

**SCA CONSERVATION INTERN HANDBOOK**

**Welcome**





**Congratulations!**

I am pleased to welcome you as an SCA Conservation Intern! Based on reports from the thousands of interns who have served before you, you can expect to have a rewarding experience, full of personal and professional growth. Equally important, you will be making a vital contribution to the conservation efforts in the area in which you will be working.

This manual will help you prepare for your new position. In addition, there are enrollment forms that must be completed and returned prior to the start of your internship. SCA assigns the highest priority to your safety. Please read the safety advisories in this manual. Take full advantage of training opportunities you will receive from professional agency staff and always follow the safety guidelines and instructions provided by your supervisor. Lastly, please recognize that you may be exposed to serious injury when pursuing recreational opportunities during off-duty hours. Safety awareness and practices should extend to leisure time activities in addition to your professional responsibilities.

Let us welcome you personally into the SCA family. If you have any questions or problems during your internship, please do not hesitate to contact your SCA Contact.

Good luck to you!

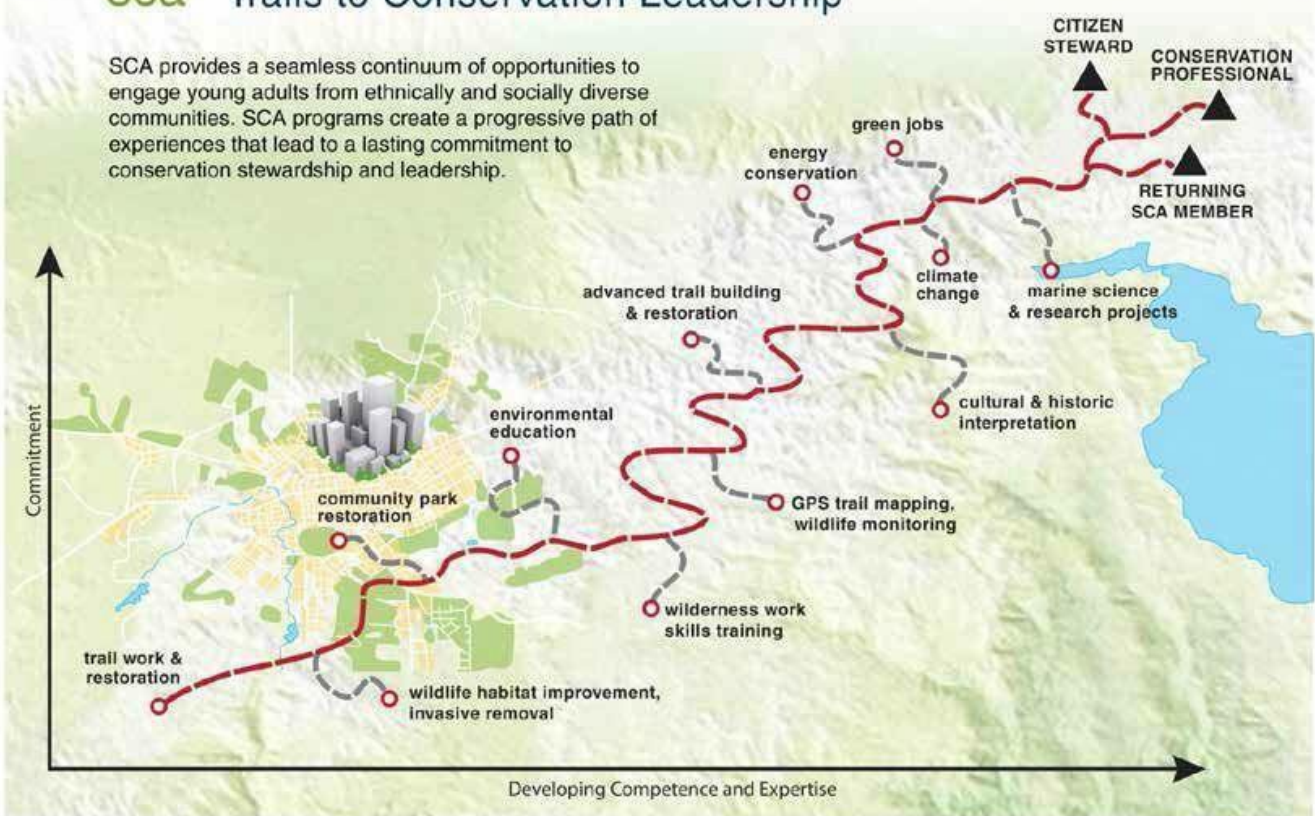
**~SCA Program Staff**



# The SCA Experience

## Trails to Conservation Leadership

SCA provides a seamless continuum of opportunities to engage young adults from ethnically and socially diverse communities. SCA programs create a progressive path of experiences that lead to a lasting commitment to conservation stewardship and leadership.



## Your Internship Map



## Table of Contents

<b>Accepting an Internship</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Have a conversation with your Host.....	8
Complete and Sign All Enrollment Forms .....	9
Internship Checklist .....	12
<b>The Adventure Begins</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>You Arrive</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Take Care of Logistical Details .....	20
<b>Getting to Work</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>Wrapping Up</b> .....	<b>49</b>
Wrap Up Your Service .....	50
Reflect on Your Experience .....	50
<b>Heading Home</b> .....	<b>53</b>
<b>Continuing On</b> .....	<b>55</b>

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# Accepting an Internship



## Accepting an Internship

### Get to know your SCA Internship Handbook



This is your go-to resource for getting inspired, keeping track of logistics and making the most of your SCA experience. We recommend printing it out for use throughout your internship.

### Have a conversation with your Host



Now that you have accepted your position, it's time to begin developing a professional relationship with the people who oversee your internship directly. Be sure to address the topics in this section.

### Complete and Sign All Enrollment Forms



Paperwork is the hardest part of the internship for some people. Start off on the right foot by being proactive about these important details. See this section for detailed information about all things paperwork.

### Plan Your Travel to Your Site



Read this section for details about maximizing the travel allowance you'll receive. Move on to **The Adventure Begins** for tips on making the trip memorable.

### Know How Your Contact Can Help



Your SCA Contact is here to be a resource for you throughout your SCA experience. Check out this section to learn more.

### Plan Your Finances



Plan to bring at least one month's worth of expenses until you receive your first stipend.

### Stay Connected and Get Excited



If you've made it this far, you've done the hard work of preparing for your internship and are almost ready to begin. Stay connected and get excited:

- [Visit conservation-nation.org, SCA's site for social networking and other intern resources](http://www.conservations-nation.org)
- [Like SCA on Facebook](#)
- [Follow SCA on Twitter](#)

## Notes and Questions

## Have a conversation with your host

Learn more about what to expect in your upcoming experience, as well as to show the site that you are proactive, professional and committed to being successful in your position.



- **Confirm the start and end dates of your position.**

Think about any obligations that you have at the end of your internship (like the start of school or sports programs) and discuss these with your site supervisor up front. Any date changes need to be reported to your SCA Contact as well.

*Confirmed Start Date:*

*Confirmed End Date:*

- **Discuss your arrival at the site.**

Confirm when and where you should report for duty and who will be available to meet you.

*Notes about arriving:*

- **Learn about the specifics of your position.**

Is there special gear that you need to bring or that will be provided? If housing is provided, do you need to bring any linens or dishware? Is there a grocery store/bank/laundromat/etc. nearby? Speak to your site supervisor about these details in advance.

- **Other questions you would like to ask.**

### Handy Lingo

**Host site/Site:** The organization that you will be working with directly. SCA host sites can be nonprofits, government agencies or even corporations.

**Host:** The person at the site who is working directly with the SCA to make your internship happen.

**Site supervisor:** The person who will work with you on a day to day basis, outline your tasks and verify your time logs.



## Complete and Sign All Enrollment Forms

Start off on the right foot by doing your paperwork right away. For more detailed information about each of the required documents, check out the Handbook Appendix.

- **Sign up for Direct Deposit**

You will receive an email from PayCom to set up your direct deposit. Once you receive the email (generally you will receive this email within the first week or two of your position start date). Once you receive it be sure to register using the PayCom app or site and sign up for direct deposit immediately.

*If you have previously served with the SCA after 2017 you will already have a PayCom account, in this case you will not receive a new account log-in as you are already set up in our payroll system.*

- **Complete the Background Check Request Form**

Shortly after accepting your position, you should receive an email from SCA's HR department ([hrdocs@thesca.org](mailto:hrdocs@thesca.org)) with information about your background check(s). A document will be emailed to you by either Easy Backgrounds or Truescreen (if you are participating in an AmeriCorps program) soon after to get you started on this important compliance item.

- **Prepare to complete Form I-9**

Form I-9 is used by the federal government to verify that you are legally eligible to work in the United States. Upon accepting your position, instructions for completing the I-9 can be found in the Alerts section of your MySCA portal landing page. Reach out to [hrdocs@thesca.org](mailto:hrdocs@thesca.org) for more information or submit a help ticket request via the Contact Us tab in the MySCA portal.

- **Read and Sign All Other Enrollment Forms**

All other required enrollment documents (including AmeriCorps documents, if applicable) will be sent to you in a single email from SCA Enrollment. Pay special attention to the Confirmation of Acceptance letter which outlines your start and end dates and various allowances. If something does not match your understanding of the position, please contact your SCA Contact immediately. Once you have signed the letter, you have agreed to the terms of the position and verified that you have read this handbook in its entirety.

