

GROUNDWORK USA YOUTH PROGRAMS FY2016

REPORT TO THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



GROUNDWORK
USA



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In addition, we wish to thank the following organizations and agencies that collaborated with Groundwork and supported us to accomplish our goals in fiscal year 2016 (see page 12 for a list of all NPS units we have worked with this past year):

NATIONAL PARTNERS

Appalachian Trail Conservancy
JPB Foundation
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
National Park Foundation
National Park Service
REI
Teton Science Schools
US Environmental Protection Agency
US Forest Service
US Fish and Wildlife Service

GROUNDWORK ANACOSTIA RIVER DC

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
Anacostia RiverKeeper
Anacostia Waterfront Trust
Anacostia Watershed Society
Community Foundation of Washington, DC
DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative
Fair Chance of Washington, DC
DC Department of Energy and Environment
Chesapeake Bay Trust
George Washington University
Georgetown University
River Network
Shenandoah National Park Trust
Smithsonian Wildlife Institute
University of the District of Columbia
US Geological Survey
Washington, DC Public Schools

GROUNDWORK BRIDGEPORT (CT)

BuildOn
City of Bridgeport
Civic Moxie
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Connecticut Fund for the Environment and Save the Sound
PSE&G
Student Conservation Association
The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut

GROUNDWORK BUFFALO

Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor

GROUNDWORK CINCINNATI/ MILL CREEK

Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge
Cincinnati Museum Center
Cincinnati Public Schools
Cincinnati Zoo Academy
City of Cincinnati
Duke Energy Foundation
Easter Seals TriState
Green Umbrella
Hamilton County Community Action Agency

Happen Inc.
Human Nature Landscape Architects
Interact for Health
Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge
New Prospect Baptist Church
Northside, South Cumminsville, Spring Grove & Winton Hills Community Councils
Ohio Department of Education
Ohio Environmental Education Fund
Outdoor Adventure Clubs of Greater Cincinnati
REI Cincinnati
The Nature Conservancy, Ohio
University of Cincinnati Department of Environmental Studies
Wayne National Forest
Who Works the River
Working In Neighborhoods
Xavier University Community Engagement Fellowship Program

GROUNDWORK DALLAS

Bain & Company
Big Thought!
Boy Scouts of America: Longhorn Council
City of Dallas: Trinity Watershed
City of Dallas: Stormwater Management Agency
City of Dallas: Parks and Recreation
City of Dallas: Water Department
CP&Y
Dallas Business District
Dallas Independent School District
Dallas Zoo
Dogwood Canyon Audubon
Earth Day Texas
Eugene McDermott Foundation
Friends of Oakcliff
Founders Garden Club of Dallas
Hurst Euless Bedford Independent School District
Kids on Land
Mountain View College
National Park Conservation Association
North Texas Mountain Bike Patrol
Perot Foundation
REI Dallas
Southwest Airlines
Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
The Boone Family Foundation
The Trinity Trust Foundation
The Boone Family Foundation
Trammel S. Crow Foundation Inc.
Trash Bash Music Stash
Stemmons Corridor Business Association
Strokers Dallas
University of Texas Dallas
Uplift Education

GROUNDWORK DENVER

Aetna Foundation
Anschutz Family Foundation
Bank of the West
Colorado Mountain Bike Association
Denver Office of Economic Development
Environmental Affinity Group
National Elk Refuge
Payback Foundation
Pike National Forest
Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge
Roots & Branches Foundation
The Denver Foundation
Tony Boone Trail Building
Tony Gramsas Youth Services
Valentine National Wildlife Refuge

GROUNDWORK ELIZABETH (NJ)

Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

GROUNDWORK HUDSON VALLEY (NY)

Carvel Foundation
City of Yonkers Parks Department
City of Yonkers Public Schools
Friends of Van Cortlandt Park
St. Faiths Foundation
Untermeyer Park Conservancy
Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge

GROUNDWORK INDY

Citizens Energy Group
City of Indianapolis
EmployIndy
Flanner House
Freewheelin Community Bikes
Indiana University Health
Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership
Indy Parks and Recreation
Keep Indianapolis Beautiful
Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust
Northwest Quality of Life Plan - Arts, Parks, and Public Space Action Team
PNC Bank Foundation
Purdue Extension - Urban Farm Incubator Project
Reconnecting to Our Waterways
The Indianapolis Foundation, a CICF affiliate
The Lilly Endowment
Two Oaks Fund, a Fund of the Indianapolis Foundation
We Grow
YMCA

GROUNDWORK JACKSONVILLE

Ability Housing
Boys and Girls Club of Northeast Florida
Brennan Rental Equipment
Christ Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
CISV Jacksonville
City Cycle
City of Jacksonville
CSX
Duval County Department of Health
Duval County Extension Office
FSCJ Downtown
Green Team Project
Iberia Bank
Kayak Amelia
National Park Service Urban Fellow - South-east Region
North Florida Bicycle Club
Open Road Bicycle Shop
Operation New Hope
St. Johns Riverkeeper
Timucuan Park Foundation
UF Health Jacksonville Trauma One
US Green Building Council
Wells Fargo
YMCA of Florida's First Coast
ZenCog Bike Shop

GROUNDWORK LAWRENCE (MA)

Amelia Peabody Foundation
Appalachian Mountain Club
Artemas W. Stearns Trust
Boston College
Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence
City of Lawrence
Clipper Ship Foundation
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
DCU for Kids
Essex National Heritage Area/Commission
Essex County Community Foundation
Forest Foundation
Johnson's Highland View Farm
Josephine G. Russell Trust
Lawrence Public Schools
Massachusetts Cultural Council
Neighbors in Need
New Balance Foundation

Merck Family Fund
White Mountain National Forest

GROUNDWORK MILWAUKEE

All Peoples Church
American Rivers
Aurora Health Care
Bliffert's Lumber
Brookby Foundation
City of Milwaukee – Department of City Development
City of Milwaukee – Environmental Collaboration Office
City of Milwaukee – Redevelopment Authority
Cooperative Institute of Urban Agriculture and Nutrition
Employ Milwaukee
Fund For Lake Michigan
Golda Meir High School for the Gifted and Talented
Growing Power
Marek Landscaping
Mary Ryan Boys and Girls Club in Sherman Park
Metcalf Park Community Action Team
Milwaukee Bucks
Milwaukee Food Council
Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District
Milwaukee Public Library
MLK Drive BID
Newaukee
Reciprocity
Riverworks Development Corporation
Running Rebels
St. Joan Antida High School
University of Wisconsin Extension
Zeilder Center of Public Discussion
Zilber Foundation

GROUNDWORK NEW ORLEANS

Greater New Orleans Foundation
New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board

