



NEWS RELEASE

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Land stewardship training by Job Corps lauded by US Forest Service *Agency Job Corps Centers graduated over 4,000 students nationwide*



JUN 21 - WASHINGTON, D.C. - The new green curriculum of the Forest Service's Job Corps will expand employment opportunities for its graduates, help revitalize local economies in rural communities and enhance the mission of the agency, U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell said today.

"The Forest Service congratulates high school and college students far and wide who are graduating this month, and we are especially proud of our own graduates of the Forest Service Job Corps centers," said Tidwell. "Our students have completed valuable, hands-on projects giving them excellent tools to pursue career paths in green jobs while also creating life-long connections with America's great outdoors."

Recognizing the program's efforts in green jobs training, President Obama has endorsed them as America's Green Job Corps.

At present, the Forest Service is awaiting final authorization from the Department of Agriculture for the go-ahead to directly hire Job Corps graduates to perform on land stewardship projects -- a process which is expected to put hundreds of the program's graduates to work before fall.

Locally, the Blackwell Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center in Laona, WI graduated a total of 153 students in the 2010 program year and will graduate 12 students in June of 2011.

The Blackwell Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center is associated with the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. The Blackwell Job Corps Civilian Conservation serves 205 students at the Laona, WI Center. The USDA Forest Service operates 28 Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers across 18 states with a capacity of 6,200 students. Forest Service employees operate 28 co-educational centers in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor.

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In the last 12 months the centers have graduated 4,263 students, better preparing them to enter the job market. Historically, approximately 80 percent of Job Corps graduates have started new careers, enrolled in higher education programs or have enlisted in the military.

Center enrollees come from low-income communities, both urban and rural. Students aged 16 through 24 who meet the economic criteria may obtain a high school or a general equivalency diploma and vocational training, primarily in a residential setting.

“Forest Service Job Corps centers provide the education, vocational instruction, and job skills training necessary to obtain gainful employment and earn a living wage,” explained Tony Dixon, the National Director of Forest Service Job Corps.

“Job Corps students are making Forest Service facilities and operations sustainable, lowering its operating costs, reducing our carbon footprint, and restoring terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems,” Dixon emphasized.

The centers directly contribute to the agency’s mission of conserving the nation’s national forests and grasslands. Job Corps students have fought forest fires, planted trees, improved wildlife habitat and built or maintained recreation facilities and miles of hiking trails.

The Forest Service Job Corps program maintains a cadre of young people with skills and abilities who can be quickly mobilized to address national emergencies including wildfires, floods and hurricanes. Students assisted during the Columbia space shuttle recovery and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita disaster relief efforts.

Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers offer hands-on training in over 30 vocational trades including: cement masonry, welding, business technology, painting, carpentry, bricklaying, wildland firefighting, food service, culinary arts and forestry.

The mission of the U.S. Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world.

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