## Notes and Questions

- **Watch the Required SCA Webinar**



Visit the webpage below to watch the required SCA webinar.

<http://conservation-nation.org/group/conservation-interns/page/online-orientation-registration>

## Tips for Completing Your Paperwork

### Do it right away



Completing your paperwork right away makes it more likely that you will be able to begin your internship as scheduled, receive your allowances on time, and focus on the more exciting parts of your experience.



**A word of caution:** *If your paperwork is not complete by two weeks prior to the start date of your position, your position may be delayed!*

### Read before you sign



Reading before you sign is an important life practice. Read your Confirmation of Acceptance letter carefully. Know what you are agreeing to and make sure that the information is accurate! If something doesn't look right, contact your SCA Contact.

### Your Status: Field Preparation, Field Active, Field Approved



Monitor your progress in your MySCA account. Once you accept your position, your status in the Prepare for Service Tab will say "Field Preparation." Legally, in order to serve as an SCA intern, your status must say Field Active after Day 1 of your internship. This will indicate:

- Your background checks have cleared
- Your Form I-9 is complete
- You have signed all of your other enrollment forms
- The formal SCA and agency written agreement has been finalized

**Note:** If you have served in another SCA program recently and your background checks and I-9 are still valid, your status will say "Field Approved." In this case, all of the above items have cleared, but your position start date has not arrived and/or the formal written agreement between SCA and your host site's agency is not yet finalized. At this point, you have completed all compliance items expected of you as an individual.

## Notes and Questions

## SCA Internship Checklist

While you are getting ready to start your internship I wanted to provide you with a checklist of some things to do, check, and double check.

- ✓ All SCA AmeriCorps eligible positions must be accepted by members who will be living within the U.S. at least 3 weeks prior to the position start date due to AmeriCorps background check guidelines.
  - Background checks must be cleared before a member can start a position, which includes being fingerprinted for the FBI check. Please complete these checks as soon as possible to allow them to process. Some state checks take several weeks to return results.
  - SCA's background check vendors are Truscreen and Fieldprint or EasyBackgrounds (depending on whether you are an AmeriCorps member)
  - Please contact SCA's HR department with any questions: [hrdocs@thesca.org](mailto:hrdocs@thesca.org)
- ✓ Log into your MySCA portal and sign the documents listed under the Alerts header on the homepage. Make sure to read the documents' instructions carefully. If you are eligible for AmeriCorps, 1 of the 3 required AmeriCorps documents will include providing Proof of Citizenship documentation, like a US passport, Permanent Resident card, or birth certificate.
- ✓ Review your start and end dates and confirm that they are correct. If you are leaving the position before the end date we have listed for you we need to know before you start your position. This is to ensure eligibility for AmeriCorps, if you are enrolled.
- ✓ If you are going to be living at your site, contact your supervisor at your service site and get the best mailing address for you to receive mail, packages, etc.
- ✓ Will you be driving or flying. Coordinate with your site if you will need to be picked up at the airport, train station, bus terminal, et al. If you are driving to the site, coordinate the best time/day for you to arrive (some partners like members to arrive a day or two early to allow for an appropriate amount of time for you to get settled).
- ✓ Ask your site supervisor if there is any specific gear you need to bring (example: leather boots for trail work).
- ✓ PayCom will contact you with a temporary user login and password. PayCom is our payroll system that we use to get funds to you, it's important that you create a login for us to distribute our living allowances to you.
- ✓ Once you are logged into PayCom please go into the system and enter in your direct deposit information. This is what the SCA will use to send you travel allowance and living stipend. Make sure you keep your PayCom log-in for end of the year W2 info.

If you have any questions regarding;

- HR (Paperwork, background checks, and I9's)
- Payroll (w2/w4 and payments)
- PayCom (log-in info or password reset)

Please log into your MySCA member portal and select the Contact Us tab and select the appropriate recipient from the dropdown menu. This will create a help request in our system and will generally be answered within 24-48 hours.

For more information about AmeriCorps, please check out the pages on our Conservation Nation group: <http://conservation-nation.org/group/ameri-corps>

## **Plan Your Travel**

As part of your SCA internship, you will receive a round-trip travel allowance to offset the cost of your travel to and from the host site. Travel - You are responsible for booking and paying for your travel to the site. SCA will issue you a travel allowance that you will receive on the first pay date following the start of your position.

Please note that YOU are responsible for booking your travel, so you can decide how you want to use the travel allowance.

**Don't forget that this is where your internship experience begins. Make the most of it!**

### **Directions for Booking Your Travel**

- Confirm your start date and arrival details with your host site supervisor, including logistics for accessing your housing if provided by your site.
- Plan and book your travel as soon as possible.
- SCA will issue you a travel allowance that you will receive on the first date following the start of your position.
- It is your responsibility to arrive at your host site by the start date indicated on your Confirmation of Acceptance letter (COA).

### **Forfeiting your Travel Allowance**

If you withdraw from your internship and you booked travel you will not be provided any reimbursement. If you leave your position before your scheduled end date, you are required to repay half of the travel allowance to SCA. You will be responsible for paying all return travel costs on your own.

### **Termination from your position**

If you are terminated from your position, you may use your travel allowance to return home.

## Travel Benefits

Travel allowance amounts are intended for round trip travel costs, so plan accordingly. If your round trip travel costs more than the amounts allotted, you will be responsible for that extra cost. If you have money left over, you can keep these extra funds. A reminder that your travel allowance will be taxed, based on the information you provide on your W-4 in Paycom, so please plan accordingly. **Figures below represent pre-taxed amounts.**

### Car is Recommended or not needed



You will receive **\$650** to offset the cost of travel to and from your internship site if a car is not required for the internship. Whether you decide to arrive via car, airplane, bus, or train, YOU are responsible for booking and planning travel. SCA encourages you to look into booking flights with SCA's official airline Southwest. They do not charge change fees or baggage fees (up to 2 bags).

### Car is Required



If the position description states that a car is **required** for your position, you will receive **\$1,100** to offset the cost of traveling to and from the host site. These funds can be used for any aspect of travel, including hotel stays and gas. **Please note that if you do choose to drive to a site where a vehicle is NOT required you will still only receive the \$650 travel allowance.**

*\*These are standard amounts for travel allowances, some positions may vary depending on the site you are serving at.*

### Position is not in the contiguous 48 states



If your position is in Alaska, Hawaii, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Cuba or other US Territories, the typical travel allowance is **\$1,115**.

### Required Training at Different Site Prior to Start



Some SCA positions require interns to travel to a different location for training before travelling to the host site. In these cases, special arrangements may have been made to cover travel to the training site and from the training site to the host site. If you are in a position with this benefit, you will be informed of it during your interview or in the position description.

### You Live Local to the Position



Some positions seek candidates who live close enough to the host site to commute from home each day. Usually, these positions are labeled as "Local Only." If you are in a Local Only position, you are not eligible for the travel allowance. Depending on the budget for your position, what would have been your travel allowance may be converted into a weekly commuting allowance, if your host site made this request when the position was created. Check your Conditions of Acceptance form for details on your benefits.

## Notes and Questions

### Know How Your Contact Can Help You

SCA's HR department and your SCA Contact can help you with a variety of issues, including but not limited to the following.

#### Pre-Internship Logistics, including:

- ⊗ Changes to your position dates
- ⊗ Background Checks
- ⊗ Form I-9
- ⊗ Enrollment paperwork
- ⊗ Travel allowance
- ⊗ AmeriCorps (if applicable)
- ⊗ Your MySCA account

#### Questions and Concerns during Your Internship Related To:

- ⊗ Health Insurance and Workers' Compensation
- ⊗ Changes to your position dates
- ⊗ Challenges with your host, site supervisor, or other colleagues
- ⊗ Living, commuting, and housing allowances
- ⊗ Direct Deposit
- ⊗ AmeriCorps
- ⊗ Time Logs (Activity and Output)
- ⊗ Your MySCA account

#### End of Internship Transition, including:

- ⊗ Exit paperwork
- ⊗ Final Time Logs (Activity and Output)
- ⊗ Your MySCA account
- ⊗ Updating your application for future positions

#### Who is my SCA Contact?

When you accepted the offer, a SCA Contact was assigned to you based on position location. Your contact's name is listed in your MySCA account.

#### How can I reach my Contact?

Contacts are available to help during regular business hours. Log in to MySCA and go to the "Contact Us" tab on the top of your MySCA homepage. Select the appropriate Help Request Type from the drop down menu and the most appropriate contact will follow up with you depending on the nature of your question. Thereafter, you should be able to follow up with the appropriate contact via email or phone directly.

#### Will I always have the same SCA Contact?

You will have the same SCA Contact throughout the duration of your internship and for the 30 days following the end of your position. If you serve with SCA again in the future, you will be assigned to a Contact for the region in which the new position is located. When you are not currently in an internship, the whole SCA team will be available to support you.

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# The Adventure Begins





## The Adventure Begins



You are about to take part in an American rite of passage... the Great American Road Trip. Whether you're travelling by car, plane, boat, or train, across mountains and oceans, or just down the road, your SCA adventure begins with the physical and metaphorical transition into your new position.

## Before You Travel

- Visit [Conservation-nation.org](http://Conservation-nation.org)
  - Read travel blogs from other SCA members
  - Write your own travel blog - be sure to tag it "Road Trip"
  - Ask questions about "must see" sites, good routes, and places to stay
- Make a packing list
- Bring one month's worth of expenses
- Pack appropriate shoes and clothing for your internship
- If driving, make sure your car is up for the journey before setting off. Tell a trusted mechanic about your plans and ask them to give it a once over.