GROUNDWORK RHODE ISLAND

City of Providence Department of Parks and Recreation

City of Providence Office of Sustainability
Miriam Hospital/Lifespan

GROUNDWORK RICHMOND (CA)

Cal Fire
Chevron
City of Richmond
ClifBar Foundation
Friends of the Richmond Greenway
Outdoor Foundation
Playmaker SuperBowl 50 Fund
Strong Foundation
The Watershed Project
Trust for Public Land

GROUNDWORK RVA (Richmond, VA)

ART 180
City of Richmond
Communities in Schools
James River Association
James River Park System
Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens
Richmond Public Schools
Robins Foundation
Saving Our Youth
Storefront for Community Design
Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation
Virginia State University
Wheeler's Landscaping Training

GROUNDWORK SAN DIEGO

Cleveland National Forest
Mount Laguna National Forest
San Diego Gas and Electric

GROUNDWORK SOMERVILLE (MA)

Agnes Lindsay Fund
City of Somerville
Cummings Foundation
Forest Foundation
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Merck Family Fund
Mystic River Watershed Association
Somerville Arts Council

INTRODUCTION

Groundwork USA is pleased to submit this report of our accomplishments in fiscal year 2016. This past year, Groundwork USA and our network engaged over 12,000 youth in a variety of conservation-related programs and activities. Over 20% of these engagements were directly supported by the National Park Service, a testament to the importance of this partnership. The following pages present an overview of our collective successes and a record of our commitment to continue to expand the breadth and depth of our youth programming.

- Groundwork USA's approach is to meet the needs of our youth through an array of programming, rather than simply focus on one area of youth development, such as conservation skill building. Our programs are carefully designed to:
- boost ecological awareness and encourage a commitment to stewardship of our natural resources,
 - raise awareness of the need for public lands,
 - promote family connections to our national parks and national wildlife refuges,
 - prepare youth for a career in conservation-related fields (including closing the STEM gap that hinders youth's academic success),
 - close the "participation gap" and encourage more urban youth to recreate outdoors,
 - foster healthy communities through ongoing urban farming and farm-to-table initiatives, and
 - prepare our youth to shape the future of their communities—not only by changing perspectives, but by giving youth the skills they need to physically change their environment.

Groundwork USA's youth programming is a one-stop approach for meeting the needs of the whole youth and preparing that person for a lifetime of civic and conservation engagement. Through our youth programming, Groundwork's commitment to "*changing places and changing lives*" continues.

ABOUT GROUNDWORK USA

The mission of the Groundwork USA network is to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement, and management of the physical environment by developing community-based partnerships that empower people, businesses, and organizations to promote environmental, economic, and social wellbeing.

We are committed to:

- pursuing a future in which everyone's neighborhood environment is green, healthy, and resilient,
- undoing legacies of poverty and racial discrimination, and
- breaking the trend of widening disparity between communities that are enjoying a renaissance and communities that are experiencing disinvestment, neglect, and deepening poverty.

Groundwork USA and our network of Trusts offer quality environmental education, stewardship, employment, and leadership opportunities for young people, most of whom are low-income and/or youth of color. We believe that communities are a source of rich expertise and human capital. Through our youth development programming, we're investing in the future of individuals and their communities, providing platforms for young people to effect change in themselves, in the built and natural environments in which they live, and in our society as a whole.



"The trip was full of firsts for me. My first week-long camping trip, first time swimming in a river, outdoor rock climbing, working in a national park, even my first time being in a national park. I found out things about myself that otherwise I wouldn't have known I even had the ability or courage to do. "

—Iyah Brown, Groundwork Cincinnati/Mill Creek Green Team youth, on 2016 trip to Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area

CHANGING THE FACE OF CONSERVATION IN AMERICA

What will change the face of conservation in America? Traditional job pipelines and training programs don't reflect the diversity of our nation and could yield environmental leadership for tomorrow that looks similar to yesterday's.

Why does this matter? Many Americans are missing out on the many benefits our public lands offer. As one writer observed in a New York Times op-ed, "For big segments of this country's increasingly diverse and urban population, especially its young people, the parks seem either irrelevant or remote places where they may not be welcomed. Persuading them otherwise will determine the parks' future."

Fixing the "inclusion gap" is a challenge the National Park Service (NPS) has embraced. In 1998, NPS and the US Environmental Protection Agency founded the Groundwork USA network to create green spaces in post-industrial cities, revitalize urban waterways, and restore brownfields that hinder community development. Working at the intersection of environment, equity, and civic engagement, Groundwork USA and our network of 23 local affiliates, or Trusts, work with residents of marginalized communities to transform neighborhoods into green, healthy, resilient places where all can thrive.

This community-centric approach affords Groundwork a singular opportunity to engage urban youth in conservation. In 2015, 12,935 youth—over 90% of them youth of color—participated in a wide range of Groundwork projects and programs across the country, involving restoration, clean-up and conservation work, leadership development, job training, skills building, school-based learning, and more, in both the national parks and public lands and in Groundwork communities. Our rate of success in connecting urban youth with the parks is unrivalled and continues to grow each year.



Juana Lopez started her conservation work with Groundwork three years ago, at age 13. Her older brother was a former Groundwork Lawrence (Massachusetts) Green Team youth, but her real motivation came from a neighbor's comment that hit her hard. Juana joined the Groundwork Lawrence Green Team and has been working to improve her community ever since.

"She told me that the streets are dirty, that no one cared, and that kids are just sitting at home doing nothing. I felt she was wrong and wanted to change her view on that."

—Juana Lopez, Groundwork Lawrence Green Team member, on why she decided to work with Groundwork

How do we do it?

Most of our youth first experience a national park through Groundwork. Few know people who work on or visit public lands. If they have visited a national park or national wildlife refuge, they probably didn't see many people who "look like them." Yet they soon come to regard the parks as theirs.

Groundwork starts by engaging young people in conservation and restoration work close to home, in places that matter to them. We create opportunities in school-based and after-school environmental education and service-learning activities. Our signature Green Team programs for high school youth combine skill and leadership development, service, and paid employment. Groundwork Trusts partner with dozens of national parks in and near their communities—identifying and removing invasive species in Jean Lafitte National Historic Park and Preserve, restoring gardens at Weir Farm National Historic Site, and transplanting native vegetation in Rocky Mountain National Park, to name just a few examples.

With satisfying work comes a new appreciation of nature and the importance of conservation. As Groundwork Jacksonville Green Teamer Eduardo Soriano-Guzman observes, "When local youth clean up their own environment, they fall in love with it. They see why it needs to be preserved. Protecting their local park or river will make them want to see other natural places preserved as well."

