

Seeds Of A Better Life Planted In National Parks

(NAPSA)—Thanks to an innovative public partnership, a growing number of young people are experiencing the rewards of service as members of the Public Land Corps. At the same time, our national parks have never looked better.

Created by an Act of Congress in 1996, the partnership authorized the federal land managing agencies—National Park Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service—to charge increased fees for recreation use on public lands. According to the legislation, they would retain the fee revenue for use in maintenance, the restoration of the lands in their care and for different programs and projects.

One such priority project is the Public Land Corps (PLC). PLC, involves young people in public works projects in the National Parks System.

Most often the participants are assigned to deferred maintenance or restoration projects for which there is little funding.

To date, Fran Mainella—Director of the National Park Service (NPS)—has made a commitment to fund the PLC program by setting aside several million dollars out of the parkwide fee funds. Said Mainella, “I believe that young people are given a unique opportunity, through our partnership with the PLC, to understand the relevance that national parks have to all Americans.

“Not only do we expose our youth to the parks but we also



Thanks to an innovative program, young people are introduced to the world of work and the wonders of the National Park System.

allow them the opportunity to learn valuable skills while working on construction and conservation projects and helping to lower the amount of deferred maintenance that plagues our parks.”

Experts believe that youth who spend time working to protect or rebuild natural and cultural resources through the Public Land Corps gain an understanding of how a natural ecosystem works, how historic preservation is done and how visitors learn about the resource.

By providing these opportunities to our youth, the NPS is helping to instill stewardship skills at a young age that may yield, not only a future workforce for the parks, but for future generations in support of the National Park System.

To learn more, visit the Web site at www.nassc.org.