



# Community Volunteer Ambassador Climate Cohort



# COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER AMBASSADOR CLIMATE COHORT

## Introduction

### Program Background

The Community Volunteer Ambassador (CVA) Program combines the strength of a national leader in conservation service with the National Park Service (NPS) in order to train a diverse group of emerging leaders to assist park units in building lasting connections to local communities.

Public Purpose:

1. To expand volunteerism and community engagement at NPS sites to engage new audiences as stewards of their national parks.
2. To provide career development opportunities for youth participants, motivating them to be involved with their community and with natural, cultural, and historic resources protection.

Although any NPS site may apply to host a CVA from the Climate Cohort, NPS sites based in island, coastal, and arctic communities will be prioritized. This is to ensure the CVA Climate Cohort supports sites greatly at-risk for impacts from climate change and that CVA resources are provided to sites are generally less represented in the CVA program. This includes but is not limited to National Park units in U.S. territories, Hawaii, and Alaska.



### Climate Cohort

Beginning in 2024, the Community Volunteer Ambassador (CVA) program is excited to launch a specialized cohort of CVAs focused on supporting climate resiliency and education work at National Park sites.

### History

The CVA Climate Cohort is funded through the Inflation Reduction Act to address NPS Director Charles F. Sams' goal to confront the climate crisis using science and traditional ecological knowledge. As a conservation leader and steward of magnificent natural and cultural landscapes, the NPS is working with partners to address the growing climate crisis and its measurable impacts on our resources. The NPS strategy to respond to and mitigate climate-related vulnerabilities includes the use of traditional ecological knowledge, scientific research, technical support, sustainability efforts, and public education.

### About the CVA Climate Cohort:

The CVA Climate Cohort will work to implement Director Sams' directive on-the-ground at National Park sites through volunteerism, community engagement, and service learning. The CVAs will specifically engage youth and young adults in climate resiliency work. This will be in alignment with the CVA programs objectives to:

- Create new or leverage existing community partnerships.
- Expand volunteer opportunities offered at NPS sites.
- Foster potential of CVA member and develop them as lifelong conservation stewards and future leaders.

As ambassadors to local communities and frequently recruited from the local community, CVAs are uniquely positioned to connect local populations with National Parks as living classrooms to understand the impacts of climate change, participate in volunteer projects focused on resiliency, and develops skills to implement community-based solutions. The CVA Climate Cohort will engage volunteers and communities in activities that support:

- Youth engagement and community education on the climate crisis and local adaptations;
- Understanding and mitigation of causes and impacts of climate change at NPS sites and surrounding communities through citizen science;
- Enhanced resiliency to protect natural and cultural resources at National Park sites; and,
- Implementation of community-based solutions for NPS sites and surrounding areas impacted by climate change. CVAs may focus on reducing barriers to the communities learning alongside National Park staff and developing shared practices to support climate resiliency.



## Project Ideas

### CVA Climate Cohort Projects may include:

- Development of public-facing climate change web content at various sites and connecting content to volunteer opportunities for the public to get engaged locally.
- Development of K-12 climate-focused curricula at various sites, including opportunities for age-appropriate volunteer activities and engaging volunteers in content delivery.
- Development and delivery of climate-focused teacher workshops in the US Territories, including suggestions of opportunities for age-appropriate volunteer activities.
- Participating with park staff in delivery of facilitated dialogues with local territorial communities about climate change.
- Development of a citizen science monitoring strategy for documenting the climate-related vulnerability of select sites within the territories.
- Development and piloting of a citizen-science methods for monitoring resources
- Working with park staff in development of a multi-audience climate change communications strategy for territorial communities
- Engaging volunteers to conduct greenhouse gas inventories, identify efficiency opportunities, and work with visitors to encourage “green” behaviors.
- Integration of renewables and more efficient energy use practices on National Park sites.

\*Project list developed from past CVA projects and examples provided by the NPS Climate Change Response Program The list below is not an exhaustive list. It is intended to provide examples of project work and support brainstorming. Sites may submit projects that are not included list, as long as they focus on engaging volunteers in climate resiliency, mitigation, adaptation, or education.



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## Training Curriculum

The CVA Climate Cohort will be integrated into the larger CVA cohort structure and timeline. As such, these members will participate in orientation, training, service projects, and other events (both virtual and in-person) alongside the full CVA cohort. Additionally, the CVA Climate Cohort will receive specialized training to support their focus on climate resiliency and education projects at National Park sites.



