



Rocky Mountain Conservancy

CONSERVATION CORPS

2017 End-of-Season Portfolio





Rocky Mountain Conservancy

Since 1931, Rocky Mountain Conservancy has supported Rocky Mountain National Park and other public land partners through educational programs and philanthropic donations. Early on, the focus of the Conservancy was developing educational materials and publications for visitors to use while in Rocky Mountain National Park. Over the past eighty year, the Conservancy has grown to support its public land partners in a breadth of ways. Currently, Rocky Mountain Conservancy contains six departments:

- **Retail** – manages 42 nature stores throughout Colorado and Wyoming to provide visitors with educational materials to enhance their experience.
- **Publications** – produces nature guides, children’s literature, natural and cultural history books, and more.
- **Membership** – connects people to Rocky Mountain National Park in support for the Conservancy and through newsletters updating constituents on upcoming projects.
- **Development** – raises funds for RMNP and Conservancy programs through donor outreach, grant proposals, and community engagement. Funds are used for specific projects including land acquisition, historical preservation, trail maintenance, building construction, and education.
- **Education** – provides field classes, internships, nature-based activities, and fellowships for people of all ages to further understand and connect with public lands.
- **Conservation Corps** – see below

Conservation Corps Program Outline

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy created the Conservation Corps program in 2003. Initially, the program supported seven interns on one crew in Rocky Mountain National Park. Since 2003, the program has grown to provide thirty-six youth with a summer-long internship opportunity on six different crews. Crews locations are: (listed in order of when they were established) Rocky Mountain National Park - Estes (2003), Rawah Wilderness (2005), Shadow Mountain (2006), Red Feather Lakes (2009), Boulder (2014), and Rocky Mountain National Park - Kawuneeche (2015). Crews are made up of six people (one leader and five crew members).

Program Goals:

1. To empower youth with job skills, career development resources, a conservation ethic, and a connection to our nation’s public lands to create the next generation of stewards.
2. To increase participant awareness of careers related to the environment, environmental stewardship, and public lands.
3. To link Conservation Corps projects to the missions and visions of the Rocky Mountain Conservancy, Rocky Mountain National Park/National Park Service, and Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest/USDA Forest Service.
4. To increase participant awareness and use of effective leadership skills based on positive and constructive communication and to provide opportunity for practice of these skills.
5. To increase participant awareness of the cultural and natural history and environment of the Rocky Mountain region.
6. To inform crew members in the need for and use of various methods of construction for environmentally-friendly trails, restoration, and reclamation projects.
7. To provide on-the-ground conservation work for Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) and the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest (ARNF).

The season spans eleven weeks between late-May and early-August. For eight weeks the crews work directly alongside the National Park Service and USDA Forest Service completing conservation project you will find summarized in the pages following. The other three weeks focus on leadership training, educational programming, and career development.

The program provides work clothing, camping gear, housing, and a living stipend to all members and leaders. The program is funded through generous donor support, in-kind gear donations, grant funding, and National Park Service and USDA Forest Service project funds.

To see more details about the program and season, please visit www.rmconservancyconservationcorps.wordpress.com!

Estes Crew



Summary of Work

During the 2017 season, the Estes Crew experienced some changes in crew size and personnel. Early in the season, Gabriel (pictured third from the left above) has to return to school in Puerto Rico as student strikes were brought to an end earlier than expected. This left the crew with only five members for a few weeks until a member of the High School Leadership Corps, Grace Oh-Willeke, was able to join the crew.

These changes did not slow down the Estes Crew's work on-the-ground. If anything, they made the crew stronger and more efficient. In their six weeks of work with the National Park Service's trail crew they maintained over 30 miles of trail by repairing drains to prevent erosion, clearing trail corridor to mitigate trail braiding, and decommissioned social trails to restore damaged areas; constructed over a dozen check steps to improved tread retention and reduce erosion on heavily used horse trails; and repaired 250 feet of turnpike on the Bierstadt Lake Trail to protect the sensitive wetland ecosystem, eliminate standing water on trail, and reduce nonpoint source pollution. With the increasing high visitation at Rocky Mountain National Park, this trail-related work protects the natural resources by encouraging visitors to remain on trail by moving water and clearing debris from corridors.

Beyond their time with trails, the crew worked two weeks with the Resource Stewardship division in Rocky Mountain National Park. These weeks were spent planting nearly 2500 native plants to disturbed areas in the front-country. Additionally, they helped remove invasive species through manual and chemical reduction of Musk Thistle, Canada Thistle, and Toadflax from campground and roadside pull-offs most susceptible to noxious weeds. This work helps to maintain and restore native habitat within the Park.

Crew Profiles



Name: Blake Crossland (Crew Leader)

Hometown: Denver, Colorado

School/Major (Area of Study): Colorado State University/Natural Resource Management with minors in Conservation Biology and Global Environmental Sustainability

Career Goals: Position with the National Park Service

Likes/Hobbies: Skiing, hiking, backpacking, paddle boarding, watching sports

Quote: "Working in the RMC-CC has truly been a life changing experience. It's grown me both professionally and personally, and I never could have expected to come away with so much after just two summers."



