



# New Mexico Youth Conservation Corps Commission

## 2021 Annual Report





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*Cover: Taos Land Trust Spring Crew*

*This page: Puye Cliff, Santa Clara Pueblo*





## From YCCC Chair, Mel Loucks

December 6, 2020

**Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham**

**YCC Commission:**

Mel Loucks, Chair

Amanda Getchell Stevenson

Alicia Littlebear

Anthony Marquez

Marlene Yanez

Carmen Austin,

Energy, Minerals & Nat Res

Zach Chavez

Public Education Department

Cassie Ruiz

Children, Youth & Families Dept

Dana Vackar-Strang

State Land Office

**YCC Staff:**

Sarah Wood, Executive Director

Vacant, 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 2021 Annual Report. Participation in a YCC program changes lives. Each project's success is grounded in cooperation between the grantee and members of the surrounding community. Local business owners, educators, 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 sessions are a core component of a YCC program. Youth received instruction this year in construction, historic preservation, emergency preparedness, flora and fauna, and financial literacy and many other topics.

The Commission is proud to report twenty-five projects were successfully carried out in 2021. These projects hired 425 youth in 17 counties. The Commission will be reviewing proposals for 2022 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. The YCCC is authorized by 9-5B-1-10 NMSA 1978.

YCC grants are open to government agencies, tribal governments and 501c non-profits. Eligible projects may occur on public, non-profit or tribal lands with reasonable public. Projects include conservation and preservation projects, facility improvements, or emergency assistance and preparedness.

Corps members hired by grantees are between 14 – 25 years old and New Mexico citizens. Seventy percent of each grant must be spent on corps member wages, and grantees provide a 20% in-kind match. Youth are provided training in a broad variety of skills including construction, landscaping, irrigation, cultural preservation, trail-building, tool safety, decision-making, 1<sup>st</sup> Aid / CPR, Mental Health First Aid, wildfire certifications, resumé & interview skills, and fiscal responsibility. 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.



*I was able to network with people from Game & Fish and learned how to present my resume.– Corps Member, 2021*



# 2021 Summary

**Legislature:** In January 2021, YCC introduced a bill in the legislature with the intent of increasing efficiency and accessibility of our grant application process and project management. The bill died in Committee. As a result of this, State Purchasing invited NMYCCC to submit a request for exemptions to the RFP template, and most of these were approved. Thirty-eight proposals have been submitted for 2022.

**Grant awards:** YCC received thirty-five proposals for and funded thirty in 2021. The awards were not announced until late April 2021, resulting in disruption for some grantees, and as a result, five more declined funding. Approximately 438 youth were hired to perform \$2.3M in projects. Projects are still wrapping up as of late 2021.

**Cooperative Procurement Agreements:** Cooperative Procurement Agreements (CPA) allow the YCC to enter into agreements with other government agencies. State agencies have struggled in the past decade to initiate YCC grants because of the time it takes for internal planning and hiring processes. CPAs will be multi-year agreements, giving state agencies the planning time they need, and draw on YCC's fund balance to encumber monies.

YCC reached out to State Parks, Forestry, Mining & Minerals, Historic Sites, the Public Education Department, Game & Fish and the State Land Office with this initiative. A CPA with EMNRD (to include funding for Parks, Forestry and Mining & Minerals) is ready for final approval and implementation in early 2022. Once we have this pilot program underway, we will initiate agreements with other interested agencies.

**Career Development:** YCC participated in Cradle to Career initiative spearheaded by the Outdoor Recreation Department in the spring of 2021. We added a job postings and career resources page to our website to help guide youth towards careers in conservation, preservation and recreation. We will continue to expand on this initiative in 2022.

**Project Tracking and Reporting:** YCC worked with EMNRD's IT department throughout the summer on a significant refurbishment of our in-house project tracking application. The app went live in late 2021, and feedback from grantees indicate it is easier to use. The YCC is also able to track metrics, such as youth hired, more accurately.

**Personnel changes:** In May, long-time administrator and coordinator Kristine Sanchez retired. Her position was re-classified and should be posted in early 2022. Commissioners Mel Loucks and Zach Chavez are leaving at the end of 2021; replacements are in line for both positions.

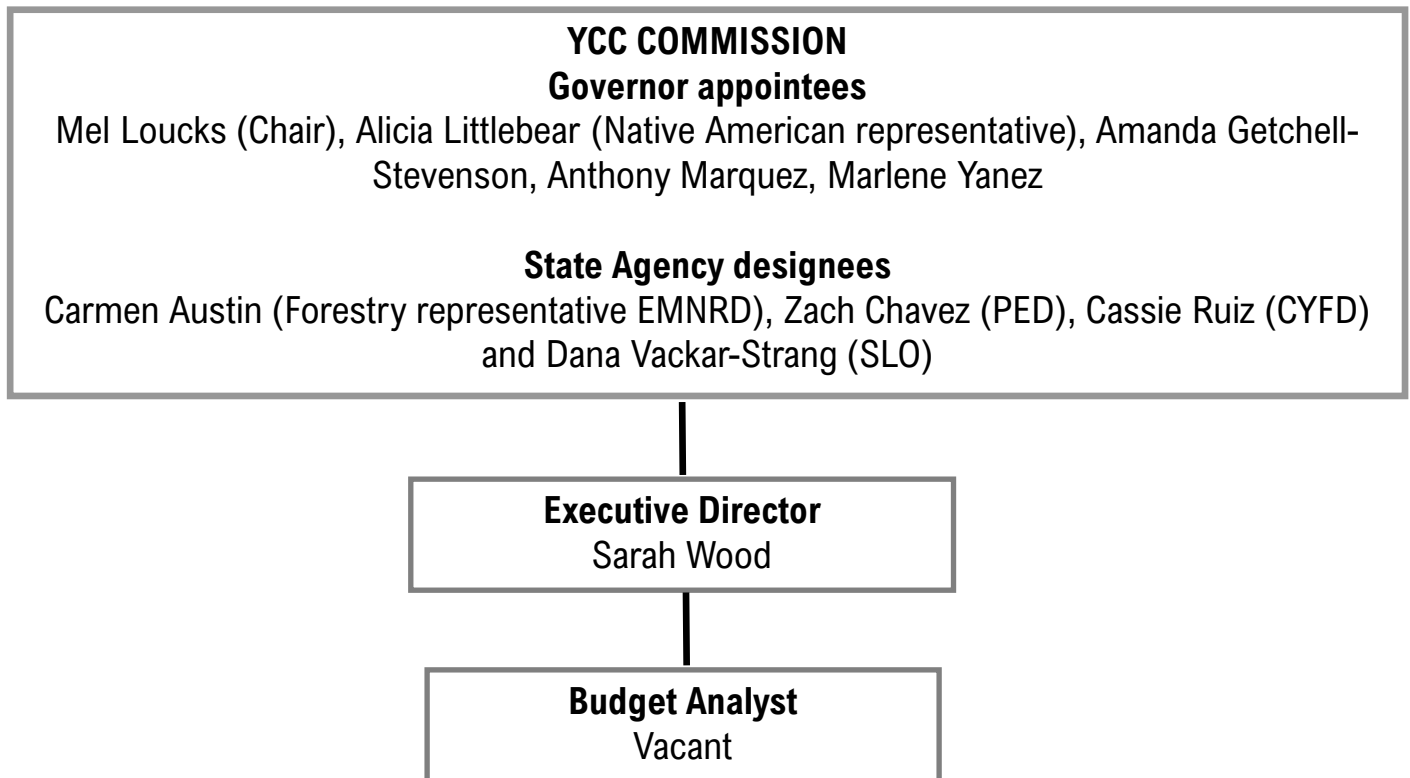
**Website re-design:** In June, YCC re-designed its website to conform with the new WordPress platform. It looks terrific and is much easier to update and keep current.

