

# STEWARDS AMERICORPS VISTA PROGRAM NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIP



## Progress Report Summary

The Stewards Individual Placement Program, a program of Conservation Legacy, is completing the first year of a partnership with the National Park Foundation to support AmeriCorps VISTAs placed with National Park Service philanthropic partner organizations.

Over the last year, Stewards and National Park Foundation have collaborated on projects with eight Friends Groups across the country with continued growth anticipated for 2020.

The Stewards program is honored to share the successes and challenges of this partnership while amplifying the capacity building efforts of these service members. The community impact and achievement of the VISTA's placed with Friends Groups is exemplified through the images and stories collected from projects from the past year.

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Emily Starobin, Rock Creek Conservancy VISTA, places a sign as part of the new Spanish 'mini oasis' at Rock Creek Park.





## Program Statement of Purpose

The National Park Foundation (NPF) awarded a grant agreement to Conservation Legacy in support of the Strong Parks, Strong Communities Initiative. The goal is to provide capacity to national park philanthropic partner organizations (Friends Groups) across the country by placing 20 AmeriCorps VISTAs in one-year terms. Recipient organizations receive \$6,500 in funding from this grant to provide partial funding support towards the cost of a VISTA, as placed by Conservation Legacy's Stewards Individual Placement Program.

## Program Summary

In a collaborative effort to strengthen the impact of the Strong Parks, Strong Communities Initiative, Stewards Individual Placement Program, a Program of Conservation Legacy, places AmeriCorps VISTA Members with Friends Groups across the nation supporting projects that:

- ◆ Bolster the community through peer relationships and learning;
- ◆ Build capacity of individual partners;
- ◆ Take collective action that improves park experiences and expand park visitation.

To date, Stewards has placed nine (9) AmeriCorps VISTA Members whose projects range from fund development and grant writing to strategic plan implementation.

Stewards is currently supporting national recruitment efforts for an additional four (4) Friends Groups with AmeriCorps VISTA Projects. These projects will focus on increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion to increase park visitation among people of color, engaging the next generation in environmental stewardship, and building overall capacity for newly established Friends Groups.

Long Term NPF VISTA project goals include:

- ◆ Extending the Period of Performance of our current Grant Agreement to offer tiered funding support to ongoing Projects throughout their three-year AmeriCorps VISTA Project Plans.
- ◆ Expanding current partnership, increasing the number of AmeriCorps VISTA Projects & Members we can collaboratively support.
- ◆ Expanding the agreement Scope of Work to diversify the projects collaboratively supported.



Cali Janulis, VISTA with Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park, lifts a tree she uprooted as part of Settlement Restoration event.

**||** *I learned many ways we can incorporate sustainable practices into our everyday lives. Being green does not have to be difficult or expensive.* **||**

-Emily Starobin,  
AmeriCorps VISTA



## 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 20 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, Supervisor, VISTA Leader, and Program Coordinator, works together to ensure greatest impact for communities, organization, and the VISTA member themselves.



In addition to supporting Friends Groups and the communities they serve, Stewards VISTA Program is built to provide support, training, and application-based experience to ensure VISTA Members are civic and professional leaders in the future. 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.

To immerse VISTA members in a holistic training experience and approach to community engagement, the Stewards Program engages The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation. The Harwood Institute equips people, organizations, communities, and networks with tools to bridge divides, build capacity, and tackle shared challenges. Harwood Institute and Stewards began their training and community engagement partnership in 2018. It includes providing in-person and virtual training to all Stewards VISTA Members, including those supported by NPF funding. The Harwood Virtual Lab includes eight (8), two-hour long virtual sessions and four (4), one-hour long in-person sessions during the Stewards VISTA training.

Stewards continues to operationalize 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 grant year 2020 as we review and improve these opportunities for our future members.

