

STEWARDS AMERICORPS VISTA PROGRAM

Conservation Legacy Engagement Coordinator Initiative



**CONSERVATION
LEGACY**

Progress Report Summary

In 2019, Stewards Individual Placements engaged Conservation Legacy's local corps programs with the hope of placing AmeriCorps VISTAs within the communities where our programs are based.

This collective promise to learn from and better impact those communities has led to eight Stewards VISTAs placed in cities in six states. Identified as Conservation Legacy Engagement Coordinators (CLEC), these VISTAs have already begun building capacity to ensure diverse opportunities through conservancy and national service are available to all, with education, jobs development, and community awareness at the forefront.

The 2019 - 2020 cohort of CLEC Stewards' VISTAs recently crossed over the mid-point of their service years.

This reporting summary takes a moment to reflect on the successes, challenges, and sustaining impact these service members, communities, and organizations have created so far.

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**CONSERVATION
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Stewards VISTA, Greta Binzen overlooks a local Conservation Legacy AIM crew. Visits to the field are integral to ensure all of the Conversation Legacy VISTAs understand their organization.



Program Mission

Many communities are challenged to find

sustainable solutions for environmental and community-based issues. These challenges often directly impact youth success, economic opportunity, sustainable environmental practices and equal access to and utilization of opportunities. Support and resources needed to face such challenges are also often a barrier many communities cannot overcome. Conservation Legacy is uniquely equipped to support these communities and to work towards building capacity to not only face these challenges, but to ensure sustainable avenues for success remain.

Utilizing its long-standing practices in youth engagement and environmental conservation and hard-won authority within the environmental and community conservation world, Conservation Legacy placed eight VISTAs where there is a physical presence, but very little community or environmental impact. All eight of these communities and their surrounding regions struggle with social, economic, and environmental challenges – often indicated through the under-served and under-represented stakeholders who live and work within its borders.



Erik Dale,
Stewards
VISTA
with Southeast
Conservation Corps,
tabling at Glass St.
LIVE in Chattanooga.

Program Background

Conservation Legacy is among the nation's fastest growing conservation corps and currently operates twelve, year-round offices located in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Today, it is the third largest non-profit conservation corps program in the country and is now in its 20th year of engaging individuals to complete important conservation projects throughout the nation.

In 2017, Conservation Legacy's dedicated staff and participants surpassed the million-service hour mark, with 1,679 service members placed in positions serving their communities and the environment across 48 states and territories. In 2018, Conservation Legacy engaged over 2,000 youth, young adults, and veterans in conservation, restoration and community development projects and contributed 1.1 million hours of service to public lands.

Conservation Legacy is a purposeful and strategic organization that operates a national collection of corps and service programs that:

Engage Young Americans in Service. Conservation Legacy provides service, education and employment opportunities for community members. Each of its programs targets a diversity of participants, reflective of their community, to engage as participants.

Conserve, protect, and promote each community's greatest gifts. Conservation Legacy maintains, restores and enhances public and tribal lands and waters as well as natural, cultural, and historical resources and treasures that meet locally identified needs.

Build America's future. Conservation Legacy helps develop a generation of skilled workers, educated and active citizens, future leaders, and stewards of natural and cultural resources and communities.



Stewards VISTA Support & Training Opportunities

Stewards Individual Placement Program provides direct support for each AmeriCorps VISTA service member and their organizational supervisor. The Stewards VISTA support staff team includes VISTA Leaders who are experienced national service members trained to provide support to a cluster of approximately 30 active VISTA members. This support team also includes VISTA Program Coordinators who focus specifically on supporting organizational supervisors.

Each support team, comprised of a VISTA, site supervisor, VISTA Leader, and Program Coordinator, works together to ensure greatest impact for communities, organization, and the VISTA member themselves.



Stewards Individual Placements VISTA, Anna Powers (left), with Stewards VISTA Leader, Lilibeth Fuentes (right), engaging community members during Fridays in the Park in Beckley, WV



Stewards VISTA, Nina Williams, gets ready to head out into the community on behalf of her organization, Conservation Corps New Mexico.

