



Rocky Mountain Conservancy

CONSERVATION CORPS

2023 End-Of-Season Portfolio



AmeriCorps



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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 years, the Conservancy has grown to support its public land partners in a breadth of ways.

Currently, Rocky Mountain Conservancy contains five departments:

- **Retail** – manages nature stores throughout Colorado and Wyoming to provide visitors with educational materials and interpretive products for visitors to learn more about public lands.
- **Publications** – produces nature guides, children’s literature, natural and cultural history books, and more to enrich people’s experience in Rocky Mountain National Park and other public lands.
- **Philanthropy** – connects people to Rocky Mountain National Park and the Conservancy through a membership program and donations supporting RMNP and Conservancy programs.
- **Education** – provides field classes, internships, fellowships, and nature-based activities for people of all ages to further understand and connect with public lands.
- **Conservation** – hosts the High School Leadership Corps, Conservation Corps, and Volunteer Stewardship programs to engage local high school youth, young adults (ages 18-25), and the public (all ages) in conservation work.

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. In the years since, the program has grown to provide dozens of youth ages 18-25 with a summer-long internship opportunity on a variety of crews. In 2022, the Conservation Corps was comprised of eight crews working across Rocky Mountain National Park and the surrounding Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forests.

Program Goals:

1. To empower youth with job skills, career development resources, a conservation ethic, and a connection to 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 main 2023 season spanned eleven weeks between late May and mid-August. The extended season crew worked an additional nine weeks until late October. All crews work directly alongside the National Park Service (NPS) or USDA Forest Service (USFS) completing conservation projects summarized in the following pages. Intentional time throughout the summer was devoted to leadership training, educational programming, and career development opportunities from professionals such as the NPS and USFS.

The program provides work clothing, rented camping gear, housing for the duration of the term, and a biweekly 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.

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy’s Conservation Corps is an AmeriCorps program through The Corps Network.

Canyon Lakes Crew



Name: Chelsea Baum (Crew Leader)

Hometown: Salt Lake City, UT

School/Area of Study: Utah Valley University

Career Goals: Court Jester

Testimonial/Quote: *"This summer I heard the music of the crosscut saw."*



Name: Owen Miller (Crew Leader)

Hometown: Denver, CO

School/Area of Study: Colorado Mountain College, Avalanche Science

Career Goals: Avalanche Forecaster for the CAIC

Testimonial/Quote: *"I enjoyed my summer with the Canyon Lakes Crew. It was fun."*



Name: Kiran Johnson

Hometown: Chicago, IL

School/Area of Study: Northeastern University

Career Goals: Environmental Journalism

Testimonial/Quote: *"I learned how physically capable I am. I feel like my limits were pushed and I discovered new boundaries for myself, especially when it comes to hiking and backpacking."*



Name: Katelynn Daughtery

Hometown: Las Vegas, NV

School/Area of Study: University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Career Goals: Something environmentally related

Testimonial/Quote: *"Every situation is a positive situation if viewed as an opportunity for growth and self-mastery."*



Name: Avril Cowo

Hometown: Oklahoma City, OK

School/Area of Study: University of Central Oklahoma

Career Goals: Become a scientist! Go to grad school at Naropa!

Testimonial/Quote: *"Don't overthink, just do, trust yourself, listen to your body, take care of yourself, and love."*



Name: Aayla Kastning

Hometown: Haymarket, VA

School/Area of Study: William and Mary, for Geology and Environmental Science

Career Goals: Something outside, protecting nature!

Testimonial/Quote: *"This summer I ventured the furthest west I've ever been to explore Colorado with some of the coolest people I've ever met! Highlight: learned to play the music of the crosscut saw."*



Name: Keela Burgeson

Hometown: Austin, TX

School/Area of Study: Bachelor's in Studio Art, Drawing focus

Career Goals: A combination of outdoor conservation and art

Testimonial/Quote: *"Each step taken to move forward was a step I will never forget. Thank you for an amazing experience that taught me so much about myself."*



Name: Connor Neal

Hometown: Blacksburg, VA

School/Area of Study: Virginia Tech, for political science with a minor in environmental policy planning

Career Goals: Work as a Forestry Tech with the U.S. Forest Service

Testimonial/Quote: *"Love the woods, love your friends, love the vibes."*



Name: Ryan Schleter

Hometown: Baton Rouge, LA

School/Area of Study: Louisiana State University

Career Goals: Doing stuff outside

Testimonial/Quote: *"This summer has been amazing, and I've made so many good connections and memories."*



Name: Jada Webb

Hometown: New Braunfels, TX

School/Area of Study: Bachelor's Degree in Studio Art, Drawing

Career Goals: Something to do with the outdoors, education, and/or art!

