



the GreenWay

SCA's Conservation Quarterly

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Students in discussion at NPS Academy session, Grand Teton National Park.

An All-American Story for All Americans

by Wanda Murphy, SCA '07-'09, '12

I often see people settle for good. I would rather strive for great.

That's what made me join SCA when I was 16 years old. I worked on a conservation crew over summer vacation in 2007. I didn't think I'd like it. I really couldn't see myself going out to pick up trash, plant a garden, or build a hiking trail. It would have been more fun hanging out with my friends. But I knew that wouldn't help me get to where I want to be.

So every morning, I got up early and headed off to Schenley Park. I worked hard but it felt good. I got more confident in myself. I made a lot of new friends. And I learned about nature and why it's important to protect the environment.

So I decided to stick with it. I worked with SCA in other city parks and even camped and built trails in Allegheny National Forest. A lot of kids couldn't handle being out in the woods or even just working in other neighborhoods, but one of my proudest accomplishments is that I finished every crew I was on. I also attended SCA conferences in Washington, D.C. and Memphis. Through these experiences I discovered that it's better to try than assume you can't, because if you put your mind to it, you can do anything.

I sure hope so.

In March, I attended NPS Academy at Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee. Another session was held the

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CONSERVATION BEGINS HERE
Student Conservation Association
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In Conservation, Youths' Actions Speak Loudest

A recent study purports that, based on four decades of youth surveys, Millennials are less inclined than Generation X or Baby Boomers to protect our environment.

I have a hard time buying that.

When comparing generations, we must note that 40 years ago, Earth Day was brand new and the idea of being an “environmentalist” was considered rather radical. Since then, views and practices have changed significantly. We no longer take for granted resources like clean air and water, and most Americans practice at least some degree of conservation. It's part of a modern lifestyle and young people often don't feel the need to report these actions—they just take them.

Ironically, as this new study broke, SCA was hosting a record number of college students in nationwide “alternative spring break” programs at Everglades and Joshua Tree National Parks and, in partnership with the National Park Service, we were also holding two sessions of NPS Academy, a groundbreaking workforce diversity initiative to prepare students of color for careers in the park service.

National service today is surging thanks to waves of young adults who seek only to only give back, and conservation consistently has been among their top priorities. With summer approaching, SCA is looking at yet another all-time high in applications.

I'm sure there is much to be learned from those 40 years of surveys but over the past 55 years, more than 65,000 young men and women have served with SCA and, as you'll see in these pages, their stories are also quite telling.

Millennials' actions speak for themselves.

See more on Millennial study, Page 7

An All-American Story *continued from page 1*

week before at Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. It's a program to prepare young people of color for careers in national parks, run by the National Park Service and SCA. College students from all over the country were there to learn about job opportunities, meet park service staff, and get to know the history of national parks, which are almost 100 years old.

I have to say, it's not my goal to be a park ranger. I'm not majoring in environmental studies or anything close. I'm studying accounting and finance at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. But I do value clean air and water, places where wild-life can roam free, and parks where I can find peace and quiet. And if I can help a park get the most out of its budget and use taxpayer dollars responsibly and efficiently, then I feel I'll be doing my part.

I want to contribute to the natural sanctuaries, historical landmarks, and cultural sites that, when you think about it, tell a uniquely all-American story. And I want to be sure that story includes all Americans.

Most people have stopped using the word “minorities” to describe Blacks, Hispanics and other ethnic groups, but we are in the minority when you look at who visits national parks. I believe NPS Academy is an opportunity for me as well as our country. It shows me that national parks are also striving for greatness through diversity, inclusivity, and tapping into the best people, regardless of color or any other differentiator.

I'm excited about interning in a national park this summer with SCA and hopefully getting a job with NPS. Don't tell anybody, but my trip to the Great Smoky Mountains was my first time in a national park. And it feels really good to know it won't be my last.

A version of this column was published in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.



Wanda Murphy as member of SCA Pittsburgh.