Name: Chris Rokusek

Hometown: Crystal Lake, Illinois

School/Major (Area of Study): University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign/Agriculture and Consumer Economics

Career Goals: Startup and own a successful business

Likes/Hobbies: Hanging out with friends, attending concerts, traveling, and reading

Quote: "This summer has truly sparked an interest in working for a non-profit in the future, as well as partaking in conservation work."



Name: Claire Gillett

Hometown: Longmont, Colorado

School/Major (Area of Study): Gonzaga University/Biology

Career Goals: I want to be a nurse, a teacher, and a park ranger in my career.

Likes/ Hobbies: I love hiking and rock climbing with my siblings, cousins, and friends! I also like to play the ukulele, hammock, bake, and run!

Quote: "Overall, my time as an intern in the Rocky Mountain Conservancy- Conservation Corps Estes Crew was incredible and life changing. I learned so many new skills, practical and social."



Name: Grace Oh-Willeke

Hometown: Denver, CO

School/Major (Area of Study): Colby College/Undeclared

Career Goals: Undecided

Likes/Hobbies: Hiking, Golf, Succulents, Ice Cream



Name: Simbi Umwali

Hometown: Aurora, Colorado.

School/Major (Area of Study): Colorado State University/Health and Exercise Science with a concentration in Sports Medicine.

Career Goals: Short term: CAN; Mid term: Registered Nurse; Long term: Phsician Assistant or Pediatrician.

Likes/Hobbies: I love to sleep 😊, I really love challenging myself. I love being outside doing all sorts of things, Road trips, singing, and laughing with friends. Lastly, I really love dancing.

Quote: "Every day I learned a new skill, either being the leader of the week, or how to use a certain tool. I watched myself grow into a person I never have thought that I would become. With waking up early, working as hard as we could, only to look back at the work we have done, or tourists appreciating the work we do, satisfied my heart. I know that I am not the same person that I was when I came."



Name: Sal Sharp

Hometown: Houghton, Michigan

School/Major (Area of Study): Fort Lewis College/Environmental Studies

Career Goals: Work in an environmental field and work in the outdoors.

Likes/Hobbies: I enjoy being in the outdoors and identifying plants. I also enjoy backpacking, biking, skiing, and hammocking.

Quote: “Over the past three months, not only have I developed a deeper understanding for the natural world and the conservation of our public lands, but I have also made lifelong friends. I have had experiences that will be with me my whole life.”



Photo: The crew working to set logs while replacing the turnpike at Bierstadt Lake.



Photo: The crew spraying for thistle above Moraine Park Campground.

Rawah Wilderness Crew



Summary of Work

The Rawah crew split their time this season between the Rawah Wilderness and trails along the Cache Le Poudre River. For the first few weeks of the season, the crew teamed up with the Red Feather Crew to help support flood restoration work on the Young Gulch Trail. The Young Gulch Trail was heavily affected by the High Park Fire in 2012 and the significant flood event in 2013. This disturbance left the trail largely washed away and impassable forcing the Forest Service to close it for repairs. In an effort to improve the trail's sustainability, the Forest Service is rerouting the trail along a fully new path. In partnership with the USFS and Wildland Restoration Volunteers, the Rawah and Red Feather Crews helped construct large rock structures to help fortify the new trail corridor, this included a nearly 50 foot rock wall and several smaller structures (i.e. armored ford river crossing and smaller walls along switchbacks).

After the first two weeks, the crew spent the next two in the Rawah Wilderness working to maintain the lower elevations of the trail systems, as the higher elevations were still snow covered. The crew had their work cut out for them, as the first few miles of trail at each trailhead was chock full of downed trees and defective drainage structures. On the Link Trail in the northern Rawah Wilderness, the crew removed 200 trees in two days!

During the second half of the season, Rawah and Red Feather Crews teamed up again and adopted the new name of Redwah. This mega crew of twelve returned to Young Gulch for one week to cut nearly 1.5 miles of new tread and remove several trees from the rerouted corridor. From then on, the Redwah Crew spent their season in the backcountry tackling more remote projects in the Comanche Peaks and Rawah Wilderness areas. The backcountry work included a four-day hitch near Beaver Reservoir maintaining trails to Browns Lake, Comanche Lake, and Mirror Pass; a four-day hitch around the Rawah Lakes maintaining trails around Sandbeach, Camp, and the Rawah Lakes; and a three-day hitch installing a puncheon, building a turnpike, and repairing a boardwalk on the McIntyre Trail.

Crew Profiles



Name: Gustaf Anderson (Crew Leader)

Hometown: Wausau, Wisconsin

School/Major (Area of Study): University of Minnesota - Twin Cities/History

Career Goals: High school history teacher

Likes/Hobbies: Spending time outside, drinking hot chocolate, learning new constellations, climbing on rocks, watching movies

Quote: "This summer has been an extremely rewarding experience. I feel very fortunate that I got to spend my summer in the Rawah Wilderness, working alongside a group of wonderful friends."



Name: Anna Conley

Hometown: Yakima, Washington

School/Major (Area of Study): Carleton College/Chemistry

Career Goals: Study mycology and ecology and work in bioremediation

Likes/Hobbies: mushroom hunting, fishing, playing oboe/piano, backpacking, skate skiing

Quote: "When I landed in Colorado, I didn't know what to expect this season. I had a lot of hopes and a few apprehensions. I hoped to learn a lot, enjoy working in the outdoors, become a better leader, meet people with shared interests, and think about my future career. I came out having learned more than I ever thought I would, doing more, higher quality work than I ever thought I would, having unforgettable experiences in beautiful places, getting to practice leadership, learning from and laughing with the people I work with, and opening my eyes to career possibilities."