Many Groundwork youth then travel to some of America's iconic public lands, including Rocky Mountain, Grand Teton, and Yellowstone National Parks. Our Yellowstone corps program, for example, initiated in 2012, brings youth from across the country for a week of habitat restoration and trail-building, learning, and exploration alongside NPS staff.

Having begun environmental work and learning in their communities, Groundwork youth arrive motivated and well-prepared. They complete essential projects, helping reduce the backlog of deferred maintenance. Seeing the result of that work, they experience not just pride, but a sense of belonging and ownership of places that could otherwise feel uncomfortable.

For the new urban environmental agenda, new leaders

Groundwork is America's urban conservation corps. While Groundwork youth learn to build hiking trails, install bear boxes, and use crosscut saws on public lands, they also develop skills like carpentry, plastering, painting, and other urban restoration skills that they can apply close to home in their own communities. Their experiences in national parks provide a context for their work at home and a sense of themselves as part of a national movement.

Beyond the skills and sense of mastery they develop, youth credit their Groundwork experiences in national parks and wildlife refuges with helping them re-envision their neighborhoods as places that can be greener and healthier. As former Groundwork Hudson Valley Green Team member Ashley Perez—subsequently an NPS Seasonal Ranger and Groundwork USA Board member—observes, "Yellowstone National Park is stunning, but so is the Hudson River. We just have to see it that way. Sometimes it takes hiking to the top of a mountain to see what's in your own backyard."

FY16 GROUNDWORK/NPS
YOUTH PARTNERSHIP
BY THE NUMBERS



Groundwork youth engaged in National Park Service projects and programs



Employed in NPS-funded programs

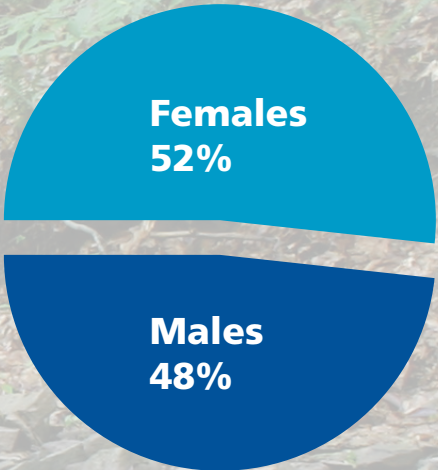


In college

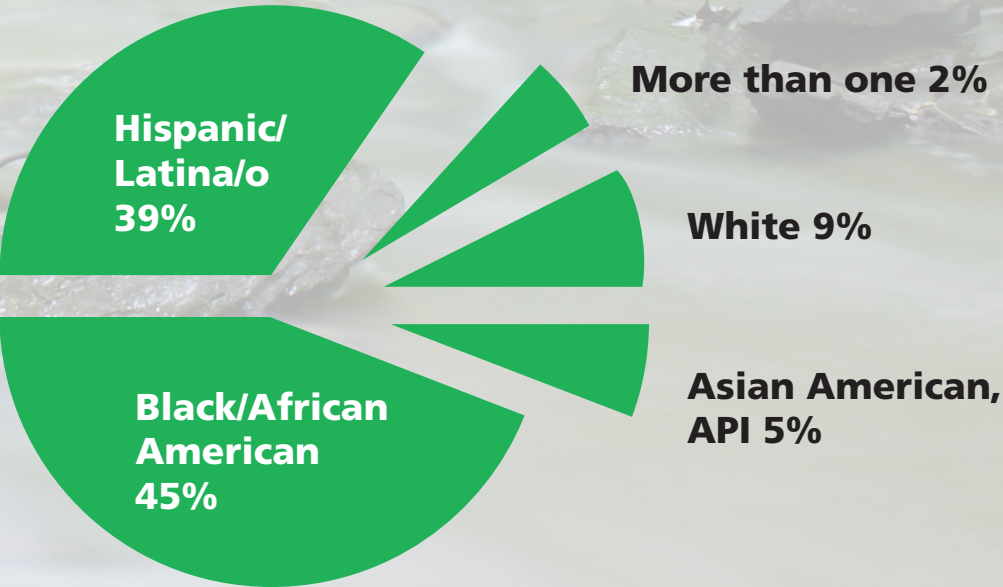
FY16 NPS FUNDING for all Groundwork projects (including youth programs)



By Gender:



By Race/Ethnicity:



ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

Connecting urban youth and residents—including many who have never ventured outside their community—to wild or reclaimed places close to home and to the broader natural world is essential to Groundwork’s approach. Fostering a sense of stewardship for these habitats helps

ensure their preservation, but also helps urban youth reap the social and spiritual benefits of connecting to the land and to nature. Groundwork is rooted in urban communities, and our deep bond to our neighbors as well as to the natural environment affords us a unique opportunity to tie one to the other. We want our youth to feel at home in both the built environment and the natural world, and we have created innovative programs to accomplish that.

MOUNTAINS TO MAIN STREET



PROJECT OUTCOMES

20 urban ambassadors trained in strategic planning, leadership, and community outreach during the Grand Teton National Park’s Mountains to Main Street week-long workshop

18 urban national parks visited by participants in ambassadors’ events

46 NPS-themed events or park field trips organized by ambassadors

569 participants attended park-themed events or park field trips led by urban ambassadors

>1,769 estimated social media contacts through newsletters and blog posts by urban ambassadors

Program/Project Funding

2016 Mountains to Main Street - \$52,831 (NPS)
2016 Urban Archeology Corps - \$58,000 (NPS)

GROUNDWORK AT WORK: ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

553

Community events

New partnerships established

485

1,037

Partners engaged in work

People engaged at events

44,754

Please note: Groundwork USA collects data on network accomplishments on an annual basis, thus the most complete available data are for 2015.

Groundwork USA provides innovative opportunities to put the NPS Urban Agenda into action. When Megan Kohli, Program Manager for Youth, Outreach, and Volunteers at Grand Teton National Park, was charged with taking on the “diversity gap” in national park visitation, she partnered with Groundwork USA.

In the spring of 2016, 20 youth leaders from across our network became “urban ambassadors” through the inaugural “Mountains to Main Street” program, crafting engagement strategies to connect their communities—who don’t typically visit national parks—with nearby NPS units. Rather than simply encourage local residents to visit nearby parks as tourists, Mountains to Main Street ambassadors began by asking how national parks could serve the communities they wanted to engage. The urban ambassadors then developed strategies for using NPS’s natural, cultural, and historic resources to meet the communities’ needs. By developing and drawing on the urban ambassadors’ leadership and community-mobilization expertise, this innovative partnership seeks to forge relationships between communities and parks that will endure long after the Mountains to Main Street program has ended.



