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21ST CENTURY CONSERVATION SERVICE CORPS ACT

DECEMBER 6, 2018.—Ordered to be printed

Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 1403]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to which was referred the bill (S. 1403) to amend the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 to establish the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps to place youth and veterans in national service positions to conserve, restore, and enhance the great outdoors of the United States, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and recommends that the bill, as amended, do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "21st Century Conservation Service Corps Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

Section 203 of the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 1722) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking "under section 204" and inserting "by section 204(a)(1)";

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (8) through (13) as paragraphs (9) through (14), respectively;

(3) by inserting after paragraph (7) the following:

"(8) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'institution of higher education' has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002).

"(B) EXCLUSION.—The term 'institution of higher education' does not include—

"(i) an institution described in section 101(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(b)); or

"(ii) an institution outside the United States, as described in section 102(a)(1)(C) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(a)(1)(C)).";

(4) in paragraph (9) (as so redesignated)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ", as follows" and inserting "and other conservation and restoration initiatives, as follows"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

"(E) To protect, restore, or enhance marine, estuarine, riverine, and coastal habitat ecosystem components—

"(i) to promote the recovery of threatened species, endangered species, and managed fisheries;

"(ii) to restore fisheries, protected resources, and habitats impacted by oil and chemical spills and natural disasters; or

"(iii) to enhance the resilience of coastal ecosystems, communities, and economies through habitat conservation.";

(5) in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (11) (as so redesignated), by striking "individuals between the ages of 16 and 30, inclusive," and inserting "individuals between the ages of 16 and 30, inclusive, or veterans age 35 or younger";

(6) in paragraph (13) (as so redesignated)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking "and" at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and (C) by adding at the end the following:

"(C) with respect to the National Marine Sanctuary System, coral reefs, and other coastal, estuarine, and marine habitats, and other land and facilities administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Secretary of Commerce."; and

(7) by adding at the end the following:

"(15) VETERAN.—The term 'veteran' has the meaning given the term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.".

SEC. 3. PUBLIC LANDS CORPS PROGRAM.

Section 204 of the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 1723) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following:

"(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS CORPS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established in the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Commerce a corps, to be known as the 'Public Lands Corps".

"(2) NO EFFECT ON OTHER AGENCIES.—Nothing in this subsection precludes the establishment of a public lands corps by the head of a Federal department or agency other than a department described in paragraph (1), in accordance with this Act."; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the first sentence, by striking "individuals between the ages of 16 and 30, inclusive," and inserting "individuals between the ages of 16 and 30, inclusive, and veterans age 35 or younger"; and

(B) in the second sentence, by striking "section 137(b) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990" and inserting "paragraphs (1), (2), (4), and (5) of section 137(a) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12591(a))".

SEC. 4. TRANSPORTATION.

Section 205 of the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 1724) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(e) TRANSPORTATION.—The Secretary may provide to Corps participants who reside in their own homes transportation to and from appropriate conservation project sites.".

SEC. 5. RESOURCE ASSISTANTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 206(a) of the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 1725(a)) is amended by striking the first sentence and inserting the following: "The Secretary may provide individual placements of resource assistants to carry out research or resource protection activities on behalf of the Secretary.".

(b) DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY.—Section 121(a) of the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012 (16 U.S.C. 1725a), is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking "Secretary of the Interior" and inserting "Secretary (as defined in section 203 of the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 1722))";

(B) by striking "paragraph (1)" and inserting "paragraph (2)"; and

(C) by striking "with a land managing agency of the Department of the Interior"; and

(2) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking "with a land managing agency" and inserting "with the Secretary (as so defined)".

SEC. 6. COMPENSATION AND EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS.

Section 207 of the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 1726) is amended—

(1) by striking the section heading and inserting "compensation and terms of service";

(2) by redesignating subsections (b) and (c) as subsections (c) and (d), respectively;

(3) by inserting after subsection (a) the following:

"(b) EDUCATIONAL CREDIT.—The Secretary may provide a Corps participant with an educational credit that may be applied towards a program of postsecondary education at an institution of higher education that agrees to award the credit for participation in the Corps.";

(4) in subsection (c) (as so redesignated)—

(A) by striking "Each participant" and inserting the following:

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Each participant"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) INDIAN YOUTH SERVICE CORPS.—With respect to the Indian Youth Service Corps established under section 210, the Secretary shall establish the term of service of participants in consultation with the affected Indian tribe.";

(5) in subsection (d) (as so redesignated)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively, and indenting the subparagraphs appropriately;

(B) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) (as so redesignated), by striking "The Secretary" and inserting the following:

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary"; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) TIME-LIMITED APPOINTMENT.—For purposes of section 9602 of title 5, United States Code, a former member of the Corps hired by the Secretary under paragraph (1)(B) for a time-limited appointment shall be considered to be appointed initially under open, competitive examination."; and

(6) by adding at the end the following:

"(e) APPLICABILITY TO QUALIFIED YOUTH OR CONSERVATION CORPS.—The hiring and compensation standards described in this section shall apply to any individual participating in an appropriate conservation project through a qualified youth or conservation corps, including an individual placed through a contract or cooperative agreement, as approved by the Secretary.".

SEC. 7. REPORTING AND DATA COLLECTION.

Title II of the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 1721 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating sections 209 through 211 as sections 211 through 213, respectively;

(2) by inserting after section 208 the following:

"SEC. 209. REPORTING AND DATA COLLECTION.