Name: Jacob Ng

Hometown: Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

School/Major (Area of Study): University of Wisconsin-Madison/Electrical Engineering

Career Goals: Work in the field of renewable energy, such as photovoltaics

Likes/Hobbies: Outdoor recreation (such as backpacking, biking, climbing, canoeing, and skiing), playing piano, reading, cooking, math and science

Quote: "My overall experience with this program was strongly positive. I enjoyed getting to know the other Corps members, doing project work and maintenance work, bonding with my crew, spending weekends exploring our environment, and learning new things through the Conservancy."



Name: Jordan Vogt

Hometown: Greenville, South Carolina

School/Major (Area of Study): College of Charleston/Political Science & Latin American Caribbean Studies with a minor in Spanish

Career Goals: After college, I plan to use my outdoors experiences in the career that I choose. I believe that it is valuable because it provides good leadership and team building experiences that are beneficial in the workplace. Since I plan on graduating with a degree in Political Science and Latin American Caribbean Studies, I am interested in working with other countries in politics, sustainability, and/or community work. Both leadership and team building experience are important

to ensure success in these fields.

Likes/Hobbies: Reading, running, cooking, hiking, canoeing, drawing

Quote: "Over this entire summer, I was able to learn and grow tremendously. I am positive that I will take the skills and lessons that I learned this summer and use them throughout the rest of my life."



Name: Noah Landguth

Hometown: Fairview, Texas

School/Major (Area of Study): Collin College/Environmental Science

Career Goals: I want to earn a science degree that I can apply towards conservation. I'm most interested in biology and geology. Regardless of the field I end up pursuing, I hope to inspire others and obtain a leading role in the movement to protect the environment through the work that I do.

Likes/Hobbies: Running, biking, climbing, camping, photography, working on cars

Quote: "With all things considered, this program has been one of the best and most relevant opportunities of my life. I am extremely grateful to have participated in such a program and I will always remember the people I've met and the things I've learned this summer."



Name: William Scarbro

Hometown: Golden, Colorado

School/Major (Area of Study): Colorado State University/Computer Science

Career Goals: Make the world a better place.

Likes/Hobbies: I enjoy mountain biking, trail running, and playing soccer. In my free time I like to do volunteer work, write computer code, and play with my dog.

Quote: "My experiences in this program were exceedingly positive. I was able to live and work in one of the most beautiful places on earth. In addition, I was exposed to a new level of remoteness living at the Stub Creek work center. Looking back on the summer, I believe that this internship has allowed me to grow as a person because of the challenges I faced in living and working in such a remote environment. While some of this growth is demonstrated in the completion of my initial goals, I believe that working in the Rawah wilderness has also had inexplicable spiritual improvements on my soul."





Photo: Crew members cutting out a downed logs on trail in the Rawah Wilderness.



Photo: Before and After of the crews digging new tread for the Young Gulch Trail.



Photo: Crew members work to decommission illegal campsites in Comanche Peaks Wilderness

Shadow Mountain Crew



Summary of Work

In 2017, the Shadow Mountain Crew tackled 75 miles of trail maintenance and cleared over 900 trees from trails in their short eight weeks with the USFS in the Sulphur Ranger District out of Granby, Colorado. Due to heavier winters and the significant deadfall from the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic, the district always has significant maintenance to be done to simple ensure the trails are hike-able by the public. The crew worked on the Bottle Pass Trail in the Byers Peak Wilderness, the South Fork, Morgan’s Gulch, and Williams Fork Trails near Parshall, CO, and the High Lonesome, Arapaho Pass, and Devil’s Thumb Trails along the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

Beyond their work maintaining trails they also helped the USFS replace a bridge on the popular Cascade Creek Trail just below Cascade Falls. This project required the crew to identify two 23 foot stringers suitable for a bridge, cut the logs to size, debark them fully, and place them level on the existing sills. In four-days alongside the USFS crew and SCA Wilderness Ranger Interns, the crew successfully rebuilt the bridge over Cascade Creek and even got to see the first few grateful hikers enjoy their hard work.

For their last week of work the crew went up to Ice Hill Trail outside of Fraser and Winter Park, CO to repair a turnpike. As mentioned in the Estes Crew overview, a turnpike is a section of raised trail in a wetland area that helps water drain beneath the trail surface and elevates the surface of the trail away from the wetland to minimize human impacts on the sensitive ecosystem. The turnpike on the Ice Hill Trail was approximately thirty feet long.

Crew Profiles



Name: Izzy Owen (Crew Leader)

Hometown: Portland, Oregon

School/Major (Area of Study): Smith College/Psychology and the Study of Women and Gender

Career Goals: Undecided

Likes/Hobbies: Hiking, cooking, reading, biking, Ultimate Frisbee, dogs

Quote: “This has been the best summer of my life. Looking back over the past three months, I feel incredibly satisfied with the work my crew and I have done.”



