



COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER AMBASSADOR PROGRAM
Fiscal Year 2023 Report

MEMBER ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY THE NUMBERS:

34,110

TOTAL # OF VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED BY CVAS

757,937

TOTAL # OF VOLUNTEER HOURS SUPPORTED BY CVAS

\$24,102,396

TOTAL VALUE OF VOLUNTEER TIME*

6,744

TOTAL # OF YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

2,007

TOTAL # OF VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE VETERANS

7,200,982

TOTAL # OF PEOPLE ENGAGED THROUGH NPS SOCIAL MEDIA

599

TOTAL # OF PARTNERSHIPS DEVELOPED OR LEVERAGED BY CVAS FOR VIP PROGRAMS

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Stewards Individual Placements (Stewards), a program of Conservation Legacy, is excited to continue to partner with the National Park Service (NPS) to support the Community Volunteer Ambassador (CVA) Program. The CVA Program combines the strength of a national leader in conservation service with the National Park Service to train a diverse group of emerging leaders to assist park units in building lasting connections to local communities. From October 2022 - September 2023, 91 young professionals completed their CVA service at NPS sites across the country, from Guam to New York and Alaska to Florida. These CVAs supporting the Volunteer-in-Parks (VIP) programs at NPS sites by hosting service events, supporting community partnerships, engaging local volunteers, and developing program resources.



CONTINUUM OF LEARNING
YOUR CVA YEAR AT-A-GLANCE

Feb/Sept ORIENTATION
CVA members orient to their sites, regions, and program, while reviewing goals & setting expectations.

March/Oct PRE- NATIONAL EARLY SERVICE TRAINING (NEST)
Members participate in webinars, calls, and introductions to projects in preparation for National Early Service Training.

April/Nov NEST
National Early Service Training - Members travel and participate in a week-long immersive in-person training & 8 weeks into service.

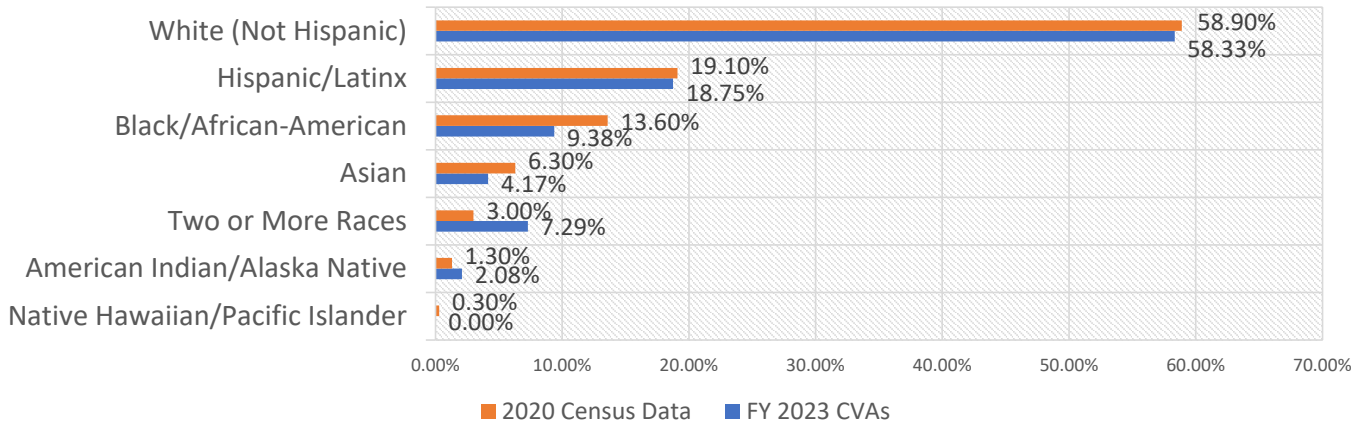
May-June/Dec-Jan POST-NEST
Members continue learning via training and online resources, while diving into their project.

July-Aug/ Feb-March MID-SERVICE
Members complete mid-term report, receive mid-term evaluation, and participate in additional learning opportunities.

Sept-Dec/ April-July END OF SERVICE TRN.
Members engage in end-of-service trainings, including a CVA Alumni Panel, federal hiring Q&A, resume workshops, and Member-Led Webinars.

Jan/Aug END
Members complete their service with an end-of-service celebration, final reports, and final evaluation.

