education. Here's a quick look at some of the summer projects.



PHOTO: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE/NICOLE SEGNINI



PHOTO: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE/DIANE RENKIN

Canyonlands National Park

SCA BACKCOUNTRY INTERNS PROVIDE TRIP-PLANNING assistance to visitors and lead guided interpretive walks at Horseshoe Canyon, a park extension that contains some of the most significant rock art in North America. With 337,000 acres of other-worldly red rock spires, mesas, cliffs and canyons, this national park in Utah's high desert is divided by the Green and Colorado Rivers into four districts: Island in the Sky, The Needles, The Maze and the rivers. All offer distinctly different opportunities for exploration.

Yellowstone National Park

AS MEMBERS OF THE BISON MANAGEMENT TEAM AT Yellowstone National Park, SCA interns are responsible for observing large grazing herbivores and measuring aboveground production and consumption by large grazers. If you visit sites where bison roam, always keep a safe distance – That's at least 25 yards. Yellowstone became the first national park in 1872. Covering 2.2 million acres, visitors can observe wildlife, explore geothermal areas that contain about half the world's active geysers and view geologic wonders like the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River.



Washington, D.C.

MEMBERS OF THE SCA NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS-EAST (NACE) Youth Weekend Ambassador Crew hosted an Upcycle Plant Pot event for visitors attending the Anacostia River Festival. Passers-by had the opportunity to build a plantable pot using recycled materials with native plant seeds. The NACE Crew also showcased their group project featuring a curated Self-Guided Tour for community members to use to experience places of interest throughout the park system.

Beyond the Sea

MATTHEW BOTELLO GREW UP HUNTING, FISHING AND EXPLORING THE OUTDOORS ALONGSIDE HIS FAMILY IN CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS. ONE OF THE PERKS OF LIVING NEAR THE GULF OF MEXICO WAS BEING ABLE TO ATTEND THE SEA TURTLE RELEASES AT PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE SINCE HE WAS SIX.

Rather than just watching turtle hatchlings scurry their way into the water, he is now a part of the team tasked with their survival. Botello is one of four SCA Sea Turtle Recovery Interns responsible for assisting National Park Service staff save the critically endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle species from extinction.

"There are no words for me to explain this experience," Botello said before heading out for a night shift. "This whole job has changed me. In a way, you grow with the program and the turtles."

Botello, 23, always planned to become a game warden like several of his uncles after earning a degree in criminal justice. However, since working with sea turtles, he now wants to become a park ranger.

"I thought becoming a game warden was my calling. But now, I want to work with wildlife. This program has changed everything," he said. "This work matters because it's our responsibility to help. We can't let a certain species die off. Every animal has its place in the ecosystem; if one thing changes, everything changes."

Kemp's ridley sea turtles are the smallest and most critically endangered sea turtles in the world. SCA interns have been helping protect them since the late 1970s, following in the footsteps of the program's legendary leader, Dr. Donna J. Shaver, chief of the Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery.





SCA Intern Matthew Botello assists critically endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle hatchlings into the Gulf of Mexico to increase their chances of survival.

"I would never have known about this program if I had not joined the SCA back then. It changed my life without a doubt," Shaver said. "We are an endangered species success story in the making, but we are not there yet and still have more work to do. What a remarkable opportunity to make a difference, and these interns are getting the same chance I had."

While a student at Cornell University studying wildlife biology in 1980, Shaver came across an SCA ad on a campus bulletin board looking for sea turtle recovery volunteers at Padre Island National Seashore. Interested in endangered species, she decided she would give it a try.

"I came down being shy Donna from Syracuse, New York, never having seen the ocean or having worked with sea turtles," she said. "It was feared back then that the species was lost. I decided right then that I would dedicate my life to saving the Kemp's ridley turtle."

Thanks to her research and commitment, the recovery program has helped bring the species back from the brink of extinction, with SCA interns contributing every step of the way.

"It's definitely cemented what I want to do with wildlife conservation and that this is what I want to do with my future," said intern Deanna Nottingham, 23, of Virginia Beach, Virginia, who graduated with a degree in biology last December. "The field of conservation gives you the opportunity to help the world around you versus just being


in it. With the climate crisis, I feel everything is changing with so many species, and I want to be able to give them a leg up."

During their time at the national seashore, the interns help conduct daytime and evening turtle patrols, gather eggs, assist with caring for the eggs and release sea turtle hatchlings.

"This program is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I've found my people here. They are so passionate and dedicated to the cause. I don't think I've ever had a job that is this important," said intern Taryn Moorhead, 27, of San Antonio, who is majoring in Environmental Science. "The work truly is important, not only for the ecology and sustainability of the species but also for getting the public interested in how they can help. It's awe-inspiring and very rewarding. If I could do this for the rest of my life, I really would."