Timeframe	Learning Activity	Learning Outcomes	Facilitator
Pre-National Early Service Training (NEST) (Month 1-2)	Introduction to Climate Change in National Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define current activities within the National Park Service surrounding climate change.</li> <li>Understand NPS policies related to climate change response.</li> <li>Establish shared understanding of science and approach to climate change response.</li> </ul>	Self-Directed
	Climate Cohort and Partners Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with fellow Climate CVAs to understand anticipated projects.</li> <li>Identify various offices and individuals who can answer questions or provide resources on climate change efforts within NPS or your locale.</li> </ul>	Stewards, NPS, and DOI Office of Insular Affairs
NEST (Month 3)	Climate Cohort Meet-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build in-person connections with fellow CVAs in the climate cohort to support collaboration and shared learning when completing project work on-site.</li> </ul>	Stewards, NPS, and CVAs
Mid-Service (Months 4-6)	Managing for a Changing Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define climate systems and impacts of modern climate change on lands.</li> <li>Understand implications of climate change on public land management and resource protection.</li> </ul>	Self-Directed
	Community Engagement in Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand best practices for engagement diverse audiences in climate conversation.</li> <li>Identify key concepts for finding common ground when discussing climate change.</li> <li>Review existing resources/examples of community engagement on climate change.</li> </ul>	Shel Winkley
	Interpreting Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop skills for interpreting climate change to the public.</li> <li>Identify best practices in developing climate change programming and curriculum.</li> <li>Recognize differences in interpreting climate change for natural and cultural resources.</li> </ul>	NPS
End of Service (Month 7-End)	Climate Cohort Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share project outcomes and lessons learned with CVA cohort and NPS community.</li> <li>Practice presentation and communication skills through delivery or presentation.</li> </ul>	Stewards and CVA



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## Additional Resources

### NPS Climate Change Response Program Resources

#### Overall NPS Climate Change Response

[Climate Change Subject Site on NPS.gov](#)

[NPS Climate Change Response Strategy 2023 Update](#) (DOI internal link)

[NPS Green Parks Plan](#)

[Climate Change Training](#) (DOI internal link)

[@NPSClimateChange YouTube Channel](#)

#### Climate Projections

[National Climate Assessment](#) (national/regional)

[NOAA State Climate Summaries](#) (state)

[U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit Climate Explorer](#) (local)

[Analog Atlas](#) (local)

#### Climate Impacts

[NASA Sea Level Projection Tool](#) (coastal)

[NPS Sea Level Rise and Storm Projections](#) (park-specific)

[NPS Integrated Resource Management Application](#) (search “climate change” and select your unit)

[Google Scholar](#) (search “climate change” and your unit)

#### Climate-Related Organizations

[NPS Climate Change Response Program](#)

Provides technical expertise in climate science synthesis, local climate projections, vulnerability assessments, scenario planning, and climate-related communications.

Contact: [climate\\_change@nps.gov](mailto:climate_change@nps.gov)

[NPS National Center for Preservation Technology and Training](#) (cultural resources)

Provides technical expertise on the conservation of buildings, landscapes, sites, and collections, increasingly with a focus on climate-smart methods.

Contact: [ncptt@nps.gov](mailto:ncptt@nps.gov)

[NPS Sustainable Operations and Maintenance Branch](#) (facilities)

Provides technical expertise on the sustainable management of national parks, including climate change mitigation and facility adaptation. Serves as the lead for execution of the NPS Green Parks Plan and administration of the Climate Friendly Parks Program.

Contact: [shawn\\_norton@nps.gov](mailto:shawn_norton@nps.gov)

[USGS Climate Adaptation Science Centers](#)

Fund scientific projects that generate research, data sets, and tools that natural and cultural resource managers can use to help fish, wildlife, ecosystems, & local communities survive and thrive in a changing climate.

[Regional CASC Contacts](#)

[Earth-to-Sky Partnership](#)

Earth to Sky is a NASA-led partnership between the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The partnership nurtures and supports a growing community of interpreters, educators, and scientists focused on climate communications.

Annual training offerings range from one-day workshops to one-week trainings.



### DOI Office of Insular Affairs Contacts and Resources

#### OIA staff in the Territories:

##### Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands:

- Desk Officer Francisco Taitano (Washington DC); [Francisco\\_taitano@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Francisco_taitano@ios.doi.gov)
- Field Representative Harry Blanco (Saipan); [harry\\_blanco@ios.doi.gov](mailto:harry_blanco@ios.doi.gov)

##### Guam:

- Field Representative Harry Blanco (Saipan); [harry\\_blanco@ios.doi.gov](mailto:harry_blanco@ios.doi.gov)

##### American Samoa:

- Field Representative Lydia Faleafine-Nomura (Pago Pago); [faleafine.nomura@gmail.com](mailto:faleafine.nomura@gmail.com)

##### US Virgin Islands

- Policy Director Basil Ottley (Washington DC); [basil\\_ottley@ios.doi.gov](mailto:basil_ottley@ios.doi.gov)

#### Weblinks:

- [Northern Mariana Islands Resources](#)
- [Guam Resources](#)
- [American Samoa Resources](#)
- [U.S. Virgin Islands Resources](#)