The Stewards Individual Placement Program, a program of Conservation Legacy, is completing the first year of a partnership with the National Park Foundation to support AmeriCorps VISTAs placed with National Park Service philanthropic partner organizations. Over the last year, Stewards and National Park Foundation have collaborated on projects with eight Friends Groups across the country with continued growth anticipated for 2020.

The Stewards program is honored to share the successes and challenges of this partnership while amplifying the capacity building efforts of these service members. The community impact and achievement of the VISTA’s placed with Friends Groups is exemplified through the images and stories collected from projects from the past year.

Progress Report Summary

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Emily Starobin, Rock Creek Conservancy VISTA, places a sign as part of the new Spanish ‘mini oasis’ at Rock Creek Park.
Program Statement of Purpose

The National Park Foundation (NPF) awarded a grant agreement to Conservation Legacy in support of the Strong Parks, Strong Communities Initiative. The goal is to provide capacity to national park philanthropic partner organizations (Friends Groups) across the country by placing 20 AmeriCorps VISTAs in one-year terms. Recipient organizations receive $6,500 in funding from this grant to provide partial funding support towards the cost of a VISTA, as placed by Conservation Legacy’s Stewards Individual Placement Program.

Program Summary

In a collaborative effort to strengthen the impact of the Strong Parks, Strong Communities Initiative, Stewards Individual Placement Program, a Program of Conservation Legacy, places AmeriCorps VISTA Members with Friends Groups across the nation supporting projects that:

- Bolster the community through peer relationships and learning;
- Build capacity of individual partners;
- Take collective action that improves park experiences and expand park visitation.

To date, Stewards has placed nine (9) AmeriCorps VISTA Members whose projects range from fund development and grant writing to strategic plan implementation.

Stewards is currently supporting national recruitment efforts for an additional four (4) Friends Groups with AmeriCorps VISTA Projects. These projects will focus on increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion to increase park visitation among people of color, engaging the next generation in environmental stewardship, and building overall capacity for newly established Friends Groups.

Long Term NPF VISTA project goals include:

- Extending the Period of Performance of our current Grant Agreement to offer tiered funding support to ongoing Projects throughout their three-year AmeriCorps VISTA Project Plans.
- Expanding current partnership, increasing the number of AmeriCorps VISTA Projects & Members we can collaboratively support.
- Expanding the agreement Scope of Work to diversify the projects collaboratively supported.

“I learned many ways we can incorporate sustainable practices into our everyday lives. Being green does not have to be difficult or expensive.”

-Emily Starobin, AmeriCorps VISTA
Stewards VISTA Support & Training Opportunities

Stewards Individual Placement Program provides direct support for each AmeriCorps VISTA service member and their organizational supervisor. The Stewards VISTA support staff team includes VISTA Leaders who are experienced national service members trained to provide support to a cluster of approximately 20 active VISTA members. This support team also includes VISTA Program Coordinators who focus specifically on supporting organizational supervisors.

Each support team, comprised of a VISTA, Supervisor, VISTA Leader, and Program Coordinator, works together to ensure greatest impact for communities, organization, and the VISTA member themselves.

In addition to supporting Friends Groups and the communities they serve, Stewards VISTA Program is built to provide support, training, and application-based experience to ensure VISTA Members are civic and professional leaders in the future. Stewards VISTA Members receive professional development in non-profit fundraising, public speaking, public engagement, and project management and implementation during a week-long, in-person training as well as through web-based sessions and resource materials.

To immerse VISTA members in a holistic training experience and approach to community engagement, the Stewards Program engages The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation. The Harwood Institute equips people, organizations, communities, and networks with tools to bridge divides, build capacity, and tackle shared challenges. Harwood Institute and Stewards began their training and community engagement partnership in 2018. It includes providing in-person and virtual training to all Stewards VISTA Members, including those supported by NPF funding. The Harwood Virtual Lab includes eight (8), two-hour long virtual sessions and four (4), one-hour long in-person sessions during the Stewards VISTA training.