Name: Anna Floyd

Hometown: Austin, Texas

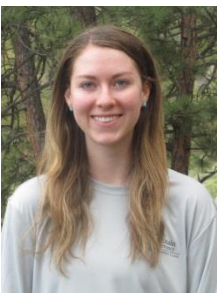
School/Major (Area of Study): The University of Texas at Austin/Plan II Honors and European Studies with a History Minor

Career Goals: I want my career to involve conservation and the environment! I’m considering working with the National Park Service, maybe in a ranger position, or maybe through the Department of the Interior. I’m also very interested in environmental policy and am considering graduate school for public affairs with a specialization in natural resource management/environmental policy. I am absolutely in love with language as well; I speak English,

Spanish, Portuguese, and French, and I would love to be a live translator at some point.

Likes/Hobbies: I enjoy reading, creative writing, hiking, soccer, rowing, Krav Maga, rugby, hammocking, singing/performing with guitar, piano and banjo, fishing (although I have a crippling fear of live fish), learning languages, spending time with my family, and traveling. I’m also completely obsessed with national parks, so much so that I’m currently writing my honors thesis as an ethnography of contemporary American attitudes toward wilderness and national parks.

Quote: “This summer with RMC has been one that I will remember and cherish for the rest of my life. It was intricate, nuanced, sweeping, exciting, new, illuminating, and beautiful...This internship has cemented the idea that I want to pursue a career in this field. Whatever I do with my life, I know that conservation and stewardship will be a big part of it.”



Name: Elise Parker

Hometown: Fort Collins, Colorado

School/Major (Area of Study): Colorado State University/ Health and Exercise Science with a concentration in Sports Medicine and a minor in Gerontology

Career Goals: Occupational Therapist

Likes/Hobbies: hiking, biking, reading, running, singing, music, coffee, soccer, frisbee, and dogs

Quote: “This summer with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy has by far been one of the best summers of my life. I have made so many valuable memories and friendships over the course of this summer and I am so grateful to have been a part of such an incredible program.”



Name: Will Sternberg

Hometown: Louisville, Colorado

School/Major (Area of Study): Montana State University/Business

Career Goals: I want to start my own action sports company.

Likes/Hobbies: I like mountain biking, snowboarding, slack lining, climbing, cliff jumping, and hiking.

Quote: “This was one of the best summers I have ever had. I learned so much about myself both physically and mentally and feel more confident in my abilities to interact with different people. I came into the summer with an open mind and had no idea what to expect. I felt out of place being the youngest crew member at first until I found that I was with a very accepting, diverse, and

interesting group of people.”



Name: Mary Cretney

Hometown: Mukwonago, Wisconsin

School/Major (Area of Study): University of Wisconsin-Madison/Conservation Biology

Career Goals: When I graduate from college, I would like to pursue a career focused in conservation or ecology, likely focused on a certain species of animal or plant, or studying community-level interactions in ecosystems to best preserve environments. Although I am uncertain whether I want to become involved with a more research-oriented or field work-oriented job, I do know that whatever I do will involve plenty of time in the outdoors!

Likes/Hobbies: Some things I love are the mountains, driving minivans, cheese, Hawaiian shirts, turtles, and Chaco tans. My hobbies include identifying wildlife, backpacking, playing the ukulele, trying my best to rock climb while really just watching other people on their routes, collecting pins, and jamming out to classic “dad rock” songs on road trips.

Quote: “The Rocky Mountain Conservancy – Conservation Corps was an educational experience intertwined with a friendship- and career-building environment. Through the program, I learned both hard and soft skills that will be applicable in my personal life and professional pursuits. The Corps has upheld its morals and values in regards to environmental conservation and passed them along to this current season’s members, many of whom, I presume, will do the same going forward.

The program also made an incredible effort to not only educate us in the methods of conservation work, but also the reasons behind why such work is so important. The Conservancy ran educational lessons on everything from history to predator-prey relations in Rocky Mountain National Park. The broadest lesson I took away from these teachings was that everything in the natural world has a purpose, working together to form a cohesive unit we call the Earth, and we have a significant role in preserving this environment.”