"(a) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Act, and annually thereafter, the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service, in coordination with the Secretaries, shall submit to Congress a report that includes data on the Corps, including—

"(1) the number of participants enrolled in the Corps and the length of the term of service for each participant;

"(2) the projects carried out by Corps participants, categorized by type of project and Federal agency;

"(3) the total amount and sources of funding provided for the service of participants;

"(4) the type of service performed by participants and the impact and accomplishments of the service; and

"(5) any other similar data determined to be appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service or the Secretaries.

"(b) DATA.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretaries shall submit to the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service the data described in subsection (a).

"(c) DATA COLLECTION.—The Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service may coordinate with qualified youth or conservation corps to improve the collection of the required data described in subsection (a).

"(d) COORDINATION.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries shall, to the maximum extent practicable, coordinate with each other to carry out activities authorized under this Act, including—

"(A) the data collection and reporting requirements of this section; and

"(B) implementing and issuing guidance on eligibility for noncompetitive hiring status under section 207(d).

"(2) DESIGNATION OF COORDINATORS.—The Secretary shall designate a coordinator to coordinate and serve as the primary point of contact for any activity of the Corps carried out by the Secretary."; and

(3) in subsection (c) of section 212 (as so redesignated), by striking "211" and inserting "213".

SEC. 8. INDIAN YOUTH SERVICE CORPS.

Title II of the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 1721 et seq.) (as amended by section 7) is amended by inserting after section 209 the following:

"SEC. 210. INDIAN YOUTH SERVICE CORPS.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—There is established within the Public Lands Corps a program to be known as the 'Indian Youth Service Corps' that—

"(1) enrolls participants between the ages of 16 and 30, inclusive, and veterans age 35 or younger, a majority of whom are Indians;

"(2) is established pursuant to an agreement between an Indian tribe and a qualified youth or conservation corps for the benefit of the members of the Indian tribe; and

"(3) carries out appropriate conservation projects on eligible service land.

"(b) AUTHORIZATION OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with Indian tribes and qualified youth or conservation corps for the establishment and administration of the Indian Youth Service Corps.

"(c) GUIDELINES.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Act, the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with Indian tribes, shall issue guidelines for the management of the Indian Youth Service Corps, in accordance with this Act and any other applicable Federal laws.".

PURPOSE

The purpose of S. 1403, as ordered reported, is to amend the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (PLCA, 16 U.S.C. 1721 et seq.) to increase the number of youth, Tribal youth, and veterans in national service positions to conserve, restore, and enhance the great outdoors of the United States.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Great Depression. The program employed more than 2.5 million young men to work on conservation projects across the nation. The original "CCC Boys" received an education, job training, and a modest wage, and the parks, forests, trails, and structures they created are still used today.

When the United States entered World War II, many CCC members, having received basic skills and training through their Corps experience, entered the armed forces. Soon thereafter, the CCC program ended but its legacy continues through the more than 150 Corps operating nationwide today.

The Public Lands Corps, one of the modern successors of the CCC, was established by the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (Public Law 103–82) to encourage young adults to carry out a wide range of service projects on public lands. In 2005, the 1993 Act was amended to expand the use of the Corps and the opportunities it

promised for young people around the country. Since then, the Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture have supported a wide range of Public Lands Corps projects. These projects have a strong record of restoring, maintaining, and improving public lands in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

Public Land Corps programs benefit young men and women by providing them with public service, service-learning, job training, and work opportunities. The programs seek to introduce a diverse group of young people to careers in natural and cultural resource stewardship and public service by working directly with conservation professionals in natural resource agencies. This work also promotes the understanding of and appreciation for the agencies' missions, and provides potential pathways to Federal careers in these agencies.

S. 1403 amends the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 to expand the number of American youth and veterans who work to protect, restore, enhance, and increase public access to America's great outdoors. In addition, the bill establishes a Tribal Youth Corps to include and attract underserved populations, and increases the number of Federal agencies that are eligible to create Public Lands Corps programs. Unlike the original CCC, S. 1403 aims to cultivate public-private partnerships to expand the capacity of existing Corps and incubate new Corps where there is need.

There is a large backlog of priority projects on public lands awaiting completion. There is also a high demand for national service positions, with applications to existing national service corps programs consistently exceeding the number of available positions. S. 1403 seeks to address these two needs by putting America's youth, particularly Tribal youth and returning veterans, to work protecting, restoring, and enhancing America's great outdoors.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

S. 1403 was introduced by Senators McCain, Alexander, Bennet, and Udall on June 21, 2017. The National Parks Subcommittee held a hearing on S. 1403 on July 19, 2017.

In the House of Representatives, Representative McSally introduced a related bill, H.R. 2987, on June 21, 2017.

In the 114th Congress, a similar bill, S. 1993, was introduced by Senators McCain and Bennet on August 5, 2015. The National Parks Subcommittee held a hearing on S. 1993 on March 17, 2016.

Another similar bill, S. 1160, was introduced by Senators Udall, Bennet, Heinrich, and Tester on April 30, 2015.

In the House of Representatives, Representative McSally introduced a related bill, H.R. 5114, on April 28, 2016. On June 23, 2016, the Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on H.R. 5114.

Another similar bill, H.R. 2167, was introduced by Representative Grijalva on April 30, 2015. The Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on H.R. 2167 on June 23, 2016.

