



Public Lands Service Coalition Partnership Impact Evaluation Final Report September 30, 2022



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Acknowledgements

Participating Public Lands Service Coalition corps and The Corps Network funded this evaluation, with leadership from Montana Conservation Corps. We also thank all corps and crew members for their time and dedicated efforts in developing, testing, refining, and implementing this evaluation. Finally, we thank Samantha Lockwood, MS for her contributions to the project and previous versions of reports.

Cover photos Clockwise from left: 1. Manual tree removal, American YouthWorks, Texas Conservation Corps, Austin, TX. 2. Trail work, American YouthWorks, Texas Conservation Corps, Austin, TX. 3. Group work photo, American YouthWorks, Texas Conservation Corps, Austin, TX.

Executive Summary

Working in a partnership model, conservation corps engage AmeriCorps members to provide land management agencies with resources to support community engagement [Engagement], a dependable workforce that balances high quality work with reduced agency costs [Efficiencies], and enhance the ability of public land agencies to provide for conservation and visitor recreation [Enhancement].

The overall aim of the proposed evaluation is to examine the impact of participating AmeriCorps conservation corps programs on hosting agencies' capacity. The primary outcome-related goals are to determine, ultimately through quasi-experimental post-hoc comparison group design, whether there is evidence that conservation corps' host partners demonstrate higher levels of engagement, efficiency, and environmental stewardship than similar non-hosting agencies.

The AmeriCorps conservation corps programs contributing to this impact evaluation include: American Conservation Experience, Colorado Youth Corps Association, Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa, Conservation Legacy, Delaware State Parks Veterans Conservation Corps, Kupu Hawaii, Montana Conservation Corps, Northwest Youth Corps, Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (NM), the SCA, American Youthworks (TXCC and LACC), Utah Conservation Corps and The Corps Network.

The primary research questions and outcomes were:

1. Do Conservation Corps increase partners' capacity to engage communities compared to non-host agencies as indicated by perceived levels of engagement?
2. Do Conservation Corps increase partners' efficiency compared to non-host agencies as indicated by fewer organizational resources committed to trail/habitat work and higher perceived quality of trail/habitat work?
3. Do Conservation Corps increase partners' natural resource enhancement compared to non-host agencies as indicated by increased miles of trails improved/created and habitat acres improved?

Partners surveys were distributed via Qualtrics in September-October, 2019 (Wave 1), September-December, 2020 (Wave 2), and September-December, 2021 (Wave 3). Surveys were designed to examine the differences between USFS and State Parks and Land Management units that used conservation corps AmeriCorps programs to conduct trail and habitat work and those that use alternative methods (e.g., agency crews, volunteer groups, contractors) during the previous year and identify differences in relevant outcomes during the project period. Additionally, the repeated measure survey design enabled an examination of the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on work performance.

A total of 493 respondents completed the surveys across all three waves. These respondents represented both USDA Forest Service (n=293, 59% of resulting sample population) and state parks/state land management units (n=200, 41%) across a representative distribution of the US. 67% of survey respondents were male (N=329), 67% had been with their current agency more than 10 years (N=333), and 52% had been in their current position more than 5 years (N=242).

Conservation Corps were among the most frequently reported partners among public land managers. Results suggested that conservation corps were important partners for land management agencies, primarily in tasks related to trail management. **Land management agencies who reported partnering with conservation corps were able to accomplish significantly more trail management work than agencies who did not partner with corps.** Overall, agencies working with partners were able to complete 61.5% miles of planned trail work compared to 50.4% of planned trail miles for agencies not partnering with corps. In general, work performed by Corps declined in 2020 (first year of the COVID-19 pandemic) and had variable rebounds in the 2021 season (second year of the COVID-19 pandemic). However, the trends were similar for most other types of partners.

Land management personnel perceived corps partnerships make a substantial contribution to resource enhancement. **Conservation corps' contribution to resource enhancement was rated highest among all partner types.** Conservation corps were also perceived to make considerable contributions to agency efficiency (ranked second among all partner types).

Participants were also asked to rate the partners they had worked with over the last year in terms of overall quality. Quality was assessed on a 0.0-5.0 scale (similar to giving 'star' ratings on Amazon). **Land managers perceived the quality of work performed by corps to be high (4 out of 5 stars), which was joint highest among all partner types.** Managers suggested that corps required considerable resources from their host before they arrive, moderate resources once they are on-site, and few resources after their work is complete. Based on the effort, quality and impact analyses presented above, a cost-benefit analysis was computed to explore the relationships between these two concepts. **Corps were perceived as highly contributing to their hosting agency's goals, to perform high-quality work, and to require moderate resources or effort from agency hosts.**

Participants were asked who would complete the work of their existing personnel and partners if these entities were no longer available to accomplish their currently assigned tasks. In many cases, paid staff would be called upon to complete the work currently being performed by others. In other cases, this work would simply go 'undone' (i.e., the participant reported that the work being performed by that partner would or could not be replaced and so would not be completed). Across all waves of the survey, **Corps were the most "irreplaceable" partner type identified by respondents** with approximately 1/3 of the sample suggesting that work would not be completed if not performed by corps partners.

Additionally, participants were able to provide comments about what they perceived to be the added value of working with Conservation Corps as well as barriers to engaging more fully with Corps. The comments generated by land management personnel in the sample population were analyzed and cataloged into general categories. Corps provide added value through (1) youth engagement, (2) relationships, (3) recruitment into the workforce, and (4) accomplishing tasks. Barriers included: (1) funding; (2) communication; (3) agreement processes; and (4) training.

This report provides ongoing evidence of **positive impacts to land management partners** by Conservation Corps in relation to other types of partner organizations. Corps were particularly **valuable** in assisting partners with **achieving trail management goals** leading to **higher levels of resource enhancement** in comparison to other partner types. Conservation corps were also seen as an **irreplaceable partner** in terms of providing high quality work for the amount of agency resources required to manage.

