



2025 Raleigh Youth Conservation Corps with CCNC

VOLUNTEER SERVICES PROGRAM
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Program Overview



August 8, 2025, marked the conclusion of the sixth year of hosting the Raleigh Youth Conservation Corps in partnership with Conservation Corps North Carolina. This continued partnership between Raleigh Parks and CCNC gives local youth the chance to carry forward the legacy of the 1930s Civilian Conservation Corps by engaging in conservation-focused projects throughout Raleigh.

Two young adult leaders guided a four-week and a three-week crew, each consisting of six teenagers. Throughout the summer, participants completed a range of environmental projects and took part in educational sessions both on and off-site. Each day began with a stretch circle and safety briefing at the outdoor classroom near the Gatekeeper's Cottage before heading to the designated worksite.

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Projects and Education



The 2025 Raleigh Youth Conservation Corps contributed to important projects across multiple Raleigh sites, including Annie Louise Wilkerson Nature Preserve, Crabtree Creek Trail, Dix Park, Durant Nature Preserve, Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserve, Rocky Branch Trail, and Walnut Creek Wetland Park. Their work included surveying leaf-mining insects, box turtles, Ashe trees, and soil; removing invasive plants to improve safety and visibility; and restoring trails and stream areas to support environmental health.

These activities provided hands-on experience in topics such as plant and animal identification, erosion control, and trail maintenance. The crews had the unique opportunity to collaborate with and learn from environmental professionals in various fields.

Featured Project Metrics

- 2240 hours of work
- 700 bales of pine straw spread
- 2.5 acres of invasive management
- 0.5 miles of trail built/improved
- 250 feet of sensitive plant fencing installed
- 100 plants planted
- 400 plants staged for art installation
- 3 erosion devices installed
- 19 drainage devices maintained
- 118 Ashe trees surveyed

Education Sessions and Demographics



This year's participants represented ten zip codes across Raleigh, Holly Springs, and Knightdale, offering a valuable opportunity for youth to connect with peers beyond their neighborhoods. Notably, this year's crew included three returning members and welcomed a guest speaker who had previously served on a Raleigh Youth Conservation Corps crew.

In addition to gaining new skills, the program helped them build professional networks, explore potential career paths, and foster a deeper connection to public green spaces through education. These experiences lead to newfound interest in wetland protection and arboriculture, sparking meaningful conversations with others.

Featured Educational Sessions

- Leaf-Mining Insects
- Soil Surveying
- Utilizing Geographic Information Services in Raleigh
- Improving the World Through Plant Science Innovation
- Sustainable Agriculture
- From Wasteland to Wonder
- Water Quality and Green Stormwater Infrastructure

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Alumni in Action



For the first time since the Raleigh Youth Conservation Corps program launch, we reached out to former crew members to see where they are now. Learn how their experiences inspire their continued commitment to conservation.

Maya Hardison is double majoring in Environmental Technology & Management and Sustainable Materials & Technology at North Carolina State University and contributes to water quality research in Southeast Raleigh near Walnut Creek Wetland Park. Once Maya graduates, she hopes to create a nonprofit focused on educating people on native, sustainable materials. Her experience with the crew reminded her that she could shamelessly enjoy working hard, celebrate herself, and do good in the world at the same time.

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Chapman Warren is enrolled at Clemson University and is studying forestry. Each summer, he has been working as a wildland firefighter in Colorado and Nevada. Some of his favorite memories are working with the crew and the sense of comradery among them. Chapman plans to continue pursuing a job that is physically active and engaged with the natural world.

Annie Allen is studying Horticultural Science at North Carolina State University and spent her summer as an intern at the North Carolina Botanical Garden's Coker Arboretum. She continues to grow her appreciation for the care that goes into maintaining public parks – noting the daily dedication it takes to make spaces successful.

Madison Lamptey is currently enrolled at Duke University and is involved in researching Dorothea Dix Hospital's sister institution, Cherry Hospital. She plans to declare her major in History and Literature. She has spent her summers in nature, joining the Uwharrie youth crew and backpacking through the Yosemite wilderness as a NatureBridge Armstrong Scholar. Madison credits her experience with CCNC for helping her find her voice and transforming how she relates to the natural world, adding that conservation is becoming increasingly more diverse, accessible, and welcoming.

Cayla Lassiter was accepted to North Carolina A&T University and is majoring in Environmental Studies. During her time with the conservation crew, she found fulfillment in giving back through environmental work and continues to share stories about the projects they accomplished.



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Program Support



The Raleigh Youth Conservation program would not be possible without the dedication and support of its leaders, donors, educators, and field experts. Thank you to Conservation Corps North Carolina for their continued partnership with Raleigh Parks, and to North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives, the Woodson Family, the Dix Park Conservancy, and the Invasive Species Program for their generous financial contributions. We also extend our appreciation to the following organizations and individuals who provided project guidance and engaging educational presentations: BASF, Leaf and Limb, NCSU Innovative Plant Science, and the following Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources groups: Annie Louise Wilkerson Nature Preserve staff, Athletics Program staff, Destination Park Crew, Durant Nature Preserves staff, GIS staff, Greenway Vegetation Crew, Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserves staff, Department Director, Community Relations Supervisor, Volunteer Services Program, and Walnut Creek Wetland Park staff.

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