

THE STUDENT
CONSERVATION
ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL
REPORT
2004

T H E R E ' S W O R K
T O B E D O N E

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



Do you remember what you were doing exactly 50 years ago? Well, I don't either. Few deeds truly pass the test of time.

But half a century ago, a Vassar College student had just completed her senior thesis in which she proposed a volunteer "student conservation corps" that would come to the aid of under-funded national parks. She soon began to share her vision, build partnerships, and earn the trust of park officials. She extolled the potential of young people, advocated personal stewardship, and promoted the virtues of teamwork.

Today, the hallmarks of Elizabeth Titus Putnam's original dream continue to guide the Student Conservation Association. They have enabled SCA to grow and sustain its position as a high-performance solution provider to federal, state and private land managers. To serve as a reliable source of experiential conservation training for those seeking to protect our natural world. And to be a vital contributor to a society in need of responsible leadership.

SCA also recognizes the obligations we have to our generous supporters and allies in the effort to preserve our natural and cultural resources. I'm pleased to report that in 2004, SCA successfully executed its mission while recording its 17th consecutive budget surplus. We also received a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, a leading independent charity evaluator.

The credit for these accomplishments is shared by many. It is both my privilege and good fortune to succeed past Chairman George Covington, whose direction and devotion will continue to influence this organization for many years to come. I'm grateful to the many other dedicated members of the SCA Board, as well as retiring directors Cindy Brookshire Fitch, Dr. William Forgey, Kathryn Fuller, Charles Katz, Jr., Paul McQuade, John Roberts, and Sue Sander. And, at the core of SCA, President Dale Penny and his extraordinary staff magnificently managed every challenge they faced, resulting in another productive and successful year.

I also want to thank you for your role in making these important efforts possible and for the trust you have placed in us. And finally, I want to acknowledge the thousands of young SCA members who stepped up during the past year on behalf of our wildlands and wildlife. No one should be surprised if in, say, another 50 years, people are writing about the incredible things they did in their younger days that made our planet a better place.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. Coleman".

William C. Coleman



P R E S I D E N T ' S L E T T E R



There's Work to be Done.

And what is our work? That is the ultimate question that the Student Conservation Association, and every not-for-profit organization, must answer. As we look back at the 2004 year, the temptation is to report on the miles of trail maintained, acres of wild lands restored, native species protected or even the number of hours volunteered by SCA's members. While all of those details are important facets of the SCA story, the full work of this organization is much greater than the individual parts.

The real work of SCA goes beyond statistics. It is more than the various projects completed by SCA volunteers, staff and agency partners. It is not only our work. It is truly the nation's work. Through the combined dedication of all of those allied with SCA, we are helping conserve the natural, historical and cultural heritage of this land and preparing a new generation of conservation citizens.

We are pleased to share some of the SCA story with you in this report. It is a story of the accomplishments of hundreds of land managers, thousands of SCA volunteer members and tens of thousands of supporters who provide critical financial support. As we turn to the future we pledge to continue our partnership with you to engage young men and women in programs which enable them to give back to the land, realize their personal potential and become tomorrow's conservation leaders.

Those of us on the staff and Board of Directors are constantly aware that we are tasked by all of our constituents to be good stewards of the investment you have entrusted with us. We thank you for your trust and hope you will see in this report that your investment has been well placed.

In this effort I appreciate the SCA Board of Directors who provide thoughtful counsel, support and oversight to ensure the continued health of the organization and assure the public of responsible management. And I particularly wish to thank the staff with whom I work on a daily basis for their integrity and commitment to SCA's mission.

All of us are grateful to all the volunteer members, agency partners, alumni and generous supporters for helping get the work of SCA done.

Dale M Penny
Dale Penny

MISSION STATEMENT

To build the next generation of conservation leaders and inspire lifelong stewardship of our environment and communities by engaging young people in hands-on service to the land.



Amid growing threats and shrinking funds, the need to sustain our habitats, watersheds and parks has never been clearer. Equally as important, we must sustain the long line of stewards who have been so vital to the day-to-day care of our natural resources.

That's why so many look to the Student Conservation Association. Or, more specifically, to Felicia Williams of Washington, DC. To Kristin Johns of Norwood, Pennsylvania and Jesse Swift of Corvallis, Oregon. These and other SCA volunteers see conservation as a calling – a way of life that improves our quality of life. And they recognize both the richness of the land and the fulfillment that comes from giving back to it.