<https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/about-ycc/>

**Field visits:** During the summer and early fall, NMYCC made visits to projects in process, including two art projects in Albuquerque, a Santa Fe Children's museum training, and a riparian restoration project in the Jemez. More travel was planned, but the increased administrative load precluded much of it.



# ORGANIZATION, MISSION & VALUES



[Appendix A](#) contains bios of the Commission and staff.

## **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.



# LIST OF PROJECTS

YCC Projects 2021								
Applicant	Website	City	Zip	Type of Organization	YCC Award	% Match	Corps Members Hired	Summary
Aldo Leopold Charter School Fall	<a href="https://www.aldocs.org/">https://www.aldocs.org/</a>	Silver City	88061	charter school	\$58,195.00	33.88%	95	Aldo Leopold Charter School students are given the opportunity to earn 0.5 internship credit in one of four crews: garden/landscaping, ecological monitoring, murals, and trail construction. In addition to earning school credit, students gain a wealth of college and career readiness skills.
Aldo Leopold Charter School Spring	<a href="https://www.aldocs.org/">https://www.aldocs.org/</a>	Silver City	88061	charter school	\$94,603.00	23.59%	34	See above
Apprenticeships for Leaderships in Mosaic Arts (ALMA)	<a href="https://almatile.org/">https://almatile.org/</a>	Albuquerque	87195	non-profit	\$55,521.86	79.93%	8	Design mosaic sculptures to welcome visitors at Valle de Oro Wildlife Refuge. The sculptures will provide wayfinding and educational resources. They will tell the stories of this area and exploring the histories, cultures, species, and connection to place in and around the Refuge.
City of Gallup	<a href="https://www.gallupnm.gov/">https://www.gallupnm.gov/</a>	Gallup	87305	municipality	\$144,500.64	34.61%	12	Improve trails in and around Gallup.
Deming Cesar Chavez Charter HS Fall	<a href="https://www.cesarchavezcharterhs.com/">https://www.cesarchavezcharterhs.com/</a>	Deming	88031	charter school	\$30,756.52	25.69%	15	Working with current community program partners, we will work on projects that help with much needed repairs and improvements to Deming and Luna County public parks and areas.
Deming Cesar Chavez Charter HS Spring	<a href="https://www.cesarchavezcharterhs.com/">https://www.cesarchavezcharterhs.com/</a>	Deming	88031	charter school	\$40,781.41	21.82%	15	See above
East Rio Arriba SWCD	<a href="https://www.eraswcd.net/projects">https://www.eraswcd.net/projects</a>	Hernandez	87537	local government	\$48,090.23	26.79%	5	Inventory Acequias and other natural resources within the boundary of the ERASWCD and produce comprehensive reports for the community. Map invasive weeds within the SWCD.
Eco Servants Lincoln	<a href="https://www.ecoservants.org/">https://www.ecoservants.org/</a>	Ruidoso	88345	non-profit	\$148,900.29	20.24%	10	Build and improve trails in the Lincoln National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico Historic Sites, Lincoln County and the Village of Ruidoso according to a plan adopted in 2017.
Eco Servants Otero	<a href="https://www.ecoservants.org/">https://www.ecoservants.org/</a>	Ruidoso	88345	non-profit	\$148,900.29	20.24%	19	Build and improve trails in the Lincoln National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico Historic Sites, Lincoln County, Mescalero Apache Reservation and the Village of Ruidoso according to a plan adopted in 2017.
Harwood Art Center	<a href="https://www.harwoodartcenter.org/community-programs/art-and-social-justice-apprenticeship/">https://www.harwoodartcenter.org/community-programs/art-and-social-justice-apprenticeship/</a>	Albuquerque	87102	non-profit	\$41,307.21	118.35%	10	Youth will design, fabricate and install a sculpted walkway and narrative lanterns to connect two previous sculptures.
National Audubon Society	<a href="https://nm.audubon.org/about-us/job-openings">https://nm.audubon.org/about-us/job-openings</a>	Santa Fe	87504	non-profit	\$66,440.28	24.35%	6	Plan and facilitate the Northern NM Master Naturalist program; trail restoration & expansion, planting, erosion control, invasive species removal at Audubon Center; Monarch butterfly habitat at Leonora Curtin in collaboration w/ Institute of Applied Ecology.
Sugarite Canyon State Park	<a href="http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SPD/sugaritecanyonstatepark.html">http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SPD/sugaritecanyonstatepark.html</a>	Santa Fe	87505	state agency	\$60,720.31	207.20%	6	Develop an 11-site tent camping area at Sugarite Canyon State Park to include tent pads, ground grills and bear lockers. Site preparation includes erosion control, a walking path and a parking area.
Rio Arriba County Healing Memorial	<a href="http://www.rio-arriba.org/departments_and_divisions/rac_stop/index.html">http://www.rio-arriba.org/departments_and_divisions/rac_stop/index.html</a>	Tierra Amarilla	87575	county government	\$149,800.72	22.97%	11	Continue work on a multi-phased project on a healing memorial in Espanola: ADA paths and landing area; colored gravel and install rose garden and dwarf shade trees; install benches; construct 100' x 4' retention walls to keep landscaping eroding into parking lot.
Rio Arriba County Precious Age	<a href="http://www.rio-arriba.org/departments_and_divisions/rac_stop/index.html">http://www.rio-arriba.org/departments_and_divisions/rac_stop/index.html</a>	Tierra Amarilla	87575	county government	\$149,606.72	24.08%	11	Improve Hernandez Senior Center with ADA walking path, benches and gazebo and plant trees and shrubs.
Rio Grande Return	<a href="https://riograndereturn.com/">https://riograndereturn.com/</a>	Santa Fe	87505	non-profit	\$88,324.36	45.29%	6	Restoration of native riparian vegetation along Jemez riparian areas, as well as constructing fencing to protect plantings from livestock and/or elk browse. Crewmembers will also support biologists in wildlife habitat monitoring, including fish and Jemez mountain salamander surveys.
Pueblo of Santa Clara	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/scptribaladmin">https://www.facebook.com/scptribaladmin</a>	Espanola	87532	tribe	\$132,663.62	20.01%	25	Restoration of Puye houses and main kiva. Address trail and erosion issues. Rebuild and restore 2 miles of trails and stream in Santa Clara Canyon. Build check dams, prepare area for picnic sites; assist with stream monitoring.
Santa Fe Children's Museum Inc	<a href="https://santafechildrensmuseum.org/">https://santafechildrensmuseum.org/</a>	Santa Fe	87505	non-profit	\$71,942.83	20.08%	6	Youth will work on six projects that enhance the museum and train youth. These include Horno Skills Building, building a pollinator hotel; build a little library and bench; beautify the museum buildings and grounds.
Talking Talons Youth Leadership	<a href="https://www.talkingtalons.org/">https://www.talkingtalons.org/</a>	Cedar Crest	87008	non-profit	\$69,560.81	20.14%	7	The Crew will complete hands-on, projects that include trail maintenance; invasive species removal; erosion work; and plantings in Village of Tijeras, Bernalillo County, Friends of the Sandia Mountains/Cibola National Forest, and Edgewood Soil and Water Conservation District.
Taos Land Trust	<a href="https://taoslandtrust.org/">https://taoslandtrust.org/</a>	Taos	87571	non-profit	\$139,347.04	20.29%	17	Rio Fernando Park: Build hoop houses and grow food for distribution to community; ecological monitoring and mapping; park fences, benches, trails; invasive weed management; sustainable agriculture.
The Forest Stewards Guild Fall	<a href="https://foreststewardsguild.org/vision-mission-principles/">https://foreststewardsguild.org/vision-mission-principles/</a>	Santa Fe	87505	non-profit	\$149,994.06	31.08%	14	Projects will reduce the wildfire risk to communities, restore degraded ecosystems by reducing erosion and the spread of noxious weeds, help protect archaeological resources, and improve recreational opportunities for local communities.