**Print out this handbook and bring it with you if you aren't going to have access to the internet at your site.**

## On Your Journey

### Here are some tips for making the trip transformative:

- Plan extra travel days and savor the journey
- Make a "must-see" list of things to do and see along the way
- Eat Local: try the regional delicacies at a farmer's market, diners, & coffee shops
- Forget Google Earth: look out your window
- Get inspired by the greats  
(Visit [Conservation-nation.org](http://Conservation-nation.org) to join SCA's Conservation Book Club)
- Pack snacks
- Ponder the big questions of life
- Talk to one new person everywhere you go
- Make a road trip playlist
- Meditate in a beautiful place
- Leave enough time to check out roadside attractions
- Take photos, keep a journal, write a blog



*Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines, sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails.*

*Explore. Dream. Discover.*

*- Mark Twain*

**SCA CONSERVATION INTERN HANDBOOK**

# You Arrive



## You Arrive

### Meet Your Host



Your relationship with your host can have a huge impact on the success of your internship. Check out the [Meet Your Host](#) page for tips on laying the groundwork for your professional relationship.

### Introduce Yourself



Get to know the other interns, volunteers and staff at your site. Challenge yourself to learn something new from everyone you meet.

### Get Your Bearings



Get familiar with the local area. Find the nearest grocery store, bank, doctor, etc. and make note of places that you'd like to explore.

### Take Care of Logistical Details



Wondering when you'll receive your allowances, uniform, how your housing payments work or what the story is with loan forbearance for AmeriCorps? Turn ahead to the **logistical details pages** for more information.

### Prepare for Emergencies



In this section, you'll find SCA's emergency phone number, tools for managing risk, and information about workers' compensation, health insurance, and conflict resolution.

## Notes and Questions

## Meet Your Host



Most likely, you will work with many different people during your internship, but one person will take the lead and guide your experience. Having a conversation with this person early on to share your mutual goals and expectations can help you to build trust and increase the chances of a successful internship.

### Some topics and questions to consider:

- **Ask about their expectations for you.**
  - Project goals
  - Daily schedule
  - Sick day protocol
  - Site rules and regulations
  - Attire (clothing, protective gear, shoes, etc.)
  - Personal and professional use of the internet, telephone, and your cell phone.
  
- **Share your goals for the internship.**
  - What skills and knowledge do you want to develop?
  - How does this internship fit into your long term goals?
  - What types of resources, support, etc. would help you to meet your goals?
  
- **Prepare for emergencies.**
  - Ask where you can find:
    - Fire extinguishers
    - First aid kits
    - Phones
    - Other emergency equipment
  - What are you expected to do in an emergency situation?
  - Ensure you and your supervisor have SCA's emergency contact info Handy (1-800-YO-SOGGY)
  - Where is the nearest hospital or urgent care center?
  - Where is the nearest walk-in clinic for non-emergency medical visits?
  
- **Make small talk matter.**
  - How did they get where they are?
  - What do they like best about their job?
  - What's the coolest thing about your site?
  
- **Other questions you would like to ask.**

## Notes and Questions

## Take Care of Logistical Details

Taking some time now to get organized can help ensure that you spend the rest of your internship focusing on new skills, new people, and the beautiful place where you are serving. You'll find more information about each of these topics in the following pages.

### Within Your First 30 Days:



- Troubleshoot any issues with the Direct Deposit you set up in **Paycom** to Receive your **Allowances**

- Receive your **Uniform** at your host site



- Receive **Health Insurance** Enrollment Confirmation Email (if eligible)

- Complete Weekly **Time Logs** via MySCA portal



- Receive AmeriCorps Information by email (if eligible)

- Inspect your **Housing** (if provided)



## SCA Allowances

Thank you for your commitment to learn, grow, and serve your site and the mission of conservation. Your living allowance should help cover some of your basic expenses while you do this good work.



### How do I receive my pay?

You should receive an email from SCA's payroll vendor, by the Friday before your first pay disbursement is scheduled. Keep an eye out for this email, and if you haven't seen it before your start date, check your SPAM folder. The email arrives from "systemmessageonline@paycom.com" and does not include mention of SCA. See below for a sample of what the emails looks like. If you have not received this message, reach out to your SCA Contact to arrange for a duplicate to be sent. See the payroll calendar (in the appendix).



### Login Instructions

Go to [www.paycom.com](http://www.paycom.com)

1. Click "Login" on the top left corner and then select "Employee".
2. Use the information provided below to log in.
3. You will be prompted to change your password the first time you log in.

Employee      SONYA DUHAIME  
Department    00600S  
Username       0Y534A17N  
Temp Password 01b46927

Once you've signed in, be sure to:

- Change your password and answer your security questions
- Review the notifications on the right hand side related to the Onboarding Checklist
- Watch the appropriate videos and/or read the manuals to learn more about what you can access in the Employee Self Service portal, including your Scheduled Earnings (Pay Schedule) and pay stubs

The screenshot shows the Paycom Employee Self Service portal. On the left is a navigation menu with options like Time Management, My Information, and My Documents. The main content area displays an "Onboarding Checklist" table with columns for Task Number, Task, Completed by, Completed Time, and Start Task. The tasks listed are: 1. Direct Deposit, 2. Learn How to Use Paycom Employee Self-Service, 3. Employee Self-Service Supplemental Quiz, 4. Learn How to Enroll in Benefits, 5. Set Up Your Tax Information, 6. Voluntary EEO-1, and 7. Emergency Contact Information. Each task has a "START" button. On the right side of the portal, there are notification and message icons.

Task Number	Task	Completed by	Completed Time	Start Task
1	Direct Deposit			START
2	Learn How to Use Paycom Employee Self-Service			START
3	Employee Self-Service Supplemental Quiz			START
4	Learn How to Enroll in Benefits			START
5	Set Up Your Tax Information			START
6	Voluntary EEO-1			START
7	Emergency Contact Information			START
8	Enroll in Benefits			START

## Direct Deposit

As soon as you've completed the above tasks, set up direct deposit to your personal bank account.

- Click on "My Payroll" and then "Direct Deposit"
- Enter your routing and account numbers on the next screen
- Click "Update Direct Deposit Information" at the bottom of the screen

## Withholdings

Make sure your W-4 tax information is correct. Verify your exemptions and address information right away. Lived in state and worked in states need to be correct for tax purposes. Please keep your PayCom info on hand after your position ends, the SCA will upload your year-end tax info directly into your PayCom portal in January of the following year.

## Personal Bank Accounts

If you do not have a personal bank account, we recommend considering one of these free options:

- **Capital One 360 Checking Account**  
Capital One 360 Checking offers a free debit card, online and mobile banking, overdraft forgiveness and access to over 40,000 ATMs across the U.S. Apply for a new account online:  
<https://www.capitalone.com/checking-accounts/online-checking-account/>
- **Meta Bank Free Checking**  
Meta Bank Free Checking account offers Unlimited Check Writing, Free chip-enabled Debit Card, No Monthly Fee, and No Minimum Balance. Apply for a new account at:  
<https://www.metabank.com/personal/checking-debit>

## How much will I receive for my allowances?

Allowances are determined by your host site and solidified prior to the position being advertised. It is expected that you confirmed the benefits of your specific position with your host site prior to accepting the position. With few exceptions, all positions come with travel allowances. Standard living allowances are based on the length of your internship. The living allowance for your position will be listed on the Confirmation of Acceptance letter that you receive with your enrollment paperwork. Although they may vary, standard amounts are as follows:

- 16 weeks or less: \$85 per week (before taxes)
- 17 weeks or more: \$160 per week (before taxes)

**Allowances are intended to cover basic expenses during the course of a service opportunity and should not be considered the equivalent of a salary. Plan to bring funds for emergencies and expenses beyond your basic needs.**

## Are my allowances taxed?

Yes. You will have federal and, where applicable, state and local taxes withheld from your allowances. The number of exemptions you claim on your W-4 form also determines the amount of tax that is withheld.

## Do I get paid for days off?

Your allowances are distributed evenly throughout your term of service. You are paid in weekly (or monthly, in the case of housing) increments rather than daily. It does not go up or down if you are out sick for a day or if you serve extra hours.

### **When will I receive my living allowance?**

Each pay day reflects earnings from the two weeks prior to the week on which the pay day falls.

See the calendar below and following along with this example:

On 1/19, interns are paid for service for the weeks beginning 1/1 and 1/8. During the pay day week, time logs are verified and approved to confirm you have worked and that you are in compliance with SCA timekeeping regulation.

- If you begin your service during a pay day week, you will receive your first bi-weekly living allowance three weeks after you start. Example: You start 1/1. You receive pay for the weeks of 1/1 and 1/8 on 1/19.
- If you begin your service during a non-pay day week, you will receive your first living allowance two weeks after your start date and it will reflect one week of earnings. You will receive two weeks' worth of earnings every pay day thereafter. Example: You start 1/ 8. You receive pay for the week of 1/8 on 1/19. You receive pay for the weeks of 1/15 and 1/22 on 2/2 and so forth.
- Your final payment will be disbursed on the pay day following the end of your internship.

