



# CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS

Expanding Chesapeake Bay Youth Workforces  
and Stewardship





VIRGINIA YOUTH  
CONSERVATION  
CORPS AT  
CALEDON STATE  
PARK

## CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS A Partnership Network

Chesapeake Youth Corps (CYC) is a partnership network of federal, state and local agencies, and non-profit organizations that employ and engage young people in conservation and restoration projects in the Chesapeake Bay region. While the individual youth programs have been long established, the partnership network connecting them is a fairly new innovation. The Chesapeake Youth Corps partnership is coordinated by the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office.

The primary impetus for the Chesapeake Youth Corps initiative, begun in 2011, was development of the federal *Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed*. The strategy was prepared at the request of President Obama in Executive Order 13508 that called for the expansion of “Chesapeake conservation corps workforces.” A team of advisors determined that forming a partnership network was the most effective way to expand workforces.

The National Park Service (NPS) contributes funding that supports youth crews hosted by partners. A team of four NPS interns placed at CYC host organizations helps partners accomplish projects connected to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail.

**This report illustrates the many accomplishments and activities of the Chesapeake Youth Corps network in 2013.**



JAMES RIVER EXPEDITION PARTICIPANTS AT HENRICUS HISTORICAL PARK

## STATISTICS 2013

**72,045** Total hours of youth engagement

**17** NPS-related projects completed along two national historic trails

**6,670** Hours worked by interns

**351** Training hours provided by interns

**76** Educational events held

**33** Educational materials created

**92** Youth participated in NPS-related work

**618** Total youth participants



YCC CREW-  
MEMBER WITH  
SALAMANDER

**PARTNERS**  
2013

“The close relationship between the National Park Service and James River Association has also been very helpful due to the fact that each partner organization is new to the CYC network, and we always felt supported. Throughout the year, it felt as though NPS always gave plenty of attention to each of the partners, while being understanding that each organization may operate differently.”

*Georgia Busch, CYC Intern, James River Association*

**Virginia Department of Conservation  
and Recreation (DCR)**  
*Youth Conservation Corps*  
Summer Crews  
CYC Intern (Shared with JRA)

**Maryland Department of Natural Resources**  
*Conservation Jobs Corps*  
Summer Crews  
CYC Intern

**Anne Arundel County Maryland-  
Department of Recreation and Parks**  
Summer Crews  
CYC Summer Intern

**James River Association**  
*James River Expeditions*  
*James River Ecology School*  
CYC Intern

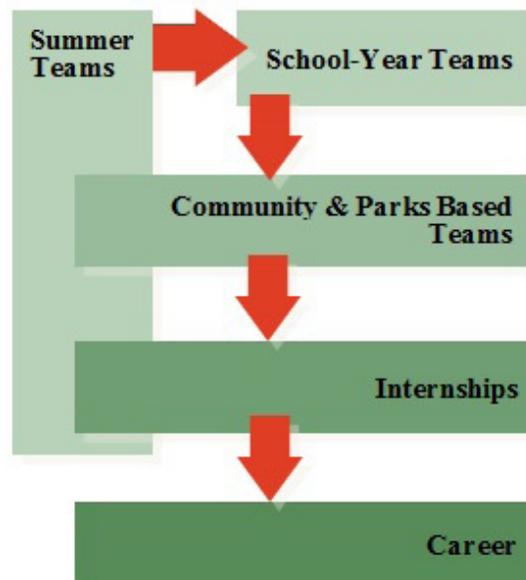
**Maryland-National Capital Parks and  
Planning Commission**  
*Conservation Jobs Corps*  
Summer Crews

**Parks & People Foundation**  
*BRANCHES Program*  
School Year Crews  
Summer Crews  
CYC Intern



## CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS Meet the Youth Participants

Governmental and non-profit organizations have increasingly placed a strong emphasis on developing a career pathway for young people. The National Park Service, for example, has had a fairly robust presence for K-12 students through curriculum based and Junior Ranger programs. However, less attention has been placed on creating opportunities for service learning and youth employment until very recently. The Chesapeake Youth Corps network fills an experience gap in the career ladder in cultural and natural resources, particularly with NPS.