# LIST OF PROJECTS

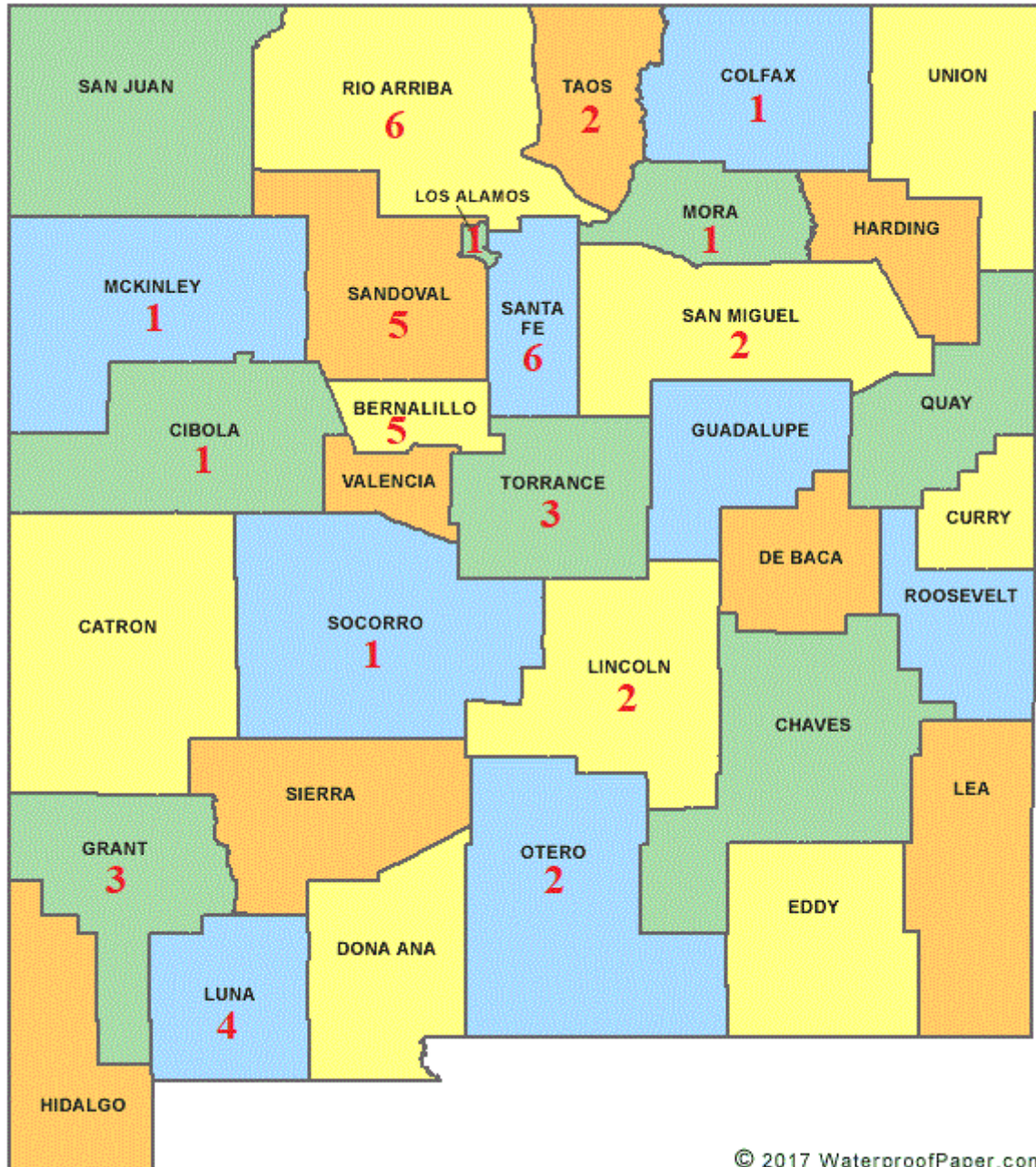
YCC Projects 2021								
Applicant	Website	City	Zip	Type of Organization	YCC Award	% Match	Corps Members Hired	Summary
The Forest Stewards Guild Summer	<a href="https://foreststewardsguild.org/vision-mission-principles/">https://foreststewardsguild.org/vision-mission-principles/</a>	Santa Fe	87505	<a href="#">non-profit</a>	\$149,975.76	25.88%	25	Youth will be hired across 5 ranger districts in three forests. Projects will improve thousands of acres of public and ancestral Pueblo land and the visitor experience for thousands of citizens.
The Village of Columbus Fall	<a href="http://historicvillageofcolumbus.org/">http://historicvillageofcolumbus.org/</a>	Columbus	88030	<a href="#">municipality</a>	\$23,989.28	24.80%	10	YCC Crew Members will help design and install demonstrations gardens, plant trees, install irrigation systems and other landscaping tasks at several Village Public Parks working on Saturdays during the fall semester.
The Village of Columbus Spring	<a href="http://historicvillageofcolumbus.org/">http://historicvillageofcolumbus.org/</a>	Columbus	88030	<a href="#">municipality</a>	\$29,344.91	24.71%	13	See above
Village of Santa Clara	<a href="http://www.villageofsantaclara.org/">http://www.villageofsantaclara.org/</a>	Santa Clara	88026	<a href="#">municipality</a>	\$94,120.99	22.36%	16	Improvements at Fort Bayard and public parks; landscaping, trail building and grounds improvements. Crews will also train to become Fort Bayard History Docents and help inform the public as they tour the Fort grounds or visit the Museum.
YouthWorks Inc	<a href="https://www.santafeyouthworks.org/">https://www.santafeyouthworks.org/</a>	Santa Fe	87505	<a href="#">non-profit</a>	\$149,998.91	49.33%	42	YouthWorks will work in four different areas: hand thinning crew for Collaborative Forest Restoration Program on Rowe Mesa; City of Santa Fe Trails and River restoration; install 3 micro Food Forests. YouthWorks SFYCC will also work on public agricultural farms.
<b>TOTALS:</b>					<b>\$2,337,387.05</b>	<b>39.51%</b>	<b>438</b>	(average)



# PROJECTS BY COUNTY

*Red numbers represent the count of projects in each county*

Projects took place in 17 of New Mexico's 33 counties. Five grantees did projects in two or more counties.