URBAN ARCHEOLOGY

Groundwork youth are enthusiastic participants in the Urban Archeology Corps (UAC), a National Park Service program that helps urban youth discover and interpret their communities’ history. Through archeological projects, the youth use excavation, interpretation, and traditional and oral history research to unearth little-known stories and strengthen connections to place. First piloted with Groundwork Anacostia River DC, UAC undertook five projects in 2016, three with Groundwork Trusts. Through these projects, Groundwork youth learn the power of narrative, and discover a connection to the places around them. The projects also help youth find themselves in the story of their home.

“They found out a lot about their city, but bottom line, it started to become their story and their history, they started to see that they were part of the fabric of their city and that there was tons to be proud about.”

—Stephanie Cross, Groundwork Lawrence Education Program Director

RESTORING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Many corps-styled youth programs focus solely on public lands far from urban centers. By contrast, Groundwork youth work in both the natural and built environments.

Our programs do this for several reasons:

- ➔ We are committed to urban greening and want our youth to have the skills they need to impact their own environment.
- ➔ We want our youth to know that the built environment can be changed and improved and to acquire a sense of empowerment to do so.
- ➔ We want our youth to learn the job skills most relevant to careers in an urban setting.
- ➔ 60% of National Park Service units are in the built environment.

Groundwork youth learn not only how to wield a pick-mattock and reconstruct a trail, but how miter-saws, trowels, and spray guns can also change their world. These skills are also essential to helping the National Park Service meet the backlog of maintenance within the parks. Skilled and prepared for the work at hand, our youth come ready to help NPS meet these challenges, and performing work on national treasures further prepares them for the work at home.

GROUNDWORK AT WORK: IMPROVING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

148

Total construction and implementation projects

Planning and design projects

153

Total amenities completed: (playgrounds, rain gardens, benches, planter boxes, new sheetrock, stone walls, stone paths, etc.)

679



GATEWAY NATIONAL RECREATION AREA



Program/Project Funding
Gateway National Recreation Area Historic Restoration – \$59,000 (NFWF)

Working in partnership with the National Parks of New York Harbor, Groundwork youth have taken on a number of restoration projects. From building stone walls around amphibian habitat to revitalizing historic structures, the youth utilize their construction knowledge to help ready our parks for visitors.

In July 2016, 57 youth and youth leaders from three Groundwork Trusts restored the historic Fort Tilden chapel, which had fallen into disrepair and suffered damage in Hurricane Sandy. The Groundwork Green Team youth re-built and re-plastered the chapel walls, removed warped wainscoting, and repainted the entire facility, inside and out, restoring it to its original appearance.

According to Groundwork Hudson Valley Youth Leader Sara Smith Sell, the project provided a unique opportunity for the youth to be involved in the transformation of such a large and public space: “This was the biggest project that our Green Team has ever taken on, and the youth learned a variety of new skills during the week, including how to repair sheetrock, how to cut and hang trim, and how to set up a tent.”

“(This) was an incredible accomplishment,” agreed Groundwork Bridgeport Youth Leader Tanner Burgdorf. “I was most impressed with the youths’ ownership of the project. Each step of the way, they worked as a group to get tasks completed. I admired their willingness to try new things and assist other groups.”

WESTERN CENTER FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION (WCHP) GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK



For a second year, youth from Groundwork USA's network traveled to Grand Teton National Park to assist the Western Center for Historic Preservation (WCHP) with restoration of historic structures within the park. This year, the youth completed several “chinking” projects, plastering spaces between logs on wooden buildings as was done in former times.

CONSERVING PUBLIC LANDS

Groundwork USA doesn't just engage youth in the urban environment. To contextualize the work they perform in their home communities and help them see how that work connects to broader conservation goals, Groundwork creates opportunities for youth to work within the

national parks. This year, Groundwork youth from 18 different cities completed restoration projects at 49 National Park Service units and sub-units.

Along with the National Park Service, Groundwork USA recognizes the need for conservationists to reflect the diversity of this great nation. As our country becomes more diverse, we want and need all citizens to share a passion to preserve public lands. Groundwork USA's corps are the most diverse in the nation. From new trainees to seasoned staff members, our teams reflect the racial and ethnic makeup of America, ensuring that the next generation of conservationists will be as varied as the landscapes we work in.

GROUNDWORK AT WORK: CONSERVATION MILESTONES

42

Acres of brownfields/
derelict land improved

38

Miles of sidewalk, paths,
trails built or improved

274

Acres of open
space/parkland
improved

Bulbs, perennials,
flats of flowers &
vegetables planted

31,339

137/212

Sites cleaned up (one time)/
maintained (regularly)

1,044

Trees planted

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SITES WHERE WE'VE WORKED

Appalachian National Scenic Trail
Big South Fork National River and
Recreation Area
Boston Harbor Islands National
Recreation Area
Cape Cod National Seashore
Chalmette National Battlefield
Fire Island National Seashore
Fort Mahan Park
Frederick Douglass National Historic
Site
Gateway National Recreation Area
o Floyd Bennett Field
o Fort Tilden Historic District
o Jacob Riis Beach
o Jamaica Bay Ryan Visitor Center
o Sandy Hook National Seashore
Grand Teton National Park

Great Sand Dunes National Park
Indiana Dunes National Park
Jean Lafitte National Historical Park
and Preserve
o Barataria Preserve
Maggie L Walker National Historic Site
Mammoth Cave National Park
Minute Man National Historic Park
National Capital Parks-East
o Anacostia Park
o Fort Dupont Park
o Greenbelt Park
o Kenilworth Park and Aquatic
Gardens
National Mall and Memorials Park
New River Gorge National River
Obed Wild and Scenic River
Point Reyes National Seashore

Richmond National Battlefield Park
Rocky Mountain National Park
Roger Williams National Memorial
Rosie the Riveter National Historic Site
Saugus Ironworks National Historic Site
Shenandoah National Park
Slater Mill/Blackstone Valley National
Heritage Corridor
Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve
o Fort Caroline
o Kingsley Plantation
Waco Mammoth National Monument
Weir Farm National Historic Site
William Howard Taft National Historic
Site
Wolf Trap National Park
Yellowstone National Park
Yosemite National Park

Program/Project Funding

2016 GWUSA Yellowstone Corps Experience – \$72,981 (NPS)

2016 Restoration Corps Program at Grand Teton National Park – \$41,000 (NFWF)

GROUNDWORK USA YELLOWSTONE CORPS EXPERIENCE

"My biggest takeaway from Yellowstone is that you can look back in nature and see the different stones, rocks, anaerobic bacteria. You can see past millennia preserved today, see history and science first-hand in nature."