CYC PATHWAY MODEL

“I want to bring my parents out to these places. The outdoors is beautiful.”

“I would love to work for CJC again- I want to be a counselor and lead projects.”

CYC participants with Maryland Department of Natural Resources.



YCC CREW  
AT CALEDON  
STATE PARK

## CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS Youth Participants At a Glance

### First experiences:

- First time working for pay
- First time working for an employer
- First time kayaking/canoeing
- First time camping
- First time in a national park

### Age Range for CYC

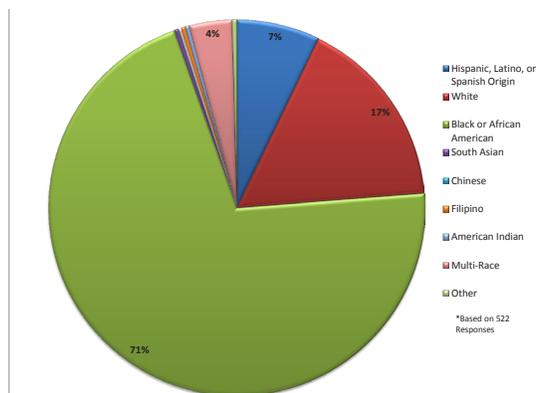
**Youth Participants: 14 to 25**

**14-17** : Most partner programs welcome young people as crew members beginning at age 14 as high school freshmen.

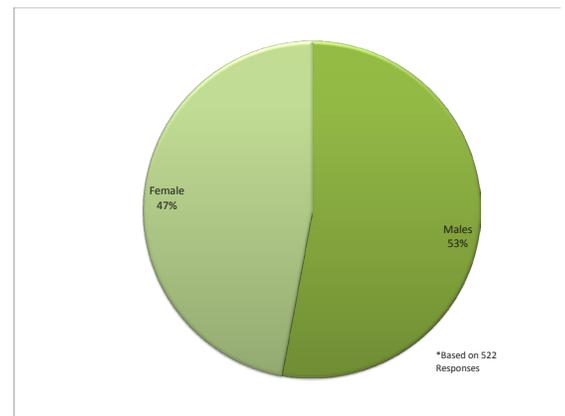
**18-21** : Crew leaders typically spent a few seasons as crew members and are now advancing to a supervisory role.

**22-25** : Interns are in a transition period moving towards full-time career employment

CYC YOUTH  
DEMOGRAPHICS



CYC YOUTH GENDER  
DEMOGRAPHICS





CYC INTERN  
 GEORGIA BUSCH  
 PRESENTS TO  
 NPS STAFF

## CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS Meet the Interns

Three year-round NPS interns and one NPS summer intern completed their first year of service with partners James River Association, Parks & People Foundation, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and Anne Arundel County Maryland Department of Recreation and Parks. NPS interns serve as a resource for partners and as ambassadors for NPS. The interns support partners with project coordination, training, funding source research, grant writing, environmental education program research and development, and outreach and recreational activities.

“Trusting the youth to make decisions about what they were going to do and how it was going to get done was a valuable teaching experience for me, and the most personally rewarding.”-

**Alex Lloyd**, CYC Summer Intern, Anne Arundel County MD Department of Recreation and Parks.

“The students’ character development throughout the trip was a very dramatic transition to witness. These groups gained a sense of personal ownership of the river, and became more motivated to take action and responsibility in the watershed.”-

**Georgia Busch**, CYC Intern, James River Association

**14**  
 grant applications with  
 7 awards received

**14**  
 recruited partner  
 organizations

**318**  
 training hours from  
 partners and NPS



CYC INTERN KATHLEEN BERUBE RECEIVING A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION FROM NPS SUPERINTENDENT CHARLES HUNT

## CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS Intern Initiatives

Intern Innovations in the 2013 season include:

- Intern-hosted “**field experience**” days for host organizations and fellow interns to work and learn as a group.
- Development of four CYC Intern **manuals** and two case studies.
- **Mentors** at partner organizations to work with each intern.
- Three **capstone** projects allowing each intern to develop and manage a unique project.