Evaluation Procedures

Previous evaluations have provided strong evidence of environmental corps programs' impacts on members' community and environmental engagement, leadership, communication skills and grit as well as enhanced recreational access, reduced fire risk, and improved ecological conditions for native species. The emerging focus of corps programs is their ability to increase organizational capacity and provide added value to public land agencies. Capacity building refers to activities that expand the scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of organizations.

Working in a partnership model, conservation corps provide land management agencies with resources that support community engagement [Engagement], a dependable workforce that balances high quality service (work) with reduced agency costs [Efficiencies], and enhance the ability of public land agencies to provide for conservation and visitor recreation [Enhancement].

Two important land management partners for conservation corps are the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (USFS) and state park systems. This evaluation will focus on the ability of conservation corps to enhance the capacity of these two organizations.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE EVALUATION

The overall aim of the proposed impact evaluation is to examine the outcomes of participating corps programs on hosting agencies' capacity. The primary outcome-related goals are to determine, ultimately through quasi-experimental post-hoc comparison group design, whether there is evidence that conservation corps' host partners demonstrate higher levels of engagement, efficiency, and environmental stewardship than similar non-hosting agencies. The primary research questions and outcomes are:

1. Do Conservation Corps increase partners' capacity to engage communities compared to non-host agencies as indicated by perceived levels of engagement?
2. Do Conservation Corps increase partners' efficiency compared to non-host agencies as indicated by fewer organizational resources committed to trail/habitat work and higher perceived quality of trail/habitat work?
3. Do Conservation Corps increase partners' natural resource enhancement compared to non-host agencies as indicated by increased miles of trails improved/created and acres of habitat improved?

Partner surveys were distributed via Qualtrics in September-October, 2019 (Wave 1), September-December, 2020 (Wave 2), and September-December, 2021 (Wave 3). Surveys were designed to examine the differences between USFS and State Parks units that used AmeriCorps conservation corps programs to conduct trail and habitat work and those that use alternative methods (e.g., agency crews, volunteer groups, contractors) during the previous year and identify differences in relevant outcomes during the project period. Outcome measures were to key organizational capacity variables identified in

partner interviews or adapted from Olsen, Cooper, and Viola's (2016) CNCS-sponsored evaluation of Habitat for Humanity's National Service Program. Primary measures include:

- Perceptions of capacity (Three items measuring how well respondent believes agency is accomplishing goals related to engagement, enhancement, and efficiency);
- Documentation of community engagement (One item requesting entry of agency hours worked with volunteers);
- Documentation of resource enhancement (Three items requesting entry of the number of trail miles and habitat acres scheduled for maintenance and number actually maintained in the past 12 months);
- Documentation of partnership level (Three items to identify the percentage of miles/acres improved worked on by identified partners);
- Perceptions of partners' role in agency outcomes (Three items per identified partner to record perceptions of contributions of partners to outcomes);
- Perceptions of work quality (11 items per identified partner adapted from SERVQUAL measures directly related to contracted services); and,
- Resource commitment (One item per identified partner to document resources required for training/oversight for three project stages - pre-work, on-site work, post-work).

Sample Population

In total, 493 usable responses were collected via the electronic questionnaire over the three waves of sampling (e.g., 2019, 2020, and 2021). Respondents represented USDA Forest Service personnel (59%, n=293) and state park (or equivalent) personnel (41%, n=200). The majority of respondents, 84%, reported working with their current agency for more than 5 years. However, there was a 50% split between personnel who had been in their current position for more or less than 5 years. Overall, the majority of respondents were male (67%, n=329) and white (86%, n=424). For a review of respondents by wave, see the following narrative and Table 1 below.

Sample population - 2019

A total of 218 respondents completed the Wave 1 electronic survey. After removing those individuals who did not identify as either a current United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service or a current state park employee (n=18), our resulting sample population consisted of 200 respondents. These respondents represented both USDA Forest Service (n=102, 51% of resulting sample population) and state parks units (n=98, 49%) in nearly equal proportions. The majority of respondents (84%) had been working within their current agency for more than five years while, overall, the time participants had spent in their current position was lower (56% had been in their current position five or fewer years, 44% more than five years). About two-thirds (67%) of participants were male, about a third (29%) female. For a complete listing of the sample population descriptive statistics, see Table 1.

Sample population - 2020

A total of 155 respondents completed the Wave 2 electronic survey. These respondents represented USDA Forest Service (n=59, 38% of sample population) and state park and land management units (n=96, 62%). The majority of respondents (90%) had been working within their current agency for more than five years while, overall, the time participants had spent in their current position was lower (38% had been in their current position five or fewer years, 62% more than five years). About two-thirds (67%) of participants were male, about a third (24%) female. For a complete listing of the sample population descriptive statistics, see Table 1.

Sample population - 2021

A total 138 respondents completed the Wave 3 electronic survey. These respondents represented USDA Forest Service (n=39, 28% of sample population) and state park and land management units (n=99, 72%). The majority of respondents (88%) had been working within their current agency for more than five years while, overall, the time participants had spent in their current position was lower (45% had been in their current position five or fewer years, 56% more than five years). About two-thirds (67%) of participants were male, about a third (29%) female. For a complete listing of the sample population descriptive statistics, see Table 1.

Table 1. Sample population descriptive statistics for Waves 1, 2, 3, and overall of the Public Land Management Personnel survey.