At its business meeting on October 2, 2018, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, on a voice vote, ordered S. 1403 favorably reported, as amended.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, in open business session on October 2, 2018, by a majority voice vote of a quorum present, recommends that the Senate pass S. 1403, if amended as described herein. Senator Lee asked to be recorded as voting no.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

During its consideration of S. 1403, the Committee adopted an amendment in the nature of a substitute. The substitute amendment replaces the short title; updates the definitions to the PLCA; expands the Public Lands Corps to authorize the participation of additional Federal agencies; and expands the qualified participants eligible to enroll in Public Lands Corps programs. The substitute amendment also authorizes the applicable Secretary to provide additional transportation options to Public Lands Corps' participants; individual placements of resource assistants to carry out research or resource protection activities; and educational credits to program participants that may be applied towards a postsecondary education program for participation in the Public Lands Corps. The substitute amendment further establishes and provides equity for all Indian Youth Service Corps; clarifies the status of former Corps participants hired for time-limited appointments; applies all compensation and hiring standards to any individual participating in corps projects through a qualified youth or conservation corps; requires additional reporting and data collection; and expands direct hire authority to additional Federal agencies.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Sec. 1. Short title

Section 1 contains the short title.

Sec. 2. Definitions

Section 2 amends Section 203 of the PLCA (16 U.S.C. 1722) to modify definitions for the terms "Priority Project," "Qualified Youth or Conservation Corps," and "Secretary," and add definitions for the terms "Institution of Higher Education" and "Veteran."

Sec. 3. Public Lands Corps program

Section 3 amends Section 204 of the PLCA (16 U.S.C. 1723) by adding the Department of Commerce to those federal agencies (i.e., the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture) for which a "Public Lands Corps" is established and makes clear that other Federal departments or agencies are not precluded from establishing a Public Lands Corps. This section also amends section 204(b) of the PLCA to allow veterans age 35 or younger to participate in the program, and modifies enrollment criteria.

Sec. 4. Transportation

Section 4 amends section 205 of the PLCA (16 U.S.C. 1724) by adding a new subsection (e) to authorize the Secretary to provide participants with transportation to a project site.

Sec. 5. Resource assistants

Subsection (a) amends section 206(a) of the PLCA (16 U.S.C. 1725(a)) to include the updated definition of the term "Secretary" to provide the Secretaries of Agriculture and Commerce with the authority to provide individual placements of resource assistants to carry out research or resource protection activities.

Subsection (b) amends section 121(a) of the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012 (16 U.S.C. 1725a) to include the updated definition of the term "Secretary" to provide the Secretaries of Agriculture and Commerce with direct hire authority under this section.

Sec. 6. Compensation and employment standards

Section 6 amends section 207 of the PLCA (16 U.S.C. 1726) to insert a new subsection (b) to authorize the Secretary to provide a Public Lands Corps participant with an educational credit for a postsecondary education program at an institution of higher education that agrees to award such credit. This section also redesignates the subsections accordingly.

This section also modifies subsection (c), as redesignated, to require the Secretary to establish the term of service of participants in the Indian Youth Corps established in section 210 in consultation with the affected Indian Tribe.

This section further adds a new paragraph (2) to subsection (d), as redesignated. The new subsection directs certain time limited appointments to be considered as being appointed under open-competitive examination.

This section also adds a new subsection (e) to apply hiring and compensation standards to all individuals participating in an appropriate conservation projects through a qualified youth or conservation corps, including an individual placed through a contract or cooperative agreement.

Sec. 7. Reporting and data collection

Section 7 amends Title II of the PLCA to insert a new section 209 on reporting and data collection and redesignating the applicable sections accordingly. The new section 209 requires the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Corporation for National and Community Service (Corporation), in coordination with the Secretaries, to submit a report to Congress that includes Public Lands Corps data, within two years of the Act's enactment and annually thereafter. The specified reporting includes the number of participants enrolled in the Corps and each participant's service term length; the projects, categorized by and Federal agency, carried out by participants; the total amount and funding sources provided for participants' service; the type of service performed and the impact and accomplishments of such service; and any other similar data determined to be appropriate by the CEO or the Secretaries.

Pursuant to the new section 209, the Secretaries are required to submit the specified data to the Corporation's CEO within one year after the Act's enactment and annually thereafter. The CEO of the Corporation is authorized to coordinate with qualified youth or conservation corps to improve data collection. The Secretaries are further directed to coordinate with each other, to the maximum extent practicable, to carry out this Act's duties and activities, including

data collection and reporting, as well as implementing and issuing noncompetitive hiring status eligibility guidance. The Secretary must also designate a coordinator to coordinate and serve as the primary point of contact for any Corps activity carried out by the Secretary.

Sec. 8. Indian Youth Service Corps

Section 8 amends Title II of the PLCA (as amended by section 7) by inserting a new section 210 to establish the Indian Youth Service Corps. The Indian Youth Service Corps is to enroll participants between the ages of 16 and 30, inclusive, and veterans age 35 or younger, a majority of whom are Indians; be established pursuant to an agreement between an Indian Tribe and a qualified youth or conservation corps for the benefit of the Indian Tribe members; and carry out appropriate conservation projects on eligible service lands. The Secretary is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements with Indian Tribes and qualified youth or conservation corps for the establishment and administration of the Indian Youth Service Corps. Not later than 18 months after enactment, the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Indian tribes, is required to issue guidance for the management of the Indian Youth Service Corps, in accordance with this Act and any other applicable Federal laws.

COST AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The following estimate of the costs of this measure has been provided by the Congressional Budget Office:

S. 1403 would amend the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993, which governs programs that employ young adults to work on lands managed by the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Forest Service.

Existing Public Lands Corps (PLC) programs vary by agency and funding source. Although historically some agencies have received specific appropriations to carry out the program, the National Park Service often has derived funding from recreation fees that the agency can use without further appropriation action. Additionally, most PLC projects are carried out through partnerships with existing qualified youth or conservation corps in each state. The costs of those projects are split between the federal government and the participating service corps.