The Chesapeake Youth Corps intern team completed a series of manuals designed to evaluate the current program and provide strategies for growth and development.

*Industry Standards Metrics Recording Manual* proposes a uniformed measuring and reporting standard for the Chesapeake Youth Corps partners.

*Evaluations Manual* outlines current practices by partner organizations within the CYC network as well as providing resources for creating an evaluation process.

*Connecting Youth to Opportunities Manual* highlights youth corps programs and opportunities throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

*Recruitment Strategy* provides tactics for recruiting qualified applicants for the crew leaders, crew chiefs, and intern positions.



YCC CREW  
STATIONED AT  
CALEDON STATE  
PARK

CYC PARTNER PROGRAM

## Virginia State Parks Youth Conservation Corps

### Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

*Gaston Rouse*, Director of Community Engagement and Volunteerism

*Georgia Busch*, CYC Intern

The mission of the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) is to engage youth in a structured program of important conservation and park projects on public lands while fostering teamwork, self-esteem, social responsibility and respect for the environment.

**Caledon YCC Team:** All-female crew completed four projects on the John Smith Trail.

- Developed four new boat-in campsites. These are the first overnight facilities at Caledon including a tent pad, lantern post, and picnic tables.
- Removed rocks to make safer canoe and kayak landings at the City of Tappahannock.
- Trail clearing at Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge.
- Fence repair and brush clearing to open water viewshed at George Washington Birthplace National Monument.

**York River YCC Team:** All-male crew completed three projects on the John Smith Trail.

- Trail clearing, beach clean-up, and access improvements at Lawrence Lewis, Jr. Park.
- Brush clearing, access improvement, and Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail sign installation at College Landing Park.
- Trail clearing and fishing area access development at Eco-Discovery Park on Powhatan Creek.

**Leesylvania Youth Service Corps:**

Co-ed crew from Molinari Juvenile Shelter completed two major projects along the John Smith Trail.

- Cutting, clearing, and surfacing 1/4 mile hiking trail at Mason Neck State Park.
- Built viewing platform deck for watching bald eagles and migratory waterfowl at the end of the trail.
- Both the trail and platform will become universally accessible features.



YOUTH PARTICIPATING  
IN THE JAMES RIVER  
EXPEDITIONS.

## CYC PARTNER PROGRAM James River Association

### James River Association

*Bill Street*, Executive Director

*Jessica Templeton*, Education Program Manager and Intern Mentor

*Georgia Busch*, CYC Intern

The mission of the James River Association is stewardship of the James River. They provide a voice for the river and take action to promote conservation and responsible stewardship of its natural resources. JRA achieves these goals through core programs: Watershed Restoration; Education & Outreach; River Advocacy; and the Riverkeeper program.

**CYC Intern Georgia Busch** served as environmental educator for the James River Ecology School on Presquile National Wildlife Refuge and designed service-learning experiences to bond youth to the environment.

Georgia's accomplishments with the James River Association include:

- Incorporated themes of the Captain John Smith Trail, changes of the Chesapeake Bay over time, and important trail sites into a new service-learning program at the school.
- Supported the *Envision the James* initiative to increase public access to trails and propose cultural and heritage initiatives in the James River corridor through collaboration with partners.
- Acted as the main liaison and point of contact between National Park Service, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and JRA.
- Strengthened and constructed new relationships with partner organizations throughout the James River corridor through engagement with the James River Expeditions, *Envision the James*, YCC crews, and the internship network.
- Secured funding and developed a tree nursery in which future youth service corps crewmembers will transplant trees from the nursery to Presquile National Wildlife Refuge.
- Participated as a leader of the James River Expedition summer program. Three 8-day programs were held, giving participants the opportunity to build skills and gain understanding of the James River. Thirty high school students and seven high school teachers from across the watershed paddled 260 miles of the James River.