Testimonial/Quote: *"I learned that I am a lot stronger than I thought I was, which makes me so happy because it matches my favorite quote: 'You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.' – A. A. Milne"*

2023 Work Highlights

The largest crew in the Corps worked with the Canyon Lakes Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service, near the Northwest border of Rocky Mountain National Park. The 10 crew members helped maintain trails in the Rawah Wilderness by using antique crosscut saws to clear downed trees, building rock structures, and clearing drainage features. Each member on the crew received Crosscut Saw certifications from the USFS and put them to good use removing 462 trees from the various trails in the wilderness area. They cleared over 78 miles of trail, built one stream crossing, and constructed one 20 foot rock wall.



Sulphur Crew





Name: Emily Dewing (Crew Leader)

Hometown: Rohnert Park, CA

School/Area of Study: Sonoma State University, Environmental Science

Career Goals: GIS Work

Testimonial/Quote: *"I love everyone on my crew!"*



Name: Melia Carvahlo

Hometown: Conifer, CO

School/Area of Study: Red Rocks Community College, Associate's Degree in Biology

Career Goals: Working in conservation

Testimonial/Quote: *"Best summer ever! I absolutely loved working and hanging out with my crew. We visited so many beautiful locations in Colorado and Utah. Waking up and watching the sunrise over Crater Lake while eating ramen is one of my favorite memories from hitch."*



Name Arden Cherry

Hometown: Prescott, AZ

School/Area of Study: University of Arizona, Landscape Architecture

Career Goals: Landscape architect/ wilderness forest ranger

Testimonial/Quote: *"This summer has been unforgettable, and I'm super thankful for the people I've met and the places we got to visit."*



Name: Rylan Chromy

Hometown: Schuyler, NE

School/Area of Study: University of Notre Dame, Architecture

Career Goals: Find a traveling job in either sports marketing, architecture, or an outdoor profession

Testimonial/Quote: *"My highlight was building bridges while building bridges into the outdoor world. And west side is the best side."*



Name: Matthew Donzelli

Hometown: Chicago, IL

School/Area of Study: University of Missouri, Environmental Science

Career Goals: Teacher

Testimonial/Quote: *"I've grown so much as a person, in skills and personally!"*



Name: Matthew Ippolito

Hometown: Sarasota, FL

School/Area of Study: Auburn University

Career Goals: Wilderness forest ranger, crosscut saw technician

Testimonial/Quote: *"Live, laugh, learn, lop."*



Name: Sara Kearny

Hometown: Upper Arlington, OH

School/Area of Study: TBD

Career Goals: Work outside with animals

Testimonial/Quote: *"I am so thankful that I got to spend my summer with the most amazing group of people completing meaningful work and going on lots of adventures. West side best side, Sulphur crew 4ever."*



Name: Maya Korol

Hometown: Buffalo Grove, IL

School/Area of Study: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Psychology and Political Science

Career Goals: Something in women's health

Testimonial/Quote: *"The joy I felt waking up every day this summer was immense—I am so grateful for the work I've gotten to do this summer and the people that made Colorado home."*