### **Who can I talk to about allowance questions?**

Your SCA Contact can help you with most questions related to your allowances, including:

- Your allowance amounts (note: amounts are set by your site at the time of position setup and disbursed by SCA over the course of the internship)
- The payment schedule and any missed payments

SCA's Payroll department ([payrollsca@thesca.org](mailto:payrollsca@thesca.org)) can help you with most questions related to:

- Paycom
- Direct Deposit

SCA's HR department ([HRdocs@thesca.org](mailto:HRdocs@thesca.org)) can help you with questions related to:

- Proof of Income

**Your host can help you with questions about your work schedule, days off, and sick days.**



## SCA Uniforms

Here's your chance to represent yourself, your site, the SCA, and AmeriCorps.

### Your SCA Uniform Package will include a combination of:

- SCA Shirts (long and short sleeved)
- SCA Hat
- SCA Bandana
- SCA Water Bottle
- SCA Stickers
- SCA Name Tag



If you are serving in an extreme climate, you may receive additional climate-appropriate gear. Note that specific uniform packages are selected by your host site at the time the position was created.



Enrolled in AmeriCorps? Your package will include items with the AmeriCorps logo.

### When will I receive my uniform?

Your uniform will be shipped directly to the site and should be there when you arrive. Your uniform may arrive in multiple packages, and during periods of high volume, it may arrive shortly after you do.

### Wrong size? Missing Items? Didn't receive your uniform?

If you have questions about your uniform and you haven't started your internship yet, get in touch with your SCA Contact. If you receive your uniform and something is too small or is missing, or if you've been at your site for 2 weeks and have not yet received your uniform, follow these steps:

**Please Note:** A larger size, a differently gendered item, or a similar item may be substituted based on availability.

- For questions or instructions for returns/exchanges contact Arborwear Customer Service at: (888) 578-TREE (8733) or [info@arborwear.com](mailto:info@arborwear.com)
- Tell the Arborwear team:
  - Which items are wrong or missing
  - What you need instead
  - The best address to which they should ship new items
- Complete a returns form if exchanging items (*included in your uniform package and located in the Appendix of the handbook*)

Our friends at Arborwear will get your replacement items ordered right away and will let you know how to return incorrect items. You won't have to pay shipping!

### When should I wear my uniform?

Ask your host for specifics about when and where to wear your uniform. In general, wear your uniform anytime that you are working. Be proud and represent!

If you're interested in purchasing supplemental items for yourself, check out SCA's public storefront:

<https://www.arborwear.com/portal/scapublic/Products>

## Notes and Questions

## Internship Housing

Settle in and make yourself at home. If you are living at home or are in an internship where housing is not provided, feel free to skip this section.

### Pet Policy

To avoid potential health risks and damage to property, it is SCA's policy that pets are not to be kept in SCA-leased housing. When housing is provided by the partner, or if housing is not leased by SCA, the intern must obtain written permission from the partner and/or landlord. SCA will not be responsible for any pet-related damages.

### Inspect Your Housing



As an SCA intern, you may find yourself living in anything from a tent to a house, but there are some things you can expect to be the same for all SCA internship housing. Use the list below to inspect your housing. Does it have:

- ✓ A safe location
- ✓ Access to showers and toilets
- ✓ Cell phone service, phone, or two-way radio
- ✓ Minimal furnishings including a bed, table, and chairs (unless camping)
- ✓ Basic cleanliness and good repair
- ✓ Heating during cold weather
- ✓ A place to cook food
- ✓ Single gender sleeping quarters (unless you've agreed to other arrangements)

### How does my rent get paid?

- By SCA: In most cases, your housing will be taken care of by the SCA and your site.
- By You: You should know already if you are in this situation! You will receive your housing allowance by the first of each month in order to make your housing payments. As you are determining what rent you can afford, keep in mind that housing allowances are taxed.

### Housing Issues?

Use the list below to decide who to call.

- Issues with heating, plumbing, roof, etc.? Talk to landlord\* and SCA Contact\*\*
- Conflicts with housemates? Use the [Conflict Resolution Tools](#) in this handbook. Talk to Site Supervisor and SCA Contact.
- Housing Allowance Question? Talk to SCA Contact.

*\*If you live on site, talk to your site supervisor or maintenance staff.*

*\*\* If you signed the lease for your housing (instead of SCA), you only need to contact your landlord about these issues, but you can always get help from your SCA Contact if you need it.*

## Prepare for Emergencies

SCA and your host have developed policies, processes, and tools to support a safe service environment. However, ultimately, safety is up to you. You will be making decisions on a daily basis that affect your safety.

**SCA's 24-Hours Emergency Line 1-800-YO-SOGGY (1-800-967-6449)**

By taking the steps listed below and becoming familiar with the resources on this page, you can reduce your risk and be ready to deal with emergencies if they occur.

### Things to do in your first seven days:

- Talk to your site supervisor about the following topics.

(See [the Meet Your Host Page](#) for additional suggestions.)

- Emergency policies and procedures
- Protective equipment
- Evacuation Plans
- Other questions that you have about safety.

- Become familiar with your site's emergency response plan (ERP).

- If your site doesn't have an ERP already, create your own.

Use the blank [ERP in the appendix](#) to create a resource that includes:



- Steps to take in an emergency
- Emergency phone numbers
- Directions to the nearest medical facilities

- Put a copy of the ERP in your first aid kit, vehicle, living and work spaces.

- Put SCA's 24-Hour Emergency Number into your phone: **1-800-YO-SOGGY(967-6449)**.

### Site Evacuation Procedures

- An evacuation procedure may occur at your service site in the event of a natural disaster, civil unrest, or due to COVID-19
- Make sure you are familiar with your site's evacuation plans
- If you have been briefed that an evacuation may occur, please call the 24-hour emergency hotline or contact your SCA advisor and let them know.
- Please let the on call responder know where you are located, if you are living in park quarters or not and if the housing is also being evacuated, estimated length of the evacuation.

## Resources for Managing Risk

You can view the following resources in the appendix.

- Emergency Response Plan Template
- Hazard Assessment Information
- Take 5 for Safety



## Resources for When Injuries and Incidents Happen

Turn to the following pages in this handbook.

- Steps to Take During an Emergency
- Steps to Take for Non-Emergency Incident or Injury
- Steps to Take After an Emergency
- Health Insurance
- Workers' Compensation

## Discrimination & Sexual Harassment Advisory

We are confident that in your upcoming term of service, you will meet resource management and conservation professionals of the highest personal and professional integrity. Some of these people will inspire you, serve as mentors, and have a lasting effect on the rest of your life. You will come to value and treasure your opportunity to work side by side with these experienced professionals.

Even in a workplace as professional as those of our cooperating agencies, discrimination can occur. It is the policy of all of our partner agencies to maintain a workplace environment free from any type of discriminatory conduct, including making statements or jokes, or committing acts regarding a person's race, color, national origin, religion, gender, physical condition, age, marital status or sexual orientation that are offensive, derogatory, or harassing. Nonetheless, over the years, a small number of our volunteers have reported that they were victims of violations of this policy. Therefore, we feel that it is our responsibility to advise you that there is a possibility, however remote, that you could be confronted with discriminatory behavior.

Most of us immediately recognize the more overt forms of discrimination. There is one kind of discrimination that sometimes takes subtle and insidious forms, namely, sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is not merely defined as sexual advances and/or requests for sexual favors that are unwelcome. It is also verbal comments, gestures and/or physical contact which are deliberate, repeated, unwanted, and unsolicited.

Sexual harassment can sometimes be so subtle that it is not readily recognized at first. It may take the form of unwelcome verbal comments, jokes, suggestions or derogatory remarks based on sex; unwelcome physical touching, pats, squeezes, repeated brushing against or the impeding or blocking of one's movement; unwelcome visual harassment, sexually suggestive or derogatory pictures, drawings or cartoons; unwelcome communications, notes, phone calls or e-mail. This may include words or actions that the initiator intends to be "harmless", benign or playful, but which may not be so perceived by the recipient or an onlooker.

From your perspective, you should take seriously and not tolerate any conduct that makes you feel uncomfortable, degraded or intimidated. Also, do not ignore offensive behavior because it occurs outside of work hours. Inform the initiator that his/her words and/or actions are unwelcome and state that they should not be repeated and will not be tolerated. If the behavior continues, or if you do not feel safe or comfortable confronting the individual directly, please report the situation immediately to your supervisor or, if this is not appropriate, to any other management representative of your choice.

Many of our hosting sites have Personnel Directors or Equal Employment Opportunity Representatives who are trained to deal constructively and professionally with incidences of harassment. We urge you to consider contacting these officials. They will make sure that your concerns are dealt with in confidence to the extent consistent with a full and fair investigation. Oftentimes, they are experienced enough to resolve the difficulties you may be experiencing through informal discussions. However, they will also know when more formal measures are called for which they will advise you of, but will not take without permission (with the rare exception of serious assault).

These measures could involve conducting a thorough investigation of your allegations, interviewing others who may have witnessed the behavior which has caused you discomfort, identifying any areas of factual dispute, and eventually reaching a conclusion as to whether the alleged conduct constituted a violation of agency policy or federal or state law. If this is indeed the case, they will know the next steps to take to invoke remedial action or sanction. They also will ensure that there will be no retaliation of any kind as a result of your utilization of their complaint procedures. No action will be taken against any individual who makes a good faith complaint or against any individual participating in the investigation or enforcement of this policy. However, any individual who knowingly makes a false claim of sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

We all have a responsibility for maintaining high standards of conduct in the workplace. Sexual harassment has no place in it and should never be condoned. Most importantly, for your own wellbeing, we urge you to not tolerate it and to take the steps outlined above, if necessary. Please remember that our agency partners will not be able to take remedial action to correct problems or individuals if they do not know that inappropriate behavior is occurring. Think of the next person who will be in the position you are in and allow our agencies to send out the message that sexual harassment is simply unacceptable.