CVA Demographics FY 2023 vs Census Data (2020)



*Amount calculated at the Independent Sector rate of \$31.80/hour.



MEMBER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As part of the CVA Program, members participate in extensive training through the Continuum of Learning to ensure the experience supports ongoing development and growth to prepare CVAs for their service and future opportunities. This includes orientation, an immersive National Early Service Training, mid-service check-ins, and post-service development.

Beyond the provided training, CVAs receive funding to support their own goals. This year, CVAs used their professional development funding to receive certifications in:

- First Aid/CPR/AED
- Wilderness First Aid/Responder
- Leave No Trace Trainer
- Project WILD Curriculum
- Operational Leadership
- Foundations of Interpretation
- Mental Health First Aid
- Certified Interpretive Guide

In addition to these certifications, CVAs received training in volunteer management, leadership and communication techniques, DEIJ, resume development, and interview skills.

Some CVAs were able to participate in regional meetups to support peer-learning and networking between CVAs. The CVAs in the Pacific West, Intermountain, and National Capital regions gathered at NPS sites within their regions for week-long shared learning opportunities.

Lastly, CVAs supported shared learning through presentations on project work to their peers, supervisors, and the larger NPS community in the following areas:

- Alternative Spring Breaks
- Queer History
- Community Engagement
- Bark Ranger
- Youth Programs



STORIES FROM THE FIELD: NORTHEAST REGION*



Sean Hanke, Longfellow House - Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site

Sean's project work focused on engaging historically underrepresented audiences as visitors and sharing stories that tell a more inclusive history. This included conducting community outreach with individuals identifying as LGBTQ+ during community-based pride events, building partnership with organizations supporting immigrant youth, and organizing events highlighting queer art and stories connected to Longfellow House - Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

In addition to this focused project work engaging new audiences with the site and volunteerism, Sean supported existing operations through day of service events, volunteer appreciation efforts, and a volunteer engagement strategy.

Sean writes, "I have been very passionate about preserving and making accessible the Queer history at my site and its broader connections throughout the world. I have put a lot of effort into engaging the community and educating people on Queer history that has been buried and hidden for a long while."

*Stories are provided using information submitted by CVAs in mid-term and final reports. Stories have been adapted to third-person, unless quoted directly.





Emily Wright, Colonial National Historical Park

As a CVA in the September 2022 cohort, Emily is proud to reflect on her support to the volunteer program and community outreach efforts. Throughout her service she has expanded park volunteerism to 300+ annual volunteers through engaging advertising strategies, dedicated management and frequent communication leading to 4,500+ hours equating to \$143,100 of service donated to the park for the year.

Emily has assisted in coordinating large-scale park events such as Yorktown Day, Wreaths Across America and Memorial Day including those that attract international dignitaries reaching over 10,000+ interested individuals. Additionally, Emily orchestrated both reoccurring and large group volunteer events such as Clean the Bay Day with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Wells Fargo, American Express, and others.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD: NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION



Nia Crawford, National Mall and Memorial Parks

Nia worked with the African American Civil War Memorial to build on the United States Colored Troops (USCT) Historical Trail project. She helped to develop partnerships and garner community support for the project to ensure its success.

The USCT Historical Trail project spans beyond the National Mall and Memorial Parks to elevate the history and stories of people of color serving in the armed forces nationwide and provide resources to NPS sites to appropriately share these stories with visitors.



Rachel Henson, Catoclin Mountain Park

During her CVA service, Rachel supported a 5-month Eagle Scout Project at Poplar Grove, a primitive youth group campground. Rachel led this project through logistics, planning, and implementation. This began with developing the JHA ensure appropriate risk management and preparedness in alignment with NPS volunteer policies for adult and youth volunteers. From there, she engaged resource management to complete compliance, visitor protection who oversees the campground, and facilities who assisted with problem-solving during planning, the woodshed blueprints, construction, and supervision of volunteers using power tools. This project is a great example of how teamwork is necessary from many different divisions to complete such a large-scale project.

In addition to this project work, Rachel recognized volunteers with a Hartzog Award nomination, completed reporting for the site, integrated volunteer.gov into VIP program operations, and coordinated several volunteer service days.