S. 1403 would, among other things:

- Expand the program to include the Department of Commerce (specifically, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA),
- Assist Indian tribes and related youth groups with the operation of the Indian Youth Service Corps,
- Offer an educational credit as a form of compensation for participation in the PLC,
- Require participating agencies to designate program coordinators,
- Require data collection and a subsequent report to the Congress about the operations and effectiveness of the PLC programs,
- Open the program to veterans under the age of 35, and

• Authorize agencies to use appropriated funds to provide transportation subsidies to program participants.

Using information from DOI, the Forest Service and NOAA, CBO estimates that S. 1403 would not significantly increase spending subject to appropriation.

Enacting S. 1403 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply

CBO estimates that enacting S. 1403 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2029.

S. 1403 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

On May 4, 2018, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 2987, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on January 17, 2018. The two pieces of legislation are similar, however H.R. 2987 would expand and authorize more activities under the Public Lands Corps Act than S. 1403. CBO estimates that neither bill would have a significant effect on the federal budget.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Jacob Fabian. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

REGULATORY IMPACT EVALUATION

In compliance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee makes the following evaluation of the regulatory impact which would be incurred in carrying out S. 1403. The bill is not a regulatory measure in the sense of imposing Government-established standards or significant economic responsibilities on private individuals and businesses.

No personal information would be collected in administering the program. Therefore, there would be no impact on personal privacy.

Little, if any, additional paperwork would result from the enactment of S. 1403, as ordered reported.

CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING

S. 1403, as ordered reported, does not contain any congressionally directed spending items, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

The testimony provided by the Department of the Interior at the July 19, 2017, hearing on S.1403 follows:

STATEMENT OF ROBERT VOGEL, ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Chairman Daines, Ranking Member Hirono, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on S. 1403, to amend the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 to establish the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps to place youth and veterans in national service positions to con-

serve, restore, and enhance the great outdoors of the United States, and for other purposes.

The Department recommends that Congress defer action on S. 1403 until we have an opportunity to review all of the Department's youth programs and determine the most cost-effective strategies for engaging children, youth, and young adults in our nation's great outdoors. This legislation would officially rename the Public Lands Corps as the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps, expand the participation of veterans of the U.S armed forces in the corps, increase the number of Federal agencies that are able to use the program, and authorize a program specifically for Indian youth to carry out projects on tribal lands.

The Department's land management bureaus, along with the U.S. Forest Service, have established successful public-private partnership programs using the authority of the Public Lands Service Corps. Informally, the agencies identify these arrangements as 21st Century Service Corps or "21CSC" partnerships, so we believe that converting the Public Lands Corps Act authorities to 21st Century Service Corps authorities in statute is appropriate. In addition, a new identity for the program seems appropriate in light of the bill's highlighting of veterans as an eligible group of participants and the extension of the program to multiple Federal agencies beyond the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture.

In the Department of the Interior, using the authority of the Public Lands Corps Act, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Park Service (NPS) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), have collaborated with youth conservation corps on 21CSC projects all across the country. These projects, which are undertaken through the use of cooperative agreements, have ranged from trail maintenance to watershed restoration, historic preservation to forest regeneration, and invasive species removal to front-line services for visitors. The projects have decreased the land management agencies' maintenance backlogs and helped to fill critical staffing gaps. They have also given many young people, including youth from underserved communities and veterans, opportunities to gain in-demand skills for success in the 21st century workplace. Through these partnerships, the bureaus have been able to generate an interest among young people in pursuing careers in public land management, which is an increasingly important aspect of the program as growing numbers of Federal employees become eligible for retirement.

A few specific examples of public-private partnerships help illustrate the success of the 21CSC partnerships:

In Maryland, the NPS Historic Preservation Training Center and a partner organization, Conservation Legacy recently piloted the Traditional Trades Youth Initiative to provide a structured, experiential training opportunity to young adults in traditional construction trades (carpentry,

masonry, and woodcrafting). Participants work closely alongside experienced craftspeople, serving as assistants or apprentice level trades workers to learn preservation trades skills while completing projects within parks, such as restoring historic windows and replacing a shingle roof on a barn at Gettysburg National Military Park.

In Oregon and California, the Klamath Bird Observatory (KBO) built on a long-standing partnership with the BLM and FWS to expand its internship program and improve outreach to underserved communities, including Native American and Hispanic youth. The combination of KBO's established long-term monitoring program and an intensive bird banding training curriculum foster the integration of youth engagement and professional training. The internships have provided opportunities for training and practical experience in bird monitoring techniques; learning through a well-rounded curriculum in field biology; and attaining bird bander certification through the North American Banding Council.

In Arizona, the Conservation Legacy organization worked with the BIA to lead an eight-person Native American youth crew in completion of natural resource conservation projects on the Navajo Nation. The crew consisted of local area high school students and two adult crew leaders. During the four-week program the crew restored and stabilized Hubble Wash, maintained trails, and repaired and constructed wildlife fencing.

In New Mexico, the Talking Talons Youth Leadership, in partnership with the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), the Bureau of Reclamation, the New Mexico State Land Office, Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District, the Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program, Amigos Bravos, Friends of the Valle de Oro, and Friends of the Sandia Mountains provided approximately 560 hours of paid employment for urban and minority youth in conservation work that benefited the public lands and the mission of the Valle de Oro NWR, BOR, and the State of New Mexico. In addition to receiving in-depth education and training in diverse aspects of environmental restoration, monitoring, and stewardship, crew members conducted surface and groundwater quality monitoring and removed invasive vegetation on 80 acres on the refuge and adjacent Federal and state lands.

And, in Maine, the Friends of Acadia hired young people to work on projects with the NPS in Acadia National Park, including engaging the public in raptor viewing opportunities and working on a trail crew mediating trail issues. Many of the youth work experiences occured in accessible, highly visited areas, such as Sieur de Monts Springs.