### ***Intolerance of harassment, abuse, and assault***

**SCA does not tolerate harassment or abuse of any sort on our members, and we rely on our agency partners to provide workplace and housing environments that actively identify and manage hazards and risks. If any instances of harassment or abuse are suspected or have been reported, please alert SCA via normal incident reporting channels such as contacting us at 1-800-YO-SOGGY.**

## COVID-19 Guidance

SCA's COVID-19 Response Plan was created to mitigate risks to SCA, its staff, and its members. It is a working document, continually updated to reflect the latest conditions and CDC and local guidance. In March, 2020, SCA activated its Incident Response Team (IRT), composed of experienced professions representing numerous relevant disciplines, to guide the organization's management of the ongoing coronavirus situation. IRT activities are conducted in consultation with SCA's Executive Team.

All SCA staff, partners, and participants are encouraged to review this plan in its entirety and are expected to comply with the directives and recommendations herein to protect themselves and those with whom they work. Key points include but are not limited to:

### SCA Programs

- SCA applicants will accurately and honestly submit a Health and Medical History form
- Participants who are offered a team position will be asked to sign SCA's Expectations of Program Participants to help keep themselves and other participants safe
- All team participants must disclose any illness or travel from or through a CDC-designated high risk area in the 14 days prior to program start date
- Where applicable, program leaders will maintain a Daily Health Log
- Face coverings must be worn by all SCA personnel while working with or around other members leaders, or staff when a 6 foot distance cannot be continuously maintained
- Tools should only be used by the SCA crew and should be disinfected on a daily basis
- In vehicles with 2+ rows of seating, the driver and one passenger per row of seats are allowed.

### All are to wear masks

- At a minimum, clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces in the vehicle at the beginning and end of each shift
- Members must isolate when they have any of the following symptoms/diagnosis: influenza, vomiting, fever, potential or diagnosed contagious illness
- Staff, members, and their immediate families may access SCA's Employee Assistance Program

## Steps to Take: Emergency or Injury

Follow the steps below for any emergency or injury that requires immediate support.

- Deal with the immediate threat to life.
- Facilitate first aid and/or evacuation if necessary.
- Call 911 and/or get to nearest medical facility, if necessary.
- Communicate with your site supervisor as necessary and appropriate.
- Call your SCA Contact during regular business hours, or 1-800-YO-SOGGY (967-6449) if your SCA Contact is not reachable or it is after hours
- If you visit a medical facility, provide your insurance card, or, if the injury occurred while performing service tasks during work hours, tell the health care provider that this will be a workers' compensation claim.

## Steps to Take: Non-Emergency or Injury

Follow these steps for incidents or injuries that do not require immediate support.

- Facilitate first aid and/or evacuation if necessary.
- Communicate with your site supervisor as necessary and appropriate.
- Contact your SCA Contact during regular business hours for additional support as needed
- If a medical facility is visited, provide your insurance card, or, if the injury occurred while performing service tasks during work hours, tell the health care provider that this will be a Workers' Compensation claim.

## Notes and Questions

## Steps to Take: After an Incident or Injury

Follow these steps as appropriate within one day of an incident.

### Call your SCA Contact:

- Within 24 Hours: Report the incident to your SCA Contact. If SCA offices will not be open within 24 hours of the incident, you can call SCA's 24-hours emergency hotline: 1-800-YO-SOGGY (967-6449)
- Request ongoing support and provide information as requested by SCA staff to complete an incident report
- Discuss any potential impacts that the incident may have on your internship (work restrictions from your doctor, missed service hours, unresolved interpersonal/ professional issues, etc.)

### Communicate with your site supervisor:

- Within 24 Hours: Report the incident.
- Follow up about the status of the situation
- Discuss any potential impacts that the incident may have on your internship (work restrictions from your doctor, missed service hours, unresolved interpersonal/ professional issues, etc.)

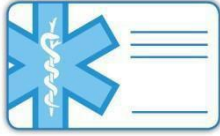
## Notes and Questions



## Health Insurance Basics

It can be hard to think clearly when you're sick or injured. Read through this information now and be prepared to get the medical help that you need when you need it.

### Things to do in Your First 30 Days



- Receive your insurance documents in an email from SCA
- Print your insurance card and put it in your wallet
- Find a local walk-in health center for non-emergency visits

### What to do When You Visit a Health Care Provider

- Bring your insurance card and show it when you check in
- Ask if they will file your insurance claim or if you need to file it directly
- If you need to file a claim, send your bills to Cigna using the addresses below

### Is my position eligible for SCA health insurance?



Only AmeriCorps positions of 42 weeks or more are eligible to receive health insurance coverage.

#### AmeriCorps

If your position is eligible for health insurance, you will receive enrollment forms with the rest of your SCA paperwork.



Please note: if you are currently enrolled in non-SCA insurance, you will not be eligible for SCA insurance during your internship.

### How long will I be covered by SCA insurance?

If your position is eligible and you choose to enroll, you will be covered from the start date of your SCA position to the last day of the month in which your position ends.

\* There is no option for extended coverage after your internship ends.

\*The maximum length of coverage for one position is 364 days.

### What benefits does the SCA health insurance provide?

To view up to date insurance information, including coverage benefits, visit the Cigna Insurance page.

[https://enrollment.summitamerica-ins.com/school\\_insurance.aspx?AFID=4&SCID=37&THID=TCN](https://enrollment.summitamerica-ins.com/school_insurance.aspx?AFID=4&SCID=37&THID=TCN)

## Notes and Questions

**How do I contact the health insurance company?**

Cigna Health Plan Hotline: 1-800-244-6224

Web: [www.myCigna.com](http://www.myCigna.com)

App: myCigna Mobile App

**Do I need a doctor who is in the insurance plan network?**

No. You can go to any doctor, urgent care center, or hospital for treatment. However, health providers who are in Cigna's network will automatically file your insurance claims and may give you special discounts.

To find a local health care provider who is in the network:

Call: 1-800-244-6224 or

Visit: [www.myCigna.com](http://www.myCigna.com)

**What do I do if I still have my insurance card from my last SCA internship?**

You will need to print out a new insurance card. Insurance policy information and coverage change frequently, so it is important to ensure that your card is up to date.

## Notes and Questions

## Workers' Compensation

If you are injured during service hours while performing job-related tasks, your medical costs may be eligible to be covered in full by Workers' Compensation.



### How do I use Workers' Compensation?



- Visit a walk-in clinic (non-emergencies) or urgent care/emergency room (emergencies)
- Tell the health care provider that this will be a Workers Compensation claim and that you work for the SCA
- If requested, provide the contact information for SCA's Human Resources Coordinator:

Bridget Nelson  
HR Director  
[bnelson@thesca.org](mailto:bnelson@thesca.org)  
4245 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 825  
Arlington, VA 22203  
United States

- Contact your SCA Contact **within 24 hours** to provide:



- Name and contact info of the health care provider
  - Details of the incident/injury
  - If SCA offices are closed, use SCA's 24 hours emergency line to report the incident: 1-800-YO-SOGGY (967-6449)
- Your contact will complete a Workers Compensation Report using the information that you provide.
  - SCA will generate a Workers Compensation claim number and email it to you.
  - SCA will also provide the Workers Compensation claim number to the health care provider so that they can submit your claim for payment.
  - The Workers Compensation company will determine whether or not your claim will qualify as a claim.

If it qualifies, your bill will be paid. If it does not qualify, you will be informed by the Workers Compensation company and will have the option to submit your claim for insurance coverage through your personal or SCA health insurance.

## Notes and Questions

### What if I get a medical bill?



If you receive a bill, it means that something went wrong with your Workers Compensation claim and no one is currently paying the bill. You need to take action right away to make sure that the unpaid bill does not affect your credit.

### **Follow the steps below if you receive a medical bill:**

If you received a Workers Compensation claim number:



○ Call the phone number on the bill, tell them that the costs should have been submitted as a Workers Compensation claim, and provide them with the Workers Compensation claim number.

If you did not receive a Workers Compensation claim number:



○ Call your SCA Contact or site supervisor and let them know that your Workers Compensation claim did not go through properly and needs to be resubmitted.

## Notes and Questions

## What if I get injured during service work, but don't need medical attention?

It is in your best interest to report all work related injuries/incidents to the SCA within 24 hours. Reporting minor injuries when they happen makes it more likely that you will be eligible for Workers Compensation coverage if the injury develops into something more serious.



Tick bites provide a great example of why minor injuries should be reported right away. While an embedded tick is a minor incident, tick bites have the potential to lead to Lyme disease. If you do not report the tick bite when it happens, you may not be eligible for Workers Compensation to cover Lyme disease or other complications that may develop as a result of the bite.

## What you should know about Workers' Compensation

### You need to report Workers Compensation incidents within 24 Hours



SCA must be informed of Workers Compensation claims within 24 hours, or may not be able to submit your claim. During business hours, call your SCA Contact for assistance filing a claim. If you need to report an incident when SCA offices are closed, use SCA's 24-hours emergency line: **1-800-YO-SOGGY (967-6449)**.