PARKS AND  
PEOPLE FOUNDATION  
FIELD EXPERIENCE

CYC PARTNER PROGRAM  
**Parks & People Foundation**

## **Parks & People Foundation**

*Guy Hager, Senior Director*

*Nicole McDaniels, Green Career Program Coordinator and CYC Intern Mentor*

*Anne Gilbert, CYC Intern*

BRANCHES is the Parks & People Foundation's year-round green job training program for Baltimore City youth ages 14-21, and part of the PPF Green Career Ladder. CYC Intern Anne Gilbert helped Parks & People administer this program and also introduced youth participants to the many sites in Baltimore along the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail.

### **BRANCHES summer program completed projects:**

- **Site Preparation for Signage:** NPS is designing way-side signage for Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail locations in Baltimore. Four of these locations were prepped by BRANCHES teams. This included removal of invasive species and trash and debris clean up. Locations are Clifton Park, Middle Branch, Patterson Park, and Riverside Park.
- **Bioswale Remediation:** Completed one model project in bioswale remediation and soil replacement in a Baltimore neighborhood. The BRANCHES year-round team will follow the model to complete more remediation.
- **GIS Mapping on the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail:** Youth learned the many applications of GIS mapping by collecting data points of amenities at trail locations. They then used their data to create maps.
- **Community Beautification and Garden Installation:** In the Rosemont community of Baltimore City, BRANCHES team members cleared and prepared an existing garden structure for new plantings.
- **Outdoor Skills and Activities:** Team members enjoyed new activities such as zip-lining, rock climbing, camping, and kayaking.



CONSERVATION  
JOBS CORPS  
MEMBER AT  
WORK

CYC PARTNER PROGRAM

## Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps

### Maryland Department of Natural Resources

*Fred Banks*, Director of Conservation Jobs Corps

*Cindy Hawkins*, Program Manager and Intern Mentor

*Kathleen Berube*, CYC Intern

The Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps (CJC) works with community youth organizations to provide conservation service opportunities in Maryland state parks. Youth participants build employability skills, discover Maryland's natural resources, and develop a sense of stewardship through service-learning projects.

### Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps participants completed three significant NPS-related projects:

Todd's Inheritance historic home restoration along the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail

CJC crews removed debris, leveled the land, constructed and painted a shed, and a new split rail fence. Maryland Park Service Superintendent Nita Settina observed the crew's progress and participated in a "Bridging the Watershed" activity highlighting the negative effects of invasive plants on an ecosystem. CYC Intern Kathleen Berube tailored this environmental education experience to fit the needs of CJC.

North Point Battlefield restoration along the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail

The all-female crew worked on improvements to the North Point Battlefield sign, doing brickwork, painting, and building a new flower bed and stone wall making the area more attractive to park visitors. The crew did additional maintenance to the North Point Battlefield, including unclogging drains, separating gardens and grass, and replacing broken fence boards.

Bladensburg Waterfront Accessible Launch: See page 15 for more information.

"I would love to work for CJC again. I want to be a counselor and lead projects."

-- CJC Summer 2013 youth participant



EZ DOCK AND LAUNCH  
AT BLADENSBURG  
WATERFRONT PARK

## CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS Accessibility Projects and Case Studies

In an effort to provide more inclusive opportunities, the CYC was part of two accessibility projects in 2013. These projects act as case studies for the creation of new accessible trail features, youth involvement, and documentation intended to help others with similar projects. These included an accessible dock and canoe/kayak transfer station and launching system at Bladensburg Waterfront Park in Prince George's County, MD, and an all-sensory trail at Lake Waterford Park in Anne Arundel County, MD. Case study reports were developed for both projects. These two accessibility projects were the first for the NPS Chesapeake Bay youth partner organizations. The case study reports share best practices among youth partners and programs.