S. 1403 would increase the number of Federal departments and agencies authorized to partner with conservation organizations to support and carry out 21CSC projects. In addition to the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, the authorities could be used by the Departments of Transportation, Labor, Energy, Defense, Vet-

erans Affairs, and Commerce; the Environmental Protection Agency, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and any other agencies as designated by the President. The bill would give participating agencies flexibility to support 21CSC projects in a manner consistent with each agency's mission and resources, while seeking to minimize the duplication of a specific project by another agency. Authorizing these entities to carry out project directly with other agencies would relieve the administrative burden on the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, which currently serve as sponsoring entities for 21CSC projects carried out by Federal entities outside of those two departments. The bill would also require participating agencies to report to Congress to ensure 21CSC activities are carried out in a cost-effective manner.

This bill delineates the categories of projects that could be conducted through a cooperative agreement between an agency and a partner. While the projects are focused on the full range of activities that constitute conservation, restoration and management of public lands and waters, the list includes work that would be conducted primarily inside, such as service in a science, policy, or program internship, which has a clear benefit for natural, cultural, or historic resources or treasures, including interpretation and education services. This will make clear to agencies that manage almost any kind of work related to conservation or restoration that they have the ability to use this program, even if those agencies are not considered land management agencies.

S. 1403 also establishes a 21CSC specifically for Indian youth to participate in projects on tribal lands. This program would be administered through a cooperative agreement with a tribal agency or a 21CSC organization. Guidelines for this program would be issued by the Secretary of the Interior within 18 months of enactment of the bill.

This bill maintains two changes to the Public Lands Corps Act that were passed by Congress in December 2016 as part of the NPS Centennial Act: one providing an upper age limit of 30 for participants (raised from 25), and the other providing a two-year period of eligibility for non-competitive Federal hiring for participants (increased from a period of 120 days) who complete the requirements of the program. These provisions both increase the pool of potential participants and the opportunities for participants who have developed the skills the agencies need to move into permanent Federal positions.

In addition to these changes, the lower end of the age limit for participation would be reduced from 16 to 15. 21CSC organizations would be encouraged to select veterans of age 35 or younger for projects to focus on training young people, but veterans would not have any age limit for participation.

S. 1403 would reduce the cost-share requirement for 21CSC projects from 25 percent to 10 percent, while resource assistants participating through 21CSC organizations would still require a 25 percent cost-share. The Department supports the cost-share requirement reduction for 21CSC projects, which would enable a greater range of organizations such as smaller, community-based organizations that draw from low-income and rural populations to participate in the 21CSC.

If the committee acts on S. 1403, we recommend an amendment to Section 12. This section retains existing law that allows land management agencies to use direct hire authority to hire former resource assistants who have completed "a rigorous undergraduate or graduate summer internship" and extends that authority to other agencies, we suggest amending this section. As currently written, Section 12 would eliminate the reference to the National Park Service Business Plan Internship as an example of the kind of internship that meets the definition of "rigorous." We think that keeping that phrase in law would maintain the Business Plan Internship as a benchmark for the types of internships that are sufficiently rigorous for interns to be hired by agencies without going through the competitive hiring process. Without maintaining that benchmark, agencies will have a more difficult time determining what internships meet the definition of "rigorous." We would be pleased to provide language to amend this section. Finally, as the Department reviews this legislation more thoroughly and considers it in the context of other programs aimed at youth engagement, we may want to suggest additional amendments.

Chairman Daines, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the subcommittee may have.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, changes in existing law made by S. 1403, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

PUBLIC LANDS CORPS ACT OF 1993

TITLE II OF THE YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS ACT OF 1970

Public Law 91–378, as Amended by Public Law 103–82

* * * * * * *

SEC. 203. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this title:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONSERVATION PROJECT.—The term "appropriate conservation project" means any project for the con-

servation, restoration, construction or rehabilitation of natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or scenic resources.

(2) CORPS AND PUBLIC LANDS CORPS.—The terms "Corps" and "Public Lands Corps" mean the Public Lands Corps established [under section 204] *by section 204(a)(1).*

(3) ELIGIBLE SERVICE LANDS.—The term "eligible service lands" means public lands, Indian lands, and Hawaiian home lands.

(4) HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS.—The term "Hawaiian home lands" means all lands given the status of Hawaiian home lands under section 204 of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920 (42 Stat. 1101, or under the corresponding provision of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii adopted under section 4 of the Act entitled "An Act to provide for the admission of the State of Hawaii into the Union", approved March 18, 1959 (Public Law 863; 73 Stat. 5).

(5) INDIAN.—The term "Indian" means a person who—

(A) is a member of an Indian tribe; or

(B) is a "Native", as defined in section 3(b) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1602(b)).

(6) INDIAN LANDS.—The term "Indian lands" means—

(A) any Indian reservation;

(B) any public domain Indian allotments;

(C) any former Indian reservation in the State of Oklahoma;

(D) any land held by incorporated Native regional corporations, and village corporations under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.); and

(E) any land held by dependent Indian communities within the borders of the United States whether within the original or subsequently acquired territory thereof, and whether within or without the limits of a State.

(7) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term "Indian tribe" means an Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Native village, Regional Corporation, or Village Corporation, as defined in subsection (c), (g), or (j), respectively, of section 3 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1602 (c), (g), or (j)), that is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States under federal law to Indians because of their status as Indians.

(8) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'institution of higher education' has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002).

(B) EXCLUSION.—The term 'institution of higher education' does not include—

(i) an institution described in section 101(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(b)); or

(ii) an institution outside the United States, as described in section 102(a)(1)(C) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(a)(1)(C)).

