



New Mexico Youth Conservation Corps Commission 2020 Annual Report

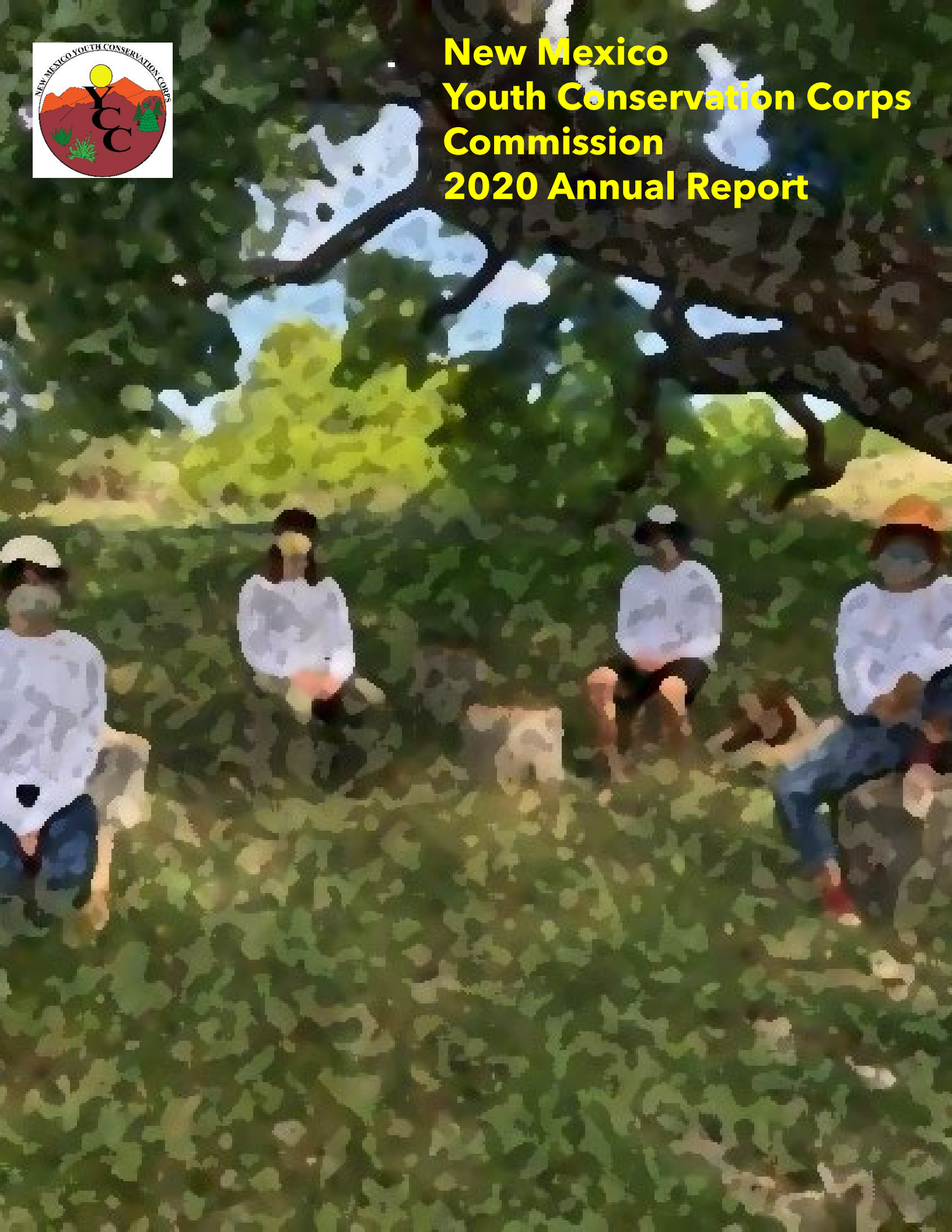


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Appendix A: Corps Member Survey Results

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Appendix C: Website Update Examples

Cover: Masked Santa Fe Botanical YCC corps members pose for a group photo





A message from YCCC Chair, Mel Loucks

December 7, 2020

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham

YCC Commission:

Mel Loucks, Chair

Andrew Frederick, Vice-Chair

Energy, Minerals & Nat Res

Amanda Getchell Stevenson

Alicia Littlebear

Anthony Marquez

Marlene Yanez

Zach Chavez

Public Education Department

Cassie Ruiz

Children, Youth & Families Dept

Dana Vackar-Strang

State Land Office

YCC Staff:

Sarah Wood, Executive Director

Kristine Sanchez,

Coordinator/Administrator

To: The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor and
Members of the New Mexico House and Senate

It is with great honor that I share our 2020 Annual Report. The Youth Conservation Corps is one of the best programs the state offers its citizens. Gross receipt taxes collected from businesses go back into New Mexico communities to fund improvement projects that hire and train youth ages 14 to 25 and encourage their further academic and vocational education.

Participation in a YCC program has the potential to change a youth's life before life can change them. Each project's success is grounded in cooperation between the grantee and members of the surrounding community. Local business owners, educators, elected officials and local government agencies contribute training and resources for projects. Each grantee decides what improvements are needed, what can be achieved with youth and how to do it.

Training is a core principle of the YCC program, and a broad variety is encouraged to build youths' work ethics, motivation, and self-esteem. Many corps members go on to permanent employment in their communities after working in the YCC program.

In 2020, grantees faced the challenge of re-structuring their projects to ensure the safety of crews and staff. Some dropped out. However, due to the support and guidance of the Governor and Legislature, the work of the YCC staff, and the incredible commitment of the grantees, the Commission is proud to report twenty-seven projects were successfully implemented. These projects hired 438 youth in 17 counties. The Commission will be reviewing proposals for 2021 in January.

On behalf of the YCC Commission and staff, I pledge our continued commitment to the Youth Conservation Corps and thank you for your support. YCC is a life-enhancing experience for our youth and provides lasting benefits to our communities and natural resources.

Mel Loucks, Chair
Youth Conservation Corps Commission



THE YCC PROGRAM

The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) was established in 1992 to provide a process to employ youth ages 14 - 25 in public projects that conserve New Mexico's natural resources and provide community benefits of lasting value. YCC grants are open to government agencies, tribal governments and 501c non-profits. It is administratively attached to the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), and pays an annual fee to that Department for administrative, budgetary and IT services. The YCC is statutorily authorized by 9-5B-1-10 NMSA 1978.

Each year, the Commission releases an RFP for project proposals. Eligible projects may occur on public, non-profit or tribal lands with reasonable public access and last no longer than six months. Activities include conservation and preservation projects, facility improvements, or emergency assistance and preparedness.

The Commission is funded by gross receipts tax money. Historical tribal structures are restored, municipal parks receive much needed improvements, trails are constructed or improved, open spaces and forest lands are improved, acequias are mapped, public murals and sculptures are installed, and corps members gain a sense of self-worth as well as career training.

Corps members hired by grantees are between 14 – 25 years old and New Mexico citizens. Seventy percent of each grant goes to wages, and grantees contribute in-kind. Skills learned include construction, preservation, trail-building, tool safety, decision-making, 1st Aid / CPR, Mental Health First Aid, wildfire certifications, resumé & interview skills, fiscal responsibility and beekeeping. Corps members who have served for 32 to 48 months in the YCC are entitled to an additional cash reimbursement or an educational voucher for expenses at a New Mexico college or vocational school.

Governor Lujan Grisham appointed five new commissioners in late 2019 and early 2020. They are Alicia Littlebear from Tamaya (Santa Ana Pueblo), Amanda Getchell Stevenson, a marketing professional from Rio Rancho, Mel Loucks, a professor at New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell, Anthony Marquez a retired New Mexico State Parks superintendent in Chama, and Marlene Yanez, director of community education at La Semilla Food Center in Anthony. There are four state employee designees.