Item	2019 % (n/200)	2020 % (n/155)	2021 % (n/138)	Overall % (n/493)
Unit:				
<i>USDA Forest Service</i>	47% (102)	38% (59)	28% (39)	59% (293)
<i>State parks</i>	45% (98)	62% (96)	72% (99)	41% (200)
<i>Other*(removed from sample population)</i>	8% (18)			
Years with current agency				
<i>5 years or less</i>	15% (33)	10% (13)	12% (18)	13% (64)
<i>6-10 years</i>	13% (26)	18% (28)	21% (29)	17% (83)
<i>11-20 years</i>	40% (79)	34% (52)	38% (53)	37% (184)
<i>More than 20 years</i>	31% (61)	32% (50)	28% (38)	30% (149)
Years in current position				
<i>5 years or less</i>	56% (94)	38% (60)	45% (61)	48% (230)
<i>6-10 years</i>	21% (41)	27% (42)	25% (34)	24% (117)
<i>11-20 years</i>	17% (33)	22% (34)	24% (33)	20% (100)
<i>More than 20 years</i>	6% (11)	6% (9)	7% (9)	6% (29)

Item	2019 % (n/200)	2020 % (n/155)	2021 % (n/138)	Overall % (n/493)
Gender:				
<i>Male</i>	67% (134)	67% (103)	67% (92)	67% (329)
<i>Female</i>	29% (58)	24% (37)	29% (40)	27% (135)
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	3% (7)	3% (4)	3% (4)	3% (15)
<i>Other</i>	1% (2)	6% (12)	1% (2)	3% (16)

*For these analyses I only selected those identifying as SP or USFS personnel (n=200). This results in 51% state park-affiliated and 49% USFS-affiliated respondents.

Results

Reported Partnerships

Participants reported working with a diversity of partners over Wave 1 (2018-2019), with the highest proportion indicating partnerships with Corps, contractors, “Friends of...” groups, individual volunteers, and local groups (e.g., local civic organizations). Participants were also asked to specify the type of work performed by each partnership (see Table 2). Trail work was the most common task for, followed by invasive species management. Fuels management was the least common partnership task, although Corps, along with contractors, were the most likely partners to be contributing to fuels management tasks.

Participants reported continued high levels of working with specific types of partners during Wave 2 (2019-2020), with the highest proportion of partnerships with Corps, contractors, “Friends of...” groups, and individuals. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some differences were noted between 2019 and 2020. For many types of partners, the amount of partnership work decreased in 2020. While partnerships with corps decreased for trails and fuels, Corps remained the top partner for trail, invasive species, and fuel management among all participant agencies. It was noted that there were six instances where engagement with specific types of partners increased in 2020 for trails (“Friends of...” groups and outfitters/guides) and invasive species management (Religious/civic groups, contractors, “Friends of...” groups, individuals, and local governments).

Some ‘rebounds’ occurred in the partnerships reported by personnel during Wave 3 (2020-2021). For example, six types of partners that saw a decreased frequency of engagement with trail work in Wave 2 –including Corps– saw an increase in frequency of trail work engagement in Wave 3. However, continued decline in engagement persisted more consistently in areas of invasive species and fuels management. Corps remained the most often engaged partner type for trail and invasive species management and for fuels management Corps were the most engaged partner type after only contractors. See Figure 1 for an illustrative depiction of engagement of Corps across all three Waves of data collection and work areas.

Table 2. Work completed by various types of partners, as reported by Wave 1 (2019), Wave 2 (2020), and Wave 3 (2021) survey participants.

Over the past year, these groups completed work related to...	Trails % of sample 'yes' (n)			Invasive mgmt. % of sample 'yes' (n)			Fuels mgmt. % of sample 'yes' (n)		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Paid employees	81% (162)	78% (121)	80% (110)	70% (14)	66% (102)	69% (95)	49% (98)	64% (99)	35% (48)
Corps	60% (119)	51% (80)	65% (89)	35% (70)	35% (54)	31% (43)	14% (28)	11% (17)	9% (13)
Religious & civic groups	14% (28)	8% (12)	9% (12)	4% (8)	5% (7)	5% (7)	---	1% (1)	0
Contractors	31% (61)	29% (45)	30% (41)	29% (57)	35% (54)	22% (30)	17% (33)	16% (25)	15% (20)
Court ordered community service	9% (18)	7% (10)	9% (12)	4% (7)	5% (7)	4% (6)	2% (4)	1% (2)	3% (4)
Friends of... groups	41% (81)	42% (65)	38% (53)	15% (29)	19% (30)	14% (21)	2% (4)	3% (4)	1% (1)
Individuals	51% (101)	46% (71)	46% (63)	26% (51)	27% (42)	24% (33)	3% (6)	3% (4)	6% (8)
Local/regional groups	57% (114)	48% (75)	44% (60)	14% (28)	11% (17)	11% (15)	2% (3)	1% (2)	1% (2)
Local governments	10% (20)	10% (15)	11% (15)	13% (25)	16% (24)	12% (16)	10% (19)	4% (6)	5% (7)
National groups	18% (36)	12% (19)	13% (18)	9% (17)	5% (7)	2% (3)	3% (5)	2% (3)	3% (4)
Outfitters & guides	11% (21)	13% (20)	11% (15)	2% (3)	3% (5)	0	1% (2)	1% (1)	1% (1)
Youth groups	32% (64)	23% (36)	28% (39)	12% (23)	9% (14)	8% (11)	2% (3)	2% (3)	2% (3)