SCA Expanding Opportunities for Young Veterans

Young military veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan will find more employment opportunities and new ways to continue their service to their country as the result of new efforts by SCA. Following a successful pilot launch last year, SCA is working with federal authorities and private foundations to expand the size and impact of the Veterans Fire Corps, among other new initiatives.

SCA's Veterans Fire Corps uniquely assists young vets from various branches of the armed forces in the transition back to civilian life. Corps members complete vital fire and fuels management projects and, in the process, gain new skills, work experience, and field certifications—all of which enhance their career qualifications at a time of high joblessness among veterans.

An agreement between SCA and the US Forest Service will place up to 60 veterans at Prescott National Forest and Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in Arizona, host sites of last year's program, as well as at two new partner sites: nearby Kaibab National Forest and Black Hills National Forest in South Dakota and Wyoming.

Chris Stacy logged 9,000 miles as a lead vehicle convoy driver in Iraq before joining the Fire Corps in 2011. "The Veteran's Fire Corps relates to our military history and makes me feel



As more young veterans return home from overseas, SCA is expanding opportunities for vets to continue their service to their country.

comfortable," he states. "We all integrated really fast." Marshall Kulp, who previously worked at an Army refueling station in Iraq, says it was great working with veterans who shared similar experiences and understandings. "The enemy now," he notes, "is fire."

As the U.S. prepares to bring more servicemen and women home from Afghanistan, SCA and the Forest Service are exploring new ways to support veterans who wish to extend their service to the nation once they are out of uniform.

Triple Your Gift *today* through SCA's

MillionDollar Challenge

America's national parks need 1,200 more SCA volunteers this season!

Help us raise \$250,000 by May 31st so we can make this happen.

Your contribution of...

\$35 = \$140

\$100 = \$400

\$250 = \$1,000

of conservation service!

Visit thesca.org/challenge





As SCA volunteers cleared invasive plants from Joshua Tree NP, those in the Everglades found a different type of intruder: a young Burmese Python.

Students Give Parks a (Spring) Break

The Grand Tetons and the Mojave Desert are not your typical Spring Break destinations. Then again, these are not your typical students.

“None of us really wants to go back to school,” states Auburn University grad student Jonathan Shafer.

SCA placed nearly 200 students in Alternative Spring Break programs in March, including Jonathan, who spent a week at Joshua Tree National Park with 29 others pulling weeds “as big as Saint Bernards” and reforesting a burned-out hillside.

“During one particularly miserable dig,” Jonathan recalls, “two of us took turns hewing our way through what felt like solid rock. After half an hour’s work, we managed to dig a hole 18 inches deep, just big enough to settle a new Joshua Tree. As a group, we repeated this task 105 times over several acres of the burn site.”

Taylor Holan, a freshman at John Carroll University in Ohio, traveled to the Everglades to join another SCA crew in removing noxious Brazilian pepper plants from the park’s infamous Hole-in-the Donut. She says she wanted to leave her mark on both the Everglades and her peers. “I’m well aware of the growing disconnect between my generation and the environment,” Taylor states. “We are connected technologically to everything, but I feel that nature gets lost among all those gigabytes floating around. “This is a totally different and powerful experience. It affects you like nothing else.”

The tuition-free programs in California and Florida were made possible through the generosity of American Eagle Outfitters, sponsor of SCA’s Alternative Spring Breaks for the fifth consecutive year.

Elsewhere, Timarko Mitchell, a senior at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, planted the seeds of a career at NPS Academy, a workforce diversity initiative presented by the National Park Service and SCA (see Page 1). At Grand Teton National Park, Timarko and dozens of other young people of color learned about a wide array of professional park service opportunities in advance of SCA summer internships.

“Landmarks such as the Lincoln Memorial and the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site not only reflect milestones in black history, but in our nation’s history as well. In many ways, they represent the soul of America,” Timarko wrote in an op-ed published in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. “I recently changed my major to Parks and Community Recreation and look forward to helping other people—young and old, of all colors and cultures—celebrate our diverse national heritage.”

Although where they served and what they did varied greatly, the SCA spring breakers agree their experiences were profound. In the words of Jonathan Shafer, “We return home with a new respect for natural spaces, our impact on them, and the importance of maintaining them for future generations.”