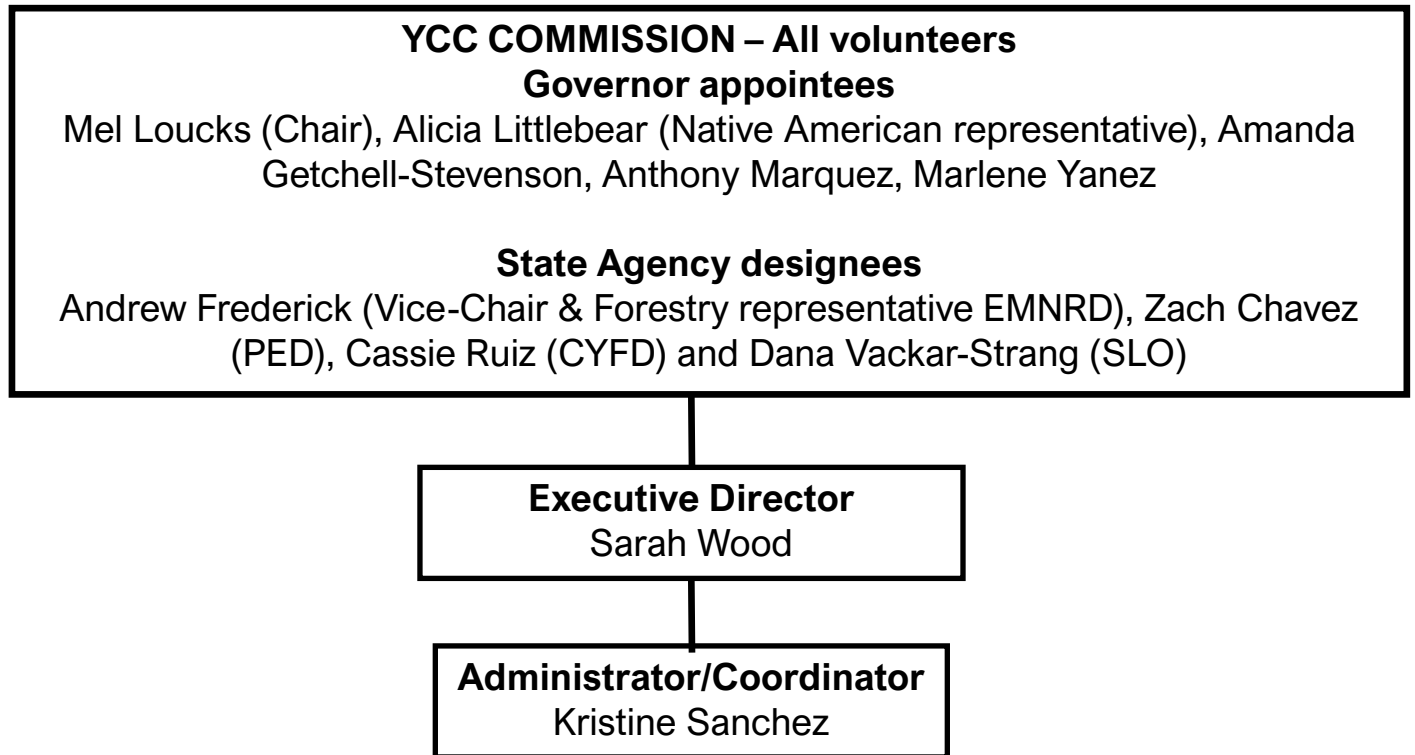
In the 2020 legislative session, the Outdoor Equity Fund was transferred to the Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD) of the Economic Development Department. YCC staff continue to work with ORD to provide youth and communities with opportunities.

This program gave me something to look forward to every day.— YCC Corps Member, RFK Charter School, Albuquerque



YCC Beekeeper at RFK

ORGANIZATION, MISSION & VALUES



Mission:

Promote the education, success and well-being of the youth in our communities and provide benefits of lasting value through the conservation and enhancement of New Mexico's natural, cultural and recreational resources.

Values:

YCC strives for

- Meaningful, community-based employment for young New Mexicans.
- An educated, skilled and environmentally aware young work force.
- Improvements to natural, cultural, recreational and community facilities and resources.
- Tax dollars returned to communities.

PROJECTS

SUMMARY

The Commission increased the maximum funding request per project to \$130,000 in 2020 (compared to a cap of \$100,000 in 2019). YCC received thirty-six proposals, and 32 were funded. The other four were found to be non-responsive. The selected awards totaled \$3.1 million with a projected 620 youth to be hired across 19 counties in New Mexico. Due to COVID19, 27 projects were implemented. Awards for these projects total \$2.87 million, and 438 youth were hired.

COVID 19 Impacts. In March of 2020, four projects already underway were stopped in response to the shutdown. On April 8, 2020, YCC crews were determined to be essential workers by the Department of Health. YCC developed and distributed "best practices" that laid out health and hygiene standards that conformed to COVID19 constraints and included specific conditions crews typically encounter. Crews were required to follow these practices and any other that may be required by the nature of their project.

YCC worked with grantees to re-configure budgets that needed to accommodate PPE & disinfectants purchases, as well as increased transportation costs. Trainings that involved travel and classrooms were cancelled. Most projects were able to adapt by splitting up corps members into crews of five and increasing the length of the project to complete the project.

Due to COVID19 difficulties, five projects turned down their grant award, leaving 27 projects that will be completed. Awards for these projects total \$2.87 million with about 430 youth hired.



Harwood Art Center YCC crew rolling with the health orders while constructing a functional bench sculpture at Mesa Verde Park in Albuquerque.

As of this report's date in December 2020, several YCC projects are still in progress. All service agreements and projects will end on or before December 31, 2020. A revised edition of this report will be released in early March 2021 to include complete data.

PROJECTS OVERVIEW

LIST of PROJECTS

Applicant	Project	Type of Organization	County	Funded Request	Expended	InKind	In Kind Contributed	Crew Member
Aldo Leopold Charter School	Fall	Charter School	Grant	\$68,933.37	\$5,401.84	\$12,161.25	\$12,953.88	38
Aldo Leopold Charter School	Spring	Charter School	Grant	\$103,951.98	\$98,550.13	\$13,361.25	\$19,050.32	39
Capacity Builders, Inc.	Farm Road Shiprock	Non-profit	San Juan	\$99,956.57	\$35,920.57	\$20,659.29	\$3,912.68	14
Capacity Builders, Inc.	Nizhoni Park	Non-profit	San Juan	\$105,068.09	\$0.00	\$21,561.29	\$0.00	14
Capacity Builders, Inc.	Tse Daa Kaan	Non-profit	San Juan	\$105,068.09	\$82,623.74	\$21,561.29	\$18,242.39	14
City of Gallup		Municipality	McKinley	\$114,915.59	\$24,832.90	\$42,449.45	\$6,106.14	11
City of Las Cruces - Mountain of Opportunity		Municipality	Dona Ana	\$129,683.45	\$41,526.78	\$13,359.86	\$6,215.14	12
City of Tucumcari		Municipality	Quay	\$42,178.83	\$40,386.54	\$33,577.08	\$39,986.02	8
East Rio Arriba Soil & Water Conservation District		State Agency	Rio Arriba	\$61,072.86	\$4,916.71	\$12,463.80	\$1,838.46	5
EcoServants	Lincoln County	Non-profit	Lincoln	\$123,718.54	\$59,050.69	\$24,903.53	\$26,494.49	11
EcoServants	Otero County	Non-profit	Otero	\$123,718.54	\$69,470.50	\$24,903.53	\$31,516.80	12
Forest Stewards Guild	FSYC Fall	Non-profit	Bernalillo, Rio Arriba, Sandoval, Santa Fe, Taos, Torrance	\$130,000.00	\$90,366.81	\$113,390.83	\$43,121.71	14
Forest Stewards Guild	FSYC Summer	Non-profit	Cibola, McKinley, Mora, Rio Arriba, San Miguel, Santa Fe, Torrance	\$129,998.41	\$0.00	\$107,892.03	\$64,457.97	15
Harwood Art Center		Non-profit	Bernalillo	\$33,972.08	\$12,997.36	\$43,503.39	\$13,598.82	8
NM Wildlife Association dba Wild Life West Nature Park		Non-profit	Santa Fe	\$122,853.60	\$44,680.67	\$86,716.24	\$75,813.68	11
Rio Arriba County (RAC) Stop	Healing Memorial Phase III	Municipality	Rio Arriba	\$129,471.76	\$86,499.46	\$25,647.86	\$24,836.11	10
Rio Arriba County (RAC) Stop	Precious Age, Precious Water	Municipality	Rio Arriba	\$129,337.76	\$98,561.33	\$25,687.86	\$25,218.14	11
Robert F. Kennedy Charter School		Charter School	Bernalillo	\$104,769.17	\$76,441.58	\$13,473.14	\$9,991.47	24
Rocky Mountain Youth Corps	Middle Rio Grande	Non-profit	Los Alamos, Santa Fe, Taos	\$128,433.78	\$59,264.34	\$98,586.17	\$36,865.02	18
Rocky Mountain Youth Corps	Upper Rio Grande	Non-profit	Bernalillo, Santa Fe	\$128,433.78	\$31,532.80	\$100,318.51	\$42,796.00	18
Santa Clara Pueblo		Tribe	Rio Arriba, Sandoval	\$124,758.42	\$38,135.76	\$37,895.24	\$22,476.55	23

PROJECT OVERVIEW

LIST of PROJECTS, continued

Applicant	Project	Type of Organization	County	Funded Request	Expended	InKind	In Kind Contributed	Crew Member
Santa Fe Botanical Garden		Non-profit	Santa Fe	\$48,777.00	\$5,849.95	\$28,490.10	\$5,046.26	6
Santa Fe Children's Museum, Inc.		Non-profit	Santa Fe	\$47,253.05	\$40,435.78	\$11,813.79	\$11,935.91	5
Santa Fe County Fire Department		Municipality	Bernalillo, Sandoval, Santa Fe, Torrance	\$125,124.29	\$76,199.12	\$109,777.27	\$57,030.98	7
Taos Land Trust	Creating Taos Rio Fernando Park	Non-profit	Taos	\$54,892.70	\$34,641.38	\$12,432.78	\$15,476.40	10
The Village of Santa Clara		Municipality	Grant	\$116,160.97	\$107,873.39	\$12,788.69	\$10,294.33	22
YouthWorks, Inc.		Non-profit	San Miguel, Santa Fe	\$129,993.41	\$89,945.09	\$160,445.36	\$136,516.18	33