% Increased | % Decreased

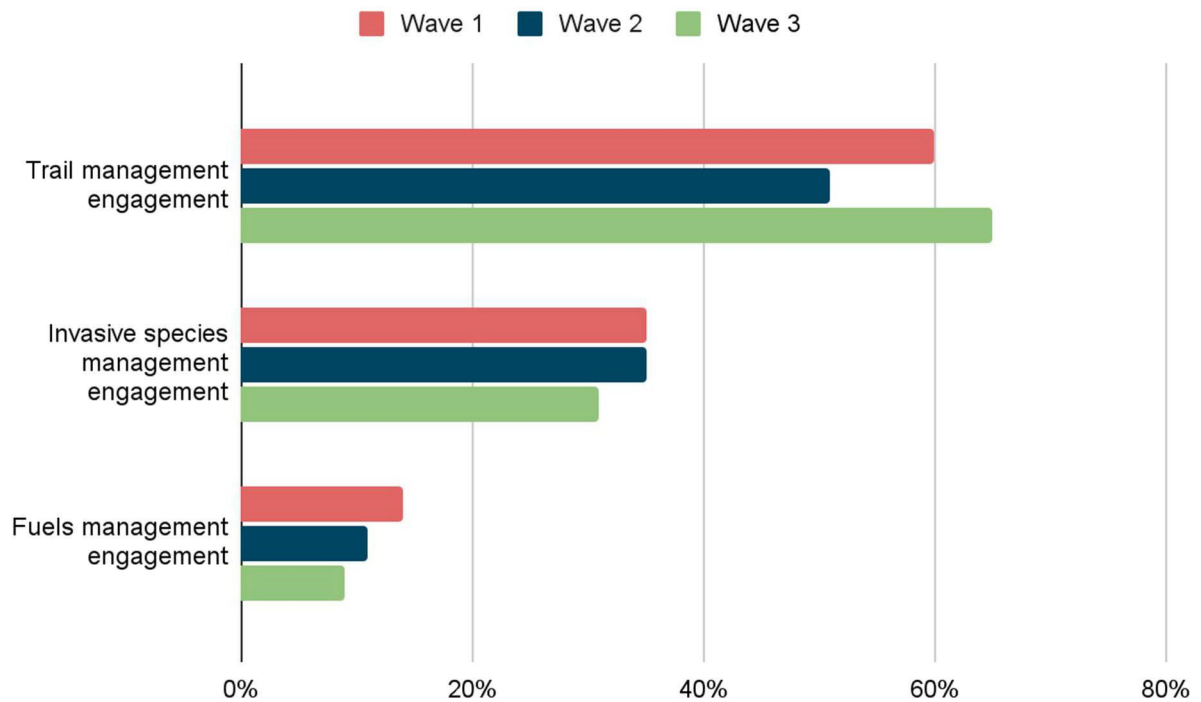


Figure 1. The proportion of Wave 1, 2, & 3 survey participants engaging with Corps partners to complete work tasks over the prior 12 months.

Corps were among the most frequently reported partnership types by public land management personnel.

...

Corps partnerships were also among the most likely to help agency partners complete tasks related to trails, invasive species, and fuels management.

Work Accomplished: Trails

On average, participants reported that they had planned to manage 91 miles of trail during 2018-2019 (range: 0-1,468 miles). Overall, 56 miles of trail (range: 0-600 miles) or 62% of the planned mileage was actually managed over the past year with 49 of those miles, on average (range: 0-600), managed in collaboration with one or more partners. On average, for respondents who reported working with a youth corps, 34 miles of trail were completed specifically with the assistance of a corps partner. Further, respondents who reported working with a conservation corps completed more (68%) of their planned work than those respondents who did not engage corps partners (38%).

In 2019-2020, participants reported that they had planned to manage 95 miles of trail (range: 0-1,800 miles). Overall, 59 miles of trail (range: 0-600 miles) or 62% of the planned mileage was actually managed over the year with 32 of those miles, on average (range: 0-600), managed in collaboration with one or more partners. The mean miles of trails managed with partners decreased 20 miles from 2019 to 2020. On average, for respondents who reported working with a youth corps, 32 miles of trail were completed specifically with the assistance of a corps partner, suggesting that 100% of miles managed with partners were managed to some degree with corps.

In 2020-2021, participants reported that they had planned to manage 94 miles of trail (range: 0-1,200 miles) on average. Overall, 57 miles of trail (range: 0-600 miles) or 61% of the planned mileage was actually managed over the year with 31 of those miles, on average (range: 0-600 miles), managed in collaboration with partners. About 12 miles of trails on average (range: 0-85 miles) were managed with Corps partners specifically. While other numbers were similar to 2019-2020, fewer personnel reported engaging Corps as trail work partners in 2020-2021. Use of partners overall, did not rebound to 2019 levels of engagement for trail work.

Table 3. Trail work accomplishments reported by survey participants.

Item	2019	2020	2021
	Mean (Min.-Max.)	Mean (Min.-Max.)	Mean (Min.-Max.)
Trail miles planned for management	91 (0-1,468)	95 (0-1,800)	94 (0-1,200)
Trail miles managed	56 (0-600) <i>62% of planned trails are managed</i>	59 (0-1,100) <i>62% of planned trails are managed</i>	57 (0-600) <i>61% of planned trails are managed</i>
Trail miles managed with partners	52 (0-600) <i>92% of trails managed are done so with partners.</i>	32 (0-600) <i>54% of trails managed are done so with partners.</i>	31 (0-600) <i>54% of trails managed are done so with partners</i>
Trail miles managed with Corps partners	37 (0-1000*) <i>71% of miles managed with partners are managed by Corps.</i>	32 (0-1,000) <i>100% of miles managed with partners are managed by Corps</i>	12 (0-85) <i>40% of miles managed with partners are managed by Corps</i>

% Increased | % Decreased

Land management personnel utilized partners less for trail work, overall, in 2020 & 2021 compared to 2019. While all Wave 2 participants who reported engaging partners for trail work, engaged Conservation Corps for at least part of that work, Wave 3 personnel engaged with Corps specifically, as trail partners, only 40% of the time.

Work Accomplished: Invasive Species

In 2019, participants reported that they planned to manage an average of 2,270 acres for invasive plant species (range: 0-250,000 acres). The actual number of acres managed for invasive species was about 57% of that which was planned (1,292 acres on average). Of the average acres managed, 45% were managed with the help of some partner. Agency personnel working with Corps had, on average, more acres of invasive species planned and accomplished than personnel not working with Corps. On average, agency partners reported managing 134 acres with the help of Corps (23% of the average acres). Personnel not engaging Corps accomplished less, overall, and relied more heavily on other partner types to accomplish invasive species management tasks.

In 2020, participants reported that they planned to manage significantly more acres of invasive plant species than the previous year, with an average of 3,470 acres of invasive species management planned per respondent (range: 0-30,000 acres). The actual number of acres managed for invasive species was about 73% of that which was planned (2,540 acres on average), a significant increase from 2019. Of the average acres managed, 96% were managed with the help of some partner (an increase of over 100% from 2019). However, the proportion of acres managed in partnership with corps remained at approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total acres managed with partners.