STORIES FROM THE FIELD: SOUTHEAST REGION



Olivia Paul, Cumberland Gap National Historical Park

Olivia helped to create an Adopt-a-Trail Program at Cumberland Gap. She developed a partnership with a local university to engage a student group as adopters for four miles of trail that were closed. Since engaging the students in the Adopt-a-Trail program, the section has fully reopened and now connects students to the site via the restored trail.

Olivia also helped to rebuild relationships with the local community's "Guardians of the Gap" and engage them as volunteers with the site. This partnership has developed to support annual clean-ups and offer educational programs to the community!



Tyler Sherill, Natchez Trace Parkway

Tyler supported development of critical resources to build capacity for the VIP Program at Natchez Trace Parkway. This included work on handbooks and management plan for the VIPs at parkway.

In addition to this focus on capacity building, he also worked to build connections with the local community through facilitating groups visiting the site twice a month for community enrichment, integrating the site back into the local holiday parade, and hosting the first two events since COVID.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD: MIDWEST REGION



Sierra Stukenholtz, Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway

During her CVA term, Sierra worked with park divisions and the park's friends group, Wild Rivers Conservancy, to help build and strengthen the newly established co-managed volunteer program. She helped develop service descriptions and job hazard analysis documents; build excel documents to record volunteer hours and interests, automatically populate the values required for annual reporting for both organizations, and help plan events; regularly communicated achievements, needs, and ideas for volunteer program; presented the program to all employees of both organizations (Wild Rivers Conservancy and Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway; and helped support volunteers into newly created volunteer positions as well as various events.

Sierra says, "I am proud of my hours tracking document. It has allowed a way for both organizations to track our volunteers in one, unified document that is accessible to both organizations, and that automatically populates the NPS Annual VIP Report for us."



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Luke Greer, Hot Springs National Park

Luke worked on many different projects with all of HOSP's park divisions throughout the year. However, he mainly helped plan volunteer event days, volunteer recognition events and awards, artist-in-residence events, public outreach events, and youth events.

Luke says, "I am most proud of continuing the Trail Recovery Leaders Program during summer 2022. This program was established by the previous CVA, and I was able to continue it for another year. I made some minor tweaks, and I came up with ideas for improvement. It was the first large project I've worked on during my post-college career, and I am hopeful the next CVA will keep it going with their own personal spin on it."

STORIES FROM THE FIELD: INTERMOUNTAIN REGION



Juan Pablo Esparza Limon, Dinosaur National Monument

Throughout Juan Pablo's CVA service term at Dinosaur National Monument, he assisted the Resource Stewardship and Science and Interpretation divisions with their volunteer and community engagement projects.

Juan had an opportunity to contribute to the following projects with the Resource Stewardship and Science team: drafting the standard operating procedures for graffiti removal, supporting the Utah State Historic Preservation Office Site Stewardship Program, assisting in the Friends of the Yampa Youth River Camps, developing and assisting in educational programs for the Girl Scout STEAM Camps, assisting in hosting monarch butterfly citizen science surveys and a public tagging event, and supporting river boat operator volunteers.



Jordan Downie, Rocky Mountain National Park

Jordan was able to participate in several projects that kept volunteers engaged at ROMO and supported VIP operations. This included developing a newsletter for volunteers to keep them engaged and informed. She also spent a lot of time familiarizing herself with Volunteer.gov, better understanding how it may benefit the site, and supporting servicewide efforts to integrate it.

Jordan writes, "I have helped to support the Volunteer Office and established close working relationships with many of our volunteers. I have loved getting to know so many of our volunteers. While there is no way I can develop a personal connection with all of them (we have over 400 volunteers), I have really enjoyed the connections I have made through my work."



STORIES FROM THE FIELD: PACIFIC WEST REGION



Hannah Marquez Macias, Cabrillo National Monument

Hannah re-energized the connection between Cabrillo National Monument and the local community by coordinating, planning, and hosting community events with the support of CABR's Science Explorer's Club volunteers and EcoLogik team. She hosted outreach booths promoting the park's volunteer and EcoLogik youth science programs at events like Animals on the Bay Day, San Diego STEAM Fair, and more. She worked alongside local partner organizations like the Living Coast Discovery Center, I Love A Clean San Diego (ILACSD), YMCA, San Diego Comic Con Museum, and more to integrate the site into their engagement events.

Hannah writes, "Most amazingly, I was able to serve as a bridge for Spanish-speaking volunteers and visitors by translating park documents, SOPs, tidepool talks, and even interpretative signs."