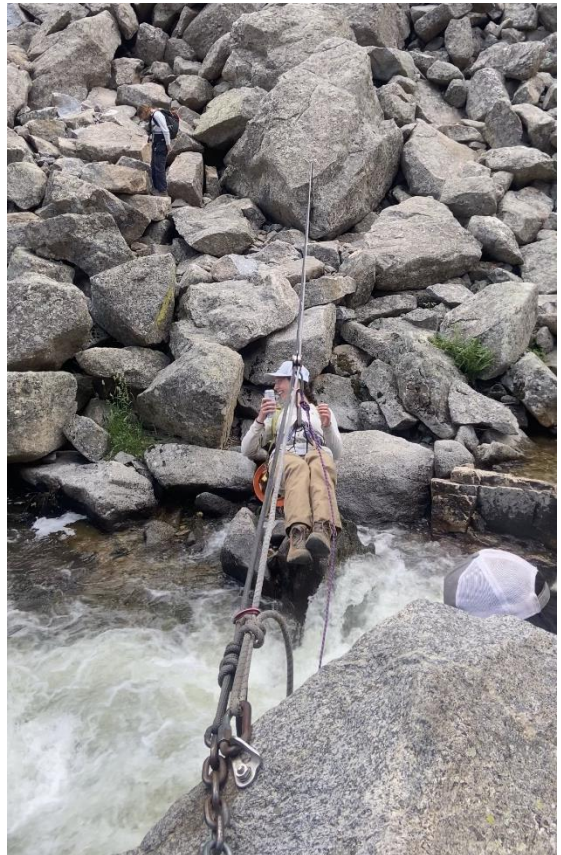
2023 Work Highlights



The Sulphur Crew spent their season in the Arapaho National Forest on the Western side of the Continental Divide. Working alongside the Sulphur Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service, the crew completed a variety of projects, including trail maintenance, crosscut saw usage, bridge construction, and habitat restoration. Each member achieved a nationally recognized crosscut saw certification and put it to good use clearing the trails in the Indian Peaks Wilderness area. By the end of the summer, the crew had maintained 49 miles of trail in which they cleared 158 trees, installed 25 drainage structures, and constructed two new bridges.



Boulder Crew





Name: Mario Alfaro (Crew Leader)

Hometown: Dalton, GA

School/Area of Study: University of Tennessee

Career Goals: Lay rock in every North American trail

Testimonial/Quote: *"Drop 'er down Clyde!"*



Name: Elliot DiSalvo

Hometown: Atlanta, GA

School/Area of Study: University of Colorado-Boulder, Environmental Biology and Astro

Career Goals: Professor

Testimonial/Quote: *"This summer is simply "Blood", "Sweat", & "Tears" with friends."*



Name: Lee LaTurner

Hometown: Hyde Park, IL

School/Area of Study: Knox College, Environmental Science

Career Goals: Work for the Forest Service

Testimonial/Quote: *"My crew taught me patience and love! I made a life-long family here!"*



Name: Gabrielle Griffith

Hometown: Maineville, OH

School/Area of Study: University of Cincinnati, Nursing. Currently works at St. Elizabeth Hospital, 3rd shift.

Career Goals: Become a travel nurse in winters, pick up fun seasonal jobs in the summers

Testimonial/Quote: *"Feeling very thankful for the opportunity to meet and develop a relationship with such beautiful people. As well as the opportunity to be present in the peace of the summer."*



Name: Mabel Books

Hometown: New Brunswick, NJ

School/Area of Study: Rutgers University, Evolutionary Anthropology and GIS

Career Goals: "I don't dream of labor"

Testimonial/Quote: *"This summer made me decide to end my lease, pack my car, and move out to Colorado :)"*



Name: Asher Ostrowski

Hometown: Mooresville, NC

School/Area of Study: North Carolina State University, Mechanical Engineering

Career Goals: I would like to continue working with my hands in my free time, and I would like to start my own engineering company in the future

Testimonial/Quote: *"The dishes are not clean."*



Name: Sara Samaniego

Hometown: Greeley, CO

School/Area of Study: University of Northern Colorado

Career Goals: Scientific journalism (Nature and science education/awareness)

Testimonial/Quote: *"This program was a fantastic excuse to bum around living in a tent all summer and get access to some of the most beautiful parts of ROMO. I'm excited to pursue the connections and professional relationships I've found this summer."*

2023 Work Highlights



The Boulder Crew spent their season working alongside the Boulder Ranger District of the USFS. They worked on a variety of trails throughout the district to increase access, improve drainage, and clear tread. The crew maintained 13 miles of trail, removed 4 trees from trail corridor, built 7 check dams, and cleared 22 existing drains. The Boulder Crew ended their season working with the Boulder Climbing Community (BCC), constructing and maintaining trail through a rock talus field at the popular climbing access site, Avalon. The crew received technical trail and rock work skills and training from their agency partners.