—Roger Osorio, Groundwork Hudson Valley
Youth Program Coordinator

RESTORATION CORPS AT GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

In August 2016, 60 youth from 18 cities attended the Groundwork USA Yellowstone program, 20 in the first session and 40 in the second. Among the highlights, Groundwork youth participated in the National Park Service centennial celebration (including helping set up and break down the event), hiked to the top of Mount Washburn, and toured Yellowstone's many unique sites. During each week-long session, the youth took on a number of conservation work projects, restoring trails, installing bear-proof boxes, and building "bumper" logs and buck-n-rail fences to help preserve park features, among other conservation activities. Now in its fifth year, the Groundwork USA Yellowstone Corps Experience is heralded as a huge success for the park, the National Park Service, and Groundwork youth and their communities.

In the summer of 2016, 20 youth from Dallas, Texas, Denver, Colorado, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Richmond, Virginia, spent a week working, touring, and learning in Grand Teton National Park. They were there for a week-long corps-styled program that included working at National Elk Refuge and Grand Teton National Park, as well as touring Yellowstone National Park. The youth spent one day hiking four miles to revitalize refuge boundaries for Elk National Refuge. The crew then split into two teams to blaze a new trail at Grand Teton and restore historic buildings at White Grass Ranch with NPS's Western Center for Historic Preservation.

The partnership between Yellowstone National Park and Groundwork USA was created by Yellowstone National Park's Judy Knuth-Folts, Deputy Chief of Resource Education and Youth Programs, and Bob Fuhrmann, Youth and Volunteer Program Manager.

RECLAIMING URBAN WATERS

Along with conserving public lands and restoring the built environment, Groundwork has an extensive urban waters initiative. Historic rivers were the lifeblood of many Groundwork communities, and years of misuse and overdevelopment have caused their decline. While these important waters flow close to Groundwork youths' neighborhoods, extensive environmental degradation

limits their enjoyment and recreation potential. Knowing just how much restoring urban rivers can impact community revitalization, Groundwork is committed to their renaissance, taking the lead on a number of high profile and award-winning projects. Across the Groundwork network, youth play a central role in the renewal of their communities' urban waters by helping raise awareness, restoring riparian habitats, improving viewsheds and public access, providing ongoing water quality assessments and macroinvertebrate testing, removing invasives, and teaching others how to recreate outdoors.

GROUNDWORK AT WORK: AT THE RIVER'S EDGE

425

Tons of trash/debris
cleaned up

Feet of riparian habitat
cleaned up, conserved or
restored

71,014

REI/NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION/GROUNDWORK COLLABORATION



Program/Project Funding
2016 REI/National Park Foundation/Groundwork
Collaboration – \$353,930 (REI/National Park Foundation)

GROUNDWORK DENVER'S BLUE TEAM



In 2016, REI provided significant support to six Groundwork Trusts through the National Park Foundation. The program was designed to support conservation and restoration projects in local communities and in national parks, combining community service, outdoor recreation, and leadership development.

Groundwork Trusts used the funds to purchase recreation equipment and improve both community access to urban rivers and recreational access in the parks. The REI equipment—including kayaks, paddles, life vests, camping supplies, and a trailer to transport the gear—will be used by Groundwork staff in Cincinnati, Hudson Valley, Richmond (California), Richmond (Virginia), Denver, and Somerville (Massachusetts) to further environmental education and teach urban youth how to recreate on urban rivers.

"I went kayaking in San Francisco, Point Reyes, and in the marina. I liked being in open water and seeing the waves flow. I had never gone kayaking before Groundwork, and it was fulfilling and peaceful being in these bodies of water. These trips showed me how nature is beautiful and really pretty."

—April Campos, Groundwork Richmond (CA)
Green Team member

In the summer of 2016, Groundwork Denver recruited a team of eight dedicated high school students from Sheridan High School to support ongoing water quality sampling efforts. The "Blue Team" spent two months in the field collecting samples and field parameters. Students also learned about potential career options from partners at the US Environmental Protection Agency, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bear Creek Watershed Association, South Suburban Parks and Recreation, Earth Force, and the Metro State University Biology Department.

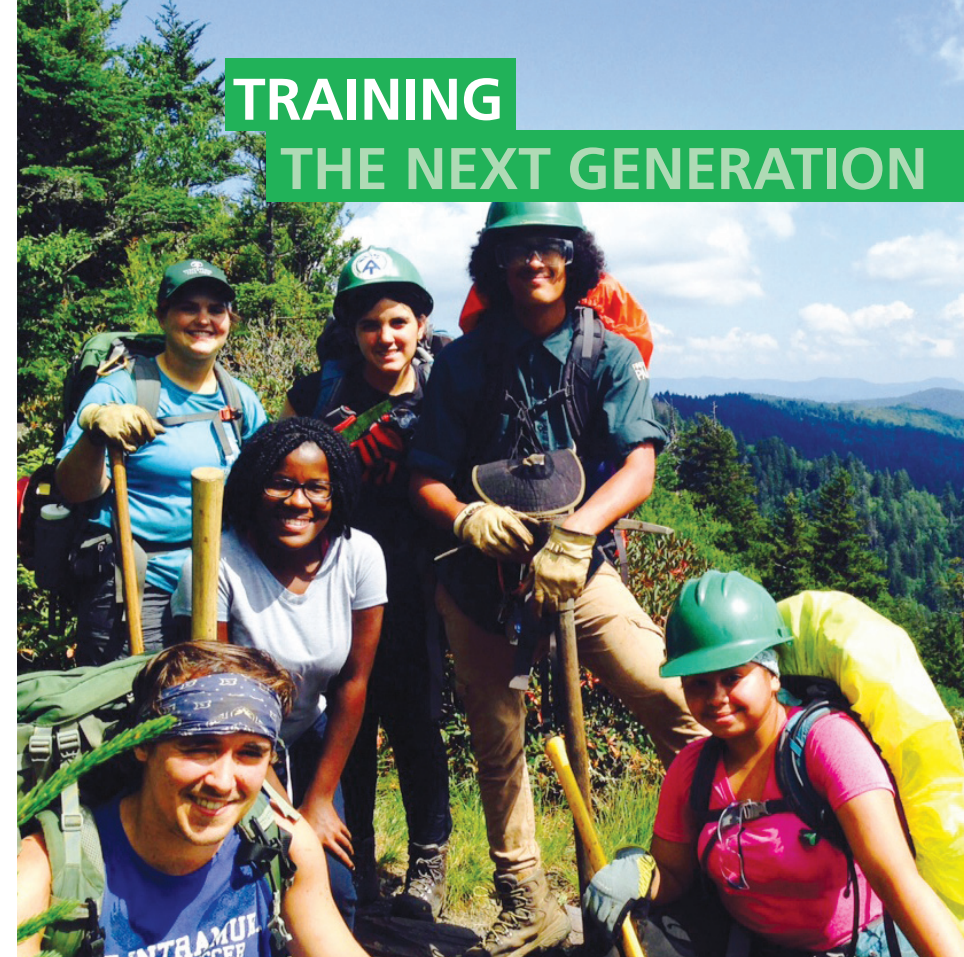
FORGING NEW CAREER PIPELINES

Jobs in conservation aren't readily apparent to youth in the urban core. Many have never visited a national park or national wildlife refuge, nor are they likely to run into people who work in the conservation field. Thus the first step to getting youth into conservation-related work is to introduce them to such work in their own communities. Helping steer youth toward conservation careers entails

more than simply taking them outdoors. There are many challenges along the way, including:

- Providing year-round jobs in conservation;
- Providing resume-building experiences;
- Addressing the STEM education gap and better preparing youth for environmental science;
- Helping overcome the stigma in low-moderate income communities of color that conservation work is a "step backward"; and
- Creating work environments where youth are paired with people of similar background and experiences.