*|| My favorite part of the program was our wrap-up discussion about how they [volunteers] can take what they saw and learned about marine pollution back to their neighborhoods. ||*

- Emma McCauley, AmeriCorps VISTA

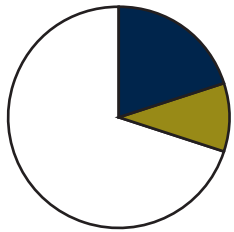


St. Croix River Association VISTA Emilee Martell, presenting at the Stewards VISTA Member Training in Waynesboro, PA this past Spring.

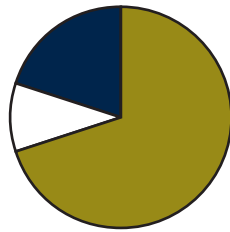


## Demographic Information

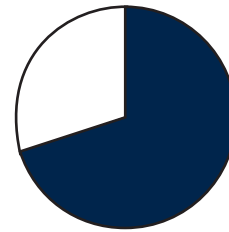
The provided demographic information is self-reported by current Stewards/ NPF VISTA service members through standardized reporting processes established by Stewards on behalf of partner organizations and grant reporting requirements. This data reflects initiative specific service members from September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



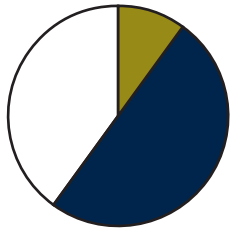
**Gender:**  
22% Male  
66% Female  
12% No Response



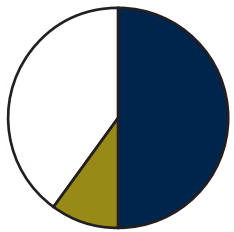
**Racial Origin:**  
77% White  
11% Black/African American  
11% No Response



**Highest Level of Educational:**  
88% Bachelor Degree  
12% No Response



**Interest in Federal NCE\* Status:**  
50% Yes  
10% No  
40% No Response  
*\*Non-Compete Eligibility*



**Professional Status Prior to Service:**  
55% Employed or Enrolled in Ed. Program  
11% Unemployed  
33% No Response



**Military Service Connections:**  
0% Report personal Military Service  
22% Report having immediate family members with Military Service  
33% No Response on either personal or immediate family Military Status

**Average Age of NPF VISTA:** **23**  
*(with 3 VISTAs not reporting age)*

## Institutions of Higher Learning Reported

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY	CITY/STATE	DEGREE/MAJOR
Rowan University	Glassboro, NJ	Not Disclosed
Hood College	Frederick, MD	Communications
Dickenson College	Carlisle, PA	Bachelor of Arts
Carlton College	Northfield, MN	Bachelor of Arts - History
St. Olaf College	Northfield, MN	Bachelor of Arts - English & Enviro. Studies
Indiana University	Bloomington, IN	Bachelor of Arts - Science in Public Affairs
University of Maryland	College Park, MD	Not Disclosed
Florida State University	Tallahassee, FL	Not Disclosed