Moraine Crew



Name: David Boord (Crew Leader)

Hometown: Columbus, OH

School/Area of Study: George Washington Law School

Career Goals: Working in environmental justice and outdoor accessibility

Testimonial/Quote: *"I'm so grateful for my crew and our NPS partners and I'm so proud of all the work we did."*



Name: Maria Truong

Hometown: Beaverton, OR

School/Area of Study: Gonzaga University

Career Goals: Dentistry

Testimonial/Quote: *"Being outside and making friends is fun!"*



Name: Makenzie "Zie" Moman

Hometown: Cincinnati, OH

School/Area of Study: University of Toledo, Nutrition/Ecology

Career Goals: Social scientist/teach about healthy eating

Testimonial/Quote: *"I grew emotionally and physically this summer, and I learned how to deal with dirt under my nails."*



Name: Carter Visicaro

Hometown: Burlington, VT

School/Area of Study: University of Vermont, Art Education

Career Goals: Outdoor education

Testimonial/Quote: *"Met a lot of cool people and moved some really big rocks."*



Name: Brooklyn Bloomfield

Hometown: Ardmore, OK

Current Employer: Uber

Career Goals: Conservation nonprofit or NPS

Testimonial/Quote: *"I ate a bunch of food in cool places with amazing people."*



Name: Logan Pope

Hometown: Edwardsville, IL

School/Area of Study: Edwardsville, IL

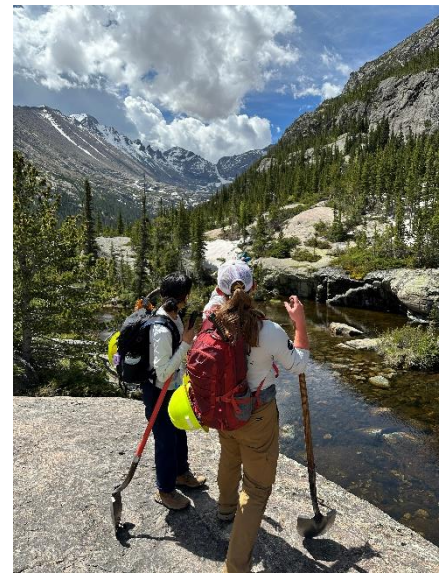
Career Goals: Not sure, just figuring out

Testimonial/Quote: *"This summer had a lot of ups and downs. I'm never going to forget this summer."*

2023 Work Highlights

This season, the Moraine Crew worked alongside the Rocky Mountain National Park trails crew on the East side of the park to maintain and improve trails for visitor usage. The Moraine Crew embarked on countless maintenance runs on trails across the national park, totaling 116 miles of trail maintained.

They cleared 300 existing drainage structures, removed 16 trees, and built one rock retaining wall. The crew was able to participate in one eight-day hitch on the Long's Peak Trail—camping only a few miles from the summit in order to lay stone pavers to improve the trail for those attempting to climb the iconic mountain! Moraine Crew received training and guidance from RMNP trails in trails construction, maintenance, and backcountry camping.



Historic Preservation Crew



Name: Noah Plenter

Hometown: Pittsburgh, PA

School/Area of Study: University of Pittsburgh, Biology/Anthropology

Career Goals: Psychiatry

Testimonial/Quote: *"Even though there were difficult and strenuous days, I learned how to take care of myself and maintain professional relationships."*



Name: Christina Stamenou

Hometown: Brooklyn, NY

School/Area of Study: University of Maine, Forest Ecology/Anthropology

Career Goals: Continue studies and keep at my craft

Testimonial/Quote: *Run fast, eat slow, swim cold."*



Name: Ella Adams

Hometown: Athens, GA

Career Goals: Work with the Forest Service

Testimonial/Quote: *"Drink water, have fun!"*



Name: Faith Phelan

Hometown: Madison, WI

School/Area of Study: Northern Michigan University, Environmental Studies/Sustainability

Career Goals: Working outside

Testimonial/Quote: *"Being able to take a break from work to look at the mountains."*



Name: Nya Schwartz

Hometown: Oak Park, IL

Career Goals: Get bachelor's degree

Testimonial/Quote: *"A series of experiences with great opportunity for growth and connection."*

2023 Work Highlights



The Historic Preservation Crew provided a unique opportunity for members to gain experience with the restoration of historic buildings throughout the national park. Working alongside the RMNP Historic Preservation department, the crew repainted a building on the NPS admin campus, stained the buildings at McGraw Ranch (a historic property within the national park boundary), constructed new picnic tables, and rehabilitated several structures at Holzwarth Historic Site. They received intensive training on construction and preservation skills from NPS staff to replace the decks, roof, and foundations on historic cabins and woodsheds at Holzwarth. The crew worked daily with very engaged agency partners to pass along the knowledge necessary to preserve the historic integrity of our national parks.