Below are the Projects which were cancelled due to COVID19 difficulties

Aztec Municipal Schools		Public School	San Juan	\$129,976.20	\$2,113.44	\$125,403.85	\$16,016.00	25
City of Aztec		Municipality	San Juan	\$59,509.68	\$0.00	\$25,560.25	\$0.00	0
Mescalero Apache Tribe		Tribe	Lincoln	\$16,604.36	\$0.00	\$15,007.24	\$0.00	0
Town of Estancia		Municipality	Torrance	\$75,291.24	\$0.00	\$19,608.97	\$0.00	0
The Family YMCA		Non-profit	Los Alamos	\$118,167.50	\$0.00	\$28,680.02	\$0.00	0
TOTALS:				\$3,162,045.07	\$1,358,218.66	\$1,444,081.21	\$777,807.85	438

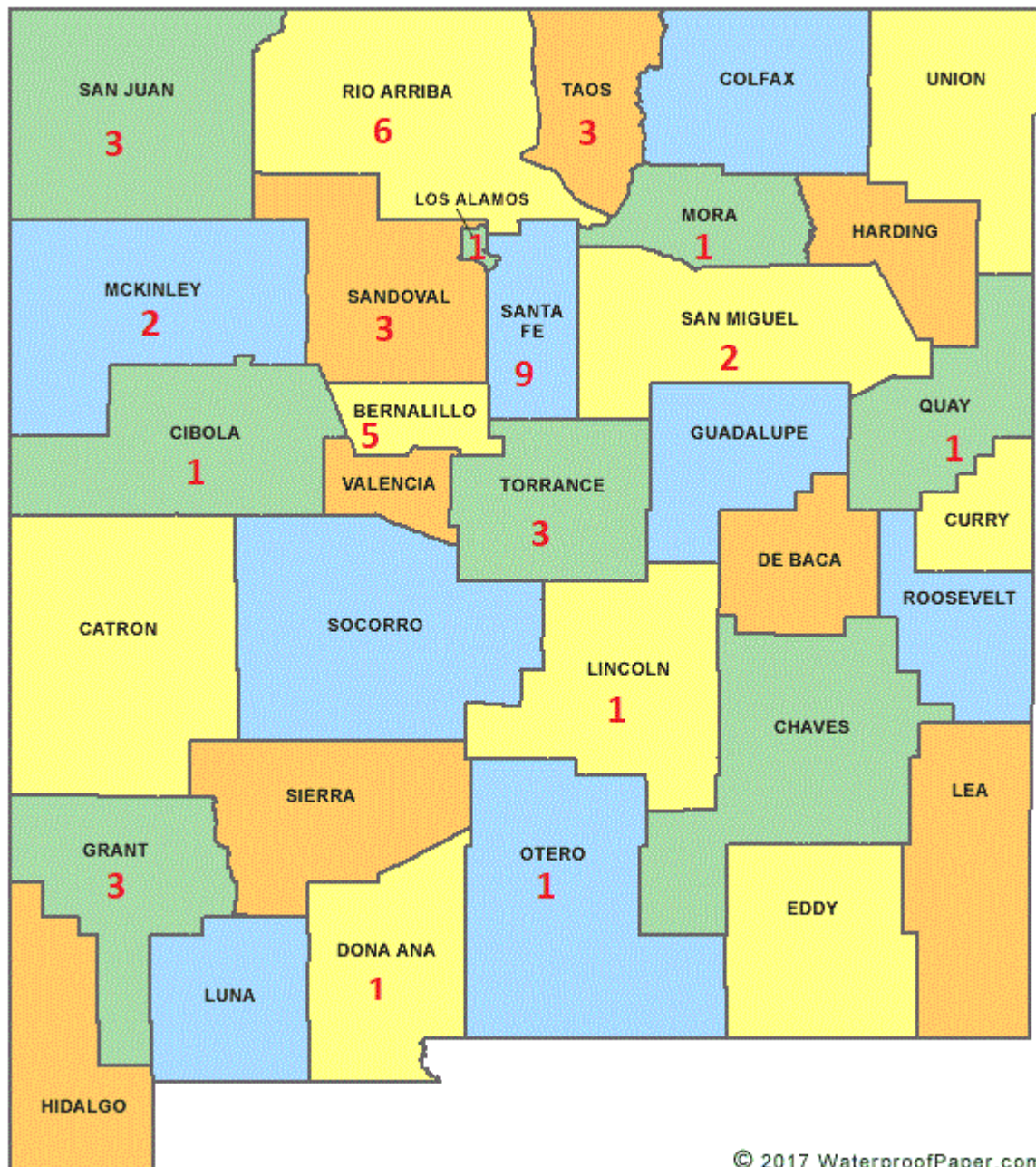
Amounts dispersed and in-kind contributions are incomplete due to projects still on-going in December. The final numbers will be included in a revised edition of this report to be released in early March 2021.

PROJECTS

LOCATIONS BY COUNTY

Red numbers represent the count of projects in each county

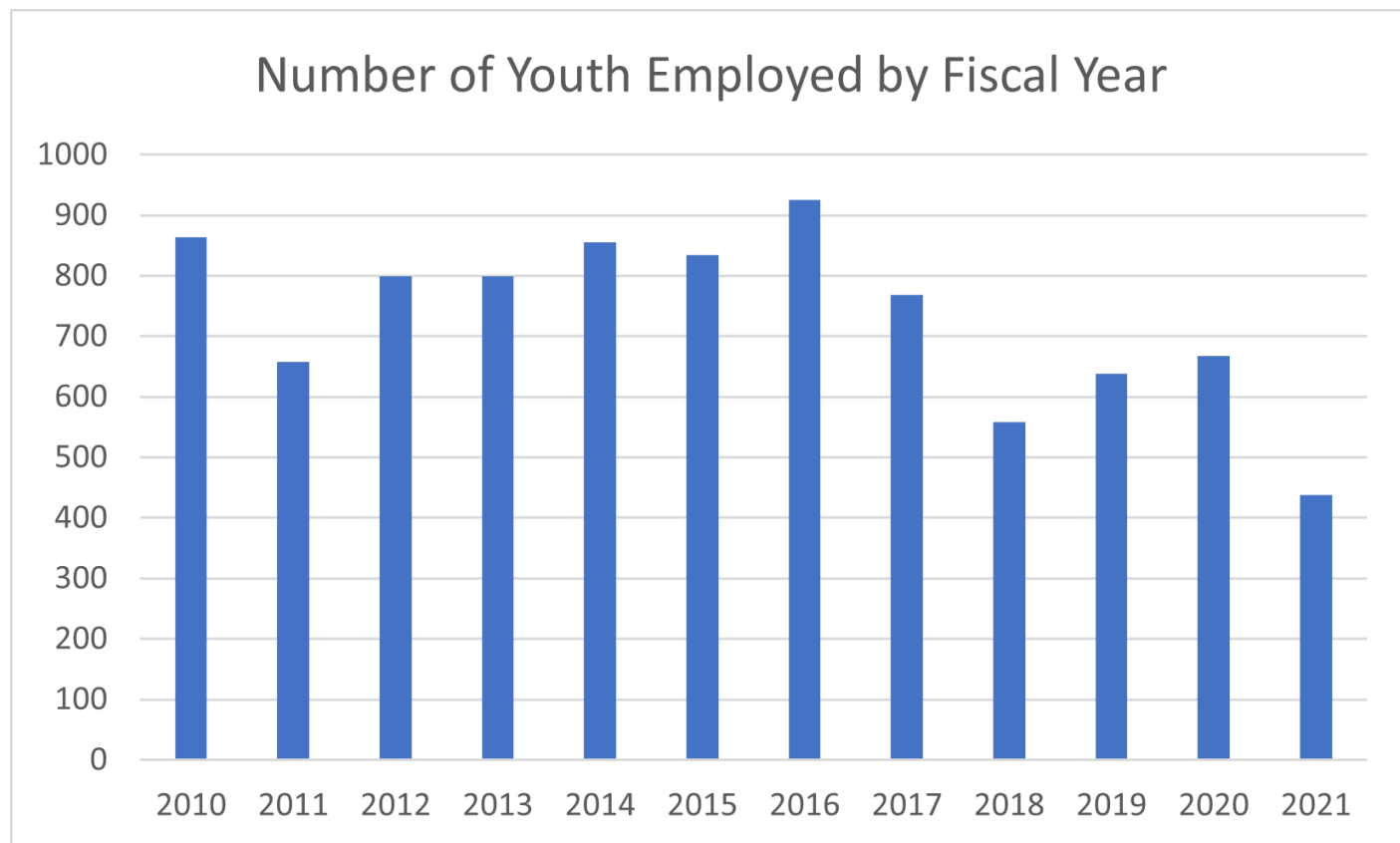
Projects took place in 17 of New Mexico's 33 counties. Nine projects took place in two or more counties, where corps members worked across county lines in National Forests.



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PROJECTS

YOUTH HIRED



There has been a downward trend in the number of youth hired since 2016. Approximately 200 less youth were hired this year than projected due to COVID19 impacts. Five projects declining their funds and many projects cut down on the number of corps members hired to comply with public health orders.