In addition to supporting its service members in their goals of impact and capacity building within their local communities and organizations, Stewards VISTA program is built to provide support, training, and application-based experience to ensure VISTA members become future civic and professional leaders. Stewards VISTA members receive professional development in non-profit fundraising, public speaking, public engagement, and project management and implementation during a week long, in-person training as well as through web-based sessions and resource materials.

Stewards continues to evolve its professional development and non-profit based training opportunities to enhance the National Service experience for all of its VISTAs. This tradition continues as we enter 2020, and we continue to review and improve these opportunities for our members in the future.



List of Project Sites & VISTA Service Members

PROJECT SITE	AMERICORPS VISTA	SITE SUPERVISOR	SERVICE TERM DATES	Service Location
Appalachian Conservation Corps	Darby Reed	Michelle Marsich 540-372-0794	Feb. 2019 - Feb. 2020 Project Year 1	Harrisonburg, VA
Arizona Conservation Corps	Joe Hamill	Russ Dickerson 928-607-9250	Jul. 2019 - Jul. 2020 Project Year 1	Flagstaff, AZ
Conservation Corps New Mexico	Nina Williams	Michelle Norris 408-605-7362	Jun. 2019 - Jun. 2020 Project Year 1	Las Cruces, NM
Conservation Legacy	Greta Binzen	Shirena Trujillo-Long 970-946-0032	Sep. 2019 - Sep. 2020 Project Year 1	Durango, CO
Southeast Conservation Corps	Erik Dale	Brenna Kelly 423-718-3467	Aug. 2019 - Aug. 2020 Project Year 1	Chattanooga, TN
Southwest Conservation Corps	George Shannon	Aubrey Tamietti 719-298-1475	Jul. 2019 - Jul. 2020 Project Year 1	Salida, CO
Stewards Individual Placements	Anna Powers	April Elkins Badtke 304-533-3265	Jun. 2019 - Jun. 2020 Project Year 1	Beckley, WV
Arizona Conservation Corps	Carlos Naranjo	Emily Swartz 928-326-1580	Sept. 2019 - Jan. 2020 Project Year 1	Tucson, AZ
Arizona Conservation Corps	Derayna Declay	Kyle Trujillo 928-606-9053	Jul. 2019 Project Year 1	Pinetop, AZ
Arizona Conservation Corps	Zuhaila Orozco	Emily Swartz 928-326-1580	Jul. 2019 - Sept. 2019 Project Year 1	Tucson, AZ

Institutions of Higher Learning Reported

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY	STATE	DEGREE/MAJOR
U. Tenn - Chattanooga	Tennessee	BS - Enviro. Studies, Engineering
Institute of American Indian Arts	New Mexico	BA - Fine Arts
Northern Arizona University	Arizona	BA - International Studies
University of Georgia	Georgia	Bachelor of Arts
James Madison University	Virginia	Bachelor of Arts
Skidmore College	New York	BS - Enviro. Studies; Minor - Mathematics
University of Arizona	Arizona	Ecology & Evolutionary Biology
UC- Los Angeles	California	Chemistry
Platt College	California	Graphic Design
University of Arizona	Arizona	Global Studies - Societies
Florida Atlantic University	Florida	Masters - Education
CSU - Los Angeles	California	Chemistry



Demographic Information

The provided demographic information is self-reported by current Stewards' CLEC VISTA service members through standardized reporting processes established by Stewards IP on behalf of partner organizations and grant reporting requirements. This data reflects initiative specific service members from September 2018 - September 2019.

AVG. AGE

35 y/o



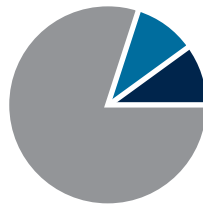
Gender:
40% Male
60% Female



Highest Level of Educational:
10% Associates Degree
70% Bachelors Degree
20% Masters Degree



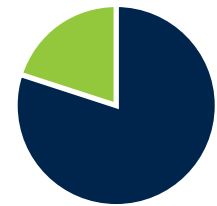
Ethnicity:
20% Hispanic/Latino
70% Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino
10% Prefer not to Answer



Racial Origin
80% White
10% American Indian / Alaskan Native
10% More than one of the Above



Professional Status Prior to Service:
20% Employed or in Ed. Program
80% Unemployed and not in Ed. Program