In 2021, participants reported that they planned to manage still fewer acres of invasive plant species than the previous year, with an average of 1,692 acres of invasive species management planned per respondent (range: 0-80,000 acres). The actual number of acres managed for invasive species was about 81% of that which was planned (1,368 acres on average), an increase from 2019 and 2020. Of the average acres managed, 58% were managed with the help of some partner (a decrease from 2020, although still a larger proportion than in 2019). However, the proportion of acres managed in partnership with corps decreased to 3% of the total acres managed with partners.

Table 4. Invasive species management accomplishments reported by survey participants.

Item	2019	2020	2021
	Mean (Min.-Max.)	Mean (Min.-Max.)	Mean (Min.-Max.)
Invasive acres planned for management	2,270 (0-250,000)	3,470 (0-30,000)	1,692 (0-80,000)
Invasive acres managed	1,292 (0-10,000) <i>57% of acres planned for invasives mgmt. are managed.</i>	2,540 (0-30,000) <i>73% of acres planned for invasives mgmt. are managed.</i>	1,368 (0-80,000) 81% of acres planned for invasive species management are managed
Invasive acres managed with partners	584 (0-30,000*) <i>45% of managed acres are managed with partners.</i>	2,430 (0-30,000) <i>96% of managed acres are managed with partners</i>	799 (0-60,000) 58% of managed acres are managed with partners
Invasive acres managed with Corps partners	134 (0-8,200) <i>23% of acres managed with partners are managed with Corps.</i>	597 (1-1,000) <i>25% of acres managed with partners are managed with Corps.</i>	27 (0-1,000) 3% of acres managed with partners are managed with Corps

% Increased | % Decreased

Participating personnel reported larger, overall, invasive species management projects in 2020 but this decreased in 2021. There was an increase in invasive species management work completed and more emphasis on partners, including Corps in 2020 but a decrease in 2021.

Work Accomplished: Fuels

In terms of fuel load management, in 2019 participants reported that, on average, they had planned to manage 4,273 acres (range: 0-90,000) over the last year. On average, about 61% of their planned work was accomplished and of that accomplished work, 28% of the acres managed were done so in tandem with the assistance of one or more partners. Agency personnel reported that 38% of acres managed with partners were done so with Corps.

In 2020, agency personnel reported significantly fewer planned acres of fuel management in 2020, with an average of 2,280 (range 0-150,000). Additionally, the planned work accomplished remained at 61% of the planned work. However, the role of partners, and especially corps in partnerships focused on fuel load management increased significantly. The proportion of acres managed with partners increased to 66%, with corps partnerships managing 82% of those acres.

In 2021, agency personnel reported slightly more planned acres of fuel management than in 2020, while still a decrease from 2019, with an average of 2,986 acres (range 0-189,000 acres). The amount of planned work that was accomplished remained at increased in 2021 with 75% of the planned work being managed. However, the role of partners, and especially corps in partnerships focused on fuel load management decreased. The proportion of acres managed with partners decreased to 63%, with corps partnerships managing only 1% of those acres in 2021.

Table 5. Fuel acre management accomplishments reported by survey participants.

Item	2019	2020	2021
	Mean (Min.-Max.)	Mean (Min.-Max.)	Mean (Min.-Max.)
Fuels acres planned for management	4,273 (0-90,000)	2,280 (0-150,000)	2,986 (0-189,000)
Fuels acres managed	2,594 (0-75,000) <i>61% of acres planned for fuels mgmt. are managed.</i>	1,390 (0-125,000) <i>61% of acres planned for fuels mgmt. are managed</i>	2,242 (0-115,714) <i>75% of acres planned for fuels mgmt. are managed</i>
Fuels acres managed with partners	737 (0-30,000) <i>28% of managed acres are managed with partners.</i>	913 (0-10,000) <i>66% of managed acres are managed with partners.</i>	1,406 (0-115,714) <i>63% of managed acres are managed with partners</i>
Fuels acres managed with	280 (0-10,000) <i>38% of acres managed with partners are managed with Corps.</i>	746 (2-888) <i>82% of acres managed with partners are managed with Corps</i>	7 (0-100) <i>1% of acres managed with partners are managed with Corps</i>

% Increased | % Decreased

While fuel project planned and managed increased or rebounded from 2020 and 2019 respectively, fewer fuels projects were completed with partners, specifically Corps, in 2021.

Findings reveal that Corps remain important partners for land management agencies, but that these relationships saw a decrease in COVID-19 pandemic-impacted years 2020 and 2021.

...

It is likely the Corps, such as other highly-engaged partner types (i.e., local governments, outfitters, and contractors) were able to navigate some of the challenges presented by COVID-19 due to their organizational structure and enhanced autonomy in completing work safely in self-contained crews. However, there were decreases in partnership engagement, including Corps, in 2020 and 2021.

Perceptions of Capacity Building and Impact

Perceptions of Engagement, Enhancement, Efficiency (3 E's)

Three E's

Participants were asked to 'grade' their agency in terms of how well their state park or Forest Service unit was performing in three areas: community engagement, natural, cultural, and/or recreation resource enhancement, and overall efficiency. On average, across all three surveys, participating personnel graded their agency/unit as a "D" average in all three areas (see Table 5). However, participants also reported that these elements (engagement, enhancement, and efficiency) are *very important* functions of their agencies' partnerships (see Table 6). Respondents indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic had a weak to moderate negative impact on their agencies' efforts at resource enhancement and efficiency and a stronger negative impact on their community engagement efforts (Tables 7 and 8).