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



***Aldo Leopold High School Spring / Late Summer*** project ran four crews. The Public Art crew completed one mosaic mural, restored another, and began work on a third. The Ecological Monitoring crew restored native plants, avian surveys, riparian monitoring, and developed educational materials for grade school students. The trails crew built two walls alongside trails, and built drainage structures. The Landscaping crew restored a public park orchard, installed native plants, removed invasive weeds, and restored a public garden and composting site.

Total youth hired: 95  
Training sessions: 87



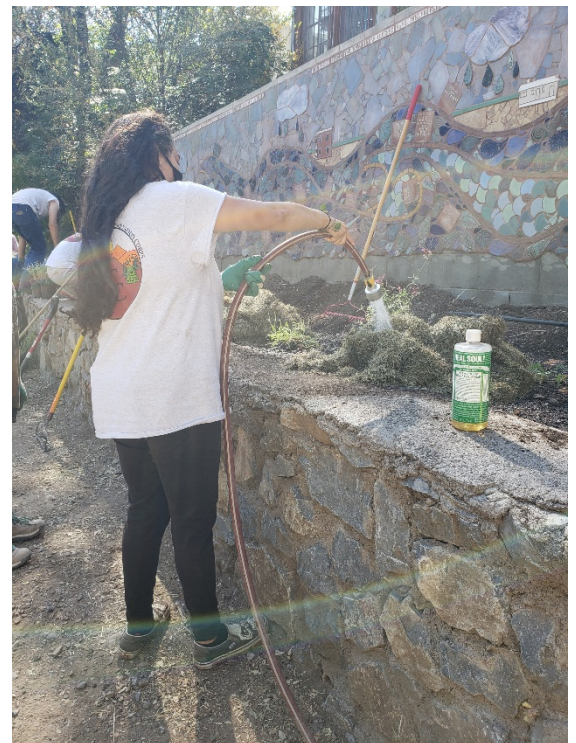


# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



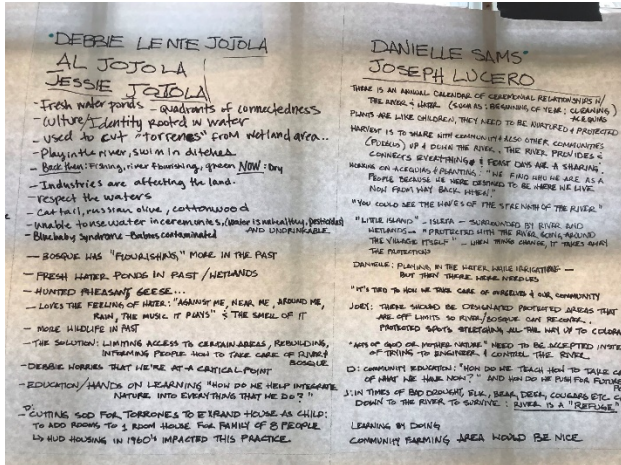
***Aldo Leopold High School Fall*** project ran four crews. The Public Art crew continued work on mural started in the spring. The Ecological Monitoring crew completed two biological surveys; and are monitoring game cameras in the Gila Forest and performed avian surveys. The Trails crews installed a new section of trail; built water bars, repaired walls and also cleaned up an existing trail. The Landscaping crew is working on restoring an orchard in Gough Park.

Total youth hired: 34  
Training sessions: 26





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



**Apprenticeships for Leaders in Mosaic Arts (ALMA)** designed and constructed two 3D mosaic sculptures for the entrance to Valle de Oro Wildlife Refuge in Albuquerque. Elements for the design were drawn from interviews of the South Valley residents who live near the Refuge by Corps members.

Total youth hired: 8  
 Training sessions: 17



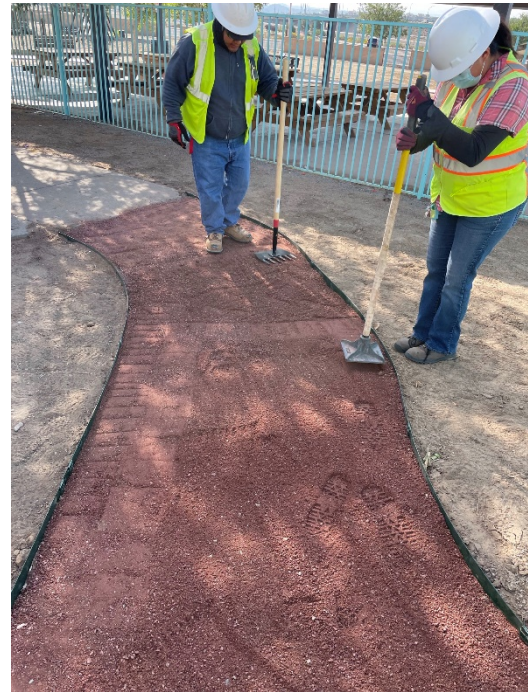


# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

***The City of Gallup*** hired 12 corps members to perform work on the City's trails and nearby Cibola National Forest. Crews installed terraced steps on Climbing Rock trail and made a new paved trail segment at the TDFL field. They worked on these trails: Pyramid, Church Rock Trail & parking lot, Flag Pole, Brickyard Bike, Ramah Pioneer, Training included Orientation, Tool Safety, PPE, OSHA regs, steps & ladders, and Defensive Driving.

Total youth hired: 12

Training sessions: 8





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



**Deming Cesar Chavez Charter High School** are performing two projects. The first one is almost complete, and they will do the second one in the spring. They teamed up with the City of Deming to beautify the city and improve parks and also helped Luna County with events. Progress was slowed by rolling student and staff quarantines and high COVID incidence.

Total youth hired: 15

Training sessions: 2





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

**EcoServants** ran two crews in Otero and Lincoln Counties. They performed multiple trail and beautification projects in and around the Lincoln National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, Fort Stanton and Ruidoso. Corps members built trails, restored trails, seeded bare areas, built erosion control structures, removed graffiti and refurbished structures. They performed work on two specialty trails, including one for senior citizens, horseback riders

Total youth hired: 29  
Training sessions: 14





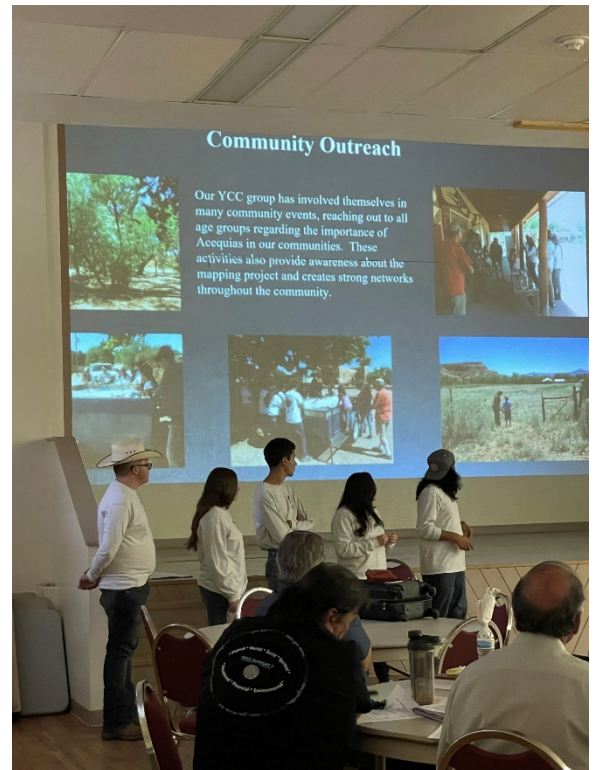
# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## ***East Rio Arriba Soil & Water***

***Conservation District*** continued their long-term work on mapping the acequias of the district, preparing detailed reports and presenting their findings to the Espanola City Council. They were trained in GPS & GIS use, learned the history of acequias in Northern NM. They also participated in a Water Resource using the Rolling Rivers exhibit.