Interest in Federal NCE* Status:
80% Yes
20% No
**Non-Compete Eligibility*



Stewards VISTA, Greta Binzen (right), rolls up her sleeves to assist a local soup kitchen with their veggie garden on 9/11 Day of Service & Remembrance.

|| *I have been making progress... working with community leaders to improve young adults' quality of life.* **||**

- Nina Williams, CCNM VISTA



The Cohort Model

|| *The outdoors belongs to everyone, and everyone to the outdoors. To know that is peace. To know peace is to be without poverty.* **||**

- Erik Dale, SECC VISTA

With a cadre of young professionals serving at various locations in 2019 - all with similar goals - Stewards strived to make sure the Community Engagement coordinators felt connected and supported. Additionally, this ambitious group of AmeriCorps VISTAs could lean on each other for support when working collectively in building capacity for the larger Conservation Legacy. The group met for the first time in person at the VISTA Member Training in Leesburg, VA. This group brainstormed ways in which they wanted to work together, knowing they are not physically in the same office space or state or time zone. The group agreed to meet via Teams (video chat) weekly to share their respective updates, ask questions of each other and tackle big projects/assignments together.

The idea behind the cohort model is simple and easily replicated for our project partners that have similar goals. The idea is that the cohort creates a team mentality, the group shares successes and challenges and tackles big projects. The cohort is managed by Stewards East Corps Director, April Elkins Badtke, but the meetings are organized and facilitated by the members.

Service Project Site Location Map



- Appalachian Conservation Corps
- Arizona Conservation Corps - Flagstaff
- Arizona Conservation Corps - Tucson
- Arizona Conservation Corps - White Mountain/Pinetop

- Conservation Corps New Mexico
- Conservation Legacy
- Southeast Conservation Corps
- Southwest Conservation Corps
- Stewards Individual Placements



Project & Member Highlights

Arizona Conservation Corps, Flagstaff, AZ - Joe Hamill

Joe has definitely made the most of the first six months of his service term. From the initial orientation of his site and service, to the in-person VISTA training, to the weekly CLEC cohort calls and peer collaboration, Joe has noted just how much he's learned and grown into his role. With all of his new knowledge, experience, and ever growing network, Joe reports having met with folks from the Northern Arizona University (NAU), visiting an AZCC crew in the field in the Grand Canyon, attending an AmeriCorps conference in Phoenix with many community, industry, and national service members, and attending the AZCC staff retreat, building from all of these experiences plans and partnerships for the future.



Stewards VISTA, Brendan "Joe" Hamill with Arizona Conservation Corps in Flagstaff, reviews the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project.

With community engagement and partnership building in full swing, Joe has also found time to begin grant research and writing, most notably working on a grant through NAU. Additionally Joe has worked hard to digitize and organize the AZCC mailing list, collecting and posting community resources on the AZCC website, creating and presenting a community asset map to the CLEC cohort, and providing demographic data on his service community to generate an all CLEC report for the Conservation Legacy strategic plan goal of improving DEI across the organization.

Appalachian Conservation Corps, Harrisonburg, VA - Darby Reed

Darby Reed was an integral part in leading three volunteering events in her work as a Stewards VISTA with Conservation Legacy – Appalachian Conservation Corps (ACC). For National Volunteer Week, Darby helped advertise, recruit for, and lead an event titled "Volunteer on Trails in Shenandoah National Park". The next event was a three-part volunteer event performing conservancy tasks on trails around Harrisonburg entitled "Trail Conservation Club", which had its ups and down but provided a good learning experience for Darby. Lastly, to celebrate National Public Lands Day, ACC hosted a volunteer event in Shenandoah National Park. The event was open to all ages and had 40 participants, from families, to JMU students, to past volunteers. Darby was able to help solicit and provide snacks, beverages, t-shirts, and raffle prizes for a handful of lucky winners. Darby overcame challenges in lack of familiarity and trust between her program and other organizations in her community by building relationships with organizations with similar goals, which allowed all of these events to be successful.