Stewards continues to operationalize professional development and non-profit based training opportunities to enhance the National Service experience for all of its VISTAs. This tradition continues as we enter grant year 2020 as we review and improve these opportunities for our future members.

“My favorite part of the program was our wrap-up discussion about how they [volunteers] can take what they saw and learned about marine pollution back to their neighborhoods.”

- Emma McCauley, AmeriCorps VISTA
Demographic Information

The provided demographic information is self-reported by current Stewards/NPF VISTA service members through standardized reporting processes established by Stewards on behalf of partner organizations and grant reporting requirements. This data reflects initiative specific service members from September 2018 - September 2019.

Gender:
- 22% Male
- 66% Female
- 12% No Response

Racial Origin:
- 77% White
- 11% Black/African American
- 11% No Response

Highest Level of Educational:
- 88% Bachelor Degree
- 12% No Response

Interest in Federal NCE* Status:
- 50% Yes
- 10% No
- 40% No Response
*Non-Compete Eligibility

Military Service Connections:
- 0% Report personal Military Service
- 22% Report having immediate family members with Military Service
- 33% No Response on either personal or immediate family Military Status

Professional Status Prior to Service:
- 55% Employed or Enrolled in Ed. Program
- 11% Unemployed
- 33% No Response

Institutions of Higher Learning Reported

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<th>DEGREE/MAJOR</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friends of Kenilworth</td>
<td>Maya Douglas</td>
<td>Tina O'Connell 202-494-0456</td>
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<td>Friends of Kenilworth</td>
<td>David Drawbaugh</td>
<td>Tina O'Connell 202-494-0456</td>
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<td>Friends of Lyndon B. Johnson</td>
<td>Caliope Janulis</td>
<td>Susanne McDonald 307-960-5135</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rock Creek Conservancy</td>
<td>Emily Starobin</td>
<td>Jesse Buff 888-462-9233 ext.702</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voyageurs National Park Association</td>
<td>Lindsay Brandt</td>
<td>Christina Hausman 612-333-5424</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Croix River Association</td>
<td>Emilee Martell</td>
<td>Kate Wright 715-483-3300</td>
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<tr>
<td>C &amp; O Canal Trust</td>
<td>Esther Herbers</td>
<td>Heidi Glatfelter Schlag 301-712-8617</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glacier National Park Conservancy</td>
<td>Jeff Babik</td>
<td>Adam Sommers 406-892-3250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haleakala Conservancy</td>
<td>Currently Recruiting</td>
<td>Natalie Gates 808-572-4400</td>
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<td>Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park</td>
<td>Currently Recruiting</td>
<td>Yolanda Hamilton 330-657-2909 x148</td>
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<td>Friends of Virgin Islands National Park</td>
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<td>Tonia Lovejoy 340-779-4940</td>
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"The National Park Service is rare as a universally loved federal agency, but they deserve their reputation. A beautiful river and rewarding work protecting it--what more could a VISTA ask for?"
- Emilee Martell, VISTA
Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, Washington DC
Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park, TX
Rock Creek Park, MD
Voyageurs National Park, MN
St. Croix National River, WI
Jamaica Bay- Rockaway Parks Conservancy, NY
Glacier National Park, MT
Virgin Islands National Park, US-VI
Cuyahoga Valley National Park, OH
North Country National Scenic Trail, MI
Haleakala National Park, HI
C&O Canal National Historical Park, PA

Volunteering has helped me feel more a part of where I live as well as build connections with some really amazing people.

- Maya Douglas, VISTA
Project & Member Highlights

Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy - Emma McCauley

The Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy (JBRPC) is a public-private partnership dedicated to improving over 10,000 acres of public parkland throughout Jamaica Bay and the Rockaway peninsula for residents and visitors alike.