Total youth hired: 5

Training sessions: 10





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

**Forest Stewards Guild Summer** ran four project crews in Cibola, Santa Fe and Carson National Forests. Crews scattered slash, repaired 21 miles of fence, built fence, performed maintenance on 11 miles of trail, marked 14 acres of timber, repaired remote weather stations and wildlife water 'trick tanks', collected water and soil samples, constructed 3 trail kiosks, installed 12 recreational signs, conducted four hours of wildlife surveys, refreshed campground facilities, and made a float for the Mountainair 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade. They received a broad variety of trainings including: wildland firefighting, natural & local history, bird ID, tool safety, forestry, tree ID, wildlife management, job application training, riparian restoration & monitoring.

Total youth hired: 25  
Training sessions: 56





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

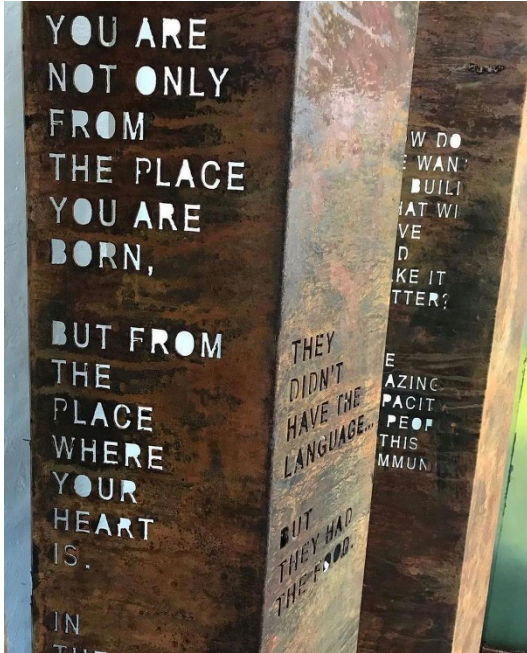
***Forest Stewards Guild Fall*** ran four project crews. They planted 3,971 trees; placed 3,200 protective cones around planted trees; cleared 8 acres with brush saws in preparation for tree planting; constructed 0.36 miles of new trail; maintained 1,320 feet of trail; maintained 735 feet of fence line; removed 10.5 acres of noxious weeds; constructed 1.04 miles of fire line; conducted ecological monitoring on 5 forestry plots; cleared brush from 1,594.65 feet of fire line; and reduced fuels on 6.5 acres. Trainings included Wildland Firefighter training, chainsaw use, defensive driving, crew leader training, active bystander training, first-aid and CPR, erosion control, trail construction and maintenance, tree planting, radio communications, tool sharpening, recreational maintenance, leadership, prescribed fire burn unit analysis and project planning, ecological monitoring, tree felling, and brush clearing using brush saws.

Total youth hired: 14  
Training sessions: 17





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



**The Harwood Art Center** hired a diverse group of young artists who designed an innovative sculpture drawing on oral histories of the surrounding neighborhood. Sculpture components are illuminated using solar energy, and excerpts of the oral history can be listened to with the touch of a button. The sculpture was installed in Mesa Verde Park in Albuquerque.

Total youth hired: 10  
Training sessions: 9





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

***New Mexico Audubon / Santa Fe Botanic Garden*** worked at the Randall Davey Audubon Center (RDAC), the Santa Fe Botanic Gardens (SFBG), and the Leonora Curtin wetland (LCW). One day a week was set aside for training opportunities. At RDAC, they installed erosion controlling media lunas and zuni bowls; at SFBG they removed invasive species, reseeded and tended gardens for harvests donated to Kitchen Angels. Crew leaders also helped with planning and logistics of the Northern NM Master Naturalists program. Trainings included GIS, monitoring, plant ID, erosion control, geology, nature journaling, 1<sup>st</sup> Aid / CPR, sexual harassment, ecology and tours of museum and cultural sites.

Total youth hired: 6

Training sessions: 11





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

**New Mexico State Parks** contracted with the **Rocky Mountain Youth Corps** to build a walk-in tent campground in Sugarite Canyon State Park. Corps members cleared a trail to the campsite, and built 10 wood frames for the tent pads. The campground was not completed due to the amount of labor required to haul in the crusher fines as well as shipping delays of fire rings & food lockers. Corps members attended trainings by RMYC – First Aid/CPR, Sexual Harassment, Substance Abuse Prevention, Communication, Empathy, DEI, Financial Management, Health & Nutrition, Recycling, job search techniques and post secondary options. State Parks provided water, fire and climate training, intro to interpretation, Astronomy, Personal Safety / Exposure control, & intro to backhoe ops and maintenance.

Total youth hired: 6

Training sessions: 11





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



*The Pueblo of Santa Clara* continued their work on restoring structures and walls on Puye Mesa. They also installed in-stream check dams to help rehabilitate the catastrophically damaged Santa Clara watershed. Trainings focused on leadership and teamwork, ancestral ways, trail building, emergency preparedness, and historical preservation. The Pueblo hires youth from Santa Clara and surrounding tribes.

Total youth hired: 24  
Training sessions: 6





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## *Rio Arriba County Healing*

***Memorial*** crew continued to work on the Healing Memorial master plan. Corps members laid a paved pathway, installed plantings and worked on the landscaping.

Total youth hired: 11

Training sessions: 6





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



***Rio Arriba County Precious Age*** crew  
landscaped the senior center in Hernandez. Crews built a  
gazebo for outdoor gatherings, installed benches, ADA  
walking paths and xeriscaping.  
Total youth hired: 11  
Training sessions: 6





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

***Rio Grande Return*** hired youth from Cuba and Los Alamos worked in the Jemez Mountains, Santa Fe County, and Albuquerque Open Space. They build beaver dam analogs in the San Antonio creek to restore the watershed, performed monitoring, removed fence in the Valles Caldera, reseeded areas at Casa San Ysidro and did restoration work at Candelaria Wetlands. Training included chainsaw use, fish, flora and biomass surveys, safety, seeding and propagation.

Total youth hired: 6

Training sessions: 11





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



***Santa Fe Childrens' Museum*** worked on improving Outdoor Access, Sustainable Gardening, and Renovation. The majority of their efforts focused on the Outdoor Space and Earthworks Sustainable Garden where Corps members learned organic maintenance of healthy ecosystems using xeriscape and permaculture principles. Trainings included tool safety, career planning, construction careers, financial literacy, investment, adobe restoration, 1<sup>st</sup> Aid / CPR, and pollinators.

Total youth hired: 6

Training sessions: 16





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



## *Talking Talons Youth Leadership*

worked on Bernalillo County Open Space, the Village of Tijeras, the Friends the Sandia Mountains and Bernalillo County Public Works. Youth worked on trails, facility improvement and erosion control. Training included jobsite management, tool safety, herbicide application, hand saws, trail restoration, stormwater management, plant ID, hazard tree ID, irrigation, recreation protection, tree planting, DEI in environmental education, public speaking, resume building, CPR / 1<sup>st</sup> Aid and self-care.