Through work experiences, job readiness programs, and partnerships with federal agencies, universities, and businesses, Groundwork provides youth an authentic career pathway that meets their needs and helps pave the way for a more diverse conservation future.



TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION

In the summer of 2016, Groundwork USA partnered with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy to hire and train the inaugural Conservation Leadership Corps (CLC), a group of motivated young people interested in conservation-based careers, but lacking the experience needed to work in the field. Over the course of 10 weeks in the backwoods and in classrooms, CLC members learned new job skills and gained hands-on experience in trail building and maintenance, natural resource management, field ecology research, and visitor education—the kinds of skills and experience needed to work with conservation organizations.

To learn more about conservation career opportunities, CLC members met with a wide variety of conservation professionals and US Forest Service and National Park Service personnel, including Cassius Cash, superintendent of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

GROUNDWORK USA NATIONAL YOUTH SUMMIT

In October 2015, with funding support From the National Park Service, Groundwork USA hosted its National Youth Summit in Estes Park, Colorado. 126 people from 23 different cities attended, including 25 Groundwork Youth Ambassadors and 20 Youth Leaders. Over the course of four days, the youth and youth leaders participated in interactive workshops on career and leadership development, equity issues, and youth programming with representatives from the National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Environmental Protection Agency, and other federal agencies, and hiked the trails of Rocky Mountain National Park.

Now in its 9th year, this annual event is an opportunity for Groundwork youth to connect with federal agency professionals to discuss emerging trends in conservation and how conservation-related youth programs can better serve youth of color and of low-moderate income. The Groundwork Youth Summit provides participants an opportunity to discuss career opportunities, share experiences and best practices, learn better ways of involving communities in environmental restoration, and connect with their peers from across the Groundwork network and to the wider National Park System beyond their communities.



Program/Project Funding
2015 National Youth
Summit – \$30,000 (NPS)

GROUNDWORK YOUTH CAREER PIPELINE BY THE NUMBERS

253

Groundwork Youth employed
in NPS-funded programs*

836

Weeks of environmental and
green job training offered

Youth participating in
leadership/skills training

Total businesses involved

1,045

357

*This figure is for October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016

GroundCorp, the social venture of Groundwork Rhode Island, is a landscape design-build and maintenance service. It provides valuable, paid, hands-on experience to graduates of Groundwork Rhode Island's job training program as they search for permanent environmental work. Under the management of the Director of Field Operations, GroundCorp engages in both small-scale residential and larger-scale community landscape design and installation projects. Projects demonstrate urban landscape restoration and stormwater management best practices, contributing to the health and vitality of Providence and nearby cities' people and places.

GROUNDWORK RHODE ISLAND GROUND CORP



BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Groundwork Trusts share the core value that everyone deserves a healthy community. By creating and promoting healthy infrastructure — high quality parks and green space, off-street trails, community gardens, sidewalks, bike lanes, and trees — in long-disinvested neighborhoods, Groundwork Trusts aim to encourage active living and healthy eating, improve quality of life,

and achieve better health outcomes for all community residents, regardless of income, race, ethnicity, age, gender, or ZIP code. Throughout our network, youth are actively involved in helping make their communities healthier places to live.

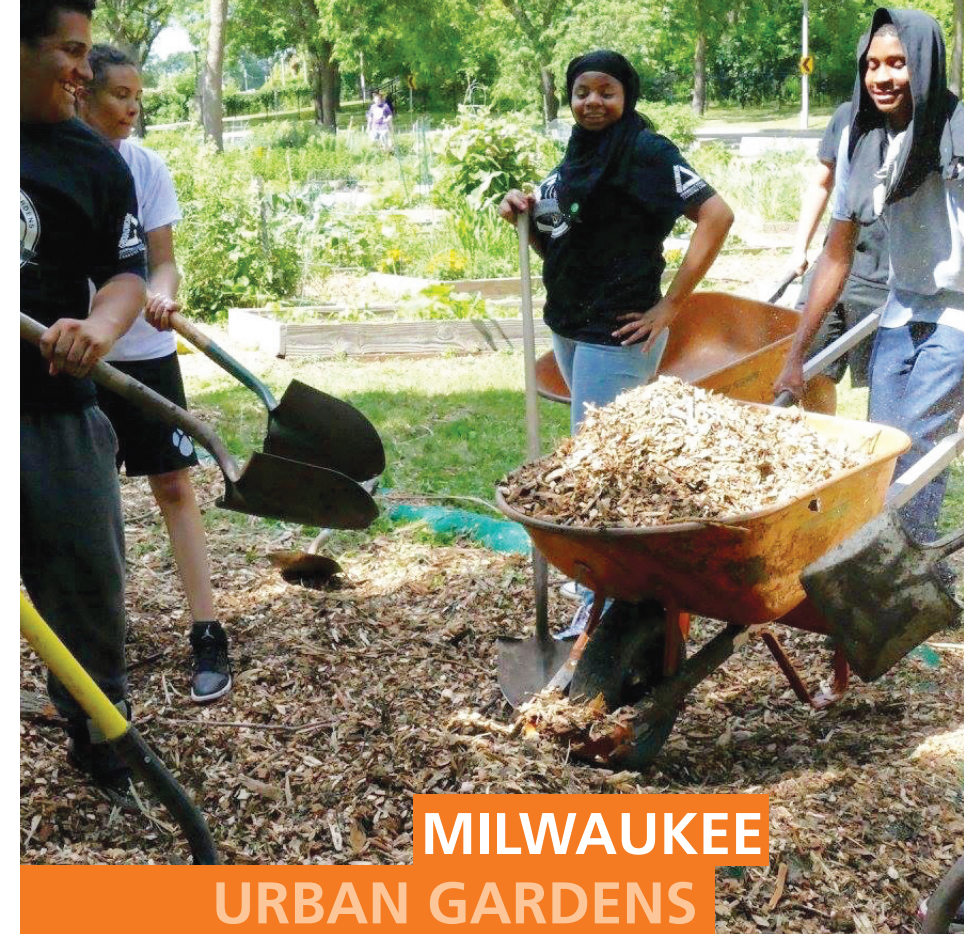
GROUNDWORK AT WORK: ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

6,228/
1,099

Community garden beds
provided/maintained

Families benefitting from
fresh food from gardens

7,017



MILWAUKEE URBAN GARDENS



ADVANCING ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION



PROMOTING URBAN AGRICULTURE AND HEALTHY FOOD



Located throughout some of Milwaukee's poorest and most disinvested neighborhoods are over 90 urban gardens organized and run by residents of all ages, races, and ethnic backgrounds. Through the Milwaukee Urban Gardens (MUG) program of Groundwork Milwaukee, residents have transformed empty lots into community gardens, pocket parks, art installations, orchards, outdoor classroom and meeting spaces, memorials to victims of neighborhood gun violence, and much more.