See member videos and read their blogs at followme.thesca.org.

Join SCA for Earth Day

This Earth Day, you can step up for nature by stepping into a new pair of jeans.

American Eagle Outfitters is giving one dollar to SCA for every pair of jeans purchased between April 20th and 22nd. The 'Jeans for Trees' campaign projects to raise up to \$25,000 to support SCA volunteers in tree planting projects across the U.S.

"Earth Day is a day of participation, conservation, and celebration, and 'Jeans for Trees' allows those with a passion for the outdoors to combine all three activities for the good of our planet," states American Eagle Outfitters Foundation Director Marcie Eberhart. "We're excited to expand our partnership with SCA in a way that will benefit people and communities for years to come."

American Eagle is a Presenting Sponsor of SCA Earth Day projects nationwide. More than 1,000 people will clean beaches, restore parks, and remove invasive species in ten SCA signature projects, ranging from a big beach clean-up with Washington CoastSavers in Seattle to a tree planting project at Kenilworth Park Aquatic Gardens in Washington, D.C. The effort will follow American Eagle's sponsorship of SCA's Alternative Spring Break at Everglades and Joshua Tree National Parks. Since 2005, American Eagle has generously provided more than \$1.5 million in direct financial aid and in-kind support, while also generating awareness through a social network of more than six million followers, in-store signage, and a 40-story LED billboard atop AEO's signature store in New York's Times Square.



SCA Earth Day projects will be held on April 14th at the Audubon Center in Manchester, NH and Washington Park Arboretum in Seattle, and on April 21st in Chicago at Humbolt Park, in Detroit at the Belle Isle Conservancy, at Houston's Sheldon Lake State Park, in Philadelphia at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, in Pittsburgh's Riverview Park, at Dimond Park in Oakland, CA, at Pacific Beach State Park in Seattle, and at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens National Park in Washington, D.C. In many cases, members of the public may join in the fun.

To register, visit thesca.org/events.



Join SCA and celebrate
EarthDay2012

Presented by



SCA Alumna Gives, Then Gets

Tai Schroeder admits she was “kind of terrified” on her SCA crew in the Idaho backcountry. Her discomfort had nothing to do with the strange surroundings or total isolation...it was her crew mates. “Everyone will tell you, that first week when you don’t know anybody else, you just think to yourself ‘I want to go home,’” Tai notes.

She was barely 16. Her family and friends in Washington, D.C. seemed a world away. “But on my fourth or fifth night, everyone else was asleep and I was in my tent reading, when suddenly all these wolves started howling! And it made me feel so secure. I felt a connection with them! I’d never been so close to nature!”

That was two summers ago. Today, Tai is a veteran of five SCA programs and currently interns in SCA’s national office. “When I was a sophomore, an SCA recruiter came to my school and talked about doing trail work and getting dirty all the time. All these girls in my class were looking at their nails and going ‘Eww!’” she recalls. “But I was on the edge of my seat! And even now, I’m enjoying my behind-the-scenes look at how a nonprofit works.”

Tai credits SCA with giving her the confidence to pursue broader interests and seek new experiences through service. She was recently named one of Washington’s Top Two Teen Volunteers, and will compete in May with more than 100 students for one of



Tai Schroeder traveled to southern Idaho on her first SCA crew.

ten national Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. “We all got free trips to DC!” she laughs. “But I’m very happy, very honored. This is the first award I’ve ever won.”

Perhaps fittingly, one of her favorite roles as an office intern is counseling new members on what to expect on an SCA crew. “They come in and it’s like: ‘this huge excursion, a bunch of people I’ve never met, I can’t escape!’ I like calming the incoming students.”

The wisdom of the wolf endures.



NH Congressman Charlie Bass and Volunteer NH State AmeriCorps Executive Director Gretchen Berger-Wabuti (front, second and third from left, respectively) recently visited SCA staff and members at the SCA National Conservation Center in Charlestown, NH. Their meeting, during which SCA urged Bass to support national service programs, coincided with National AmeriCorps Week.