[(8)]*(9)* PRIORITY PROJECT.—The term "priority project" means an appropriate conservation project conducted on eligi-

ble service lands to further 1 or more of the purposes of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6501 et seq.)[, as follows] *and other conservation and restoration initiatives, as follows:*

(A) To reduce wildfire risk to a community, municipal water supply, or other at-risk Federal land.

(B) To protect a watershed or address a threat to forest and rangeland health, including catastrophic wildfire.

(C) To address the impact of insect or disease infestations or other damaging agents on forest and rangeland health.

(D) To protect, restore, or enhance forest ecosystem components to—

(i) promote the recovery of threatened or endangered species;

(ii) improve biological diversity; or

(iii) enhance productivity and carbon sequestration.

(E) To protect, restore, or enhance marine, estuarine, riverine, and coastal habitat ecosystem components—

(i) to promote the recovery of threatened species, endangered species, and managed fisheries;

(ii) to restore fisheries, protected resources, and habitats impacted by oil and chemical spills and natural disasters; or

(iii) to enhance the resilience of coastal ecosystems, communities, and economies through habitat conservation.

[(9)]*(10)* PUBLIC LANDS.—The term "public lands'" means any lands or waters (or interest therein) owned or administered by the United States, except that such term does not include any Indian lands.

[(10)]*(11)* QUALIFIED YOUTH OR CONSERVATION CORPS.—The term "qualified youth or conservation corps'" means any program established by a State or local government, by the governing body of any Indian tribe, or by a nonprofit organization that—

(A) is capable of offering meaningful, full-time, productive work for [individuals between the ages of 16 and 30, inclusive,] *individuals between the ages of 16 and 30, inclusive, or veterans age 35 or younger* in a natural or cultural resource setting;

(B) gives participants a mix of work experience, basic and life skills, education, training, and support services; and

(C) provides participants with the opportunity to develop citizenship values and skills through service to their community and the United States.

[(11)]*(12)* RESOURCE ASSISTANT.—The term "resource assistant" means a resource assistant selected under section 206.

[(12)]*(13)* SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means—

(A) with respect to National Forest System land, the Secretary of Agriculture; [and]

(B) with respect to Indian lands, Hawaiian home lands, or land administered by the Department of the Interior, the Secretary of the Interior[.]*; and*

(C) with respect to the National Marine Sanctuary System, coral reefs, and other coastal, estuarine, and marine habitats, and other land and facilities administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Secretary of Commerce.

[(13)]*(14)* STATE.—The term "State" means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

(15) VETERAN.—The term 'veteran' has the meaning given the term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 204. PUBLIC LANDS CORPS PROGRAM.

[(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS CORPS.—There is hereby established in the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture a Public Lands Corps.]

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS CORPS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established in the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Commerce a corps, to be known as the 'Public Lands Corps'.

(2) NO EFFECT ON OTHER AGENCIES.—Nothing in this subsection precludes the establishment of a public lands corps by the head of a Federal department or agency other than a department described in paragraph (1), in accordance with this Act.

(b) PARTICIPANTS.—The Corps shall consist of [individuals between the ages of 16 and 30, inclusive,] *individuals between the ages of 16 and 30, inclusive, and veterans age 35 or younger* who are enrolled as participants in the Corps by the Secretary. To be eligible for enrollment in the Corps, an individual shall satisfy the criteria specified in [section 137(b) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990] *paragraphs (1), (2), (4), and (5) of section 137(a) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12591(a)).* The Secretary may enroll such individuals in the Corps without regard to the civil service and classification laws, rules, or regulations of the United States. The Secretary may establish a preference for the enrollment in the Corps of individuals who are economically, physically, or educationally disadvantaged.

(c) QUALIFIED YOUTH OR CONSERVATION CORPS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary is authorized to enter into contracts and cooperative agreements with any qualified youth or conservation corps to perform appropriate conservation projects referred to in subsection (d).

(2) PREFERENCE.

(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of entering into contracts and cooperative agreements under paragraph (1), the Secretary may give preference to qualified youth or conservation corps located in a specific area that have a substantial portion of members who are economically, physically, or educationally disadvantaged to carry out projects within the area.

(B) PRIORITY PROJECTS.—In carrying out priority projects in a specific area, the Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, give preference to qualified youth or conservation corps located in that specific area that have a

substantial portion of members who are economically, physically, or educationally disadvantaged.

(d) PROJECTS TO BE CARRIED OUT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may utilize the Corps or any qualified youth or conservation corps to carry out appropriate conservation projects which the Secretary is authorized to carry out under other authority of law on public lands.

(2) PROJECTS ON INDIAN LANDS.—Appropriate conservation projects may also be carried out under this title on Indian lands with the approval of the Indian tribe involved and on Hawaiian home lands with the approval of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands of the State of Hawaii.

(3) DISASTER PREVENTION OR RELIEF PROJECTS.—The Secretary may authorize appropriate conservation projects and other appropriate projects to be carried out on Federal, State, local, or private land as part of a Federal disaster prevention or relief effort.

(e) PREFERENCE FOR CERTAIN PROJECTS.—In selecting appropriate conservation projects to be carried out under this title, the Secretary shall give preference to those projects which—

(1) will provide long-term benefits to the public;

(2) will instill in the enrollee involved a work ethic and a sense of public service;

(3) will be labor intensive;

(4) can be planned and initiated promptly; and

(5) will provide academic, experiential, or environmental education opportunities.

(f) CONSISTENCY.—Each appropriate conservation project carried out under this title on eligible service lands shall be consistent with the provisions of law and policies relating to the management and administration of such lands, with all other applicable provisions of law, and with all management, operational, and other plans and documents which govern the administration of the area.