Name: Curtis Hall

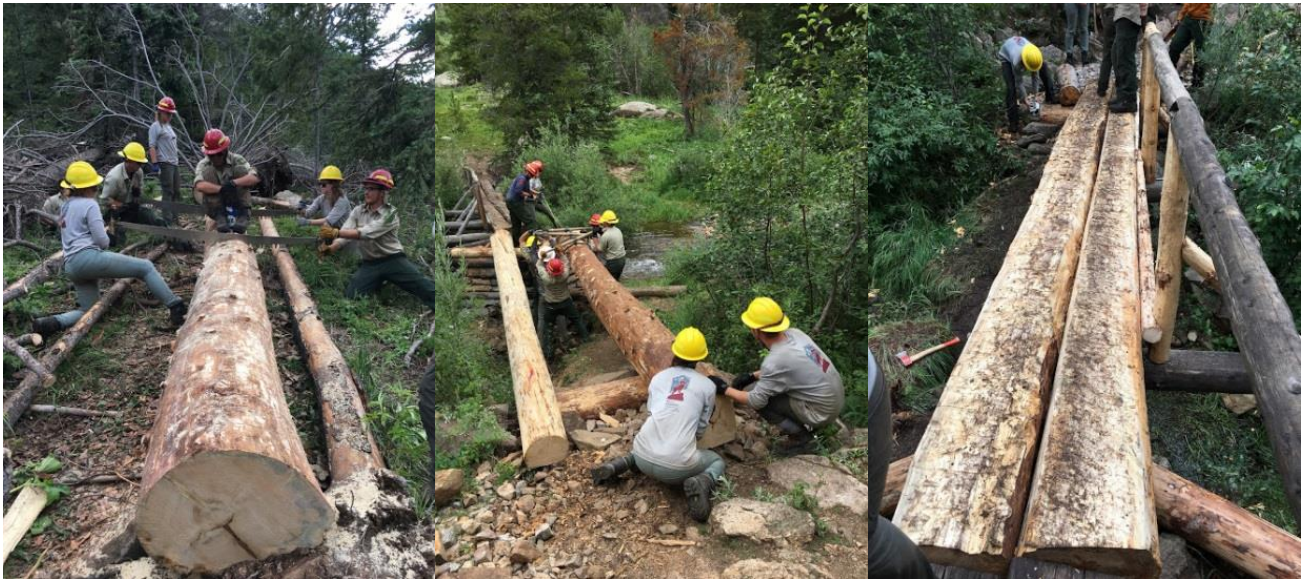
Hometown: Fort Collins, Colorado

School/Major (Area of Study): Colorado Mountain College/Sustainability Studies

Career Goals: I would like to reach a point where I’m able to teach sustainable living and design tactics, to people, through a world-wide volunteer program. Volunteers will help assist during the construction of houses that follow the principles behind permaculture.

Likes/Hobbies: Love spending time outside doing various activities from backpacking to just hanging out. I’m an active athlete, including rock climbing, hiking, running, and snowboarding. As well as being an outdoors man, I’m also an artist. I spend lots of time drawing and painting. I also like working on hands-on projects sculpted out of wood, or clay. I’m a big fan of music, some of my favorite genres include indie, reggae, ska, and rock. I also play guitar.

Quote: “It was such an honor and pleasure to spend the summer of 2017 with this group of wonderful people. I was asked if I ever had a low point of the summer and not a single thing came to mind. Every moment of the summer was by far a blast. Lifelong friends were created, memories were born, beautiful trails were cleared, and tons of laughs were shared among the shadow mountain crew. It is sad that its come to an end, but I can’t help but be excited. Every one of us will now branch out and continue to have amazing adventures and fantastic stories to share. It’s not fair to use the words goodbye, but instead, I’ll see you later.”



Photos: The crew working through identifying and cutting the log stringer, placing it, and finishing the bridge.



Photo: The crew with the nearly completed turnpike on Ice Hill Trail.



Photo: Crew members work together to clear downed logs from the Devils Thumb Trail.

Red Feather Crew



Summary of Work

As mentioned in the Rawah Wilderness Crew's Summary of Work, the Red Feather Crew spent much of their season with the Rawah Crew during the 2017 season. This included two weeks at the beginning of the season at Young Gulch Trail and the entire four weeks of the second half of the season. This left two weeks for them to conquer the trails in the Red Feather Lakes region and address some areas within the Poudre Canyon. During their two weeks working independently, the crew tackled the Mount Margaret, Lady Moon, Frog Pond, East Dowdy Lake, and Swamp Creek Trails near the Red Feather Lakes. These trails required minimal maintenance due to significant work in previous years, so the crew was able to move through them quickly.

From there the Red Feather Crew moved down to the Poudre Canyon working on Lower Dadd Gulch and into Pingree Park to maintain the Signal Mountain and Flowers Trail. It was clear these trails had not been maintained for several years, so the Red Feather Crew worked more thoroughly through these areas, ensuring all drainage structures were set properly and cleared of debris, while also removing some incredibly large downed trees from the trail corridor. Altogether the crew repaired or installed 178 drains, removed 32 trees from trail, and maintained 32 miles of trail in the area.

For the remainder of the season the crew worked with the Rawah Crew on projects at Young Gulch Trail, in the Comanche Peaks Wilderness, and throughout the Rawah Wilderness (please see Rawah Wilderness Crew "Summary of Work" for details).

Crew Profiles



Name: Shelby Ahrendt (Crew Leader)

Hometown: Grand Marais/Stillwater, Minnesota

School/Major (Area of Study): St. Olaf College/Physics and Studio Art

Career Goals: Obtain a graduate degree in Geotechnical Engineering and engage in meaningful research regarding rock mechanics and mineral allocation. I also wish to strengthen the communication between environmental research groups and the general public through accessible communication of meaningful research results.

Likes/Hobbies: Mountain biking, tennis, backpacking, painting, ice cream, mountains, geophysics and bubble-gum.

Quote: “The interactions with the land we had during the summer helped me develop a personal connection to the region, and as a result I think I will be more driven to continue participating in environmental stewardship activities through future environmental engagement. In other words, participating in environmental stewardship activities in a region doesn’t make you feel as though you’ve visited the area and checked it off your bucket list never to return, but contributes to a future responsibility and desire to protect and share the land.”



Name: Abigail Wetzel

Hometown: Greenville, South Carolina

School/Major (Area of Study): Clemson University/Environmental and Natural Resources

Career Goals: To have a job working outdoors in a conservation field

Likes/Hobbies: I love swimming, hiking, painting, and eat ice cream!