Capacity Builders YCC building a skate park in Shiprock



Forest Stewards Guild improving a fire break

PROJECTS

COVID19 IMPACTS

Grantees were surveyed regarding impacts of operating under COVID. All 21 grantees who had active projects responded.

Survey Results:

Three grantees had projects where Corps members tested positive.

One grantee had a staff member that tested positive.

Four projects were shut down for a total of 38 days due to COVID concerns.

Degree of difficulty working under COVID restrictions:

Very Difficult: Four grantees (19%)

Moderately Difficult: Ten grantees (47.6%)

Fairly Easy: Six grantees (28.6%)

Easy: One grantee (4.8%)

Days of work lost due to COVID concern shutdowns: 38 days

Comments:

It was difficult BUT not impossible. It helped that the City had strict protocols in place. Also, the YCC crew was supportive and attentive to the regulations.

The crew managed fine since most of their project was outside. If more had been inside work, it would have been more difficult.

We included a line item for PPE on the new RFP. Last year, some PPE items were hard to find locally, we still can't find disinfectant sprays. Working in small groups sometimes becomes challenging.

We are running programs in unprecedented times and although it has been very challenging, the youth in our community have been eager to work, comply with COVID standards and do what they can to support the community. YCC has been great to work with during these challenging times, the staff has been understanding, open minded and easy to work with, THANK YOU!

The restrictions were helpful. Our Risk Management team enhanced these to fit our crews.

The restrictions made it very difficult to complete the project and many crew members chafed under the restrictions. It was not always easy to achieve good compliance with mask wearing. However, the crew members were flexible and cooperative with most of the uncertainty and changing rules as the summer went on. The restrictions are another added layer of complexity when acclimating crew members to the workplace. It was difficult to convey those restrictions to the crew members when staff was learning how to deal with them ourselves. I think next year will be easier, if the restrictions are still in place then.

PROJECT

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



Aldo Leopold High School continued their art, trail and ecological monitoring work in and around Silver City. A new project was monitoring cliff sparrows.



Capacity Builders Inc, a non-profit in Farmington, continued their work on the Navajo Reservation. They cleared irrigation ditches, built a skate park, learned to weld, and built a retaining wall. Trini King, a young Navajo leader, supervised the crews. CBI ran three crews this year with no COVID incidents. Proper disinfecting of hand tools, power tools, working outdoors, sanitary stations, portable toilets away from the public restrooms, craftsmanship training outdoors and wearing PPE at all times along with social distancing has proven to be best practices.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



EcoServants, a non-profit in Ruidoso, trained and ran crews on trails in the Lincoln National Forest. They tackled the Dog Canyon Trail near Alamogordo, and its precarious 'Eyebrow' portion.

East Rio Arriba Soil and Water Conservation District, in the Espanola area, had a small crew this year. They mapped and produced reports on this important agricultural and heritage resource.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



Forest Stewards Guild hired crews in the Las Vegas, Grants, Mountainair and Santa Fe areas. Crews improved Forest Service lands in these areas and performed ecological monitoring while learning a broad variety of Forestry skills.



The City of Gallup ran crews that worked on the extensive trail system in and around Gallup. These include the bike park trails, High Desert, the Pyramid, and the Ramah Hiking trail.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



The Harwood Art Center crew in Albuquerque designed and installed a beautiful mosaic bench in Mesa Verde Park.

Rio Arriba County STOP program greatly improved a senior center in Canjilon. They did erosion work, built a shelter and helped the put in asphalt trails. The seniors are extremely grateful.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



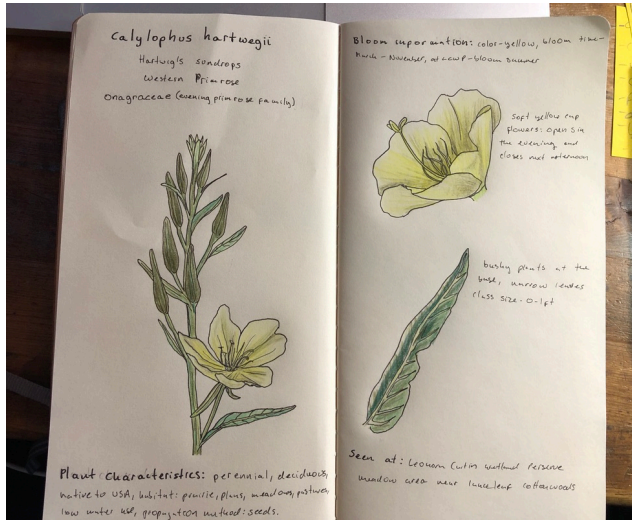
RFK Charter School in Albuquerque's South Valley were busy as, and with, bees this season. They learned how to garden, irrigate, and how to keep bees on the school's farm.



Rocky Mountain Youth Corps had crews in northern New Mexico forests, Taos Pueblo, San Ildefonso, Albuquerque Open Space and Bandelier National Monument. These photos are of restoration work at Bandelier.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



The Santa Fe Botanic Garden improved the garden, grew vegetables and helped improve the Randall Davey Audubon Center. They created original field guides for the Northern New Mexico Master Naturalist program.



Santa Fe Children's Museum practiced small-scale agriculture and improved the grounds and infrastructure of the museum. Corps members learned construction and gardening skills. Food grown at the Museum was donated to local food banks.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



The Santa Fe County Fire Department worked around the county initiating prescribed burns and assisting on several wildfires.



Santa Clara Pueblo ran crews all summer and fall to perform restoration projects on the Puye Cliff Dwellings.

They successfully re-configured their project and paid attention to protocol to manage 20 corps members from Santa Clara and surrounding tribes.

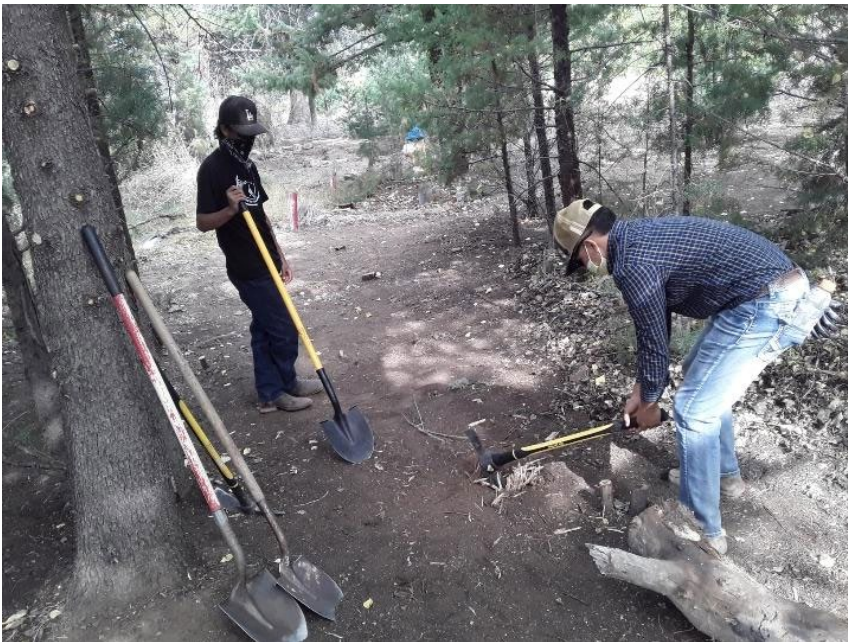


PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



Taos Land Trust crews continued their sustainable agriculture work on Rio Fernando park in Taos. They built raised beds which were distributed out to those in need of them and the food they grew was distributed to the community.



The Village of Santa Clara corps installed park equipment and sprinkler systems in town parks. They improved trails around town to make them ADA compliant. They also worked on landscaping and the buildings of historic Fort Bayard, which the Village owns.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



Corps members at WildlifeWest park built a charming children's playhouse out of adobes and recycle materials. They playhouse includes a water-capture system. Corps members also spread sidewalks and worked on landscaping.



YouthWorks worked at Reunity Resources farm to help provide food for their culinary program who distribute hot meals to needy families. They also helped the Forest Service thin woodland on Rowe Mesa.

PROJECTS

FUNDING CYCLE SUMMARY

Due to extended project times and incomplete data, this information will be included in a revised edition of this report to be released in early March 2021. Data will include a comparison of funds awarded to funds disbursed, the total amount of in-kind contributions and how the YCC budget was allocated.