Kristin Johns and crew on the Florida Scenic Trail



Felicia Williams restores the Potomac Heritage Trail

As they serve in critical capacities from coast to coast, SCA members hold more than tools in their hands. They hold the reigns of a legacy. And our hopes for the future.



Jesse Swift conducts wildlife survey in Sawtooth National Forest



PROTECTING OUR PLANET

“Rebuilding this bridge brought us together, but it’s our differences that made the experience richer and pushed my own mental boundaries.”

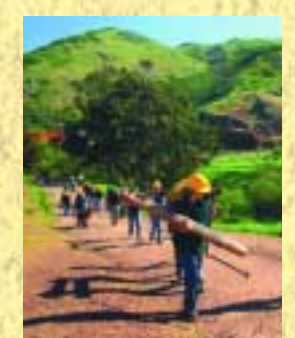


They didn’t issue a press release. They didn’t hold a telethon. They didn’t draft a petition. No, this was real, *hands-on* conservation.

At California’s Golden Gate National Recreation Area, an SCA trail crew comprised of Bay Area students – city kids who rarely stepped on unpaved earth – moved rocks, hauled timbers, and swung sledges in restoring a distressed hiking trail. It was gritty, back-breaking work rewarded nightly with a long trek back to their base camp.

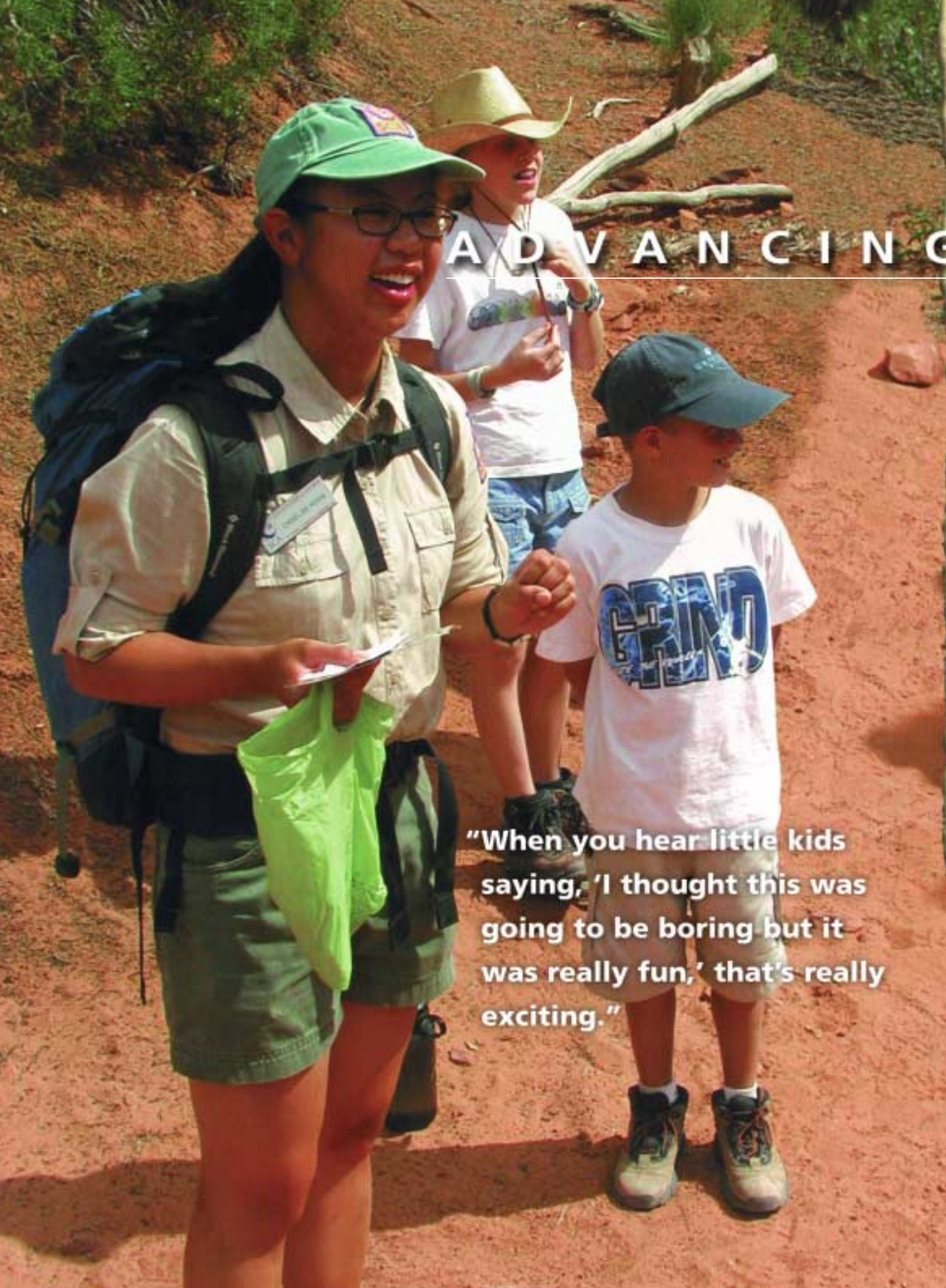
Yet for most, that was only the beginning of their journey. Inspired by their introduction to the backcountry, they continued their SCA service in Yosemite and Joshua Tree, and the Badlands and the Appalachian Trail. They learned how much the land needs their support, and discovered what like minds and able hands can accomplish. They also forged powerful connections with the wilderness and one another.