Quote: "I have learned more about conservation and stewardship activities. Working for a non-profit and its partners was an incredible experience. It is incredible to see how much people care and are willing to contribute to the Rocky Mountain area. Whether they are giving of their time, services, or money, each contribution has a great impact."

services, or money, each contribution has a great impact."



Name: Colin Mortemore

Hometown: Monclova, Ohio

School/Major (Area of Study): The Ohio State University/Environmental Engineering

Career Goals: To work in sustainable technologies and the energy industry

Likes/Hobbies: anything to do with the ocean, fishing, hiking, camping, photography

Quote: “I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience and it will always be a big part of my life. I think this program has helped me grow as a leader and a teammate and will provide an excellent basis for any career path I decide to follow.”



Name: Davina Spears

Hometown: Hudsonville, Michigan

School/Major (Area of Study): Michigan State University/Chemistry and Environmental Studies and Sustainability

Career Goals: After I get my masters in both majors, or astro-chemistry I hope to either go into space chemistry research, renewable energy research, or fresh water preservation.

Likes/Hobbies: I enjoy playing Music, I play 8 instruments. I enjoy painting with acrylics and adventuring in the nearby state parks. I also enjoy learning more about the discovery of dark matter.

Quote: “Coming into this season I did not know what to expect coming into this season. I knew it was going to be a season of hard work in the backcountry I have never hiked in before. As the season progressed the bond I made with my crew and the Rawah crew grew. I ended up making fantastic friends through each crew, not only my own. I got to work in nature experiencing first hand all the beauty the world has to offer and be those people working in the background to make the trails so many people love great.”



Name: Stephanie Vo

Hometown: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

School/Major (Area of Study): University of Oklahoma/Environmental Science

Career Goals: To be internationally involved in coming up with solutions at the nexus of environmental, economic, and social problems.

Likes/Hobbies: Lover of food, books, nature, challenges, and listening to others' stories. Dabbler in distance running, yoga, bouldering, drawing/painting, and a slew of other things.

Quote: "What a summer and it's gone by so quickly. This summer has been such an experience, and I have learned so much and gained so many new friends. Never would I have thought I would spend a summer outdoors and travelling all over Colorado. I have gotten to see so many cool views and do so many cool things."



Name: Zach Pull

Hometown: Maple Grove, Minnesota

School/Major (Area of Study): North Dakota State University/Natural Resource Management

Career Goals: I hope to one day have a position which allows me to practice conservation and stewardship of our natural areas.

Likes/Hobbies: I enjoy hiking, camping, mountain biking, hunting, traveling, and playing my guitar.

Quote: "Working for the RMCCC has helped me clarify my career and personal goals. This program has truly inspired me to aim higher for my future."

"I feel like my summer with the RMCCC has been the most constructive, both personally and professionally, to date. The leadership skills, outdoor knowledge, and friends I've gained this summer will be with me for life."



Photos: Crew clearing trail of downed trees and setting stepping stones near Red Feather Lakes.



Photos: Before and after of significant blowdown on Signal Mountain Trail.



Photos: Crews working to deconstruct and replace board on McIntyre Trail boardwalk.

Boulder Crew



Summary of Work

The Boulder Crew hit the ground running this season with new staff in the recreation and trails department of the Boulder Ranger District. They completed several large trail projects on popular trails near Nederland, Colorado and helped maintain nearly fifty miles of trail in the Boulder Ranger District. All of this was completed while camping for eleven-weeks full-time at Kelly Dahl Campground, what came to be known as Homestead Ned.

The crew's maintenance work took them to the Brainard Lake National Recreation Area, Rainbow Lakes, and the Hessey and Fourth of July Trailheads. Many of their projects were in the same region with a lot of work being completed on the Rainbow Lakes Trail to help decommission a wide social trail and reclaim sustainable tread surface to promote proper trail use. Additionally, the crew completed extensive work on the Diamond Lake Trail including maintenance of existing structures and construction of several turnpikes, stepping stones, and wetland crossings to help prevent further damage to the wetland. This included moving tons (literally) of rock to help raise the trail surface and provide a dry place for hikers to walk on while accessing Diamond Lake.

In the southernmost part of the Boulder Ranger District, the crew worked on the South Boulder Creek Trail off the East Portal Trailhead. On this trail the crew came across significant erosion, as the creek had moved into the trail. To remediate the damage to the trail, the crew worked to construct a rock obstruction to route the stream off the trail and constructed several check steps to help back-fill the eroded section of trail. This project challenged the problem-solving skills of the crew, and the results demonstrated their success.

Crew Profiles



Name: Lucas McClish (Crew Leader)

Hometown: Bellville, Ohio

School/Major (Area of Study): The Ohio State University/Environmental Science – Specialization: Ecosystem Restoration

Career Goals: To work with socio-environmental issues in order to strive for the betterment of both people and the environment.

Likes/Hobbies: Rock climbing, coffee, playing & listening to music, mountain biking, discovering new places, meeting new people, and forming lasting relationships.

Quote: “My experience with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy was extremely positive. It holistically covered the field of conservation so well. From career paths to effective application, I am walking away from this summer having a much greater understanding of the many parts and pieces of conservation work.”