CORPS MEMBERS

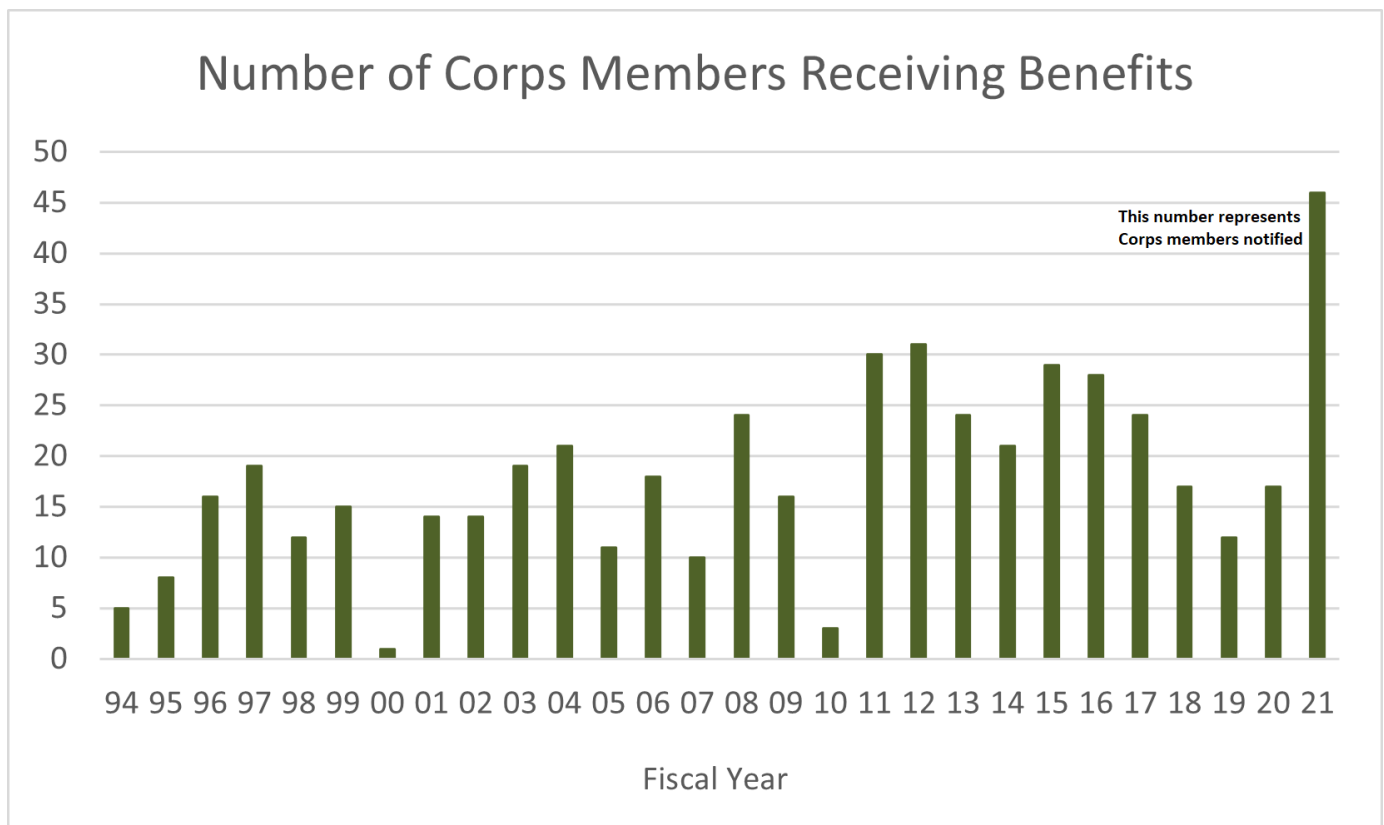
BENEFITS

By statute, the YCC offers a \$1,500 educational tuition voucher OR a \$500 cash compensation to corps members who have worked on a YCC project for 12 months (48 weeks) within a 48 month period (4 years).

In 2020, the YCC initiated a process to ensure all eligible corps members receive their benefits. Instead of corps members applying for benefits, the YCC notifies corps members of their eligibility at the end of every project year. YCC added this metric as a performance-based budget measure for FY22, setting a target of 85% of corps members who are eligible receive their benefits.



Looking toward the future in Taos



CORPS MEMBERS

DEMOGRAPHICS AND CORPS MEMBER SURVEYS

Due to extended project times and incomplete data, this information will be included in a revised edition of this report to be released by early March, 2021. Data will include a summary of survey results, age and other demographics, and post-YCC education and employment.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

YCC focused on accessibility, transparency and increased efficiency in 2020.

- We have approval from the Governor's office to introduce legislation in 2021 to exempt YCC from the procurement code for the purposes of the YCC grant process. This will allow us to use grant management software for applications and project tracking. It will greatly enhance YCC's accessibility, efficiency and capacity.
 - State Purchasing Division, previous grantees, and conservation groups support this initiative
- Enacted a rule change to reflect the transfer of the Outdoor Equity Fund to the Outdoor Recreation Division (Appendix B).
- Restructured website: constructed a more user-friendly interface; added more historical information (Appendix C)
- Established Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and GooglePhoto accounts to boost visibility
- Streamlined corps member benefit process to increase the number of corps members receiving their earned benefits.
- Joined three professional organizations at nominal cost to help develop best practices, training opportunities and career paths for YCC crews
- YCC is a member of the Outdoor Recreation Division advisory committee, and works with ORD to provide opportunities to New Mexico communities.
- Updated all contracts for the last four years in the Sunshine Portal.
- Developed specifications for grant management software purchase.
- Commissioner Getchell-Stevenson developed a new logo approved by the Commission, which will be put into use in 2021. See below.



GOALS

PROGRESS - Below is a list of our goals and recommendations from the 2019 annual report and our progress in achieving them.

2019 Goals and Recommendations	2020 Progress
1. Develop good administrative processes for the OEG program.	1. OEG transferred to EDD.
2. Simplify YCC process and facilitate better tracking of YCC corps members, project progress and budget.	2. Some progress, see #5 below.
3. Attract more applicants to the YCC program.	3. Conducted more outreach this year through social media.
4. Encourage more corps members to apply for educational reimbursement vouchers.	4. YCCC re-worked this program to facilitate all eligible corps members receiving benefits; added it as a performance-based budget measure.
5. Acquire professional grant software; research and scope of work in progress.	5. Must obtain an exemption to procurement code through legislature; have authorization from Governor's office and are proceeding with a bill in the 2021 session.
6. Update the corps member survey.	6. Corps member survey will be updated for 2021 projects.
7. Provide clear direction and resources to guide applicants through the application and reimbursement processes of YCC programs.	7. Continuous effort
8. Develop webinars and simplified instruction manuals for the website.	8. Webinar posted on State Purchasing website for 2021 RFP.
9. Promote the OEG program.	9. OEG transferred to EDD.
10. Strengthen the YCC program by connecting project sponsors to each other and to training and resources.	10. All 2020 YCC grantees had e-mail access to each other at their request. Training and resource libraries underway.
11. Promote awareness of best practices for YCC projects that have lasting value.	11. YCC joined Society for Ecological Restoration and Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals to help formulate best practices and provide resources to grantees.
12. Promote awareness of available jobs in NM for YCC graduates.	12. Job postings sent out via e-mail and posted on social media.
13. Set up social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram) for the YCC and OEG.	13. YCC now has Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube accounts.
14. Hold fundraising events for the OEG.	14. OEG transferred to EDD.
15. Coordinate training / get together events for the YCC.	15. On hold due to COVID19
16. Update YCC's website when EMNRD acquires new website provider.	16. Website significantly refreshed and re-configured; EMNRD still does not yet have new web platform.

GOALS

FOR 2021

GOAL 1: Attract a broad variety and geographical diversity of applicants from local governmental units, tribal governments, federal agencies, and non-profits.

OBJECTIVES:

- Obtain an exemption from the procurement code during the New Mexico 2021 legislative session to make the grant process accessible to more New Mexican entities.
- Acquire grant software that will seamlessly integrate data from application to project implementation and tracking. Use technology to ensure applicants are not rejected or penalized for small technical errors.
- Develop and maintain grant guidelines and FAQs on the website; disperse through social media, virtual meetings and trainings.

GOAL 2: Develop and adopt "best practices" guidelines for projects to ensure healthy and resilient natural resources and lasting community benefits.

OBJECTIVES:

- Work with knowledgeable project sponsors, Commission members and other partners to develop 1 - 3 'best practices' benchmarks tied to grant applications.
- Build a library of best practices resources. This may include training resources (online and conferences), research publications, 'how-to' manuals.
- Initiate an annual YCC conference to provide a forum for project sponsors to share processes and receive training.

GOAL 3: Encourage further education and build a clear pathway from YCC service to New Mexico careers.

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure 85% of all corps members eligible for benefits receive them.
- Work with New Mexico agencies, such as State Parks, Forestry, State Historic Sites and the State Land Office to add YCC service as a job application preference.
- Cross-post job openings from related agencies, non-profits and businesses on YCC's social media.

GOAL 4: Foster work ethics, stewardship and communal heritage in young New Mexicans.

OBJECTIVES

- Develop an updatable multi-media NMYCC orientation training that covers our mission, core values, history, benefits etc.
- Develop 1 - 3 grant benchmarks that ensures all corps members are receiving work ethics, stewardship and heritage training.