Table 6. Mean scores and standard deviations of perceived grade of agency capacity

	Engagement Grade	Enhancement Grade	Efficiency Grade
Overall Mean* (SD)	2.04 (0.86)	1.98 (0.76)	1.93 (0.81)

Table 7. Mean scores and standard deviations of the importance of partnerships in contributing to agency capacity outcomes for public land management personnel

Item:	Overall Mean (SD)
Community engagement	4.08 (0.96)
Agency efficiency	4.05 (0.96)
Recreation and/or resource enhancement	4.21 (0.91)

Scale: 1= not at all important; 2= slightly important; 3=moderately important; 4= very important; 5=extremely important

Table 8. COVID-19 mean impacts on engagement, enhancement, and efficiency (2020/21 only)

How has COVID-19 impacted your program or area of responsibility in terms of...	2020/2021 Mean* (SD)
Community engagement	-1.24 (1.72)
Resource enhancement	-0.86 (1.54)
Efficiency	-0.86 (1.60)

*Scale: strong, positive = 3; moderate, positive = 2; weak, positive = 1; neither positive nor negative = 0; weak, negative = -1; moderate, negative = -2; strong, negative = -3

In answering these questions, participants considered the following definitions:

Weak/Strong - refers to how intensely you felt the impact of COVID-19

Positive/Negative - refers to the direction of the COVID-19 impact

Table 9. COVID-19 detailed impacts on engagement, enhancement, and efficiency (2020/21 only)

How has COVID-19 impacted...	% Strong, negative	% Moderate, negative	% Weak, negative	% Neither positive or negative	% Weak, positive	% Moderate, positive	% Strong, positive
Engagement	25%	34%	15%	9%	5%	10%	2%
Enhancement	14%	27%	21%	22%	8%	6%	2%
Efficiency	15%	24%	26%	16%	7%	9%	3%

Agency personnel reported that partnerships were very important contributors to agency capacity outcomes (Table 6). Previous research (e.g., Duerden, Edwards & Lizzo, 2015) demonstrates that partners can be key in enhancing how well agencies are performing in these areas. When asked to rate their partners' contributions to engagement, enhancement, and efficiency, personnel reported that many partnerships made moderate to substantial contributions (see Figure 2). For community engagement, local governments, local groups, youth groups, and "Friends of..." groups were among those partnership types to make the most substantial contribution. For resource enhancement, Corps were the only partner type top-rated, along with the agency's own personnel. Corps, along with paid contractors, "Friends of..." groups, and local governments were also reported as highly contributing to agency efficiency.

Corps are perceived as a key partner in providing resource enhancement benefits to their hosting agency partners. Corps were also second among all types of partners that enhance agency efficiency for public land personnel.

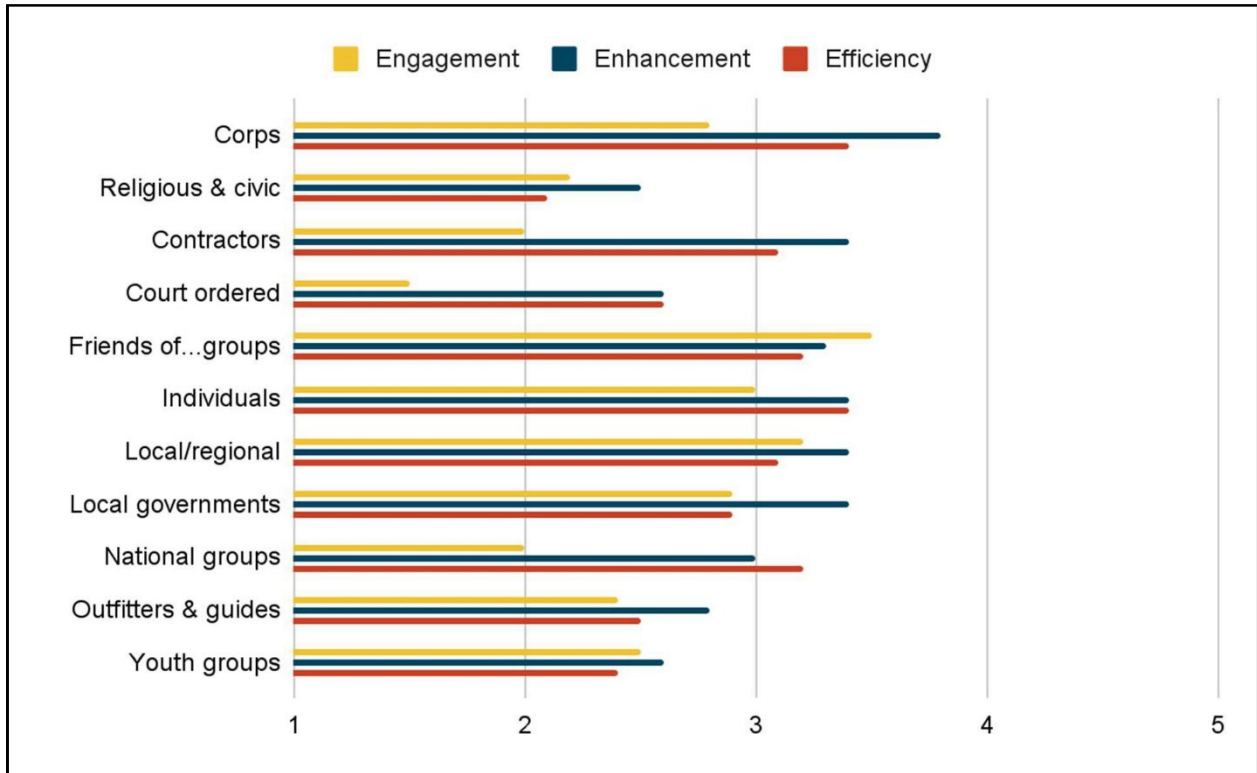


Figure 2. Contributions to community engagement, resource enhancement, and agency efficiency by various partnership types.

Scaled used: 5 = Substantial Contribution, 4 = Considerable Contribution, 3 = Moderate Contribution, 2 = Little Contribution, 1 = No contribution

Perceptions of Partner Quality

Participants were also asked to rate the partners they had worked with in terms of overall quality. Quality was assessed on a 0.0-5.0 scale (similar to giving 'star' ratings on Amazon). Overall across all three year of the survey, personnel ranked Corps and contractors as groups providing the highest quality of work. Individuals, national groups, local/regional groups and "Friends of..." groups received the next highest, overall, rating followed by local governments, outfitters & guides, and youth groups. Religious groups and court-ordered community service were perceived, by the sample of survey participants, to offer the lowest quality work for the agency.