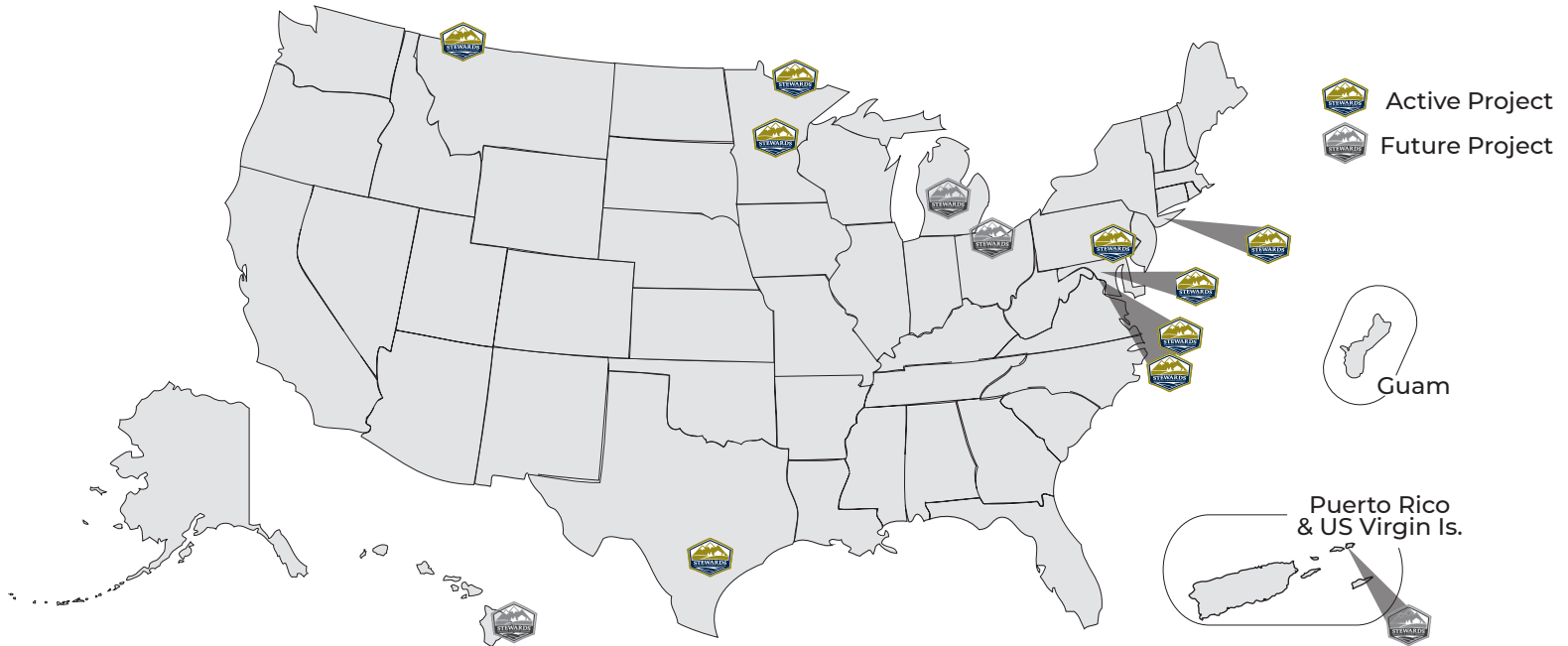
## List of Project Sites & VISTA Service Members