SEC. 205. CONSERVATION CENTERS AND PROGRAM SUPPORT.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT AND USE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may establish and use conservation centers owned and operated by the Secretary for—

(A) use by the Public Lands Corps; and

(B) the conduct of appropriate conservation projects under this title.

(2) ASSISTANCE FOR CONSERVATION CENTERS.—The Secretary may provide to a conservation center established under paragraph (1) any services, facilities, equipment, and supplies that the Secretary determines to be necessary for the conservation center.

(3) STANDARDS FOR CONSERVATION CENTERS.—The Secretary shall—

(A) establish basic standards of health, nutrition, sanitation, and safety for all conservation centers established under paragraph (1); and

(B) ensure that the standards established under subparagraph (A) are enforced.

(4) MANAGEMENT.—As the Secretary determines to be appropriate, the Secretary may enter into a contract or other appropriate arrangement with a State or local government agency or

private organization to provide for the management of a conservation center.

(b) LOGISTICAL SUPPORT.—The Secretary may make arrangements with the Secretary of Defense to have logistical support provided by the Armed Forces to the Corps and any conservation center established under this section, where feasible. Logistical support may include the provision of temporary tent shelters where needed, transportation, and residential supervision.

(c) USE OF MILITARY INSTALLATIONS.—The Secretary may make arrangements with the Secretary of Defense to identify military installations and other facilities of the Department of Defense and, in consultation with the adjutant generals of the State National Guards, National Guard facilities that may be used, in whole or in part, by the Corps for training or housing Corps participants.

(d) ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may provide any services, facilities, equipment, supplies, technical assistance, oversight, monitoring, or evaluations that are appropriate to carry out this title.

(e) TRANSPORTATION.—The Secretary may provide to Corps participants who reside in their own homes transportation to and from appropriate conservation project sites.

SEC. 206. RESOURCE ASSISTANTS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—**[**The Secretary is authorized to provide individual placements of resource assistants with any Federal land managing agency under the jurisdiction of the Secretary to carry out research or resource protection activities on behalf of the agency.**]** *The Secretary may provide individual placements of resource assistants to carry out research or resource protection activities on behalf of the Secretary.* To be eligible for selection as a resource assistant, an individual must be at least 17 years of age. The Secretary may select resource assistants without regard to the civil service and classification laws, rules, or regulations of the United States. The Secretary shall give a preference to the selection of individuals who are enrolled in an institution of higher education or are recent graduates from an institution of higher education, with particular attention given to ensure full representation of women and participants from historically black, Hispanic, and Native American schools.

(b) USE OF EXISTING NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.—Whenever one or more existing nonprofit organizations can provide, in the judgment of the Secretary, appropriate recruitment and placement services to fulfill the requirements of this section, the Secretary may implement this section through such existing organizations. Participating nonprofit organizations shall contribute to the expenses of providing and supporting the resource assistants, through private sources of funding, at a level equal to 25 percent of the total costs of each participant in the Resource Assistant program who has been recruited and placed through that organization. Any such participating nonprofit conservation service organization shall be required, by the respective land managing agency, to submit an annual report evaluating the scope, size, and quality of the program, including the value of work contributed by the Resource Assistants, to the mission of the agency.

SEC. 207. [LIVING ALLOWANCES AND TERMS OF SERVICE] *COMPENSATION AND TERMS OF SERVICE.*

(a) LIVING ALLOWANCES.—The Secretary shall provide each participant in the Public Lands Corps and each resource assistant with a living allowance in an amount established by the Secretary.

(b) EDUCATIONAL CREDIT.—The Secretary may provide a Corps participant with an educational credit that may be applied towards a program of postsecondary education at an institution of higher education that agrees to award the credit for participation in the Corps.

[(b)]*(C)* TERMS OF SERVICE.—[Each participant]

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each participant in the Corps and each resource assistant shall agree to participate in the Corps or serve as a resource assistant, as the case may be, for such term of service as may be established by the Secretary enrolling or selecting the individual.

(2) INDIAN YOUTH SERVICE CORPS.—With respect to the Indian Youth Service Corps established under section 210, the Secretary shall establish the term of service of participants in consultation with the affected Indian tribe.

[(c)]*(d)* HIRING.—[The Secretary]

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may—

[(1)]*(A)* grant to a member of the Public Lands Corps credit for time served with the Public Lands Corps, which may be used toward future Federal hiring; and

[(2)]*(B)* provide to a former member of the Public Lands Corps noncompetitive hiring status for a period of not more than 2 years after the date on which the member's service with the Public Lands Corps is complete.

(2) TIME-LIMITED APPOINTMENT.—For purposes of section 9602 of title 5, United States Code, a former member of the Corps hired by the Secretary under paragraph (1)(B) for a time-limited appointment shall be considered to be appointed initially under open, competitive examination.

(e) APPLICABILITY TO QUALIFIED YOUTH OR CONVERSATION CORPS.—The hiring and compensation standards described in this section shall apply to any individual participating in an appropriate conservation project through a qualified youth or conservation corps, including an individual placed through a contract or cooperative agreement, as approved by the Secretary.

SEC. 208. NATIONAL SERVICE EDUCATIONAL AWARDS.

(a) EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS AND AWARDS.—If a participant in the Public Lands Corps or a resource assistant also serves in an approved national service position designated under subtitle C of title I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, the participant or resource assistant shall be eligible for a national service educational award in the manner prescribed in subtitle D of such title upon successfully complying with the requirements for the award. The period during which the national service educational award may be used, the purposes for which the award may be used, and the amount of the award shall be determined as provided under such subtitle.