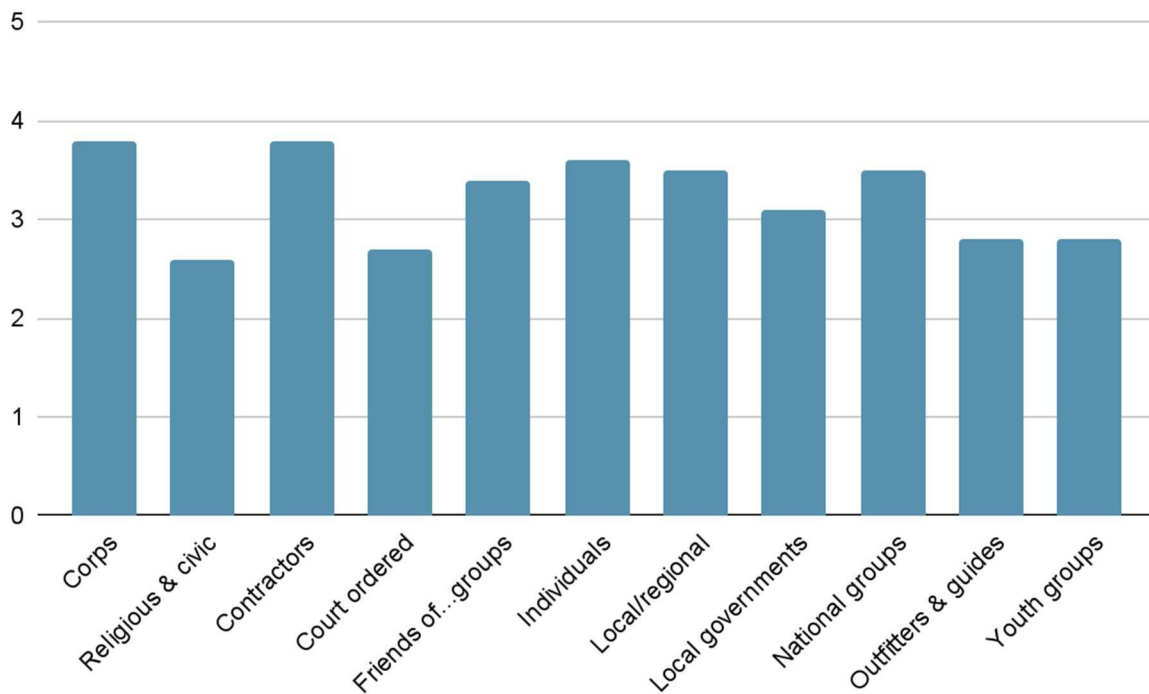


Figure 3. Average quality ratings of distinct partnership types, as reported by participants



Corps are perceived as performing high quality work by their agency (state park and USDA Forest Service) hosts.

Perceptions of Effort

Public land management personnel participants were also asked to assess level of effort in coordinating the partnerships they engage. Effort was operationalized in three categories: the “pre” effort of recruiting, marketing, setting up, providing advanced training, or otherwise dealing with partners before they arrived on site to complete work; “on-site” effort including training on-site and leadership, management and oversight provided by the agency personnel on-site; and “post” effort including documentation, reporting, evaluation, and/or recognition that occurred after the partner had departed from completing on-site work. Personnel rated the effort they put forward on a five-point scale with options of: 1= *No resources*, 2= *Few resources*, 3= *Moderate resources*, 4= *Considerable resources*, or 5= *Substantial resources* required by the personnel in either the pre, on-site, or post partnership context.

The combined, average perceived effort personnel associate with various types of partners are illustrated in Figure 4. Overall, Corps and contractors –two partners perceived as highest quality– are perceived as requiring the most overall effort to engage with on enhancement or engagement tasks. Youth groups also emerged as a partner type requiring increased effort from personnel to engage, likely due to the need to provide increased oversight and supervision for youth participants. The breakdown of perceived effort score for Corps partnerships are illustrated in Figure 5. Corps require moderate resources from their agency host before they arrive (mean=3.45) and once they are on-site (mean=3.56), and fewer resources from personnel after their work is complete (mean =2.61).

Corps require: *moderate* resources from their agency host before they arrive & once they are on-site, and *fewer* resources after their work is complete.