Total youth hired: 7

Training sessions: 13





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

**Taos Land Trust** hired a summer and fall crew to continue developing Rio Fernando Park. Corps members helped learned and implemented sustainable agriculture, set up unique composting, built garden boxes, harvested honey, learned and engaged in long-term ecological monitoring, built park furniture, built fencing, mapped and removed noxious weeds. They had numerous training sessions, including 1<sup>st</sup> Aid / CPR; permaculture; wildlife, soil, riparian and water monitoring; plant ID; riparian ecology; GIS mapping; irrigation; carpentry; construction; historic reconstructions; and plant uses.

Total youth hired: 17

Training sessions: 64





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

***Village of Columbus*** have two projects, one in spring/summer and one in the fall. Corps members work once a week beautifying and improving various parks and community facilities in Columbus. Specific projects include mulching, painting, tree trimming, laying concrete, and other park improvements. Youth are being trained in each of these skills and First Aid / CPR

Total youth hired: 13 (Spring), 10 (Fall)

Training sessions: 12 (Spring), 8 (Fall)





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

***Village of Santa Clara*** worked on the Fort Bayard historical site theater, parade grounds, administrative building gazebo and Quonset hut. Training included Economic Development, Financial Literacy, CPR and tool safety.

Total youth hired: 16

Training sessions: 5





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

**Youthworks** in Santa Fe improved 1000 yards of trail along the Santa Fe River, constructed fencing, planted fruit trees in parks at Santa Fe and the County's La Bajada Ranch. Trainings included GED work, Life Skills, Mental Health, Survival Skills, public art, and sustainable agriculture.

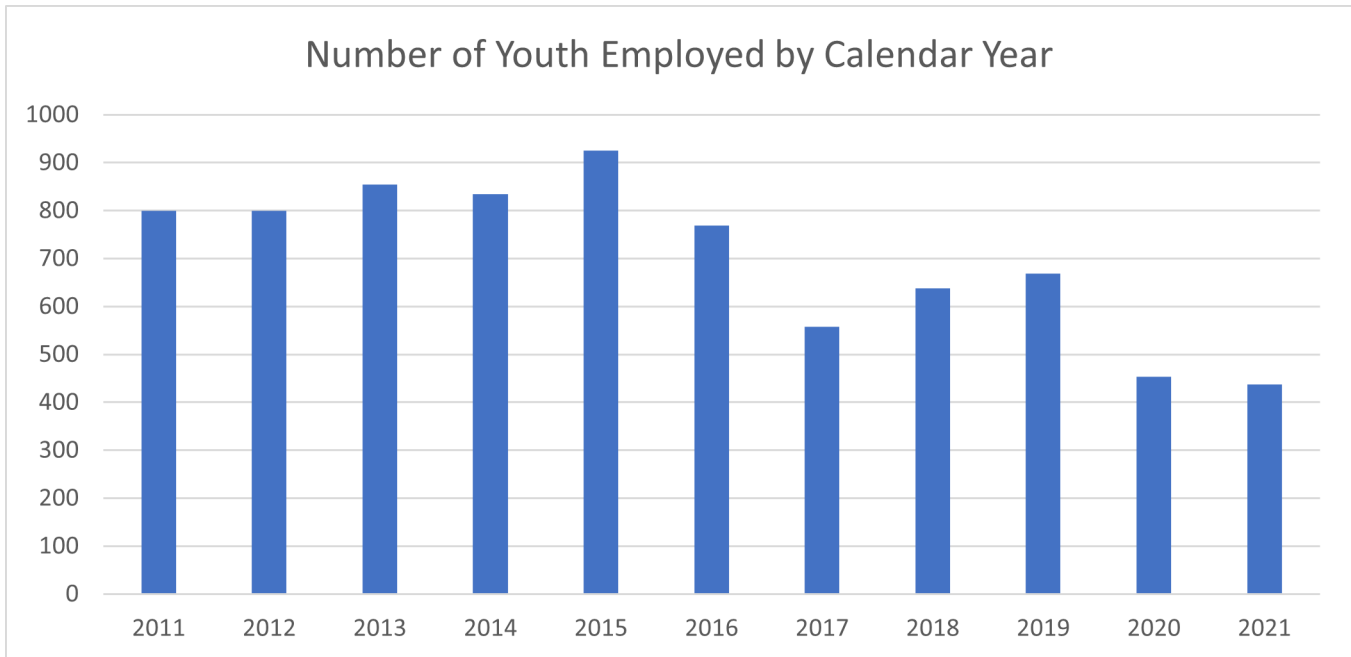
Total youth hired: 42

Training sessions: 6





# YOUTH EMPLOYED



In 2021, 438 youth were hired, 50 more than proposed. This is an encouraging reversal of the situation in 2020 when far fewer corps members were hired than proposed, due to COVID19 measures. Several projects offered higher wages than in previous years, and many reported corps members were some of the best workers they've hired. Some projects reported difficulty with recruitment, but this is not reflected in the numbers overall.

The last two years have been negatively impacted by COVID19; however, we are optimistic numbers will rebound in 2022.



EcoServants out of Ruidoso hired 29 corps members this year! The Lincoln crew are pictured here.