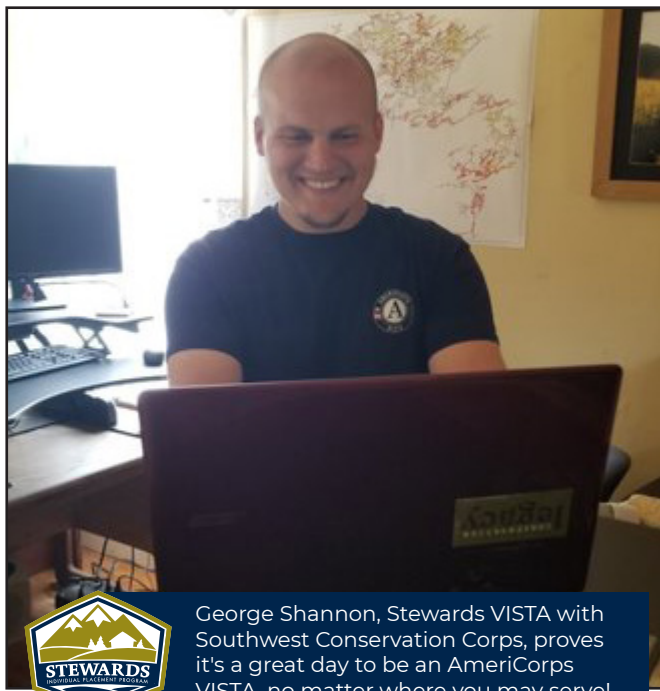
Appalachian Conservation Corps' VISTA, Darby Reed (left) and Stewards VISTA Leader, Lilibeth Fuentes (right) met with students at James Madison University Career Fair in Harrisonburg, VA.





Southwest Conservation Corps, Salida, CO - George Shannon

George Shannon, a Stewards VISTA with Southwest Conservation Corps' (SCC) Los Valles office, has dedicated a portion of his work toward engaging with local business partners in the Salida community of Los Valles to support youth crew efforts via local fundraiser events. He has entitled this effort "friendraising". Through George, SCC: Los Valles has partnered with a variety of local organizations to support Southwest Conservation Corps' Youth Crews. The funds are being put toward a gear library that will remove barriers from the youth of low-income families that want to participate but cannot afford the gear to do so. Through his efforts, relationships with local business entities has been very positive, and partners have encouraged Southwest Conservation Corps to host additional events with them. Thanks to George, SCC is creating partnerships for opportunities in the years to come as they engage the organization with the community.



George Shannon, Stewards VISTA with Southwest Conservation Corps, proves it's a great day to be an AmeriCorps VISTA, no matter where you may serve!

Between February and December 2019:

10 MEMBERS SERVED

7 Organizations in **6** STATES & TERRITORIES

THOSE 10 MEMBERS SECURED

\$250.00

IN IN-KIND RESOURCES & SERVICES DONATIONS.

RECRUITED, SUPPORTED AND COORDINATED MORE THAN **135**

VOLUNTEERS, WHO SERVED

345 HOURS

IN SERVICE TO THEIR COMMUNITIES.

EDUCATIONAL & OUTREACH MATERIALS DEVELOPED, **28**

WITH **150** COMMUNITY MEMBERS ENGAGED DURING

SEVEN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS.

24 DISADVANTAGED YOUTH SERVED

20 TARGETED INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SERVICES

21 NEW BENEFICIARIES OF VISTA PROJECTS

CLEC Collective Impact Community Asset Mapping & Demographics Analysis

After an initial kick-off to the CLEC Cohort during the 2019 Fall Stewards AmeriCorps VISTA training, each CLEC VISTA returned to their own communities with new ideas, reinvigorated motivation, and a whole lot of questions. All of these outcomes were fuel for the first CLEC cohort call, facilitated by Stewards East Corps Director, April Elkins Badtke, and developed and structured by the VISTAs themselves.

Looking to the collective to compare and note local needs that appeared across all of Conservation Legacy's office communities, the cohort set to work completing and sharing Community Asset Maps, collecting, analyzing, and comparing organizational data related to participant demographics as the initial step towards a more inclusive DEI plan, and have begun researching and cataloging grant opportunities for future fundraising objectives.

The CLEC VISTAs continue to meet weekly, reviewing and revising past and current goals, while also looking to the future and the legacy they'll leave once service is complete.

Stewards Individual Placements is proud to assist in the collective focus on community engagement with Conservation Legacy Corps Programs by creating capacity for local communities and providing professional development for National Service members across the country with the goal of growing local impact, building community driven capacity, and ensuring future efforts reflect the community at large.