“When you create great programs for people with special needs,  
you create great programs for everyone.”-

David Neibuhr, Executive Director, Watermen's Museum



ACCESSIBILITY CASE STUDY  
Bladensburg Accessibility Project

Five participants in the Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps, ages 15 and 16, worked on installation of a universally accessible canoe/kayak dock and launch at Bladensburg Waterfront Park on the Anacostia River, managed by the Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission (MNCPPC). Bladensburg Waterfront Park is a partner in the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network, and a key interpretive location along the Star-Spangled Banner and Captain John Smith Chesapeake national historic trails.

The youth prepared for the project by learning how to safely use hand and power tools. They then worked with MNCPPC staff to remove old decking boards and replaced them with new, pre-treated 2x8x12 lumber. They helped install the new EZ launch system and assisted a mason in replacing pavers with a cement ADA acceptable transition to and from the sidewalk to the dock and the installation of ADA acceptable handrails.

The CYC members also participated in training on a variety of disabilities - emphasizing persons who use wheelchairs, and the importance of adaptable recreational opportunities.

The collaborative work of all the Chesapeake Youth Corps partners led to the design, fund-

ing, and implementation of the Bladensburg Waterfront Accessibility Project.

This project fills a gap in universally accessible launches to the Anacostia Water Trail. It is included on the water trail's new map and guide designed by the National Park Service and released in January 2014. As a case study, the project will serve as a model for future CYC trail development efforts. For example, the case study report was recently used by the NPS and the River Management Society as reference and example in their recent report, *Prepare to Launch: Guidelines for Assessing, Designing, and Building Sites for Carry-In Watercraft*.

EZ LAUNCH DOCK DEMONSTRATION: [WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=FBUSJX0VOAC](http://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=FBUSJX0VOAC)

PROJECT PHOTOS: [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CHESAPEAKENPS](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CHESAPEAKENPS)



## ACCESSIBILITY CASE STUDY All-Sensory Trail Project

“Helping with the trail was such a rewarding two weeks for me. I had something to look forward to each morning when I was there. I made some friends and we all had the same goals. Having fun, working hard, and making one of my favorite parks a nicer looking place for visitors.”- Claire, 14 years old

Over three weeks in summer 2013, Chesapeake Youth Corps partners at Anne Arundel County (MD) Recreation and Parks Department designed and constructed an all-sensory trail with the help of youth corps participants.

The All-Sensory Trail encourages people of all abilities to use each of their senses as they walk along the 3/10 mile paved trail. A guide rope directs sight-impaired participants along the trail and gives them an opportunity to interact with nature using multiple senses. Interpretive signs in Braille and English help those who are visually impaired as well as sighted participants. An olfactory and tactile garden offers wonderful scents and diverse textures from a variety of flowers, herbs, and textured plants. A signature feature of the trail is the six-foot tall bamboo wind chime, stimulating hearing and touch. Lake Waterford Park is also home to Freedom Field, the county’s new and premier adaptive recreational baseball/softball field.

Eleven middle school and high school-aged participants in the Youth Conservation Corps program contributed all of the physical work needed on the trail construction. The students dug post holes, planted and watered plants, cleared brush, and mulched the trail.

Initially, the idea of the All-Sensory Trail was created through collaboration between NPS Chesapeake Bay Office and the Anne Arundel County public outreach coordinator for the Department of Recreation and Parks. NPS assisted with funding of materials to implement the trail and broaden the experience of its Chesapeake Youth Corps program. A group of volunteers have adopted the trail and recently raised \$1,400 for trail maintenance and future enhancements.

The trail won the Maryland Recreation and Parks Association’s Creative Landscaping award for 2014.

VIDEO OF THE ORDA-KOWSKI FAMILY EXPLORING THE TRAIL:  
[WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=DA\\_RBOYHGPC](http://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=DA_RBOYHGPC)



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CHESAPEAKE YOUTH CORPS  
**Acknowledgements**

Expanding corps programs in the Chesapeake Bay requires collaborative work, funding, connections between programs and teamwork across agencies and organizations. Thanks to the work of an army of dedicated individuals, we were able to complete a successful year. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all the partners, families, volunteers and staff that make youth programs work. Thank you for working together and helping advance youth stewardship and employment in our beautiful Chesapeake Bay.