(b) FORBEARANCE IN THE COLLECTION OF STAFFORD LOANS.—For purposes of section 428 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, in the case of borrowers who are either participants in the Corps or re-

source assistants, upon written request, a lender shall grant a borrower forbearance on such terms as are otherwise consistent with the regulations of the Secretary of Education, during periods in which the borrower is serving as such a participant or a resource assistant.

SEC. 209. REPORTING AND DATA COLLECTION.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Act, and annually thereafter, the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service, in coordination with the Secretaries, shall submit to Congress a report that includes data on the Corps, including—

(1) the number of participants enrolled in the Corps and the length of the term of service for each participant;

(2) the projects carried out by Corps participants, categorized by type of project and Federal agency;

(3) the total amount and sources of funding provided for the service of participants;

(4) the type of service performed by participants and the impact and accomplishments of the service; and

(5) any other similar data determined to be appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service or the Secretaries.

(b) DATA.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretaries shall submit to the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service the data described in subsection (a).

(c) DATA COLLECTION.—The Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service may coordinate with qualified youth or conservation corps to improve the collection of the required data described in subsection (a).

(d) COORDINATION.

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries shall, to the maximum extent practicable, coordinate with each other to carry out activities authorized under this Act, including—

(A) the data collection and reporting requirements of this section; and

(B) implementing and issuing guidance on eligibility for noncompetitive hiring status under section 207(d).

(2) DESIGNATION OF COORDINATORS.—The Secretary shall designate a coordinator to coordinate and serve as the primary point of contact for any activity of the Corps carried out by the Secretary.

SEC. 210. INDIAN YOUTH SERVICE CORPS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is established within the Public Lands Corps a program to be known as the 'Indian Youth Service Corps' that—

(1) enrolls participants between the ages of 10 and 30, inclusive, and veterans age 35 or younger, a majority of whom are Indians;

(2) is established pursuant to an agreement between an Indian tribe and a qualified youth or conservation corps for the benefit of the members of the Indian tribe; and

(3) carries out appropriate conservation projects on eligible service land.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with Indian tribes and qualified youth or conservation corps for the establishment and administration of the Indian Youth Service Corps.

(c) GUIDELINES.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Act, the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with Indian tribes, shall issue guidelines for the management of the Indian Youth Service Corps, in accordance with this Act and any other applicable Federal laws.

SEC. [209] *211.* NONDISPLACEMENT.

The nondisplacement requirements of section 177 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 shall be applicable to all activities carried out by the Public Lands Corps, to all activities carried out under this title by a qualified youth or conservation corps, and to the selection and service of resource assistants.

SEC. [210] *212.* FUNDING.

(a) COST SHARING.—

(1) PROJECTS BY QUALIFIED YOUTH OR CONSERVATION CORPS.—The Secretary is authorized to pay not more than 75 percent of the costs of any appropriate conservation project carried out pursuant to this title on public lands by a qualified youth or conservation corps. The remaining 25 percent of the costs of such a project may be provided from nonfederal sources in the form of funds, services, facilities, materials, equipment, or any combination of the foregoing. No cost sharing shall be required in the case of any appropriate conservation project carried out on Indian lands or Hawaiian home lands under this title.

(2) PUBLIC LANDS CORPS PROJECTS.—The Secretary is authorized to accept donations of funds, services, facilities, materials, or equipment for the purposes of operating the Public Lands Corps and carrying out appropriate conservation projects by the Corps. However, nothing in this title shall be construed to require any cost sharing for any project carried out directly by the Corps.

(b) FUNDS AVAILABLE UNDER NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ACT.—In order to carry out the Public Lands Corps or to support resource assistants and qualified youth or conservation corps under this title, the Secretary shall be eligible to apply for and receive assistance under section 121(b) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990.

(c) OTHER FUNDS.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under section [211] *213* are in addition to amounts allocated to the Public Lands Corps through other Federal programs or projects.

SEC. [211] *213.* AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this title $12,000,000 for each fiscal year, of which $8,000,000 is authorized to carry out priority projects and $4,000,000 of which is authorized to carry out other appropriate conservation projects.

(b) DISASTER RELIEF OR PREVENTION PROJECTS.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), any amounts made available under that subsection shall be available for disaster prevention or relief projects.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, amounts appropriated for any fiscal year to carry out this title shall remain available for obligation and expenditure until the end of the fiscal year following the fiscal year for which the amounts are appropriated.

CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

Public Law 112–74

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DIVISION E, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

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TITLE I

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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GENERAL PROVISIONS, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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HIRING AUTHORITIES

SEC. 121. (a) DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY.—

(1) During fiscal year 2012 and thereafter, the [Secretary of the Interior] *Secretary (as defined in section 203 of the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 1722))* may appoint, without regard to the provisions of subchapter I of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code, other than sections 3303 and 3328 of such title, a qualified candidate described in [paragraph (1)] *paragraph (2)* directly to a position [with a land managing agency of the Department of the Interior] for which the candidate meets Office of Personnel Management qualification standards.

(2) Paragraph (1) applies with respect to a former resource assistant (as defined in section 203 of the Public Land Corps Act (16 U.S.C. 1722)) who—

(A) completed a rigorous undergraduate or graduate summer internship [with a land managing agency] *with the Secretary (as so defined),* such as the National Park Service Business Plan Internship;

(B) successfully fulfilled the requirements of the internship program; and

(C) subsequently earned an undergraduate or graduate degree from an accredited institution of higher education.

(3) The direct hire authority under this subsection may not be exercised with respect to a specific qualified candidate after

the end of the two-year period beginning on the date on which the candidate completed the undergraduate or graduate degree, as the case may be.

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