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Message from the President

LIDIA SOTO-HARMON, PRESIDENT AND CEO



AS THE LEAVES BEGIN TO CHANGE COLOR AND THE WEATHER COOLS WHILE WE TRANSITION TO FALL, I AM REMINDED OF MY OWN TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE THIS SUMMER.

I had the honor of joining our New York City Urban Green crew members to help combat erosion and preserve local plant life at Acadia National Park in Maine. Together we carried

209 pounds of sterilized dirt to the summit of Sargent Mountain, the park's second-highest peak at 1,040 feet above sea level.

The experience left an indelible mark on my heart and is one you will hear more of in our next issue. In the meantime, I am immensely grateful for the lessons learned, the relationships forged and the impact we made as a team. I can imagine it's a similar experience felt by our many program participants who, after working with the SCA, emerge with increased environmental awareness, social responsibility and leadership skills.

This issue of *The Greenway* takes readers back to Olympic National Park, where it all began decades ago. It also showcases our work in the San Francisco Bay Area, introduces our new Director of Urban Green and catches up with another amazing alum.

As I have said many times before, the Student Conservation Association is truly something special. With your generous support, we can continue our legacy of building the next generation of conservation leaders who are dedicated to protecting the environment and the communities we serve.

On the cover

SCA crew member Cale Sprouse on the Olympic National Park Backcountry Trail Team.

PHOTO: RAFEED HUSSAIN

PHOTOS: SHAUN CROCKETT/THEBEARDEDMAINER





A Summer of Service

Continuing Liz Putnam's Trailblazing Work at Olympic National Park



SCA crew member Chance Kernan

AS THE SUN RISES OVER THE BOGACHIEL RAIN FOREST TRAIL AT OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK IN WASHINGTON, THE SOUND of sleeping bags and tent zippers unfurling joins the melodies of songbirds, the rustling of wind, and the ever-present pitter-patter of raindrops.

The SCA's Olympic National Park Backcountry Trail Team has been hard at work all summer. Working alongside National Park Service staff, the crew of 10 has been building bridges and turnpikes, retreading eroded and deteriorating trails, clearing brush and fallen trees, and creating memories for a lifetime.

"I think I've learned that I'm stronger than I think I am. When we hiked in [for this hitch], I was really struggling because it was farther than we went last time, and my pack was super heavy. The whole time, I was just feeling like, 'Ugh, I'm so weak, this is so hard, I'm struggling so much,'" said SCA crew member Cale Sprouse of South Carolina. "But then only a few days went by, and it's the exact same piece of trail, and it's so much easier to go over. I'm walking like 8 miles a day, and it's so easy."

Olympic National Park is where SCA founder Liz Putnam first enlisted student volunteers to assist with the upkeep of U.S. National Parks in 1957, launching the Student Conservation Association.

Today, the SCA is the largest provider of hands-on environmental conservation programs for youth and adults, with a mission to build the next generation of conservation leaders by engaging young people through hands-on service projects.

Throughout the program, the crew works exclusively in the backcountry, camping near their work sites. Each eight-day stretch, known as a hitch, is broken up by six rest days between assignments. As the crew moves along the trail, mules are sometimes needed to help carry their equipment over rough terrain.

"Conservation isn't really my niche, but I thought it'd be interesting. The line of work I'd like to go into involves planning greenways and bikeways," said SCA crew member Jalen Starks, of Chicago, who is studying urban planning at the University of Cincinnati. "A lot of times, when it comes to designing [urban] trails, a lot of fundamentals are missed, so I thought that being out here, actually helping with trail work, would give me better insight into designing those types of things."

The work is grueling, and the elements are relentless. But like the many SCA program participants before them who have spent countless hours building and maintaining thousands of miles of trails across the country, this is what the crew came for.

A photograph of a dense forest with tall, thin trees and a thick undergrowth of ferns. In the lower center, a group of about five people wearing hard hats and carrying gear are walking away from the camera on a path. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting an overcast day.

“I’ve learned
that I’m stronger
than I think I am.”