VISTA member Emma McCauley supports Rockaway Beach in many projects, one of which has been in the works for years. Community members and organization volunteers alike assisted in planting plugs of marsh grass. This event and the parks who host it are a culmination of years of advocacy by local communities who were joined by non-profit, foundational, and private partners. Over the course of four days, volunteers planted a combined 74,000 plugs at Sunset Cove and another 10,000 plugs at Black Wall Marsh. These plantings will assist by slowing the erosion of local sandbars, among multiple other benefits associated with increased vegetation.

Emma’s hard work in helping to plan the event encouraged volunteer and community support. She was also present to ensure the day of the event went off without a hitch and to show the impact her service as a VISTA has made.

Voyageurs National Park – Lindsay Brandt

The Voyageurs National Park Association focuses on empowering park stewards, implementing special projects with financial and volunteer support, promoting the park to the public and preserving the visitor experience and wild nature of the park for future generations.

VISTA Member Lindsay Brandt is working with Voyageurs to build capacity for the park by helping with outreach events to grow the donor base. This effort has her working to involve local businesses in these community development efforts. This was facilitated first by sending outreach letters and following up with a survey, both of which will be used to gauge interest in donating, volunteering, or helping promote the project.
Lyndon B. Johnson – Caliope Janulis

The Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park is working to develop programming and project opportunities to honor the President’s legacy and speak to his legislative accomplishments. Their goal is to connect the rural areas of Texas with the larger cities in the surrounding areas in a more strategic way that links a new generation to the life, times, and contributions of President Johnson.

VISTA member Caliope ‘Cali’ Janulis has been assigned duties to facilitate strategic alignment between the Friends Group and the Park. Cali has been working to build capacity for the Friends group and helping visitor engagement and community outreach. She worked with volunteers to remove and identify invasive species in the area. This effort was met with support from local community members and organizations, who see the effort at the cutting edge of invasive species control.

Cali has also made great strides in her professional development during her term of service. This fall, she applied for and was awarded a scholarship to attend the Friends Alliance Meeting at Grand Tetons National Park in Jackson Hole, WY. Cali was also asked to speak about her VISTA service with her site and the impact her service has had on her own professional path.

“I’m really excited to help this program grow and expand it to many more schools – I think it has great potential.”

- Cali Janulis, AmeriCorps VISTA
STEWARDS, A PROGRAM OF CONSERVATION LEGACY
www.stewardslegacy.org

Between November 2018 and June 2019:

**9 MEMBERS SERVED**

**8 Friends organizations across STATES & TERRITORIES**

**THOSE 8 MEMBERS SECURED $50,000 IN GRANT FUNDS WITH AN ADDITIONAL $53,410 IN IN-KIND DONATIONS**

**14 GRANTSWERE APPLIED FOR, WITH 7 AWARDED**

**RECRUITED, SUPPORTED AND COORDINATED MORE THAN 6,460 VOLUNTEERS, WHO SERVED NEARLY 17,900 HOURS IN SERVICE TO THEIR COMMUNITIES**

**102 NEW PARTNERSHIPS DEVELOPED IN PART THROUGH THE COMMUNITY EVENTS COORDINATED WITH THE HELP OF STEWARDS VISTAs**

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Friends of Virgin Islands National Park

The Friends of Virgin Islands National Park VISTA will focus on creating pathways for rich and meaningful learning and local employment opportunities for youth and their families. Focusing on how recreational options lead to healthy choices for residents, this project will build a foundation for a better economic future. The VISTA will also help prepare Virgin Island youth and their families to be stewards of their environment and empower them as protectors of the island’s natural and cultural resources in good times and bad.

North Country Trail Association

As the Next Generation and Outreach Coordinator, this VISTA will strive to create an environment that catalyzes youth leaders in an effort to engage their peers in outdoor recreation. Through this program, the VISTA will help to enhance public health while building professional development opportunities for youth leader and the Michigan youth they reach. The community in return will receive assistance stewarding their local natural resources and the economic benefit that comes with improved health and recreational resources.

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Stewards Individual Placement Program is proud to partner with the National Park Foundation in creating capacity for National Park Friends Groups, local communities, and National Service members across the country in the quest of community and environmental impact.