COMMISSION AND STAFF

Public Members Appointed by Governor Lujan Grisham



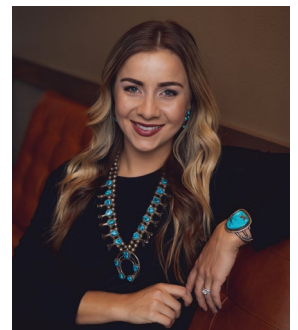
Dr. Melissa Loucks, CHAIR is an Assistant Professor of English at New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell. In addition to the Youth Conservation Corps Commission, Dr. Loucks also serves on the Board of Directors for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southeastern New Mexico, and she volunteers with a number of community-based organizations in Chaves County. Dr. Loucks is deeply invested in youth development programming that promotes a well-educated, highly-skilled, and socially- and environmentally-conscious populace for New Mexico's future.

Alicia Littlebear is from Tamaya (Santa Ana Pueblo), Mvskoke Creek, Absentee Shawnee, and Euchee Nations. She has resided in New Mexico her whole life. Alicia believes we can connect back to the land by running, and is an avid runner herself. She is thankful for the work that she gets to do everyday.



Anthony Marquez is a native New Mexican who grew up surrounded by the mountains of Chama, NM. He is an avid outdoorsman and is a recent retiree from the New Mexico State Parks Division. As the Superintendent of Heron and El Vado State Parks, he oversaw Boating & Law Enforcement, Operations & Maintenance, Volunteers, and Educational Interpretative Programs. In addition, he oversaw the multi-phase expansion of the recreational trail system at Heron Lake. Anthony is an advocate for the youth in his community and throughout New Mexico. He believes it is important that we recognize that today's youth in the very near future will be assuming many of our communities' leadership roles. We must support them with their contributions today, and most importantly in their potential for tomorrow.

Amanda Getchell Stevenson is a New Mexico native, who graduated from the New Mexico State University Journalism and Communications Department. She has worked as a Communications Specialist for a Seattle-based communications firm, Strategies 360, in Albuquerque, NM; as a Marketing Assistant with one of the largest tech companies in New Mexico, Lavu Inc.; and most recently as a Marketing Manager with the Canadian-based company, iAnthus Capital Management. Amanda owns and runs her own marketing consulting group, Middle Manda. She is an expert on social media strategy, compliance, and community management for various industries.



Marlene Yanez is a Fronteriza, a woman from the border, and good food advocate who lives in Sunland Park, NM. She has worked in the non-profit sector for over a decade and currently works at La Semilla Food Center as a Program Director for the Community Education Program. Her work endeavors to create innovative and culturally inclusive food justice programs for youth and adults in the Paso del Region in Dona Ana County and El Paso, TX.

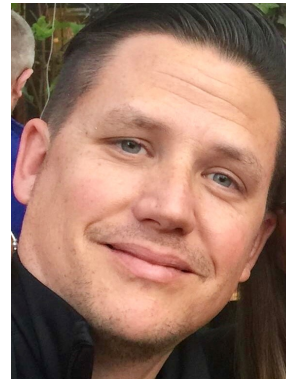
COMMISSION AND STAFF

Agency Designees



Martin “Zach” Chavez is New Mexico Public Education Department's Civic and Community Engagement Coordinator. A native of New Mexico, Zach grew up in Cuba, New Mexico. After graduating from Cuba High School in 2006, Zach attended the University of New Mexico. In 2011, Zach graduated with a B.S. in Education and a B.A. in Spanish. After graduation, Zach taught science at the Architecture, Construction, and Engineering Leadership charter high school in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he went on to excel as the Dean of Student Support. In 2015, Zach moved to northern New Mexico where he taught first grade at Chama Elementary, and later mid- and high school Science at Escalante High School. In 2017, Zach moved to Santa Fe with his wife and daughter and began work at the Public Education Department in 2018 following the birth of his son.

Andrew Frederick is the Resource Management Bureau Chief for New Mexico State Forestry where he is responsible for the Cooperative Forestry programs and Hazardous Fuels Reduction programs. These programs provide technical assistance to private forest landowners and allows State Forestry to participate with cooperators and collaboratives interested in natural resource management and watershed protection. He has previously held positions as the State Timber Management Officer in Santa Fe and Staff Forester and Timber Program Manager for the Chama and Capitan Districts of NM Forestry Division, respectively. He is the YCC's Vice-Chair and expert on forest practices for the Commission. Andrew is a graduate of Northern Arizona University, School of Forestry and currently lives in Rio Rancho, NM with his family.



Cassie Ruiz has worked with Children, Youth and Families Department for seven years, both with Protective Services and Juvenile Justice. She is currently a Transition Services Coordinator with Juvenile Justice and is based in Carlsbad. She has worked with youth in various capacities the majority of her adulthood. She practices and teaches yoga. She is passionate about the outdoors and runs, hikes, and paddle boards all over New Mexico.

Dana Vackar Strang is the Director of Field Operations Division at the New Mexico State Land Office. Dana has a B.A. in Political Science from Colorado College and an M.A. from the University of New Mexico in Parks, Recreation and Environmental Education. Dana oversees the Surface Resources Division which manages watershed health, site remediation, illegal dumping, biological and cultural resources and investigations/compliance across 9 million acres of state trust land. The Division is also responsible for the management of over 3,500 active agricultural leases.

Previously Dana was Director of Education for Audubon New Mexico and the Randall Davey Audubon Center for six years. Prior to Audubon, Dana was with the New Mexico State Land Office where she worked her way up to an Assistant Director in the Field Operations Division after holding several other positions at the Agency. She is a former President and board member of the Environmental Education Association of New Mexico, a former Chair of the Youth Conservation Corps Commission, and is the statewide coordinator and teacher trainer for the national Leopold Education Project (LEP). Dana is a mother and wife, and enjoys horses, birding, hiking, and mountain biking.



COMMISSION AND STAFF

Staff



Sarah Wood, Executive Director. Sarah grew up in New Mexico and is a proud Lobo-Aggie, having attended both UNM and NMSU where she studied biology and plant ecology. As a field biologist with the US Forest Service and New Mexico Natural Heritage Program, she lived and worked throughout New Mexico. She worked in four New Mexico State Parks over 17 years in a variety of positions. She volunteers with restoration and trail projects, and will present nature programs to anyone who asks. She enjoys hiking, flash-flood watching and fixing things. She is thrilled to be with the YCC and support New Mexico's youth.

Kristine Sanchez, Youth Coordinator/Administrator, is originally from Chama, NM and was raised by her grandparents Eddie and Luz Vigil, the first mayor of Chama. She moved to Santa Fe with her mother Lucy Vigil, graduated from high school, and was blessed with a daughter, son-in-law, three grandchildren and her husband Tim. She has been working for the State of New Mexico for 28 years, and with the YCC for over 10 years. She enjoys her job, interacting with the youth, and seeing the wonderful impact the program makes on the youth and how beneficial it is to the community. She has an Associates Degree in Computer Science, a Business Degree in Business and a Master's in Business Management.



Appendix A:

Full Corps Member Survey Results

Due to projects still wrapping up in December of 2020, these results will be presented in a revised edition of this report to be released in March, 2021.

Appendix B:

Updated Rule, NMAC 11.2.171

TITLE 11 LABOR AND WORKERS COMPENSATION
CHAPTER 2 JOB TRAINING
PART 171 THE YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS (YCC) PROGRAM

11.2.171.1 ISSUING AGENCY: The New Mexico Youth Conservation Corps Commission.
[11.2.171.1 NMAC – Rp, 11.2.171.1 NMAC, 12/17/2019]

11.2.171.2 SCOPE: General Public.
[11.2.171.2 NMAC – Rp, 11.2.171.2 NMAC, 12/17/2019]

11.2.171.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Section 9-5B-1 et-seq. NMSA 1978.
[11.2.171.3 NMAC – Rp, 11.2.171.3 NMAC, 12/17/2019]

11.2.171.4 DURATION: Permanent.
[11.2.171.4 NMAC – Rp, 11.2.171.4 NMAC, 12/17/2019]

11.2.171.5 EFFECTIVE DATE: September 15, 2020, unless a later date is cited at the end of a section.
[11.2.171.5 NMAC – Rp, 11.2.171.5 NMAC, 12/17/2019; A 9/15/2020]

11.2.171.6 OBJECTIVE: The objective of this rule is to establish procedures and standards for the administration of the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program.
[11.2.171.6 NMAC – Rp, 11.2.171.6 NMAC, 12/17/2019; A, 9/15/2020]

11.2.171.7 DEFINITIONS:

- A. "In-kind contribution"** means a non-monetary donation of goods or services provided by the project sponsor for the purpose of carrying out a program.
- B. "Native American"** means a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- C. "Residential program"** means a program where corps members and their supervisors are housed on-site in a residential facility.
- D. "Rural"** means an area not within a metropolitan statistical area as defined by the United States office of management and budget.
- E. "Summer program"** means a program taking place between May and September.
- F. "Seasonal program"** means a program that takes place any time of year and is six months or less in duration.
- G. "Under-resourced"** means lacking sufficient resources, including, but not limited to funds, opportunity, work force, knowledge base, support systems, physical aids, communication devices, and other physical assets that limit access to job training and outdoor recreation.
- H. "Urban"** means an area within a metropolitan statistical area as defined by the United States office of management and budget.
[11.2.171.7 NMAC – Rp, 11.2.171.7 NMAC, 12/17/2019; A, 9/15/2020]

11.2.171.8 PROPOSALS: At least annually, the commission will request proposals for YCC projects. The commission's announcement will include where to obtain proposal information and the date by which proposals must be submitted.
[11.2.171.8 NMAC – Rp, 11.2.171.15 NMAC, 12/17/2019; A, 9/15/2020]

11.2.171.9 YCC PROJECT ELIGIBILITY:

- A. Project sponsors:** The YCC Commission will accept applications from:
- (1) A federally recognized sovereign tribal government within the state.
 - (2) A state agency.
 - (3) A local government agency or unit.
 - (4) A federal agency operating within the state.
 - (5) A non-profit organization with a 501(c) internal revenue service designation operating within the state.
 - (6) Any organization or agency with a 501(c) fiscal sponsor.