MUG gardens also provide myriad youth development opportunities. Each growing season, Groundwork Milwaukee's Green Team helps build rainwater harvesting structures in MUG gardens and assists with garden management. Through its Young Farmers program, community farmers mentor local high school students on the agricultural, community, and fiscal skills it takes to run a successful urban farm. The program also offers elementary and middle-school aged youth opportunities to learn gardening skills by planting, maintaining and harvesting over a dozen community garden vegetable beds in Milwaukee's Metcalfe Park neighborhood.

GROWING THE RICHMOND GREENWAY

Groundwork Richmond, California has adopted three sites along the Richmond Greenway, a 3.5-mile bike and pedestrian trail through the city that Groundwork is helping to restore. Future additions to both sites include tree plantings and further development of community-planned amenities. The Greenway sites are maintained by Groundwork Richmond's Green Team, offering community youth service-learning opportunities and a chance to gain hands-on job training skills in landscape architecture, horticulture, and mural and metal arts.

ENGAGING YOUTH IN EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

Groundwork Trusts work with their communities to develop plans for local government, developers, and residents to clean up vacant and/or contaminated spaces and bring them back to productive use, creating opportunities for the whole community. Across the country, Groundwork is pioneering a youth-led community engagement model for collecting valuable resident input on how cleanup and reuse of neighborhood sites could benefit the community most.

Some of the outcomes for youth include:

- ➔ Learning about brownfields, environmental justice, and how to engage neighbors and community members;
- ➔ Conducting feedback conversations in their communities, then sorting and analyzing the information, data, and images they collect; and
- ➔ Developing visual presentation and public speaking skills.

ENGAGING COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN THE PUTNAM RAIL TRAIL PROJECT



ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY AROUND WATERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT

Groundwork Bridgeport and its Green Team assisted Civic Moxie in the launch of Bridgeport, Connecticut's plan to revitalize the city's waterfront. At one visioning session, community members shared their ideas for the waterfront through a "Fishing for an Idea" activity created by Groundwork Bridgeport Green Team members.



DESIGNING AND BUILDING

NEIGHBORHOOD GREEN SPACE

Groundwork RVA (Richmond, VA) Green Team members from Armstrong High School worked with Storefront for Community Design's Ryan Rinn and landscape architect Sarah Shirley to design a pocket park on Richmond's North 25th Street. After meeting with the community to solicit input, the team presented three design concepts at a community-wide meeting, where Richmond's mayor and a district council member provided feedback on the designs. The team spent the fall of 2015 working with the property owner and interviewing community members about their use of the site, before finalizing their North 25th Street Pocket Park plan.

The Putnam Rail Trail project is a rail-to-trail project being led by Groundwork Hudson Valley. Once complete, the paved, lighted pedestrian and bike trail will connect the downtown Yonkers, New York waterfront area to the Bronx, providing safe and easy access to the subway into New York City. Working with the City of Yonkers, Groundwork Hudson Valley facilitated local community participation in the project by turning to its Green Team, made up of high-school aged Yonkers youth from diverse backgrounds. The youth helped spread the word about the planning process to neighbors and community members, some of whom did not speak English as their first language, gathering community input and sharing their own unique insights with residents living along the proposed trail. The youth also led community visioning sessions. Supported by a US Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Area-Wide Planning grant, the youth have gone on to work with the US Fish & Wildlife Service to create mini-wildlife refuges along the trail corridor.

At the 2016 New Partners for Smart Growth Conference in Portland, Oregon, Green Team member Samantha Robinson presented on the rail trail project. Having met with Yonkers residents in their homes and during community events, Samantha saw first-hand how the input she and her peers helped gather was incorporated into design alternatives for the rail trail. Before their involvement with the visioning and planning process, many Green Team youth could not have imagined the abandoned railway line becoming something beautiful again. Now they see a different future for this space and for the community, a future they have helped shape.



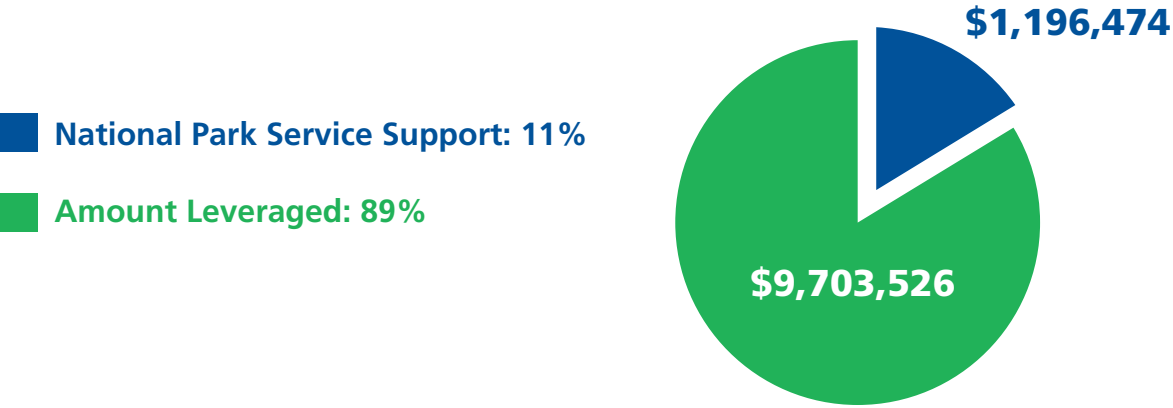
CONCLUSION

Groundwork USA has achieved significant progress in our youth programming because we follow an innovative model in conservation:

- ➡ Rather than waiting for youth to apply for conservation jobs, we go to work in urban neighborhoods, parks, and schools to familiarize our youth with conservation efforts and create opportunities for them to learn first-hand about careers in the field.
- ➡ We don't take a "one and done" approach; we work with youth throughout the year and over many years, not just during a single summer.
- ➡ We work in the youth's neighborhoods, so their entire community network can see and value the work they are doing.
- ➡ We combine work at home with work on public lands—in our national parks, national forests, and national wildlife refuges—so our youth can see how the work they perform in their local communities connects to broader conservation efforts.
- ➡ Groundwork youth aren't just tourists. They perform real sweat equity work on public lands, developing deep connections and a lasting sense of stewardship over the parks and refuges they help improve.
- ➡ We provide significant ongoing programs to strengthen our youth's understanding of math and science and integrate STEM enrichment in all we do.
- ➡ And we engage youth in real restoration work, not just trash pick-ups and "one-offs," to provide them with resume-building experiences and skills.