PROJECT SITE	AMERICORPS VISTA	SITE SUPERVISOR	SERVICE TERM DATES	NPS UNIT
Friends of Kenilworth	Maya Douglas	Tina O'Connell 202-494-0456	Sept 2018 - Sept 2019 Project Year 1	Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens
Friends of Kenilworth	David Drawbaugh	Tina O'Connell 202-494-0456	Sept 2018 - Sept 2019 Project Year 1	Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens
Friends of Lyndon B. Johnson	Caliope Janulis	Susanne McDonald 307-960-5135	Nov 2018 - Nov 2019 Project Year 1	Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park
Rock Creek Conservancy	Emily Starobin	Jesse Buff 888-462-9233 ext.702	Nov 2018 - Nov 2019 Project Year 1	Rock Creek Park
Voyageurs National Park Association	Lindsay Brandt	Christina Hausman 612-333-5424	Nov 2018 - Nov 2019 Project Year 1	Voyageurs National Park
St. Croix River Association	Emilee Martell	Kate Wright 715-483-3300	Feb 2019 - Feb 2020 Project Year 1	St. Croix National River
Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy	Emma McCauley	Shanna Blanchard 347-690-0931	Mar 2019 - Mar 2020 Project Year 1	Gateway National Recreation Area
C & O Canal Trust	Esther Herbers	Heidi Glatfelter Schlag 301-712-8617	Jun 2019 - Jun 2020 Project Year 1	C&O Canal National Historical Park
Glacier National Park Conservancy	Jeff Babik	Adam Sommers 406-892-3250	Sept 2019 - Sept 2020 Project Year 1	Glacier National Park
Haleakala Conservancy	Currently Recruiting	Natalie Gates 808-572-4400	Nov 2019 - Nov 2020 Project Year 1	Haleakala National Park
Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park	Currently Recruiting	Yolanda Hamilton 330-657-2909 x148	Nov 2019 - Nov 2020 Project Year 1	Cuyahoga Valley National Park
North Country Trail Association	Currently Recruiting	Andrea Ketchmark 616-897-5987	Nov 2019 - Nov 2020 Project Year 1	North Country National Scenic Trail
Friends of Virgin Islands National Park	Currently Recruiting	Tonia Lovejoy 340-779-4940	Nov 2019 - Nov 2020 Project Year 1	Virgin Islands National Park
Friends of Lyndon B. Johnson	Currently Recruiting	Susanne McDonald 307-960-5135	Nov 2019 - Nov 2020 Project Year 2	Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park
Voyageurs National Park Association	Currently Recruiting	Christina Hausman 612-333-5424	Nov 2019 - Nov 2020 Project Year 2	Voyageurs National Park
Friends of Kenilworth	Currently Recruiting	Tina O'Connell 202-494-0456	Dec 2019 - Dec 2020 Project Year 2	Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens
Friends of Kenilworth	Currently Recruiting	Tina O'Connell 202-494-0456	Dec 2019 - Dec 2020 Project Year 2	Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens

“The National Park Service is rare as a universally loved federal agency, but they deserve their reputation. A beautiful river and rewarding work protecting it--what more could a VISTA ask for?” - Emilee Martell, VISTA



### Service Project Site Location Map



- Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, Washington DC
- Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park, TX
- Rock Creek Park, MD
- Voyageurs National Park, MN
- St. Croix National River, WI
- Jamaica Bay- Rockaway Parks Conservancy, NY
- Glacier National Park, MT
- Virgin Islands National Park, US-VI
- Cuyahoga Valley National Park, OH
- North Country National Scenic Trail, MI
- Haleakala National Park, HI
- C&O Canal National Historical Park, PA



VISTA member Esther Herbers (left) supports park staff during a community outreach event with her site, C&O Canal Trust.

*Volunteering has helped me feel more a part of where I live as well as build connections with some really amazing people.*

- Maya Douglas, VISTA



## Project & Member Highlights



Emma McCauley plants marsh grass alongside community volunteers at Sunset Cove.

### Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy - Emma McCauley

The Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy (JBRPC) is a public-private partnership dedicated to improving over 10,000 acres of public parkland throughout Jamaica Bay and the Rockaway peninsula for residents and visitors alike.

VISTA member Emma McCauley supports Rockaway Beach in many projects, one of which has been in the works for years. Community members and organization volunteers alike assisted in planting plugs of marsh grass. This event and the parks who host it are a culmination of years of advocacy by local communities who were joined by non-profit, foundational, and private partners. Over the course of four days, volunteers planted a combined 74,000 plugs at Sunset Cove and another 10,000 plugs at Black Wall Marsh. These plantings will assist by slowing the erosion of local sandbars, among multiple other benefits associated with increased vegetation.

Emma's hard work in helping to plan the event encouraged volunteer and community support. She was also present to ensure the day of the event went off without a hitch and to show the impact her service as a VISTA has made.

### Voyageurs National Park – Lindsay Brandt

The Voyageurs National Park Association focuses on empowering park stewards, implementing special projects with financial and volunteer support, promoting the park to the public and preserving the visitor experience and wild nature of the park for future generations.

VISTA Member Lindsay Brandt is working with Voyageurs to build capacity for the park by helping with outreach events to grow the donor base. This effort has her working to involve local businesses in these community development efforts. This was facilitated first by sending outreach letters and following up with a survey, both which will be used to gauge interest in donating, volunteering, or helping promote the project.