“This internship has greatly prepared me for whatever steps are next for me careerwise. I have gained a plethora of leadership skills, technical trail skills, connections, and a greater understanding of conservation. As mentioned earlier, nearly all of these skills can be applied to future career positions. Whether leading project groups, completing complex tasks, or managing many moving parts, my time at the Rocky Mountain Conservancy has set me up for success.”



Name: Ally Gustafson

Hometown: Thornton, Colorado

School/Major (Area of Study): Colorado State University/Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism

Career Goals: My career goals are pretty board. I want to preserve land so that way it will be available for future generations. I hope to do this in many ways such as helping influence people to preserve land through government regulations or to help private land owners put their land under conservation easements. My goal that I want to do in my career and in my life in general is to reintroduce and reconnect people to nature. I feel like people have lost that connection to nature and that is part of the reason for the problems in the world. What I want to do is to teach people

how to properly hike and camp and more in order to form that connection to nature. Fear of the unknown and lack of skill keeps people from getting out into nature like they want, so I want to fill that gap. I want to fill that gap in knowledge and skill set so that way people can feel comfortable in nature and reconnect with it like our ancestors were.

Likes/Hobbies: I of course love hiking and camping. Nature is a passion and a hobby. I love reading and taking long drives in my beautiful state. I really like journaling. I helps me keep a clear head and serves as a way to record memories. One of my favorite hobbies is country dancing. I love two-stepping, triple step, and country swing. I probably know over 40 line dances and I really enjoy getting to dance with my friends every week at the Grizzly Rose.

Quote: “For my experience as a whole I feel I had a wonderful summer and I feel like I grew a lot in a variety of ways and learned a lot... I learned a lot about myself and what I can handle, which is more than I thought. This was a good way for me to end my school career. This ended up being a really good internship.



Name: Ryan Bodlak

Hometown: Wakefield, Nebraska

School/Major (Area of Study): University of Oklahoma/Mechanical Engineering

Career Goals: Become a licensed mechanical engineer.

Likes/Hobbies: Photography, drawing, reading, writing, music composition, and various sports.

Quote: “I know and am grateful that no matter where my career goes, my Conservancy training will go with me, acting as a shining light.”



Name: Andrea Rodríguez Villafañe

Hometown: Puerto Rico

School/Major (Area of Study): University of Puerto Rico/Biology

Career Goals: In the future I see myself teaching and investigating something related to Biology or Environmental Sciences.

Likes/Hobbies: playing soccer, studying mandarin, cooking and dancing.

Quote: “Working with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy Corps has definitely been the life changing experience I craved. I did thousands of things that I couldn’t have done in Puerto Rico. Not only did I learn about trail work but also about leadership and the outdoors, just as the website of the program promised. When I applied I did not really know if I was going to like trail work, but I knew that anyway I was going to learn a lot. As it turned out, I learned how to assemble a tent, how to get on lighting position, how to shower only once a week, how to not depend on my parents, and oh so many things. Nevertheless, all of these experiences were not strenuous thanks to my crew, who became my family and helped me overcome every obstacle. When I did not understand something, they would explain it to me. When I felt frustrated, they would hug me. When I needed a hand, they would offer me 10. Thank you for letting me be part of this.”



Name: Brendan Calhoun

Hometown: Louisville, Kentucky

School/Major (Area of Study): Murray State University/Wildlife and Conservation Biology

Career Goals: Become a certified wildlife biologist and work on habitat restoration

Likes/Hobbies: Backpacking, hunting, kayaking, cooking, and spending time with friends

Quote: “The amount of trail work our 6 crews completed this summer would have never been possible without the monetary contribution and volunteering organized by RMC. I now see myself considering employment by a nonprofit organization in the future thanks to this wonderful experience. I believe they serve as an important vehicle for a lot of positive change. While my time with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy is ending for now, I believe they have equipped me with the knowledge and skills to make the next step in my professional career.”



Name: Louisa Markow

Hometown: Loveland, Colorado

School/Major (Area of Study): Colorado State University/Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology

Career Goals: I ultimately want to work for a non-governmental organization like the Nature Conservancy to use research to improve conservation efforts and public policy.

Likes/Hobbies: Running, guitar, yoga, reading, traveling

Quote: “The skills I have gained throughout the last 8 weeks and friendships I have made will stay with me throughout the rest of my life. I have learned so much about myself and my strengths and weaknesses, and narrowed down my interests for my future career. This is a special organization and I couldn’t have asked for a better way to spend my summer.”



Photos: Completed turnpike on Diamond Lake Trail and check steps on South Boulder Creek Trail.



Photo: Crew decommissioning social trails with “duff,” loose sticks, pine needles, and debris.



Photo: Crew members work to remove large downed log from trail

Kawuneeche Crew



Summary of Work

The Kawuneeche Crew returned to historic preservation work for the first half of their season in 2017. That being said, they moved over to the east side of Rocky Mountain National Park to better be able to help with projects near Estes Park and RMNP headquarters. The crew began work on the Leiffer Cabin along Highway 7, just east of Longs Peak. The cabin was built in the early part of the 20th century and is protected as a historic structure. Although the property is not actively used by the National Park Service and visitors do not have access to it, the National Park Service is mandated to protect both the natural and **cultural** resources. This cabin, being a cultural resource, needed to be “moth-balled,” meaning closed up and protected from degradation. This required creating window coverings that mimicked the exterior siding of the house to both keep critters (human and otherwise) out of the structure and maintain the historic aesthetic of the structure.