The success of Groundwork USA's youth programming would not be as possible if it weren't for the opportunities created in partnership with the National Park Service. Opportunities such as our corps programs allow the youth to visit national parks, usually for the first time, and to connect with the parks through "sweat equity." Groundwork USA's National Youth Summit, funded principally by NPS, affords youth the opportunity to see how their work is connected to broader conservation efforts and to meet peers from across the nation. Thanks to the generous support of the National Park Service, many Groundwork USA Trusts have seen marked increase in applications to their programs as more and more youth hear about these wonderful opportunities and want to be part of them. Groundwork USA has strengthened our team to put an even greater emphasis on our connection to the National Park Service, and we anticipate 2017 to be our greatest year yet!

STEWARDSHIP: How Groundwork Leveraged National Park Service Support in 2015



APPENDIX A: Videos and News Articles About Groundwork USA's Youth Programs

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

Mountains to Main Street 2016

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=E59BsUvuJ5c
- www.gtnpf.org/mountains-to-main-street-kicks-off-nps-centennial-year-in-grand-teton/

Urban Archeology Corps 2016

- Urban Archeology Corps Studies Richmond's Chimborazo
<http://ideastations.org/radio/news/urban-archeology-corps-studies-richmonds-chimborazo>
- Youth in Archeology: Our Past, Present, and Future
<https://nmscarcheologylab.wordpress.com/2016/09/19/youth-in-archeology-our-past-present-and-future/>

CONSERVING PUBLIC LANDS

Groundwork Voices from Yellowstone 2016

- Lucy Crespo, Groundwork Elizabeth:
www.tapinto.net/towns/elizabeth/categories/press-releases/articles/groundwork-voices-from-yellowstone-lucy-crespo
- Juana Lopez, Groundwork Lawrence:
<http://groundworkusa.org/voices-yellowstone-2016-juana-lopez-groundwork-lawrence/>
- Hillary Reyes, Groundwork Dallas:
<http://groundworkusa.org/voices-yellowstone-2016-hillary-reyes-groundwork-dallas/>
- Giggling in Yellowstone National Park
http://billingsgazette.com/entertainment/community/giggling-in-yellowstone-national-park/article_67050c66-816b-5164-b8fa-f8d4576ba8e2.html

Meet Groundwork Dallas Yellowstone and Grand Teton 2016 Corps Members

- Nohelia
<https://youtu.be/KAKwzRnxQJI?list=PLI1z-T22l8Zg7JHxSDKitmhS-Hl1BkBd1>
- Janrose
<https://youtu.be/sJlxaDSHOIE?list=PLI1z-T22l8Zjox-UODwMi7TPgca0wnoWK>
- David
<https://youtu.be/7-gXehuudnA?list=PLI1z-T22l8Zjox-UODwMi7TPgca0wnoWK>



RECLAIMING URBAN WATERS

- Groundwork Dallas Youth in Action
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vs70_FMqxHA
- Groundwork Cincinnati Green Team Work on Mill Creek Corridor Featured in Article on Collective Impact in Cincinnati:
www.soapboxmedia.com/features/081616-GCF-special-report-green-umbrella-collective-impact-3.aspx
- Groundwork Anacostia-DC Green Team Work on the Anacostia River
www.facebook.com/GWARDC/videos/10153922694377911/

CONSERVATION CAREERS PIPELINE

- Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge Readies Urban Youth to Lead Interpretive Programming
www.fws.gov/fieldnotes/regmap.cfm?arskey=36924
- Ashley Perez '16 Merges Passion for the Outdoors with Science
<http://news.purchase.edu/ashley-perez-16-merges-passion-for-the-outdoors-and-science/>
- USFWS Blog Post on Groundwork USA Youth Summit 2015
www.fws.gov/fieldnotes/regmap.cfm?arskey=36650
- How Urban Gardening Can Drive Workforce Development
www.policylink.org/focus-areas/equitable-economy/americas-tomorrow-newsletters/urban-gardens-growing-equitable-workforce
- Richmond Students Show Off Their Green Thumbs as Part of “Farmstrong” Program
<http://wric.com/2016/04/20/richmond-students-show-off-their-green-thumbs-as-part-of-farmstrong-program/>
- Our Future Leaders in Conservation: Ten Weeks with the Conservation Leadership Corps
www.appalachiantrail.org/home/community/blog/ATFootpath/2016/09/20/our-future-leaders-in-conservation-ten-weeks-with-the-conservation-leadership-corps
- Groundwork RVA Students Make the Cut on High Grass at Oak Grove Elementary
www.richmond.com/news/local/michael-paul-williams/article_8ff48aac-7f03-5ff5-bc58-b0403230fae7.html
- Groundwork Bridgeport Youth on Impact of Green Team Involvement:
www.facebook.com/groundworkbridgeport/videos/1095838270437714/
- Yonkers Becoming an Urban Wildlife Refuge
www.lohud.com/story/news/local/westchester/yonkers/2015/10/08/yonkers-urban-wildlife-refuge/73592530/

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- Youth Team Creates an Oasis in Jacksonville’s Food Desert
<http://jacksonville.com/current/town/2016-08-10/story/youth-team-creates-oasis-jacksonvilles-food-desert>
- Groundwork Richmond Green Team Helps Grow the Richmond Greenway
<https://youtu.be/DWZwbHdH0-w>
- Groundwork Lawrence Green Team Works to Works to Make Lawrence a Healthier, Greener Community
<https://youtu.be/f42d0K1cLIM>
- Groundwork Denver Green Team and Urban Farming
www.facebook.com/GroundworkDenver/videos/918707294818870/
- Groundwork Indy Youth Help Kick Off Indianapolis “Let’s Move! Outside Initiative”
<http://wishtv.com/2016/06/15/city-leaders-to-announce-major-youth-initiative-announcement/>

ENGAGING YOUTH IN EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Groundwork RVA Youth Transform Vacant Lot on 25th Street
<http://chpn.net/2016/03/31/students-from-armstrong-and-george-wythe-transform-vacant-lot-on-25th-street>