CALE SPROUSE

“I just graduated from the University of Utah studying Environmental Studies, and I felt the call of trail work,” said crew leader Truman Wisen. “Being a crew leader is understanding what it takes to feed 10 people for eight days and how to keep them all happy. It’s like being a dad and a therapist and a park ranger and Smokey Bear all rolled into one, I’d say, and a friend above all.”

Crew member Campbell Melton, a junior at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, was looking to gain more experience in conservation and learned of the SCA through his college advisor.

“I want to walk away with a lot more discipline for my work skills,” Melton said. “I think this will make me appreciate the little things a lot more, and I think it will really just help me in my everyday life. I feel like I can push my limit more out here.”



Crew members and leaders rely on a comprehensive two-week training program to do this work. During training, they learn team building, wilderness first aid, and conservation work skills, including chainsaw and crosscutting techniques, camping basics, backcountry meal preparation and more.

With this training, the crew has tackled more technical projects, such as building a retaining wall or a rock staircase and cutting massive felled and delimbed trees into logs.



SCA crew leader Truman Wisen

Working in the backcountry is some of the most challenging work SCA crews perform. These young adults from across the country live on the trail in a rainforest for weeks at a time, disconnected from the comforts of a roof, all while moving tons of earth every day.

Completing the program requires a certain level of grit and strength that comes with many lessons learned about the world around them and themselves.

“The world doesn’t end on 87th Street,” Starks said he would tell his 10-year-old self while growing up in Chicago. “We will see a lot more of the world than you expect.”

These moments of growth, reflection, and hard work are a testament to the decades-long legacy of the SCA, particularly the first Olympic National Park Team, which trekked into the wilderness 67 years ago.

“[Liz] really put in the work to get some trail crews started, and she really pushed for women to be able to be part of it as well,” Sprouse said. “I would just like to thank her for everything.”

Young Conservationists Leave Lasting Impact on Bay Area

THE SCA FIELDDED ITS FIRST COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROGRAM IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA IN 1977.

Since then, hundreds of youth in the region have participated in SCA programs.

Now under the banner of Urban Green, Bay Area program participants support urban forestry initiatives in equity-priority communities, maintain trails to improve access to green spaces, and develop a connection to nature through outdoor recreation and camping excursions.



PHOTO: DAVID MAUK/SANTA CLARA OPEN SPACE AUTHORITY

This summer, the Bay Area Peninsula Climate Resiliency Crew spent five weeks conducting critical projects across the South Peninsula Bay Area to protect watersheds, maintain trails and improve access to various outdoor spaces.

“My amazing leaders always had my back,” said crew member Daniel Haner Wasserstein. “They helped me develop who I am, what I want to be, and learn what role we play in conservation.”

The crew — seven high schoolers, one senior member and two leaders — had the opportunity to learn about plastic pollution in waterways, study the importance of coastal habitats, explore the region by kayak and try their hands at camping. They also participated in a career panel with local professionals and learned directly from land management staff.

“Not only was it fulfilling, I met many great people and had a lot of fun experiences,” said crew member Zoey Lee. “In the future, I will be able to draw from this opportunity and look back on it with pride and joy.”

Additionally, while working with the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority, the crew undertook a special project to install a half-mile of new protective cattle fencing south of Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve. This will help safeguard a sensitive riparian area where three natural springs meet, providing essential habitat for rare and native plants and wildlife.

“I will always remember my time here and will use the work and the skills I learned here for the rest of my life,” said crew member Matthew Neynaber.

Thanks to various park partners, environmental organizations, schools, and numerous community-based organizations, the SCA can continue to provide conservation opportunities for Bay Area youth each year.

End The Year With An Impact!

Contributions made by December 31 will be **MATCHED** by a generous group of donors! Your gift will make a lasting difference in the lives of our young members and the public lands we are working hard to protect.

Make your gift today at thesca.org/match24



Jaime González Named SCA Urban Green Director

IN AUGUST, THE SCA WELCOMED JAIME GONZÁLEZ AS THE NEW URBAN GREEN DIRECTOR BASED IN HOUSTON, TEXAS.



PHOTO: SCA

Mr. González is an award-winning conservationist, environmental educator, public speaker and coalition builder who works at the intersection of human health, biodiversity conservation, equity and climate action. He works to influence policy, secure funding, catalyze planning and embed community-based projects that unlock the power of nature for community well-being and environmental health.