### Workers' Compensation is not guaranteed



SCA's insurance company has the final say as to whether or not a claim meets the Workers Compensation eligibility criteria. If your claim is denied, you will be able to submit it as an insurance claim through your personal or SCA health insurance.

## Notes and Questions

## SCA AmeriCorps

Congratulations on participating in the SCA as an AmeriCorps member!



**AmeriCorps**

## Notes and Questions

### Register with [MyAmeriCorps.gov](https://myamericorps.gov)



- My AmeriCorps is your one stop shop for all things AmeriCorps. Through this website, you will be enrolled in national service, be able to view your award details, put your student loans into forbearance, and access your Education Award funds.



- **You should create a [MyAmeriCorps profile](https://myamericorps.gov) as soon as possible and keep an eye out with an instructional email from SCA staff on how to complete the mandatory Enrollment Form**

### Receive your AmeriCorps enrollment confirmation email



- It can take the SCA up to 8 days after your start date to process your AmeriCorps enrollment. Once you are fully enrolled, you will receive a confirmation email from the SCA, and at that time you can apply for loan forbearance.



- You will not be enrolled in AmeriCorps service if the Enrollment Form isn't submitted at least 2 business days before you begin service. Please email [hmorway@thesca.org](mailto:hmorway@thesca.org) for any questions on your AmeriCorps enrollment or service.

### Put Eligible Student Loans into Forbearance



- If you have qualified student loans, you can place your loans in forbearance during your service. In addition, you are eligible to have the accrued interest paid at the end of your service.
- To put your student loans into forbearance, login to [My.AmeriCorps.gov](https://my.americorps.gov) and follow the instructions [here](#)



- You will not be able to put your student loans into forbearance until after you receive your AmeriCorps enrollment confirmation email.

### Steps to Complete Your Service in Good Standing

Follow the steps below to make sure that you fulfill the requirements for SCA AmeriCorps throughout your internship and remain eligible for an AmeriCorps Education Award.

- **Complete your minimum AmeriCorps hours.** This number can be found on the Confirmation of Acceptance and SCA AmeriCorps Member Agreement forms that you signed. Your hours must be entered in MySCA time logs and approved on a weekly basis.
- **Complete your full term of service.** You are required to serve through the scheduled end date, even if you complete your AmeriCorps minimum hours early.



If you leave your internship before your scheduled end date, you risk losing your entire AmeriCorps Education Award. If you have any concerns about your ability to serve through your scheduled end date, get in touch with your SCA Adviser immediately.

## ○ Do not engage in activities prohibited by AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps members are prohibited from engaging in the activities listed below while on active duty. If you have concerns that you are being asked to do something that might be prohibited by AmeriCorps, discuss the situation first with your site supervisor, and then with your SCA Contact as appropriate.

### AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities:

- ⊗ Attempting to influence legislation or election to public office
- ⊗ Organizing or engaging in boycotts, strikes, petitions or protests
- ⊗ Assisting or deterring union organizing
- ⊗ Engaging in any form of religious proselytization
- ⊗ Providing a direct benefit to a for-profit business, labor union, partisan political organization, or religious organization
- ⊗ Raising funds for living allowances or for an organization's general operating expenses or endowment
- ⊗ Writing a grant application to any federal agency
- ⊗ Collecting fees, selling items, or participating in money-handling duties on behalf of the agency with which you serve
- ⊗ Abortion services or referrals
- ⊗ Duplicating or displacing a volunteer or employee at your agency



## ○ Perform Satisfactorily

Your site supervisor will be completing a mid-term\* and end-of-term AmeriCorps evaluation on the quality of your service. The results of these evaluations are taken into account when you are exited from AmeriCorps at the end of your position.

\*Mid-term evaluations are only required if you're enrolled with a 900-, 1200- or 1700-hour AmeriCorps education award.

### Additional AmeriCorps Information

#### What is the AmeriCorps Education Award?



To learn more about the AmeriCorps Education Award, read through the [AmeriCorps Education Award Guidebook](#) or visit the online tutorial at [www.nationalservice.gov/resources/edaward](http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/edaward).

Use this site to form a strategy on how to use your award and discover other post-service opportunities related to school and student loans.

#### How do I use my AmeriCorps Education Award?

To apply your AmeriCorps Education Award to eligible expenses, login to My.AmeriCorps.gov. You will be able to apply your award through this site after you have been exited from AmeriCorps, approximately 30 days after your internship ends.

#### To what expenses can I apply my AmeriCorps Education Award?

Qualified Student Loans: Qualified loans include any loans backed by the federal government. Check with your student loan holder to find out if your loan is backed by the federal government.

Current Education Expenses at a Qualified Institution: Qualified institutions are schools that can provide federal financial aid. If a school has a FAFSA code with the US Department of Education, the school is qualified.



#### Look up your school here:

<https://fafsa.ed.gov/FAFSA/app/schoolSearch?locale=en> EN

## AmeriCorps Pledge

*I will get things done for America, to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier.*

*I will bring Americans together to strengthen our communities.*

*Faced with apathy, I will take action.*

*Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground.*

*Faced with adversity, I will persevere.*

*I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond.*

*I am an AmeriCorps member, and I will get things done.*

### **Nontraditional Educational Institutions**

Sometimes educational institutions that don't meet the requirements above might have an arrangement with a nearby university that allows AmeriCorps alumni to apply an AmeriCorps Education Award toward a course payment. A few of these institutions are listed below and can be contacted directly for details:



☒ National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)  
*Partners with Central Wyoming College*



☒ Aerie Backcountry Medicine  
*Partners with University of Montana*



☒ Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities  
*Partners with Sterling College*



♦ ShelterInstitute  
*Partners with University of Maine*

### **Connect with your State Service Commission**

State Service Commissions are charged with coordinating AmeriCorps service and encouraging volunteering in their states. They often administer special training and events for AmeriCorps members.

To find the State Service Commission in the state where you're serving, go to [www.americorps.gov](http://www.americorps.gov) and click "Contact Us," then the State Service Commissions link.

Like your State Service Commission page on Facebook to stay in touch about opportunities to join service days or attend professional development workshops with other AmeriCorps members.

### **Save the Date**

On national days of service there are many events across the country. Look for ways to broaden your experience by connecting with other AmeriCorps and SCA members. These days include:

January — Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service

March — AmeriCorps Week

April — Earth Day

## **Notes and Questions**



## SCA Time Logs

Time logs are the way that SCA members report the hours they serve and the important projects they accomplish.

Complete these logs accurately and professionally to ensure that SCA and your host have quality data to support current and future SCA internships.



### Things to do in your first week:



- Login to MySCA and create your first Activity Log
- Determine the three to five main accomplishments that you will be reporting in your Output Logs
- Make sure that the site supervisor listed on your time logs is the person at your site who will be approving your time logs
- Read the [Time Log FAQs in the Handbook Appendix](#) for critical details

### How do I do my time logs?



1. Login to MySCA
2. Click on Manage My Service Tasks
3. Click on your current position
4. Click New Activity Time Log or New Output Time Log
5. Complete the log appropriately. [See Time Log FAQs](#) in Handbook Appendix for critical details.

### What is an Activity Log?

SCA is required to confirm that you are fulfilling your service commitment by tracking number of hours served. Activity Logs are the method through which SCA captures this information. **Because time logs are so important to SCA and Federal partners failure to complete time logs will result in a suspension of service after 3 weeks of inactivity.** To avoid running into this issue, make sure you:

- Submit time logs weekly (do not leave them in “draft”!)
- Submit logs to your supervisor every week

### What is an Output Log?

Output logs are the method you will use to submit your work accomplishments to SCA. We use the service data you provide to show our partners your accomplishments during the project. It is critical that you submit accurate and complete output logs throughout your internship. These electronic logs are used by SCA to fulfill requirements for funding that makes programs possible, and they demonstrate the collective impact of SCA across its many programs and locations. While all output logs must be completed at the conclusion of your program, you should enter these periodically as you complete projects.

- Watch the [Output Log Video training](#) and view the Output Log Cheat Sheet (in the appendix).
- Complete Output Logs for each of the main tasks of your internship. Use the notes section to describe in detail what you have worked on, where, and with whom (include the number of volunteers if applicable)
- If you are working on the same project with other SCA interns, only one of you will need to complete an Output Log for each group accomplishment.

### What happens to my time logs after my internship ends?

Your time logs will remain in your MySCA portal as a permanent record of your hours and accomplishments. After your internship ends, you will be able to find/edit the time logs in the “View My History” tab and go to your Position number from there. If you are serving in a remote location without access to the internet, and have been authorized to keep track of service hours on paper timesheets, you are expected to enter your hours via MySCA’s electronic time logs within 30 days of the end of the position. Please see the [SCA Time Log Tutorial](#) for more details!



## Conflict Resolution



Conflicts are an inevitable part of life, even in positive situations with well-intentioned people. How you respond to conflicts during your internship will have a huge impact on how they affect your experience.

In general, dealing with conflicts early and directly is good practice. Read below for SCA's general recommendations for dealing with conflict.

- Attempt to settle the problem with the other party on a one-on-one basis.



Choose a time and place that is comfortable for both parties

Be prepared to explain:

- How you define the issue
- What you see as your role in the issue
- What you see as a reasonable solution

Be prepared to listen and hear the other person's side of the story, including:

- How they define the issue
- What they see as their role in the issue
- What they see as a reasonable solution

- If this attempt is unsuccessful, try to settle the problem by **involving your site supervisor**.