Lindsay Brandt chats with young park visitors during an engagement station session. Lindsay is piloting new programming across the park.





## Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens: Stewardship – David Drawbaugh

Friends of the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens partners with the National Park Service to build connections with the local community. They have initiated some critical volunteer and educational programs within the Gardens' including garden clean-up events, lily and lotus pond plantings, rebuilding of pond dikes, and the planting of native species.

VISTA Member David Drawbaugh has contributed to the growth of the volunteer program by synthesizing data from previous years and building their database of volunteers, partners, and potential corporate funders. David has successfully planned and implemented several volunteer events including a major annual volunteer event at the park with over 150 volunteers for National Public Lands Day.



VISTA David Drawbaugh leads local youth in a geocache scavenger hunt during a recent spring break camp.



## Lyndon B. Johnson – Caliope Janulis

The Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park is working to develop programming and project opportunities to honor the President's legacy and speak to his legislative accomplishments. Their goal is to connect the rural areas of Texas with the larger cities in the surrounding areas in a more strategic way that links a new generation to the life, times, and contributions of President Johnson.

VISTA member Caliope 'Cali' Janulis has been assigned duties to facilitate strategic alignment between the Friends Group and the Park. Cali has been working to build capacity for the Friends group and helping visitor engagement and community outreach. She worked with volunteers to remove and identify invasive species in the area. This effort was met with support from local community members and organizations, who see the effort at the cutting edge of invasive species control.

Cali has also made great strides in her professional development during her term of service. This fall, she applied for and was awarded a scholarship to attend the Friends Alliance Meeting at Grand Tetons National Park in Jackson Hole, WY. Cali was also asked to speak about her VISTA service with her site and the impact her service has had on her own professional path.

**“ I'm really excited to help this program grow and expand it to many more schools – I think it has great potential. ”**

- Cali Janulis, AmeriCorps VISTA







Between November 2018 and June 2019:

**9 MEMBERS SERVED**

**8** Friends organizations across **8** STATES & TERRITORIES

THOSE 8 MEMBERS SECURED

**\$50,000**

IN GRANT FUNDS WITH AN ADDITIONAL

**\$53,410** IN IN-KIND DONATIONS

**14** GRANTS WERE APPLIED FOR, WITH **SEVEN** AWARDED

RECRUITED, SUPPORTED AND COORDINATED MORE THAN **6,460**

VOLUNTEERS, WHO SERVED NEARLY **17,900**

HOURS IN SERVICE TO THEIR COMMUNITIES

**102** NEW PARTNERSHIPS DEVELOPED

IN PART THROUGH THE **33** COMMUNITY EVENTS COORDINATED WITH THE HELP OF STEWARDS VISTAS



VISTAs Maya Douglas (2nd from left) and David Drawbaugh (far right) smile during a break in the day with Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens staff.

## Upcoming Project Highlights

### Friends of Virgin Islands National Park

The Friends of Virgin Islands National Park VISTA will focus on creating pathways for rich and meaningful learning and local employment opportunities for youth and their families. Focusing on how recreational options lead to healthy choices for residents, this project will build a foundation for a better economic future. The VISTA will also help prepare Virgin Island youth and their families to be stewards of their environment and empower them as protectors of the island's natural and cultural resources in good times and bad.

### North Country Trail Association

As the Next Generation and Outreach Coordinator, this VISTA will strive to create an environment that catalyzes youth leaders in an effort to engage their peers in outdoor recreation. Through this program, the VISTA will help to enhance public health while building professional development opportunities for youth leader and the Michigan youth they reach. The community in return will receive assistance stewarding their local natural resources and the economic benefit that comes with improved health and recreational resources.



National Park Foundation

Stewards Individual Placement Program is proud to partner with the National Park Foundation in creating capacity for National Park Friends Groups, local communities, and National Service members across the country in the quest of community and environmental impact.