And through their ongoing actions, they’ve ensured that a valuable land ethic will span from one generation to the next.



Wendy Lo (left) says she gained a sense of purpose in the hills above San Francisco Bay. “I like feeling that I cared,” she states. “I put myself out into the world and did something that was helpful.”





ADVANCING THE LAND ETHIC



The idea that the land is a community for which we all share responsibility has long rung true for many. But nearly a half century ago, it was SCA Founder Elizabeth Titus Putnam who opened the door for America's young people to express this ethic and enact their personal values.

Today, thousands of volunteers like Emiline Kiyon, an education specialist at Arches National Park in Utah, practice a unique form of conservation that nourishes both the land and the individual. And through their endeavors, they encourage countless others to live in unison with nature and to help preserve it.

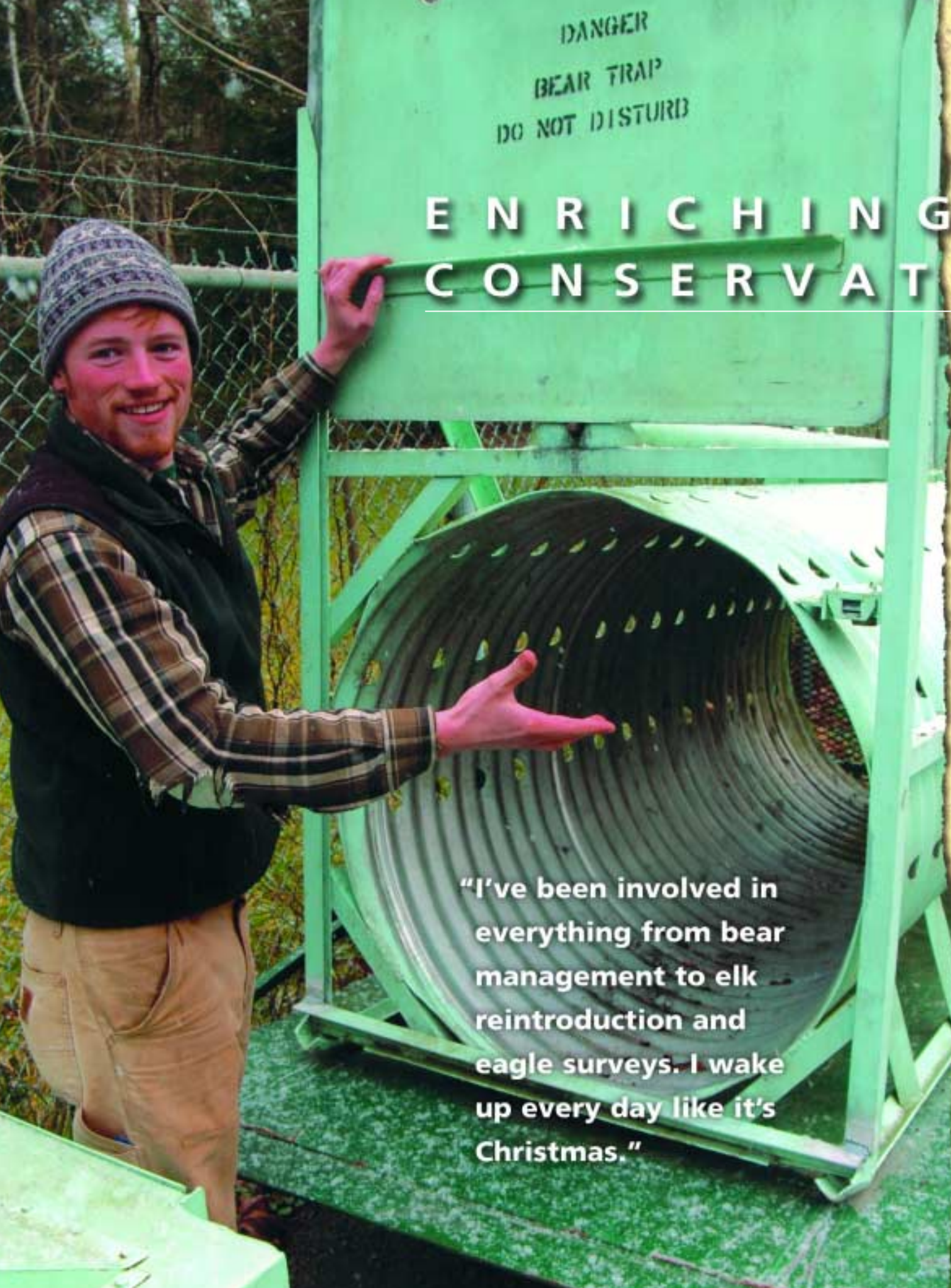
Learning on the land – from the land – provides unparalleled understanding, context and inspiration. Through SCA, a new generation of conservation leaders is discovering the land ethic, remolding it, and enhancing its relevance to their lives and today's world.