- If involving your site supervisor is unsuccessful, attempt to solve the problem by **working with your SCA Contact**. Your SCA Contact will facilitate conversations between your site supervisor and/or additional SCA staff to assist in moving the issue to resolution.

- If your SCA Contact is unable to resolve the issue, your **SCA Contact will bring the issue to SCA program management and identify a resolution** based on the details of the specific situation.



If you determine that this resolution is unsatisfactory, you may **write to the Director of Member Experience** for your program, outlining the issue and your requested resolution. This letter must be submitted within 30 days of the SCA contact's resolution as outlined above.

In 99.9% of situations the above process will resolve all issues. If necessary, you have the right to a Formal Resolution Procedure as outlined in your SCA AmeriCorps Member Agreement.

## Notes and Questions

SCA CONSERVATION INTERN HANDBOOK

# Getting to Work



## Getting to Work

### Keep Track of Logistical Details



Don't forget the details! Keep track of the basics so that you can give your attention to the important service work that you are doing.

### Expand Your Conservation Ethic



Conservation is the foundation of SCA's mission. Read the next pages for steps to take to build your knowledge base, learn the history of conservation, and expand your personal conservation ethic.

### Make a Commitment to Service



Service is an ethic and a skillset. Focusing on building your technical skills and project management abilities can increase your service impact now and in the future.

### Be a Leader



Good leadership begins with you. Look here to learn about leadership styles, access conflict resolution tools, and set goals that will make an impact.

## Notes and Questions

## Keep Track of the Details

The success of your internship experience is in your hands. The tools and reminders below can help you to make informed decisions and stay on top of the details.

- Use the resources in this handbook:
  - ✂ AmeriCorps
  - ✂ Conflict Resolution
  - ✂ Housing
  - ✂ Health Insurance
  - ✂ Living Allowance
  - ✂ Risk Management
  - ✂ Travel
  - ✂ Uniforms
  - ✂ Workers' Compensation
- Submit your Activity Logs on a weekly basis
- Make regular additions to your Output Logs as you work on long term projects. Check out this Output Log tutorial video on Conservation- nation.org to answer questions about how to fill out those logs. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jl-8JNa9sPg>

Maintain open communication with your site supervisor:



- Ask questions if you don't understand something
- Address issues directly and immediately (don't put them off)
- Request a sick day if you are feeling ill
- Discuss potential changes to your schedule
- Bring up safety concerns
- Share your successes and excitement

Contact SCA to:



- Get support for medical, emotional, or interpersonal issues
- Report Workers' Compensation incidents
- Get help with insurance, pay, Workers' Compensation claims, AmeriCorps and related questions
- Change the supervisor listed on your time logs
- Discuss changes to your service start and end dates or an interruption in your service

## Hard Work

*The three great essentials to achieve anything worthwhile are: hard work, stick-to-itiveness, and common sense.*

*- Thomas Edison*

## Expand Your Conservation Ethic

Want to be more effective as a conservationist? Here are our recommendations: learn the facts...and the systems, relationships, and processes that make the plants grow, the planets spin and the people act.

In essay after essay, we read about SCA applicants whose life changing experiences inspired them to devote themselves to conservation. This heartfelt, gut-based devotion is vital to the future of conservation, but it is only one piece of a well-developed conservation ethic.

Whether this experience is your first with conservation or your 20th, this section includes things that you can do during your internship to take your conservation ethic to the next level.

### Learn all you can!

Whether you are educating the public, collecting data, or managing resources, building your knowledge can increase your impact now and in the future.

### Start where you are:

- Learn the mission of your site and the reason behind the mission
- Become an expert-in-training: explore the visitor center, read pamphlets and brochures, poke around the website.
- Talk to the people who know



### Pick your supervisor's brain

- Talk to volunteers, staff and other interns about their knowledge and experiences
- Attend interpretive tours, lectures and other programs offered at your site
- Prepare a short "elevator speech" about your site and what you are doing

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### Questions to ponder:

- How does what's happening at your site fit into the bigger picture of conservation?*
  - Why is what you are doing important?*
- 

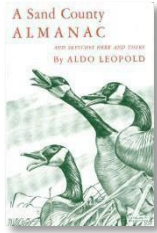


## The Land Ethic

*"The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land."*

*- Aldo Leopold*

## Learn from the past:



○ **Aldo Leopold**, Rachel Carson, Edward Abbey, and Ralph Waldo Emerson are some of the legendary names in the canon of conservation literature. Check out the Conservation Book Club on Conservation-nation.org for more authors and titles. Then find a cozy cabin or sun drenched mountaintop and get inspired.



○ **Liz Titus-Putnam** founded the SCA over 50 years ago. Learn about **the history of SCA** and the impact that one young woman has had on over 70,000 lives (including yours).

○ The **history of conservation in the US** is rich and varied. Learn the roles that artists, explorers, scientists, educators, politicians and so many more played in creating the conservation movement of today. Explore books, websites, and movies to learn more.

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### Did you know?

*...the SCA was started by a 22 year old college student?*

*...the United States invented the idea of national parks?*

*...artists had a big role in inspiring the US conservation movement?*

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### Become the future

No matter what career path you choose, you can develop your own conservation ethic and make a decision to live by it. Here are some thoughts to guide your process:



Reflect on your experience. Keep a journal: on paper, in photos, in pictures, online... Whatever the format, the key is that you take time to process your experience and learn what it has to teach you.



Be part of the conversation about conservation. You are in good company in pondering the big questions of conservation. Connect with others with SCA's online community: [Conservation-nation.org](http://Conservation-nation.org)

## Legacy

*"It was the funniest thing I'd ever heard," said Liz. "I mean, who would listen to a girl with a paper in her hands?"*

*- Liz Titus-Putnam,  
SCA Founder*

*Responding to her thesis advisor's request that she turn her idea for a student conservation corps into reality.*

## Make a Commitment to Service

Service is an ethic and a skillset. Building your technical skills and project management abilities can increase your service impact now and in the future.

### Make the Most of Your Experience

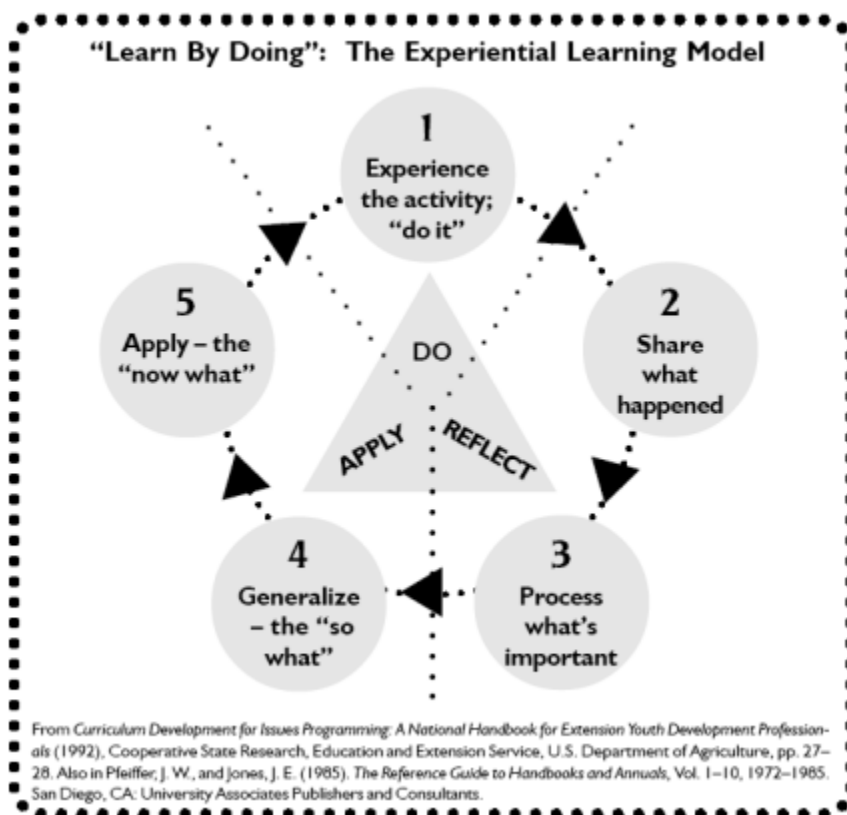
Your internship is an opportunity to work side by side with experts in the conservation field. It's up to you to make every moment count.

- Ask questions every day!
- Do your homework
- Volunteer to help out with interesting projects
- Go to every training you can, even if it's not required
- Use the Experiential Learning Model below to transform all of your service work into meaningful learning experiences

## Service

*"Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."*

*- Martin Luther King Jr.*





## Build Your Project Management Skills



Project management is everything that goes on behind the scenes to make a project successful: defining the project, securing needed people and supplies, managing time and tasks, and taking care of all of the logistical details.

In addition, project managers are the people who step back from the day to day details to see the big picture. They observe, evaluate and adjust as needed to make the project a success.

The great thing is that project management skills that you learn in one situation can be applied to all sorts of other situations. The skills you learn now will make you better prepared for whatever path you choose to follow.