Kawuneeche Crew



Name: Martin Cooper (Crew Leader)

Hometown: Woburn, MA

Career Goals: Wildland firefighter/Master blaster

Testimonial/Quote: *"Womo! My beawd hurts!"*



Name: Sam Szatyari

Hometown: Tampa, FL

School/Area of Study: University of Southern Florida; Environmental Scientist at Faller Davis, and Assoc., 2018-2023.

Career Goals: Work in natural resource management or restoration

Testimonial/Quote: *"West side, best side! I made so many wonderful memories and met many amazing people this summer. This was an unforgettable experience for sure."*



Name: Sawyer Chamberlin

Hometown: Chambersburg, PA

School/Area of Study: Kutztown University, Marketing

Career Goals: Find a job that makes me happy and at the same time can support a family

Testimonial/Quote: *"This season has really opened me up and improved me as a person. This summer means a lot and the people that came along with it are some of the best I've ever known."*



Name: Bridget Jewell

Hometown: Crystal Lake, IL

School/Area of Study: University of Colorado-Boulder, Environmental Engineering

Career Goals: To work in the environmental engineering field

Testimonial/Quote: *"This summer I have met so many great people and made lifelong memories. I'm so glad I decided to apply to RMC-CC. It's definitely been one of the coolest experiences of my life!"*



Name: Barbara Leppala

Hometown: Santa Fe, NM

School/Area of Study: St. John's College, Santa Fe

Testimonial/Quote: *"I see working with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy Conservation Corps as an opportunity to give back to Western lands that have shaped me so much already. The areas that the Conservancy works in are all beautiful, and serving these lands with people who are just as excited about outdoor work was an immensely rewarding way to spend my summer."*

2023 Work Highlights



The Kawuneeche Crew continued their work on the West side of the park for the second year, working largely to rehabilitate trails from damage sustained during the East Troublesome fire in 2020. This crew worked in partnership with NPS Trails to maintain 39.4 miles of trail, clear 435 existing drainage structures, and remove 17 trees from various trails.



They spent the majority of their season working to build three different bridges, spanning in distance from 25 to 35 feet, that had previously burned on the Green Mountain Trail. The Kawuneeche crew members also received Search and Rescue (SAR) training in addition to their hands-on experience in trail maintenance, construction, and habitat restoration.



Vegetation Crew



Name: Lydia Hale

Hometown: Fishers, IN

School/Area of Study: Conservation and Sustainability

Goals: Work outdoors while doing conservation work

Testimonial/Quote: *"Life is what you make of it."*



Name: Britney Lemus

Hometown: Van, TX

School/Area of Study: Early Education major

Goals: Spend time outdoors making positive impacts

Testimonial/Quote: *"Highlight: spending time outside with sweet friends."*



Name: Celine Torres

Hometown: Pueblo, CO

School/Area of Study: University of Northern Colorado, Anthropology/Geography

Goals: To be a museum curator

Testimonial/Quote: *"Make time for yourself to be outside alone and you'll feel human again."*



Name: Kaylyn Hinson

Hometown: Lugoff, SC

School/Area of Study: University of South Carolina, English

Goals: To become a librarian

Testimonial/Quote: *"This summer has given me the chance to travel with friends and be a part of something that I've never done before."*



2023 Work Highlights

A new addition to the Rocky Mountain Conservancy Conservation Corps in 2023, the Vegetation Crew spent their season working alongside the Rocky Mountain National Park resources and vegetation management department. The crew participated in intensive training in plant identification, herbicide safety and use, and ecological restoration. These crew

members learned how to remove harmful invasive plants both manually and using backpack herbicide applicators, as well as how to reintroduce native plants to an environment. Overall, their removal efforts covered 160 acres of NPS land, clearing invasives such as Leafy Spurge, Orange Hawkweed, several species of thistle, and more. Their tireless efforts in and around Rocky Mountain National Park help our natural ecosystems to thrive!