Dr. Donna J. Shaver today, and releasing hatchlings with the SCA in 1980.



"I am usually the only Black girl in my classes, and being here made it feel like I was home and in the right space." SA'MYA IVY

A Woman's Work

THE SCA HAS BEEN CONNECTING URBAN YOUTH TO NATURE for decades. And with generous support from Comic Relief US, the SCA launched its first Black Women's Conservation Crew for young adults in Atlanta this summer. This crew of 12 is a safe space for women of color to learn, grow, gain new technical skills and explore careers in environmental conservation.

"This was the best summer ever. The first day, I was shocked – It felt like a summer camp and not work," exclaimed crew member Sa'Mya Ivy, 22, who is a senior at the College of Coastal Georgia. "I am usually the only Black girl in my classes, and being here made it feel like I was home and in the right space."

Crew members worked on an array of service projects, including invasive species removal, habitat restoration, litter abatement and trail work at various locations throughout the area, including the West Atlanta Watershed Alliance and Atlanta Botanical Garden.

"We work hard and get a lot of work done here. It feels good to be part of something that makes you feel needed," she said.

"To see the progress we made in a short amount of time is like, 'wow, we did all of that!' You go home feeling fulfilled."

For the biological sciences major, joining the crew solidified Ivy's passion for conservation and reinvigorated her interest in applying to graduate schools.

"At the beginning of the summer, I came in trying to learn myself. I was confused about my future," she said. "Over time, I have gained clarity about what I would like to do. I've learned that I can be a leader and that I should step into that. The summer is short, but the development is long."

In addition to the hands-on service work, the crew learned valuable job-readiness skills to help them thrive in environmental career fields, discovered holistic ways nature can help the mind and body and participated in bonding exercises. The crew has gotten so tight that they dubbed their after-hours outings 'Beyond the Blue' as a play on words for the color of their work shirts.

"We work Monday through Friday, and we still want to be together," Ivy said, adding that they often get together in their off time to go to the movies or visit museums. "We really



L-R (Back Row): Kadeina Chandler (Crew Leader), Kennedy Harris, Sa’Mya Ivy, Dailyn Mintor, Alvina Ahmed, Knyla Jones, Cedria Williams, Soraya Byrdsong, Serena Echols (Crew Leader), L-R (Ground): Kenadi Morgan, Maya Williams, Brandi Lofton

enjoy spending time together. The foundation at the beginning allowed us to really bond. It’s inspiring and has been nice to learn about each other.”

One of the crew’s two leaders, Kadeina Chandler, left her corporate job managing dental offices for a reset. With a passion for gardening and being outdoors, she was eager to join the crew and mentor young Black women.

“It’s been a great experience. It was very refreshing to take my skills and teach young women how to be successful and thrive,” she said. “Being here shifted my perspective about how being out in nature helps you holistically. Seeing them be able to pick up new skills and knowing that they can do different things in nature has been great.”

Having a space where the crew could be their authentic selves allowed them to connect with nature and each other, Chandler said.

“I am very grateful to be a part of a program like this. It’s necessary and so very much needed,” she said. “It has helped them understand that this is a rare and unique find when you can be in a sacred space with people who look like you where they can connect and love on each other without judgment.”

The SCA launched its first Atlanta community conservation program in 2021. Since then, more than 50 youth in Atlanta and the surrounding areas have participated in SCA programs. Thanks to local environmental organizations, schools, youth development organizations, and numerous community groups, the SCA continues to provide conservation opportunities to Atlanta’s young people each year.



SCA GIVING DAY IS COMING ON SEPT. 19!

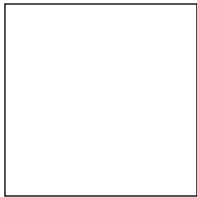
Mark your calendar for SCA Giving Day on Sept. 19. Please help us reach our goal to unlock a \$30,000 gift to support the next generation of conservation leaders.

Make your gift at thesca.org/tgwGive





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The Student Conservation Association (SCA) is America's largest and most effective youth conservation service organization. SCA conserves lands and transforms lives by empowering young people of all backgrounds to plan, act, and lead, while they protect and restore our natural and cultural resources. Founded in 1957, SCA's mission is to build the next generation of conservation leaders.

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Creating More Opportunities for Women in Fire



THE SCA AND THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE TEAMED UP earlier this year to launch a Women's Wildland Fire Crew that included three Forest Service fire leaders who mentored SCA interns based out of Clemson, South Carolina.

The crew worked and traveled throughout the U.S. Forest Service's Southern Region, gaining hands-on experience in prescribed fire, hazardous fuels reduction and fire suppression alongside the Forest Service firefighters.

In fire management, every bit of training is essential. It's the path to the certifications needed to move up in rank and pay, and a key risk management tool that keeps these crews safe in a high-risk environment.

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