"When you hear little kids saying, 'I thought this was going to be boring but it was really fun,' that's really exciting."

Emmie helps visitors both young and old recognize the wonders of the Arches landscape. "The desert is not barren," she states. "It's teeming with life that has adapted over time to live in harmony with its environment." She pauses. "It's a lesson we can all learn from."





ENRICHING THE CONSERVATION COMMUNITY

"I've been involved in everything from bear management to elk reintroduction and eagle surveys. I wake up every day like it's Christmas."



The contributions of SCA members are certainly exemplified at Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Here, straddling the Volunteer State of Tennessee and neighboring North Carolina, you'll find more than 50 SCA interns in critical apprenticeships focused on bear monitoring, forestry management, visitor services and more. But that's only the beginning.

The Smokies' staff is loaded with SCA alumni in management and field positions. Moreover, dozens of other former SCA volunteers hold conservation posts elsewhere in the region. From policy-making to preservation, these selfless stewards are safeguarding southern Appalachia, and their influence is as tall as the mountains that surround them.

As this model is repeated in parks and vicinities across our nation, it not only benefits the environment but enriches the conservation community through the influx of new talent and passion... the engagement of diverse populations and perspectives... and the practice of enduring land-based values.



SCA ensures there will always be eager, capable hands to accept the shining torch of conservation and work in concert with others to see that each day dawns a little brighter.

"What we do isn't for us today," notes an SCA Smokies alumnus, "it's for the future."



Smokies' Chief of Resource Management and Science, Larry Hartmann (SCA Sawtooth NRA, 1974), says as much of the park service leadership approaches retirement, giving opportunities to today's SCA volunteers "is as good as it gets – to open the door for someone who may be there 30 years after you're gone."



FINANCIAL REPORT 2004

I am pleased to report that 2004 was another successful year financially for the Student Conservation Association.

SCA programs continued to grow, placing more young people with more partner sites than ever before. The organization ended the year with its 17th consecutive operating surplus. And our 2004 operating revenue of \$19.4 million was eight percent above the previous high, set just one year earlier.

Operating revenue increased by \$1.6 million above the prior year as SCA's long-time and new partners continued to turn to SCA to meet their critical conservation needs and provide opportunities for our nation's young people.

Through careful financial management and

increased efficiencies, the percentage of revenues dedicated to program activities was 87 percent in 2004. SCA's financial performance and fund raising efficiency remains among the highest-rated nonprofits as gauged by the American Institute of Philanthropy, and earned Charity Navigator's highest 4-star rating.