Extended Season Crew



Name: Martin Cooper (Crew Leader)

Hometown: Woburn, MA

Career Goals: Wildland firefighter/Master blaster



Name: Lydia Hale

Hometown: Fishers, IN

School/Area of Study: Conservation and Sustainability

Goals: Work outdoors while doing conservation work



Name: Brooklyn Bloomfield

Hometown: Ardmore, OK

Current Employer: Uber

Career Goals: Conservation nonprofit or NPS



Name: Owen Miller

Hometown: Denver, CO

School/Area of Study: Colorado Mountain College, Avalanche Science

Career Goals: Avalanche Forecaster for the CAIC



Name: Sam Szatyari

Hometown: Tampa, FL

School/Area of Study: University of Southern Florida; Environmental Scientist at Faller Davis, and Assoc., 2018-2023.

Career Goals: Work in natural resource management or restoration



Name: Chelsea Baum

Hometown: Salt Lake City, UT

School/Area of Study: Utah Valley University

Career Goals: Court Jester



2023 Work Highlights

The Conservation Corps extended season comprises of six members from the summer season that stayed on to participate in another crew through mid-October. These stellar and dedicated members are spending their fall working in the Rawah Wilderness, Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest, and the Thumb Open Space in the town of Estes Park.

This crew started off their season with two backcountry hitches in the Rawah Wilderness, working to reroute a 200 foot eroded sections of trail, build over 10 new drainage structures, and construct a new bridge from native logs in the area.



For some members, this was their first time doing trail work or camping in the backcountry. After these two weeks, the crew moved to Estes Park to work on the North Fork Trail before beginning their weeks on the Thumb Open Space.

The crew is now getting the opportunity to work in partnership with the Access Fund conservation team on the Thumb Open Space, learning trail maintenance and technical rock work from trail professionals. The long-term work on this trail hopes to create better access to our town's natural areas and recreational opportunities, particularly for those using adaptive hand cycles.



History, Information, and Applications

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy's Conservation Corps (RMC-CC) was started in 2003 as a program devoted to helping young adults gain hands-on conservation experience while supporting Rocky Mountain National Park. Over 300 participants have spent a summer on our Conservation Corps in the 19 summers since 2003.

The RMC-CC is a program for US citizens aged 18-26 who are excited to try something new, develop as young adults, and have an unforgettable outdoor teambuilding experience. There are no requirements or prerequisites for this program; all are welcome!

RMC provides hiking boots, work clothes (shirt, pants, socks, hat) safety equipment, transportation, and housing for the entire duration of the summer program. Camping equipment (tent, sleeping bag and pad, backpacking equipment, stoves) is rented at no cost.

In 2023, participants will earn between \$450-\$550 per week and be eligible for a Seagal AmeriCorps Education Award upon completion of the program. Furthermore, RMC Corps members will keep their boots and work clothes for future careers and camping trips.

For information about RMC's 2023 Conservation Corps, please visit our website at

<https://rmconservancy.org/work-with-us/conservation-corps/>



Special Thanks

The 2023 Rocky Mountain Conservancy - Conservation Corps would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their invaluable contributions to this program. Thank you!

Matt Cowan - Canyon Lakes Ranger District US Forest Service

Miles Miller, Katie Oliver - Sulphur Ranger District US Forest Service

Lyle Skaar - Boulder Ranger District US Forest Service

Bob Maitland, Chuck Tubb - Rocky Mountain National Park Historical Preservation

Natalie Chiapperi, Jim Bromberg – Rocky Mountain National Park Vegetation

Doug Parker, Pete Kingham - Rocky Mountain National Park Trails

Ryan Kuehn - [Boulder Climbing Community's Front Range Climbing Stewards](#)

Katie Phillips, RisingBuffalo- Rocky Mountain National Park Interpretation and Education

The Access Fund – Lauren Posladek and Kyle Leihnsing

Zach Zehr, [Estes Park Mountain Shop](#)

Brian Berg, [Town of Estes Park](#)



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ESTES PARK
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