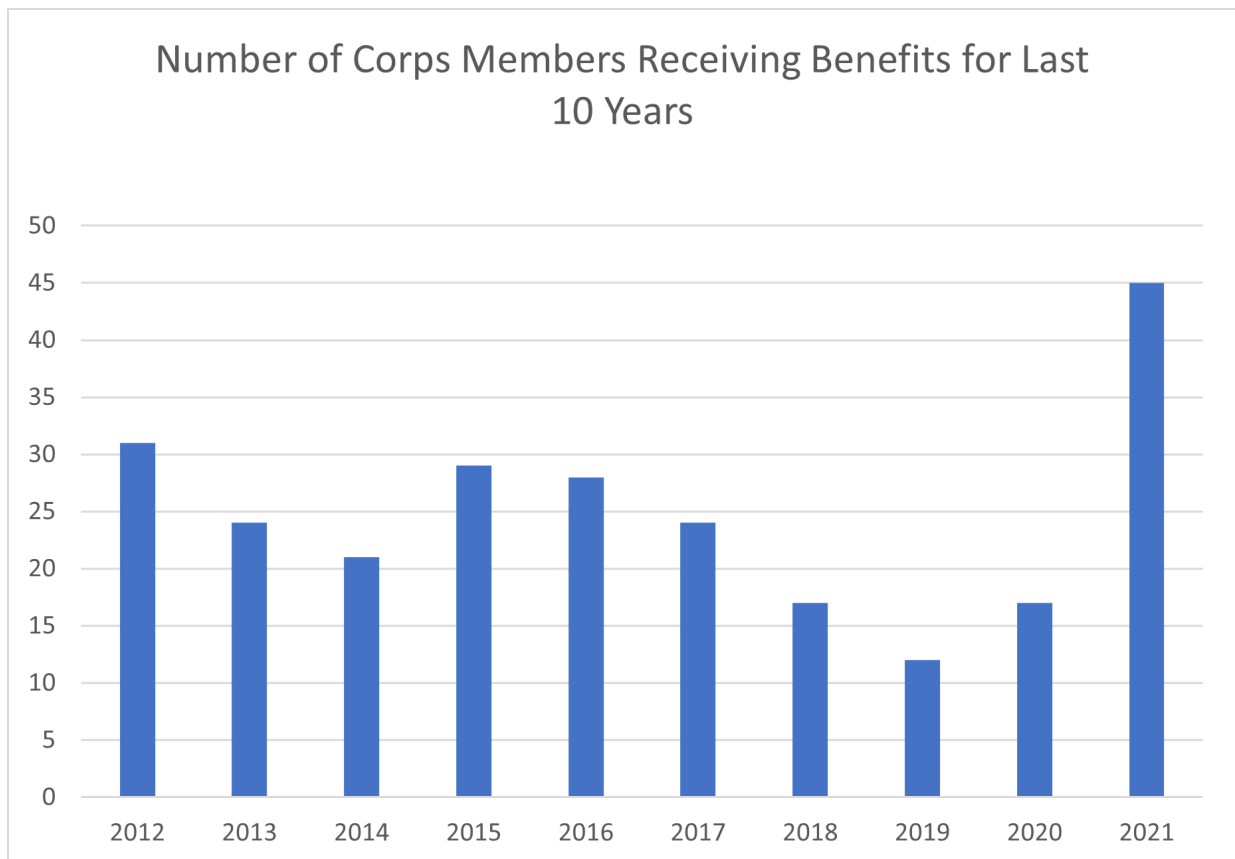
# CORPS MEMBER BENEFITS



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). Corps members who work at least 32 weeks may receive a pro-rated benefit.

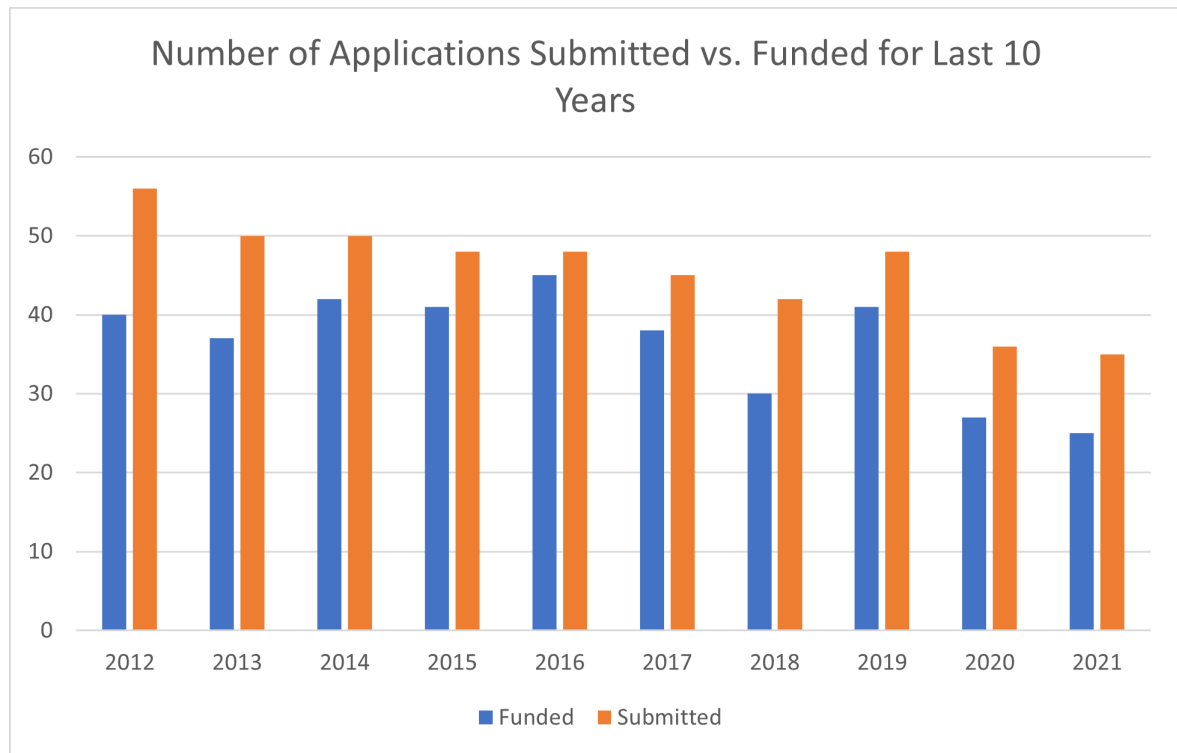
In 2020, the YCC initiated a process to ensure all eligible corps members receive their benefits, and added this as a performance-based measure budget measure starting in FY22. The target is 85% of corps members who are eligible receive their benefits.

In FY21, we contacted 72 eligible corps members, including those from the prior year who were not contacted. Forty-five (63%) responded and received benefits. Some of these youth will also be eligible next year and they may respond to us then.





# FUNDING SUMMARY



Overall, YCC funds an average of 38 projects per year. The last two years reflect the disruption from the pandemic.