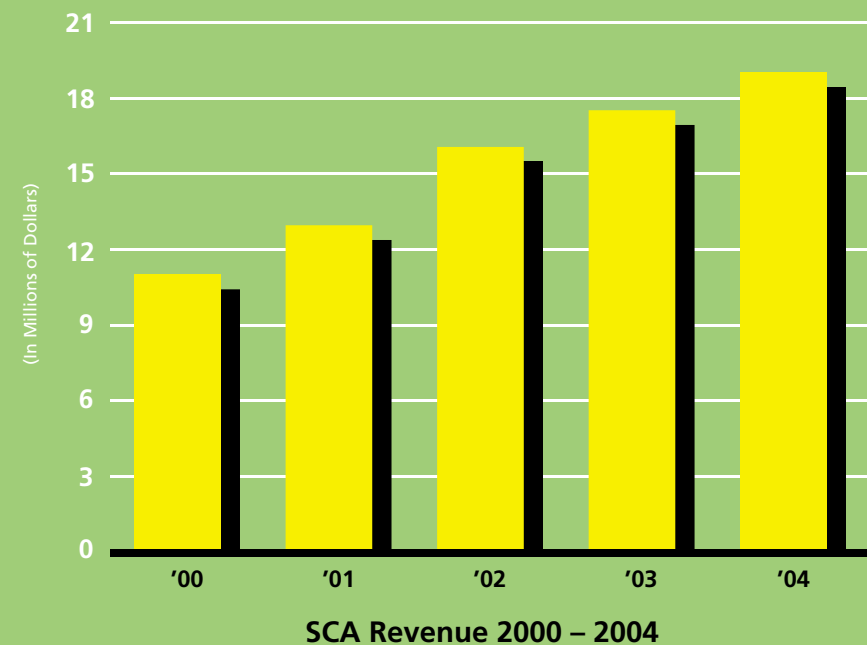
SCA's working capital needs are supported by a \$7 million line of credit provided by Key Bank. SCA values and appreciates this long-term relationship and Key Bank's continued support of the SCA mission.

To obtain a copy of the audited financial statements of the Student Conservation Association, Inc., please contact the Association.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Bodin
Chief Operating Officer and
Executive Vice President for Operations



Financial Results 2002-2004 (\$ Thousands)

	2002	2003	2004
SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
Program Income	\$11,714	\$15,495	\$14,614
Gifts and Grants	2,559	2,367	2,711
Individual Giving	1,501	1,853	1,942
Other Income	88	105	93
Total Unrestricted Operating Support and Revenue	15,862	17,798	19,560
Headquarter Facility Grants	750	0	0
Gifts Designated for Endowment (Note 1)	949	560	155
Temporarily Restricted Grants	-325	-132	4
Restricted Gifts	1,300	254	146
Total Support and Revenue	\$18,536	\$18,480	\$19,665
OPERATING EXPENSES			
Program Expenses	\$15,370	\$15,361	\$16,655
General and Administrative	1,305	1,311	1,509
Fund Raising	900	927	1,051
Total Operating Expenses	\$15,575	\$17,599	\$19,215
INCREASE / (DECREASE) IN NET ASSETS			
Unrestricted Funds:			
From Operations	\$ 287	\$ 199	\$ 145
Board Designated and Other (Note 1)	1,699	547	22
Total	1,986	746	167
Temporarily Restricted Funds	-325	-132	4
Restricted Funds	1,300	86	146
Total Increase / (Decrease)	\$ 2,961	\$ 700	\$ 517
BALANCE SHEET			
Total Assets	\$15,178	\$16,048	\$18,173
Total Liabilities	5,436	5,606	7,414
Net Assets	9,742	10,442	10,759
ENDOWMENT VALUE AT SEPTEMBER 30			
Board Designated Funds (Note 1)	\$ 2,562	\$ 3,109	\$ 3,131
Donor Restricted Funds	5,156	3,222	3,368
Total Endowment Value	\$ 5,698	\$ 6,331	\$ 6,499

Note 1: SCA's Board of Directors has designated all unrestricted bequest and capital campaign gifts to the endowment fund. Presented net of realized and unrealized gains/losses at September 30.