B. Projects must be consistent with the purposes of the NMYCC program and may include, but need not be limited to, projects that:

- (1) protect, conserve, rehabilitate or increase resiliency of terrestrial and aquatic species, forests, refuges, rangelands and waters of the state;
- (2) improve use and access to public parks, greenways, historic sites, libraries, museums, zoos, recreational areas and associated facilities;
- (3) reinforce the “keep New Mexico true” campaign;
- (4) provide emergency assistance, disaster relief or recovery; or
- (5) improve disaster preparedness; increase energy efficiency.
- (6) beautify, improve and restore urban areas;
- (7) renovate community facilities, including those for the elderly or indigent.

[11.2.171.9 NMAC – Rp, 11.2.171.12 and 11.2.171.13 NMAC, 12/17/2019; A, 9/15/2020]

11.2.171.10 PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES: The following activities are prohibited in the conduct of any NMYCC project:

A. the displacement or substitution of an existing employee by a corps member or the replacement of a seasonal employee normally hired by the project sponsor;

B. the participation by corps members in the removal or cleaning up of any toxic or hazardous waste or toxic or hazardous waste site; and

C. the assignment of corps members to general work activities such as, but not limited to, routine lawn mowing, routine litter control, janitorial duties and clerical tasks.

D. funding permanent capital improvements on privately owned property.

[11.2.171.10 NMAC – N, 9/15/2020]

11.2.171.11 YCC PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:

A. Project sponsors shall ensure that all project sites and practices conform to appropriate state and federal health and safety standards and requirements.

B. Project sponsors shall classify their programs as a summer, seasonal, or residential project; and also specify whether their project primarily engages Native American, rural, urban or other under-resourced populations.

C. Wages, unemployment insurance and workers' comp for corps members, corps leaders, and corps trainers shall account for a minimum of seventy percent of the total funds requested.

D. Projects shall hire a minimum of four corps members and one corps crew leader or corps crew trainer.

E. Project sponsors must provide an education and training program to corps members for the duration of the project. The number of hours of training provided for each corps member shall be no less than ten percent of the total hours budgeted per corps member for the entirety of the project.

F. Project sponsors shall match a minimum of twenty percent of total funds requested with in-kind or cash contributions.

G. Project sponsors shall provide proof they have obtained permission from all land owners or managers where the project shall take place.

H. Project sponsors shall have worker's compensation and unemployment insurance in place for the duration of the project.

I. Program applicants shall provide proof of adequate insurance coverage for any liability arising out of program activities for the duration of the program.

[11.2.171.11 NMAC – Rn & A 11.171.2.10 NMAC, 9/15/2020]

11.2.171.12 YCC PROJECT LOCATIONS: Projects may be undertaken on:

A. public or federally recognized tribal lands, waters or structures located within the state that ;

- (1) are under the jurisdiction, owned or administered by the project sponsor; or
- (2) are accessible to the project sponsor in accordance with a written agreement between the project sponsor and the agency or entity that owns, administers or has jurisdiction over the public or federally recognized tribal lands, waters or structures; and

(3) provided that the land or facilities are open to the public on a reasonable basis and there is a public value or benefit as a result of the project.

B. privately owned lands, waters or structures located within the state that

- (1) are owned or administered by a nonprofit organization; or
 - (2) are accessible to the project sponsor in accordance with a written agreement between the project sponsor and the nonprofit organization; and
 - (3) provided that these the land or facilities are open to the public on a reasonable basis and there is a public value or benefit as a result of the project; and
 - (4) provided no funding for capital improvements is requested for the project.
- [11.2.171.12 NMAC – N, 9/15/2020]

11.2.171.13 YCC CORPS MEMBERS:

A. Project sponsors shall, at their own expense, comply with all applicable laws, regulations, rules ordinances, and requirements of local, state, and federal authorities, including but not limited to those pertaining to equal opportunity employment, workers compensation benefits, and fair labor standards.

B. Recruitment, selection, supervision, development and dismissal of corps members will be the responsibility of the project sponsors.

C. Sponsors shall verify corps members meet the following eligibility requirements at the time of enrollment and keep records of such:

- (1) are unemployed at the time of hire;
- (2) are New Mexico residents consistent with NMAC 18.19.5;
- (3) are in-school or out-of-school youth at the time of hire;
- (4) are between the ages of 14 and 25 years of age at the time of hire;
- (5) have a work permit if under the age of 16; and
- (6) are not the children or siblings of the project sponsor's hiring officer or project

supervisor.

D. Sponsors shall enforce all labor laws and shall be familiar with child labor laws as they apply to employees under the age of 18.

E. Classification:

- (1) Corps members shall be individuals who meet the eligibility requirements and are at least 14 years of age at the beginning of the project.
- (2) Corps crew leaders or corps crew trainers shall be individuals who meet the eligibility requirements, and serve in a leadership, trainer or mentor position.

F. Compensation:

- (1) All corps members shall be compensated, at a minimum, as provided by law following the state or municipality established minimum wage.
- (2) Project sponsors may request wage increases of no more than ten percent of starting wage for corps members based on promotion, performance or additional responsibilities; and if there are sufficient funds in the budget to complete the project as planned.
- (3) The YCC will support the project sponsor's existing policy for holiday pay and sick pay.
- (4) Project sponsors may not budget overtime pay into the cost proposal, and under no circumstances will the commission reimburse project sponsors for overtime.
- (5) The YCC will not reimburse the project sponsor for hazard pay.

G. Project sponsors shall follow their established personnel policies for dismissal of corps members. Sponsors are encouraged to provide opportunities for improvement prior to dismissal.

H. The length of a corps member's employment shall be determined by the duration of the work project in which the corps member is participating.

[11.2.171.13 NMAC – Rn & A 11.2.171.11 NMAC, 9/15/2020]

11.2.171.14 YCC EDUCATIONAL TUITION VOUCHERS AND ADDITIONAL CASH COMPENSATION:

A. On completion of employment with the YCC, a corps member who has 12 full months (48 weeks) of employment as a corps member during a period not to exceed 48 months, and who has received satisfactory evaluations throughout their employment, may apply for a \$500.00 additional cash compensation or a \$1500.00 educational tuition voucher.

B. A corps member who receives satisfactory employment evaluations and has completed a minimum of thirty-two weeks employment but less than 12 months (48 weeks) in a four-year period due to circumstances beyond the corps member's control, may receive a partial cash compensation or a partial educational tuition voucher.

(1) Circumstances beyond a corps member's control may include but are not limited to illness, death in the family, a return to school, or family relocation.

(2) Circumstances beyond the corps member's control do not include the unavailability of projects or that the project sponsor did not select them for employment.

C. The YCC staff shall certify that the corps member was employed for the duration of the project.

(1) The educational voucher is good for reimbursement of expenses at a New Mexico institution of higher education, including accredited universities, colleges, community colleges, vocational schools and on-line education associated with an accredited New Mexico institution of higher education.

(2) The educational tuition voucher is valid for two years and will be reimbursed upon presentation of receipts and proof of payment.

(a) Examples of reimbursable expenses include educational expenses such as tuition, textbooks, and classroom and lab supplies.

(b) Examples of non-reimbursable expenses include personal expenses, transportation, computers, residential rent, and food.

[11.2.171.14 NMAC – Rn & A 11.2.171.12 NMAC, 9/15/2020]

[11.2.171.13 NMAC – N, 12/17/2019, Repealed 9/15/2020]

[11.2.171.14 NMAC – N, 12/17/2019, Repealed 9/15/2020]

11.2.171.15 EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS:

A. The commission shall adopt a competitive evaluation process to guide the allocation of funds.

B. The commission shall review and evaluate all proposals to determine the proposal's conformance with the goals of the programs as described in the act and 11.2.171 NMAC, Sections 9, 10, and 11.

C. The commission shall take appropriate measures to ensure the evaluation process is not influenced by donors to the youth conservation corps. This may include, but is not limited to, appointing an external review committee; and concealing the identity of applicants during the review process.

D. The commission will distribute funds equitably among qualified projects that variously engage Native American, rural, urban or other under-resourced populations.

[11.2.171.15 NMAC – Rp, 11.2.171.16 NMAC, 12/17/2019; A, 9/15/2020]

11.2.171.16 AWARD AGREEMENTS: Successful applicants shall enter into a formal agreement with the commission for the expenditure of awarded funds.