### Steps you can take to build your project management skills:

- Observe and learn from experienced managers
- Ask questions about why and how things happen
- Volunteer to take charge of small projects

### Take the lead in managing your own internship experience:

- Consider the goals that you want to achieve and make decisions based on those goals
- Keep a calendar with important dates and deadlines
- Break down big projects into smaller pieces and create a system for tracking your progress
- Be diligent about tracking your hours and accomplishments through your SCA time logs
- Step back regularly to look at the big picture of your experience and see what adjustments you can make to better achieve your goals
- Ask for feedback and accept it with grace

## Inspiration

*If your actions inspire  
others to dream more,  
learn more, do more  
and become more, you  
are a leader.*

*- John Quincy Adams*

## Be a Leader

Good leadership begins with knowing yourself. Take some time to explore your leadership style, develop conflict resolution skills, and set goals that will make an impact.



### Leadership at SCA is about:

- Understanding your strengths and limitations
- Supporting individuals and groups to maximize their accomplishments
- Developing the management and decision-making skills to unite people and resources towards a common goal

### Know Yourself

Knowing how you work is an important step in learning to work with and lead others. The internet is full of resources that can help you to determine your leadership style. Type “Leadership Style” or similar phrases into Google and see what you can find.

How do you define your leadership style now?

What are some aspects of your leadership style that you would like to develop?

## Leadership

*Trust men and they will be true to you; treat them greatly and they will show themselves great.*

*- Ralph Waldo Emerson*

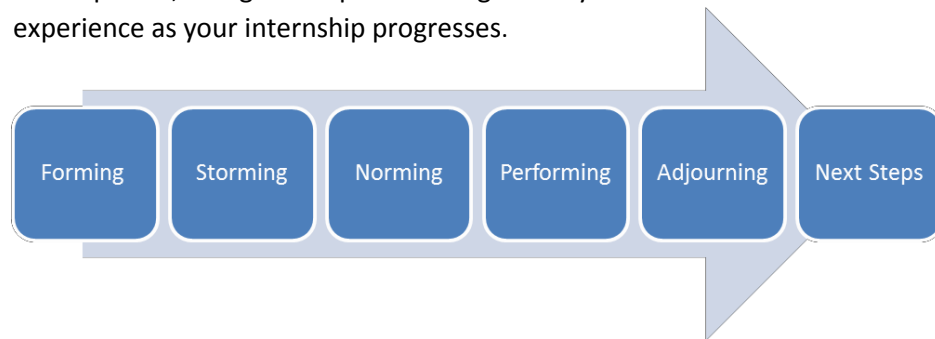
## Know Your Group

Understanding how groups function is another important element in leading others. Studies have shown that most groups go through predictable stages as they develop.

Being familiar with these stages and understanding what they mean for a group can make it easier to work through challenging times.

Search the internet for “Stages of Group Development” to learn more about the characteristics of each stage.

While the graphic above refers specifically to group development, it might also provide insight into your individual experience as your internship progresses.



### Have a Plan

Setting goals early can help you to remember your big picture focus even when you are in the midst of pressing details.

Make sure that your goals are SMART



Example of a non-SMART goal:

I want to learn more about conservation.

Example of this goal transformed into a SMART goal:

By the 6th week of my internship (Time-Focused), I want to be able to explain two conservation techniques (Measurable and Results-Focused) used by staff at my site

## SCA CONSERVATION INTERN HANDBOOK

# Wrapping up



## Wrapping Up

Turn to the following pages to read more about each topic.

### Leave Things Better Than You Found Them



Be intentional about the legacy that you leave behind. From the cleanliness of your housing to your relationships with everyone at your site, make a commitment to leaving things better than you found them.

### Wrap Up Your Service



Now that the end of your internship is nearing, there are some final logistical details for you to address. Read through the following pages for steps to take to finalize details for your housing, AmeriCorps, and more.

### Reflect on Your Experience



Whether this was the best time of your life or a practice in overcoming challenges, taking some time to process your experience while it's still fresh can help you to learn all that the experience has to teach. Turn to the Reflect on Your Experience section to get started.

## Notes and Questions

## Wrap Up Your Service

### Complete Your Final Time Logs

Complete and submit all time logs within one week of your last day. After your position ends, you will be able to view your time logs in the “View My History” tab in MySCA. If you kept paper timesheets during service, make sure those same hours are entered in your MySCA portal once you have internet access.

### Confirm details for your travel home

- Confirm your end date with your site supervisor. If this date has changed from the original end date listed on your COA form, confirm the change with your SCA Contact.
- Plan or review the travel plans that YOU arranged previously (plane tickets, train tickets, rides to the airport, etc.). Remember, you are responsible for your travel!

### Leave Your Housing Better Than You Found It

- Make your housing clean and welcoming for the next person.
- Move out everything that you brought (and anything you acquired during your internship).
- Get rid of all trash and recyclables.
- Do a thorough cleaning (fridge, stove, bathroom, floors, etc.).
- Pick-up the yard and outside living areas.
- Clean and waterproof your tent, repair zippers, etc. (if you camped for your internship).
- See below if you’re living in housing leased by the SCA.

### Additional instructions for interns living in housing leased by SCA

- If SCA paid rent directly to the landlord, you need to complete the checklist emailed to you at least one week prior to your move-in date.
- Hang on to the housing check list throughout your internship. You will need to follow check out steps at the end and return the form to SCA’s Field Services Manager within one week of moving out.



Email: [housing@thesca.org](mailto:housing@thesca.org)

Mail: SCA, Attn: Angela Brodeur (Field Services Coordinator) 689 River Rd., Charlestown, NH 03603

## Notes and Questions

### Complete Your AmeriCorps Exit Paperwork

- Sign into your MyAmeriCorps account to complete an electronic exit form.
- Submit a time log for each week of service via the MySCA portal
- Submit the Post-Position Self-Assessment via MySCA portal under the “Survey Alerts” section



### Using your AmeriCorps Education Award

- Go to the CNCS website for everything you need to know about using the education award:  
<https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps/segment-ameri-corps-education-award/use-your-education-award>
- You won't be able to access your award until you have been exited from AmeriCorps by the SCA, which can take up to 30 days. You will receive a confirmation email from the SCA when you are exited fully and able to access your Education Award funds.
- Login to My.AmeriCorps.gov to request your Education Award funds for payments. Contact the National Service Hotline with any questions: 1-800-942-2677



**AmeriCorps**

### Make sure that you will receive your W-2

- SCA will mail your W-2 to you at the end of January
- The W-2 will be mailed to the address listed on your W-4
- If you need it mailed to a different address, be sure to:
  - Contact SCA's Payroll Department at 603.543.1700
  - Provide your new address and phone number

## Notes and Questions

## Reflect on Your Experience

### Questions to Consider

What did you learn about yourself? How did you grow?

What was your biggest challenge? What was your

biggest success?

What lifelong lesson will you take with you?

How can you apply what you learned to your everyday life?

### What did you learn about:

Conservation? Service? Leadership?

### Did you meet the goals that you set for yourself?



# Heading Home



## Heading Home

Just as the trip to your site marked the physical and metaphorical transition to your new position, now your travel home marks a new transition.



Whether you are returning to the home you had before your internship, moving on to someplace new, or going home at the end of the day just as you did yesterday, you are marking an ending and a beginning.

Take some time to look back as well as forward at this moment of transition.

### Some things to consider:

- Visit [Conservation-nation.org](http://Conservation-nation.org)



- Read travel blogs from other SCA members
- Write your own travel blog. Be sure to tag it “RoadTrip”
- Ask questions about must see sites, good routes, and places to stay

○ **Write thank you letters** to people who had a positive impact on your experience

○ **Develop your “elevator speech”** so that you’re ready when your friends and family ask you about your experience

○ **Prepare to adjust back to your old life**

- Do you have different expectations for yourself? For your friends?
- Is your living situation changing drastically?
- Have you changed in ways that your friends and family may not be aware of?

○ **Take time to enjoy your journey to wherever you are headed next**

## Notes and Questions

**SCA CONSERVATION INTERNHANDBOOK**

# Continuing On



## Continuing On

Whether you are heading toward another SCA internship, a new job in conservation, back to school, or in a completely new direction, below are some steps that can help you to make the most of the internship experience you've just completed.



### Things to consider:

- Update your resume, and be sure to include the soft skills you've gained (e.g. leadership, teamwork, problem solving) as well as the hard skills.
- Ask your site supervisor to write you a letter of recommendation
- Determine if your internship made you eligible for non-competitive hiring with some of our key partner agencies
- If you are under 30 and served more than 640 with the NPS, FWS, BLM, or USFS, you may be eligible for non-competitive hiring authority through the Public Land Corps Act. Details vary from agency to agency, so ask your site supervisor or someone involved in human resources or youth programs at your site for more information about this opportunity.
- Update your SCA Application
  - Update your dates of availability
  - Add to your Skills/Education/Training/Certifications
  - Rewrite your essay to reflect your new perspective
- Check out the SCA Continuum Map at the beginning of this handbook.
  - Where are you now and where do you want to be next?
- Stay connected with other SCA alumni
  - Join the conversation on Conservation-nation.org
  - Like SCA on Facebook and Twitter
  - Find out where SCA interns are serving near you
- Spread the enthusiasm
  - Tell others about your SCA experience: <http://conservation-nation.org/group/sca-planet-2015/page/ways-to-share-your-sca-experience>
  - Mentor a young person on the path to conservation
  - Become an SCA Ambassador: <http://conservation-nation.org/page/ambassador-resources>
- Seek out other opportunities to build your skills in conservation, service, and leadership.
- Lead by example in everything that you do

## *Journeys*

*It may be when we no longer know what to do, we have come to our real work, and that when we no longer know which way to go, we have begun our real journey.*

*- Wendell Berry*