*Pueblo of Santa Clara corps members restoring an ancestral home*

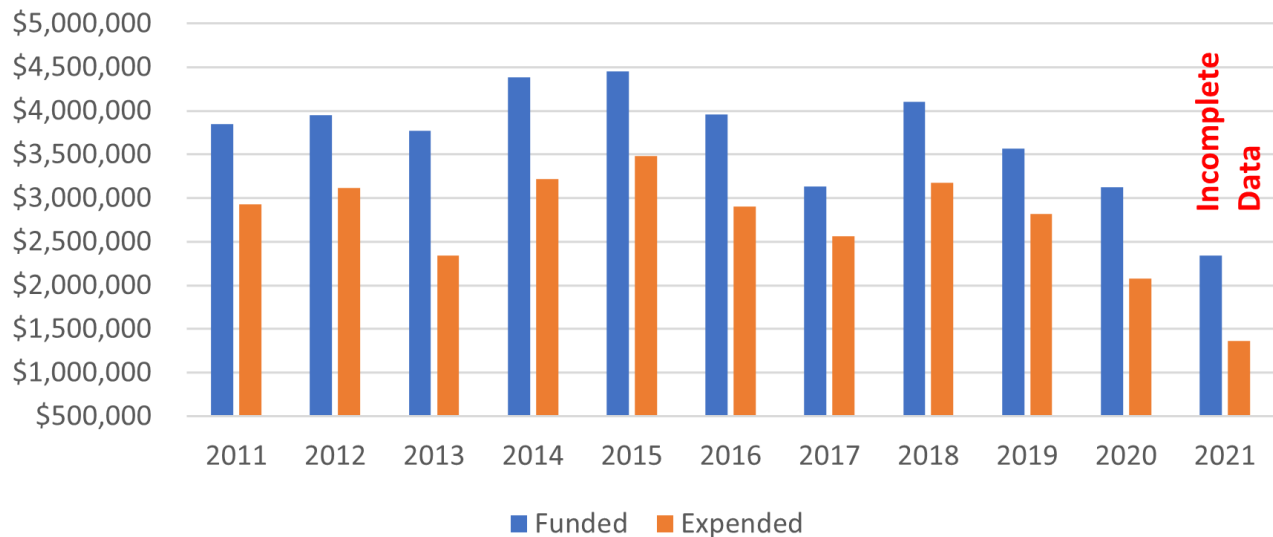


*Escuela del Sol crew working on their sculpture*



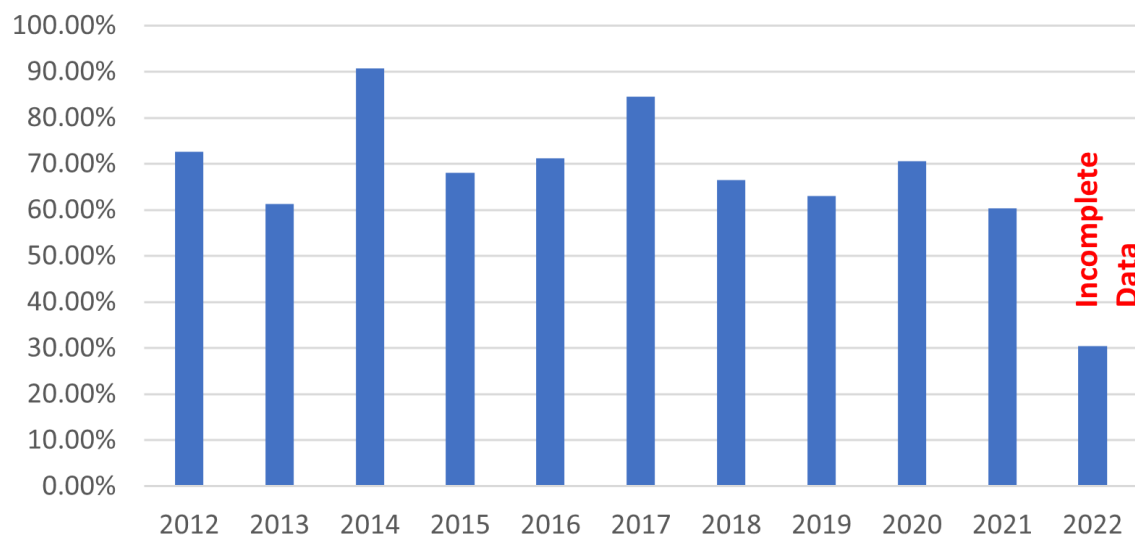
# FUNDING SUMMARY

Amount Funded vs. Amount Expended for Last 10 Years



Grantees spend an average of 75% of monies funded. YCC projects are complex – corps members leave projects early, and supplies are often donated instead of purchased. The returned money goes into the fund balance. YCC is implementing Cooperative Procurement Agreements with state agencies to put that money back into corps member employment.

Contributed Amounts as a Percentage of Funds Expended for Last 10 Years



On average, grantees contributed in-kind amounts equivalent to 67% of funds expended. Contributions include staff time, trainings, volunteers, equipment purchase and rental, and transportation.

In 2022, YCC established a 20% minimum for in-kind contributions. Prior to this, grantees were incentivized to pledge large amounts that were difficult to document, resulting in unnecessary administrative burdens for both grantee and YCC.



# DEMOGRAPHICS AND CORPS MEMBER SURVEYS

## 2020 Survey

Gender	Age Ranges	After YCC
Male: 65%	14-15: 17%	High School: 56%
Female: 35%	16-17: 34%	College: 40%
	18-20: 20%	Vocational School: 3.5%
	21+: 29%	Employed: 40% (includes Part-time employment)

## 2021 Survey (incomplete)

Gender	Age Ranges	After YCC (new categories added this year)
Male: 63%	14-15: 24%	Middle or High School: 34%
Female: 37%	16-17: 37%	Community College: 11%
	18-20: 22%	Four-year college: 26%
	21+: 20%	Trade or vocational school: 5.3%
		Intern or apprenticeship: 11%
		Job (includes PT employment): 42%

## What Corps Members said:

I'm proud that I've helped create something that will stay for many generations to come.

It was my first job and it was incredible...Most importantly, I'm not shy anymore and I'm proud of that.

It has helped me see what I really want to do in the future.

It helped me feel better about myself and give me a boost I needed.

I have learned patience and team skills.

I got the qualifications and certificates to be a wildland firefighter.

This experience helped me with knowledge I could use to become a game warden.

I really enjoy a full day of work, mostly outdoors!

I became much more proficient in plant identification and harvesting plants without injuring them.

I have more confidence in my leadership skills.

I'm proud to see the community enjoying our trails.

It gave me the experience to find jobs in forestry.



# PROGRESS REPORT

Below is a list of our recommendations from the 2020 annual report and our progress in achieving them.

2020 Goals and Recommendations	2021 Progress
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.	Bill failed; will team up with Americorps in 2023 and craft a better piece of legislation.
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.	Updated internal tracking app to simplify some processes and increase accuracy of data.  Obtained several exceptions to the RFP from State Purchasing that should help reduce or eliminate disqualification of applicants due to technicalities.  Grant basics are posted on website.
Develop and maintain grant guidelines and FAQs on the website; disperse through social media, virtual meetings and trainings.	FAQs must be posted on State Purchasing website during the time RFP is open.
Work with knowledgeable project sponsors, Commission members and other partners to develop 1 - 3 'best practices' benchmarks tied to grant applications.	This goal needs to be revisited; probably impossible to implement fairly.
Build a library of best practices resources. This may include training resources (online and conferences), research publications, 'how-to' manuals.	Gathering resources; still need to figure out how to present or communicate without violating procurement code or anti-donation clause.
Initiate an annual YCC conference to provide a forum for project sponsors to share processes and receive training.	Will need to issue an RFP for planning and implementing event.
Ensure 85% of all corps members eligible for benefits receive them.	63% of eligible corps members received benefits this year; sometimes difficult to find corps members.
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.	Working with these agencies to enter into Cooperative Procurements that will enable them to hire corps crews.
Cross-post job openings from related agencies, non-profits and businesses on YCC's social media.	Set up a job posting page on website; update it regularly.
Develop an updatable multi-media NMYCC orientation training that covers our mission, core values, history, benefits etc.	Will need to issue an ITB for this service.
Develop 1 - 3 grant benchmarks that ensures all corps members are receiving work ethics, stewardship and heritage training.	Wrap these items into orientation training.



# GOALS for 2022

- Finalize Cooperative Procurement Agreements with other state agencies.
- Hire Budget Analyst position
- Work on backlog of project inspections.
- Issue RFP for creating an orientation video for YCC and other marketing materials.
- Develop an outline with specifics for a YCC conference
- Formalize a process to connect YCC corps members to job and training opportunities
- Get the funding cycle back on track so awards are announced before the Legislature starts.



View of the Sugarite Canyon State Park tent campground



# Appendix A: COMMISSION & STAFF BIOS

## 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), Muskoke 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.



# Appendix A: COMMISSION & STAFF BIOS

## 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.

**Carmen Austin** is Diné (Navajo Nation) from northern Arizona. She is the Climate Change Specialist for the [New Mexico Forestry Division](#) where she is responsible for implementing strategies of the Forest Action Plan that incorporate climate change science and adaptation and mitigation measures into forestry practices. These practices provide technical assistance to private forest landowners and allow the Forestry Division to participate with cooperators and collaboratives interested in natural resource management and watershed protection. Carmen has previously held positions as the Woody Biomass Program Manager in Santa Fe and District Forester on the Las Vegas District for the Forestry Division. Carmen also served as YCC Interim Director for a short duration. She is proficient on forest practices for the Commission. Carmen is a graduate of Northern Arizona University, School of Forestry and currently lives in Glorieta Pass with retired NM State Park Ranger Rick.



**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 Assistant Commissioner of Surface Resources 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.





# Appendix A: COMMISSION & STAFF BIOS

## 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 supporting New Mexico's youth.