Carlos Reynoso-Reyes, Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Carlos assisted with 40 volunteer events over the course of his CVA service, including leading 8 events himself. This included all of the preparation, project planning, supply coordination, volunteer supervision, and outcome reporting. He also developed an outreach strategy to support future VIP program growth through identifying potential partners, tabling at community events, and engaging volunteers during Latino Conservation Week.

Carlos also focused his efforts on promoting volunteer safety through presentations on topics and integrating safety articles into the volunteer newsletter.



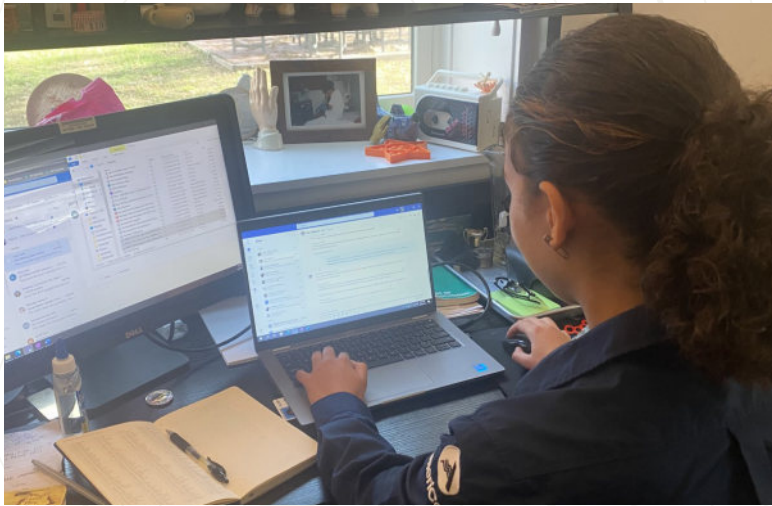
Baylee Bales-Woods, War in the Pacific National Historic Park

One of Baylee's main projects involved reviving the parks reoccurring VIP program. WAPA calls it "Friends of the Park." This program is unique because it allows volunteers to have flexible service opportunities that best met their interests through individual opportunities or regular events, while receiving specialized recognition for their work.

Additionally, Baylee is most proud of her work supporting WAPA's BARK Ranger program. She was able to support starting the program from scratch. This included creating a BARK Ranger scavenger hunt, coordinating with the park partner to bring BARK Ranger items into the bookstore, and leading BARK Ranger outreach.



STORIES FROM THE FIELD: CVA LEADER



Kaia Lohr, Washington Support Office

As the National CVA Leader, Kaia supported the September 2022 cohort from orientation through their exit. This included conducting one-on-one check-ins, producing a regular newsletter, and coordinating closely with Conservation Legacy on training and cohort webinars.

In addition to their leadership role supporting the CVA cohort, Kaia notes, "I am most proud of all of the work I have done in the digital sphere. This includes all of the articles I have written, my 508 compliance review of the volunteer manager training, my data analysis for National Volunteer Week, the content management system Volunteer Element analysis, and the odds and ends I have been able to help parks and regions achieve through the NPS website."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?*

Federal Service Careers

- 20 Community Volunteer Ambassadors obtained positions with the NPS (17 CVAs), USFS (1 CVA), and BLM (2 CVAs) ranging from Park Guides and Education Technicians to permanent Volunteer Coordinator, Park Ranger, Public Information Officer, and Youth Programs Coordinator.

Community Volunteer Ambassadors, CVA Leaders, and AmeriCorps Service

- 23 CVAs returned to the program for a second year to support continued work at their existing, transition to a new site, or provide peer leadership as a CVA Leader in the next cohort.

Local and State Government Careers

- 4 Community Volunteer Ambassadors transitioned to work with state or local governments in the fields of museum services, park management, recreation planning, and educational programming.

Non-Profit Careers

- 11 Community Volunteer Ambassadors graduated into non-profit work supporting youth programming, volunteer management, community outreach development, communications, and environmental sciences.

Undergraduate/Graduate Degrees

- 14 CVAs began or resumed academic programs, including using the AmeriCorps Education Award to finish undergraduate degrees in ecology and wildlife management and pursuing graduate degrees in public history, museum studies, environmental management, and teaching.



*Alumni tracking based on CVA self-reported data in final reports and alumni engagement.



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