Beyond the Leiffer Cabin the crew also helped to refinish the exterior of historic structures at McGraw Ranch and in the Green Mountain Village. In both cases the crew removed the degraded paint and replaced with fresh coats of paint and finish.

During the second half of the season, the crew moved away from historic preservation work and into project work on the Alpine Hotshot Dormitory. The building has a large deck that was beginning to fall apart and required a full replacement to protect the hotshots from injury themselves at home. The deck itself was well over 1000 square feet and the crew worked through deconstruction, resetting foundation posts, laying stringers, placing the decking, and constructing new stairs.

Crew Profiles



Name: Garret Fox (Crew Leader)

Hometown: St. Louis, Missouri

School/Major (Area of Study): Creighton University/ Sustainability and English Major

Career Goals: To experience and preserve the natural world through immersion, connection, callused hands, and the written word.

Likes/Hobbies: I enjoy hiking, metal detecting, reading Jack Kerouac, writing short stories, listening to a good audiobook, and occasionally performing circus acts.

Quote: “Regardless of what I decide to do, there is no denying the power of this program in my eyes. In many ways, my time in the RMC has been more influential on my life than my time in college. Certainly, it is the dominating architect of my life as I shift future plans in the wake of a shifted mind. I have come out of these two summers more mature, more defined in my identity, and less certain of my future. I am grateful for every strange bug found in the wild lands of Colorado, every rusty nail beaten out of a deck joist, every cut and scrape forever branded on me, and every other memory that this program has solidified. Thanks for everything.”



Name: Isabella Evavold

Hometown: Superior, Wisconsin

School/Major (Area of Study): University of Montana/Wildlife Biology.

Career Goals: I hope to conduct wildlife research in the Arctic or the Rocky Mountains that focuses on the effects of climate change on certain species.

Likes/Hobbies: In my free time I enjoy hiking, canoeing, camping, and general exploring of natural areas. I also like reading and watching fantasy and science fiction books and shows.

Quote: “Working on the conservation corps has made me more aware of the work that goes into trail and building maintenance in the park, which ensures the impact on the landscape is reduced. I definitely have more of an appreciation for the presence of trails and will try not to contribute to the widening of trails to further minimize my impact. In general, my care for the environment has been strengthened by living and working for the park because of the importance to keep the park as pristine as possible despite the large amounts of visitation.”



Name: Ashleigh Trujillo

Hometown: Albuquerque, New Mexico

School/Major (Area of Study): New Mexico State University/Conservation Ecology and Wildlife Biology.

Quote: “I have been able to see many new things this summer that will follow me for the rest of my life. This experience has helped me to better understand what I want to do in the future along with giving me new skills that I will be able to use later down the road.”



Name: Jonathan Murray

Hometown: Aurora, Colorado

School/Major (Area of Study): University of Colorado – Boulder/Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Career Goals: I hope to continue protecting natural resources, land, and biodiversity in the future by becoming a park ranger or filling other similar positions related to land management and conservation.

Likes/Hobbies: During the wintertime, I am an avid snowboarder and enjoy taking trips all around Colorado. During the summer I also love to explore the Rocky Mountains and go camping, hiking, rock climbing, and fishing. I am passionate about photography and enjoying taking pictures of my

friends, snowboarding, and capturing the scenic Colorado landscape.

Quote: “Before the beginning of this summer I was extremely unsure about what I wanted to do in the future, but was constantly thinking about it as I am going into my senior year of college. Thanks to my experience’s this summer with the RMC-CC and the NPS I want to continue to be a steward of public lands.”



Name: Kyle Desrosiers

Hometown: Arlington, Texas

School/Major (Area of Study): Baylor University/Environmental Science and Middle East Studies

Career Goals: I am passionate about the environment and hope to pursue a career in conservation. After getting an undergraduate degree in Environmental Science, I would like to enter a law school with the hope of one day becoming an environmental lawyer, and maybe one day enter politics. I also see myself doing a career in academia, teaching and doing scientific research to further the cause of environmental conservation.

Likes/Hobbies: I enjoy spending time outdoors. I like running, hiking, exploring, and watersports. I also enjoy photography, traveling, following college football, and reading. I am always eager to try new things and challenge myself.

Quote: “My experiences in nature this summer have left me with an incredible appreciation for nature and I will never forget them. I will continue to fight for the environment and causes of sustainability and conservation. This summer will never be forgotten.”



Name: Tate Kitchell

Hometown: Washington, Missouri

School/Major (Area of Study): University of Missouri/Fisheries and Wildlife Management

Career Goals: After college I will be going into the military. Further down the road I would like to work on a documentary team or manage wildlife in Kruger National Park.

Likes/Hobbies: My hobbies are hiking, running, reading, hammocking, and bouldering.

Quote:



Photo: Crew scraping paint off historic buildings in Green Mountain Village to repaint.



Photo: Crew refinishing the exterior of McGraw Ranch cabins.



Photo: Completed working to create window coverings to moth-ball the Leiffer Cabin



Photo: Crew stands proudly on completed deck at Alpine Hot Shot Dormitory