[11.2.171.16 NMAC – Rp, 11.2.171.17 NMAC, 12/17/2019; A, 9/15/2020]

11.2.171.17 FUNDS:

A. The commission may establish limitations on the availability and use of program funds. Any limitations shall be defined in the current application package

B. The commission may limit the amount of funding available for any element(s) of a program.

C. If money is not awarded in a given fiscal year due to the lack of applications meeting minimum requirements, the commission may reassign the funds to a non-funded or under-funded program that meets all the minimum requirements or may carry them over into the total program allocation for the next fiscal year.

[11.2.171.17 NMAC – Rp, 11.2.171.9 NMAC, 12/17/2019; A, 9/15/2020]

HISTORY of 11.2.171 NMAC:

Pre-NMAC History:

The material in this Part was derived from that previously filed with the state records center & archives under; NMYCC Rule No. 92-1, Rules and Regulations Governing the New Mexico Youth Conservation Corps, filed November 20, 1992.

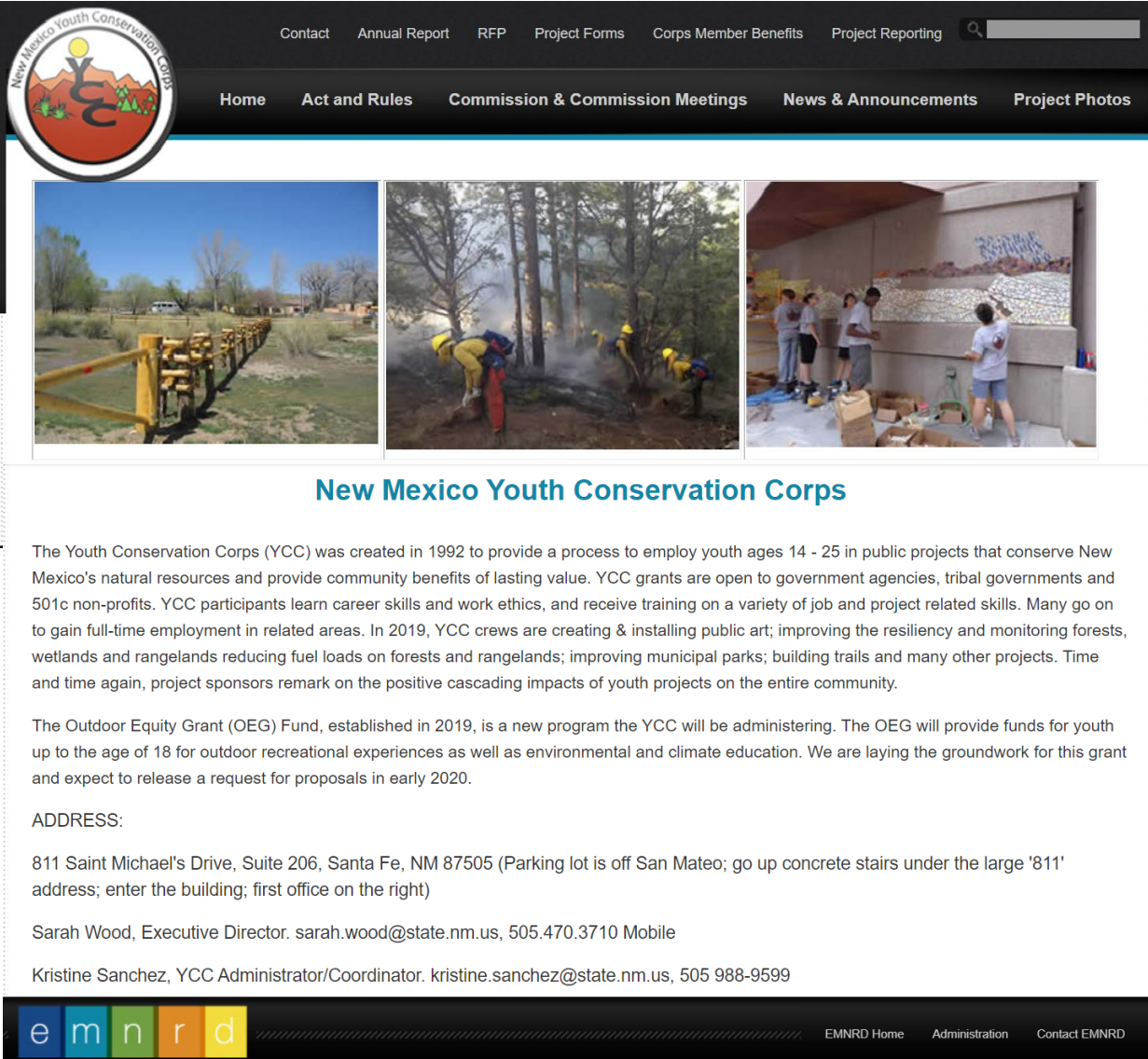
History of Repealed Material: 11.2.171 NMAC, The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) Program, filed 4/30/2001, was repealed and replaced by 11.2.171 NMAC, The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) Program and Outdoor Equity Grant (OEG) Program, effective 12/17/2019.

11.2.171 NMAC was renamed from 'The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) And Outdoor Equity Grant (OEG) Programs' to 'The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) Program' effective 9/15/2020.

Other History: 11 NMAC 2.YCC, The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) Program, filed 5/14/1997, was reformatted, renumbered, and amended to 11.2.171 NMAC effective 4/30/2001.

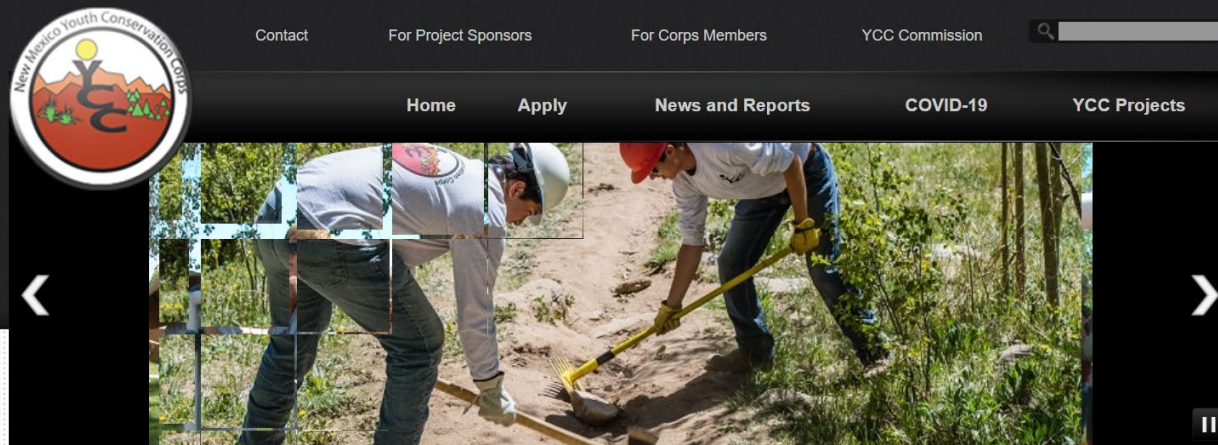
Appendix C: Website Update Example

Home Page - before



Appendix C: Website Update Example

Home Page - revised



New Mexico Youth Conservation Corps

What We Do	Who We Are	Program Impact
The Youth Conservation Corps provides grants to local governments, tribes and non-profits to hire youth ages 14 to 25 for community and conservation projects. Every year, hundreds of youth receive a paycheck, career and life skills training and educational opportunities as part of a YCC project. Corps members may build trails, improve wildfire resiliency, control erosion, create and install public art, improve senior and community centers, beautify natural areas and public parks, preserve cultural resources or map natural resources. More information on projects is here .	<p>The YCC is governed by a nine-member Commission. Five Commissioners are appointed by the Governor and four are designated by state agencies. The Commission hires and supervises the YCC Executive Director.</p> <p>Commission meetings are held quarterly and on an as-needed basis. Agendas and minutes are published here, and meetings are open to the public, who are encouraged to attend.</p> <p>The YCC Act, enacted by the NM Legislature statutorially authorizes the YCC program. The YCC Rule lays out the regulations and standards developed by the Commission to administer the program.</p>	<p>Time and time again, project sponsors remark on the positive cascading impacts of youth projects in the community. Local educators and businesses often pitch in to contribute to the project. Life-long friendships and valuable professional relationships are forged. Youth often go on to full-time positions with an organization they worked with on a YCC project.</p> <p>Corps member benefits Corps members that work four or more seasons on a YCC crew receive a \$500 cash benefit or \$1,500 towards their academic or vocational education.</p>

[Click here to sign up for updates from YCC!](#)



CONTACT INFORMATION

[Sarah Wood](#), Executive Director. sarah.wood@state.nm.us, 505.470.3710 Mobile
[Kristine Sanchez](#), YCC Administrator/Coordinator. kristine.sanchez@state.nm.us, 505.988.9599 (YCC landline)
FAX: 505.988.7313

Due to COVID-19 Public Health Orders, the YCC office is currently closed to the public

811 Saint Michael's Drive, Suite 206, Santa Fe, NM 87505
Building is on the southeast corner of San Matero and Calle Lorca. YCC is on the second floor.