Direct Your IRA to SCA



Keep young people on the conservation trail for years to come by naming SCA a beneficiary of your traditional IRA or a workplace retirement plan such as your 403(b) or 401(k). Simply complete the beneficiary designation form provided by your plan administrator. You will need SCA’s federal tax ID number (91-0880684) to complete the form.

Retirement plan assets transferred to SCA after your lifetime will pass completely tax-free, ensuring that every penny of your hard-earned money will continue to work hard for conservation.

Please let us know if you name SCA as a beneficiary, so that we can welcome you into the Liz Putnam Legacy Society. For further information, or to notify us of your plans, please contact Hugh Montgomery, SCA’s Director of Gift Planning at 603.504.3241 or hmontgomery@thesca.org.



Visit Your National Parks... for Free!

America celebrates National Park Week April 21-29, giving you the chance to explore nearly 400 national parks for free as all admission fees are waived for the entire week.

National parks, preserves, seashores, monuments, memorials, battlefields, historic sites, and scenic trails comprise some 84 million acres of the world's most spectacular scenery, notable landmarks and cultural treasures.

In addition, the National Park Service was SCA's first federal partner and remains our largest partner today. More than 1,200 SCA members will pitch in to protect national parks this year—so keep an eye out for them and be sure to say “hello!”

Are Millennials Really Green?

Young people and nonprofits responded with a collective “Oh, really?” recently when reports surfaced indicating today's generation of young people doesn't feel the same imperative to act on behalf of the environment as previous generations. News accounts referred to a “particularly steep decline” in Millennials' stewardship, citing a study in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

The sheer size of the Millennial Generation—some 70 million strong—guarantees it will indelibly impact the future of conservation. And while this study indicates there's still a good deal of work to be done in helping Millennials develop a strong conservation ethic, other research shows that Millennials are extremely active in community stewardship and that they rank helping others as one of their primary life goals. The record number of applications in to SCA in each of the past several years and the sustained growth of our local conservation

corps, with Millennials as leaders, further underscores the appeal, importance, and relevance of SCA's mission.

SCA is working with government resource managers, corporations and foundations, and colleges and universities across the nation to engage more young adults in conservation service and promote stewardship and sustainability. We are also incorporating some of this generation's core values by using technology and social media, and advancing sustainability by developing new SCA pathways to green careers.

In addition to the environment, young people today are focused on finding employment, retiring student loans, and many other factors, and their outlook is refreshingly positive. A recent report from the Pew Research Center calls Millennials “confident, connected and open to change.” By offering service and career opportunities in conservation, SCA is building a better future for our members and our world.

Take Stock of What is Important. *Then Give Stock to Protect it.*

There are many ways to donate appreciated securities to help protect our treasured lands and build new generations of conservation leaders. From a tax standpoint, stock is often considered the smartest asset to give.

An outright gift of stock or mutual fund shares that you have held long term will provide you with an immediate income tax deduction for the full fair market value and you will completely avoid capital gains tax on the appreciation in value.

There are also two ways to donate securities that generate substantial income tax and capital gains tax savings as well as **income for life**. These plans can be useful if you want the security of a fixed dollar amount each year or if you are looking for a **tax-free** way to diversify a portfolio too heavily concentrated in one company.

For further information, contact Hugh Montgomery, SCA's Director of Gift Planning, at (603) 504-3241 or hmontgomery@thesca.org.





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The American Institute of Philanthropy and Charity Navigator rank SCA among America's top conservation charities for fund-raising efficiency.

SCA is a nationwide conservation force of college and high school volunteers who protect and restore America's parks, forests, and other public lands. SCA's active, hands-on approach to conservation has helped to develop a new generation of conservation leaders, inspire lifelong stewardship, and save our planet.

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I SNOW

Photo Contest Winner!

Tough sledding? Not for Chad Slater of Yardley, PA, who managed to capture this fantastic image as well as the top prize in SCA's *I Heart Snow* Photo Contest. That's more snow than a lot of people saw all winter. Thanks to all who entered, and see the best photos at contest.thesca.org/photos.