“We are thrilled to welcome Jaime González to the SCA to lead our Urban Green program. His exceptional track record in conservation and community engagement is in lockstep with our mission of inspiring lifelong stewardship of the environment and the communities we serve,” said SCA President and CEO Lidia Soto-Harmon. “His leadership will be instrumental in creating greener, healthier futures for urban areas. His commitment to equity and collaboration will be invaluable as we work to create more sustainable and just cities for all residents. We look forward to the positive impact he will make.”

Mr. González will focus on expanding the Urban Green program while managing the urban and community forestry program in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.

The SCA’s Urban Green programs are paid innovative workforce development opportunities for youth and young adults underrepresented in the conservation field. The Urban Green programs include single-day service projects, seasonal work and year-long internships or fellowships in major metropolitan cities.

“I am very excited to join the SCA at this moment when communities need on-the-ground actions and career opportunities to make our communities more resilient, green and healthy,” González said. “The SCA’s equity-centered urban work taps into my experience and aligns perfectly with my vision and values. I am honored to join the SCA’s team of change-makers.”

Mr. González serves as board chair for the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) and as a climate change advisor to the City of Houston and Harris County. Prior to joining the SCA, he worked for The Nature Conservancy, the Coastal Prairie Conservancy, Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, and the Nature Heritage Society.

He has won numerous local, state, and national awards for his work, including the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Houston’s College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, the Houston Visionary Award from the Center for Houston’s Future, the Prairie Champion Award from the Coastal Prairie Conservancy, and the Elizabeth Hull Abernathy Award from the Garden Club of America for outstanding contributions to environmental education of youth.

Mr. González earned an M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction-Science Education and a B.S. in Biology from the University of Houston. He has also earned professional certificates in civic ecology/environmental education, environmental communications, climate change and health, and One Health from Cornell University, Duke University, Yale University, and the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, respectively.

EXCITING NEWS!



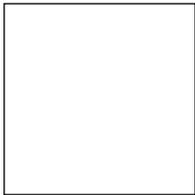
In September, the SCA’s Urban Green Program was presented with the Green Room Award, which recognizes energy, political and environmental leaders of color during the 2024 Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Annual Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. A big thank you to Key Bank for helping make our crews possible in Pittsburgh and Cleveland.



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The Student Conservation Association (SCA) is the largest provider of hands-on environmental conservation programs for youth and young adults whose lives are transformed while they protect and restore natural and cultural resources across the country. Founded in 1957, the SCA is committed to building the next generation of conservation leaders dedicated to the lifelong protection of the environment and the communities we serve.

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FIND US ON:



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Anna Tripp

WHEN ANNA TRIPP GRADUATED FROM JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY IN 2020 WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN MARINE SCIENCE AND A MINOR IN PHOTOGRAPHY, THE NATION WAS IN THE THROES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. Struggling to find a full-time job after an unpaid internship at Mote Marine Laboratory, her college professor pointed her to the SCA, where she was hired in 2021 as a Fishery Technician Intern with the U.S. Forest Service in Sitka, Alaska.

"It wasn't every day a girl from Florida got offered a job in Alaska to work with wild salmon. I just had to go," Tripp exclaimed. "Alaska was incredibly far away, and I was moving out on my own. At first, it was scary. I had to carry a rifle and get used to a whole new environment. I love being outdoors, but that was out of my comfort zone."

With only 12 miles of paved road, she found herself fully immersed in Sitka's small-town life. As one of two SCA fishery techs, she assisted with everything from salmon data collection

to snorkeling regularly to inspect underwater equipment.

"While not having running water, cell phone service, or anyone but my field partner to talk to for days, I found so much peace in remote Alaska," Tripp said. "I saw whales and otters and even got to go on a seaplane. It's truly a special place, and I really miss it."

In 2023, Tripp began an SCA Social Media Internship at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts in Virginia. Today, Tripp is a park ranger there, where she is a Visual Information Specialist managing the park's social media content.

"The SCA and its supporters make dreams come true and made it a real possibility to have a career in conservation," Tripp said. "These opportunities and memories last a lifetime. You will get to make a real difference."



PHOTO: ANNA TRIPP

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