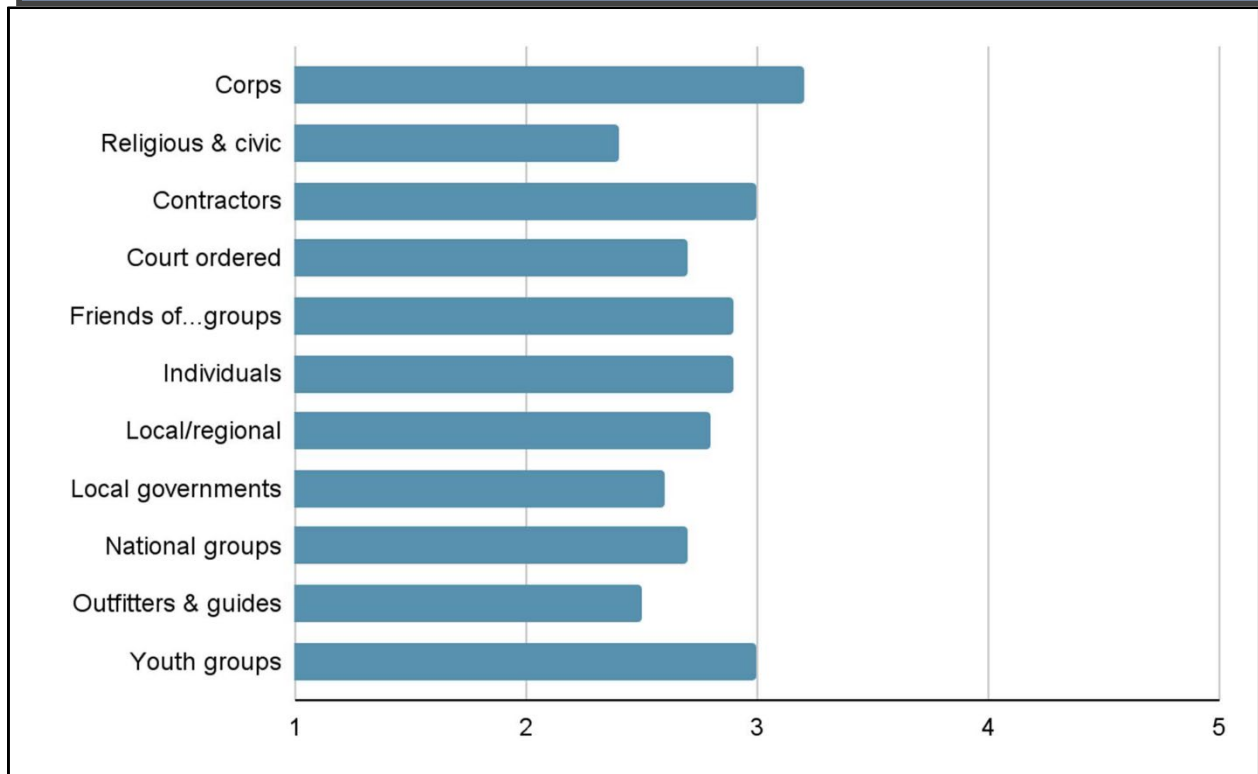


Figure 4. Land management personnel perceptions of effort associated with various partnership types

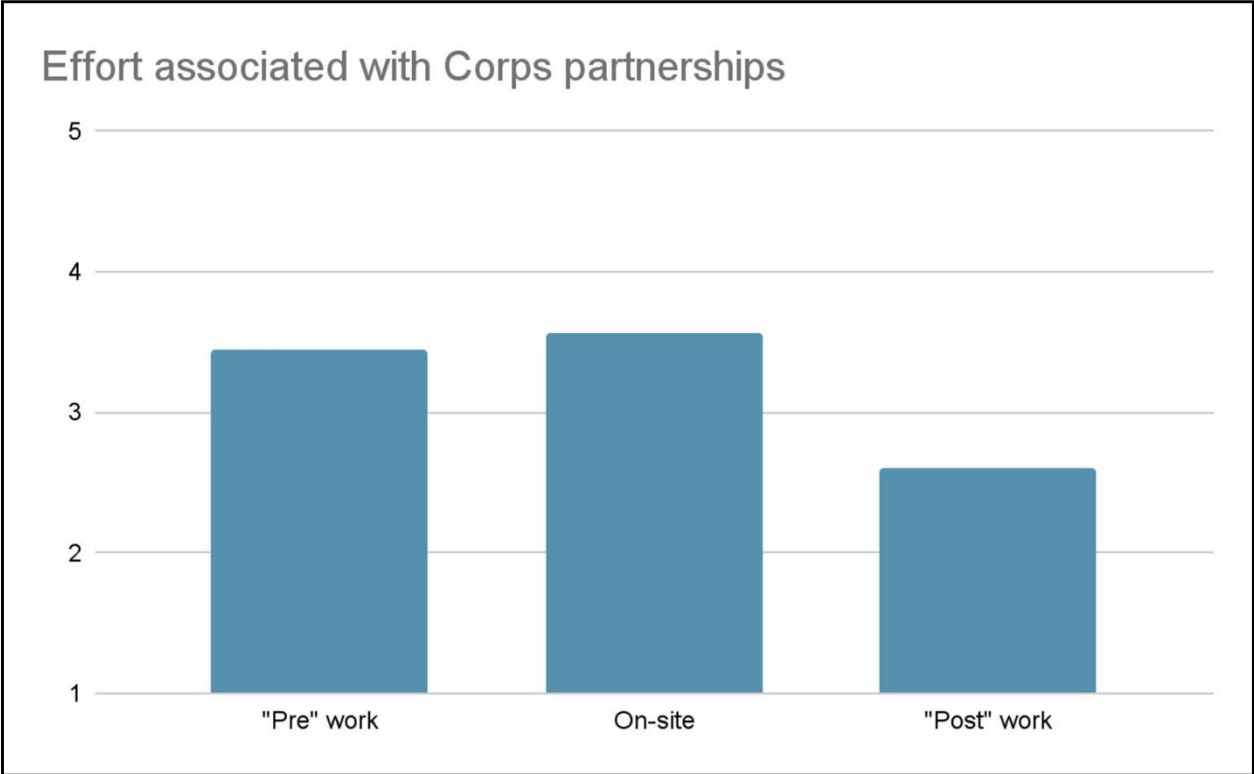


Figure 5. Land management personnel perceptions of effort associated with Corps partnerships before, during, and after work is completed by Corps

Cost-Benefit Analysis

Based on the impacts, effort, and quality analyses presented above, a cost-benefit analysis was computed to explore the relationships between these concepts. The total impact score (i.e., partners' contributions to engagement, enhancement and efficiency) was multiplied by the mean quality score, this product was then divided by the total effort metric to produce a final "cost-benefit" quotient. Cost-benefit values could range in value from 0 (low benefit for the cost) to 5 (high benefit for the cost). As illustrated in Figure 6 below, partner types exemplifying a valuable cost-benefit ratio (all ranked above a 4.0) included national groups, individuals, local and regional groups, 'Friends of...' groups, Conservation Corps, and local governments. Court-ordered community service groups and youth groups were perceived to have the poorest cost-benefit relationship.

While the rank order of overall 'cost-benefit' within the bottom two and top five partner types varied between years, membership within the top and bottom groups did not change. Corps remain a very impactful partner type for agency personnel.

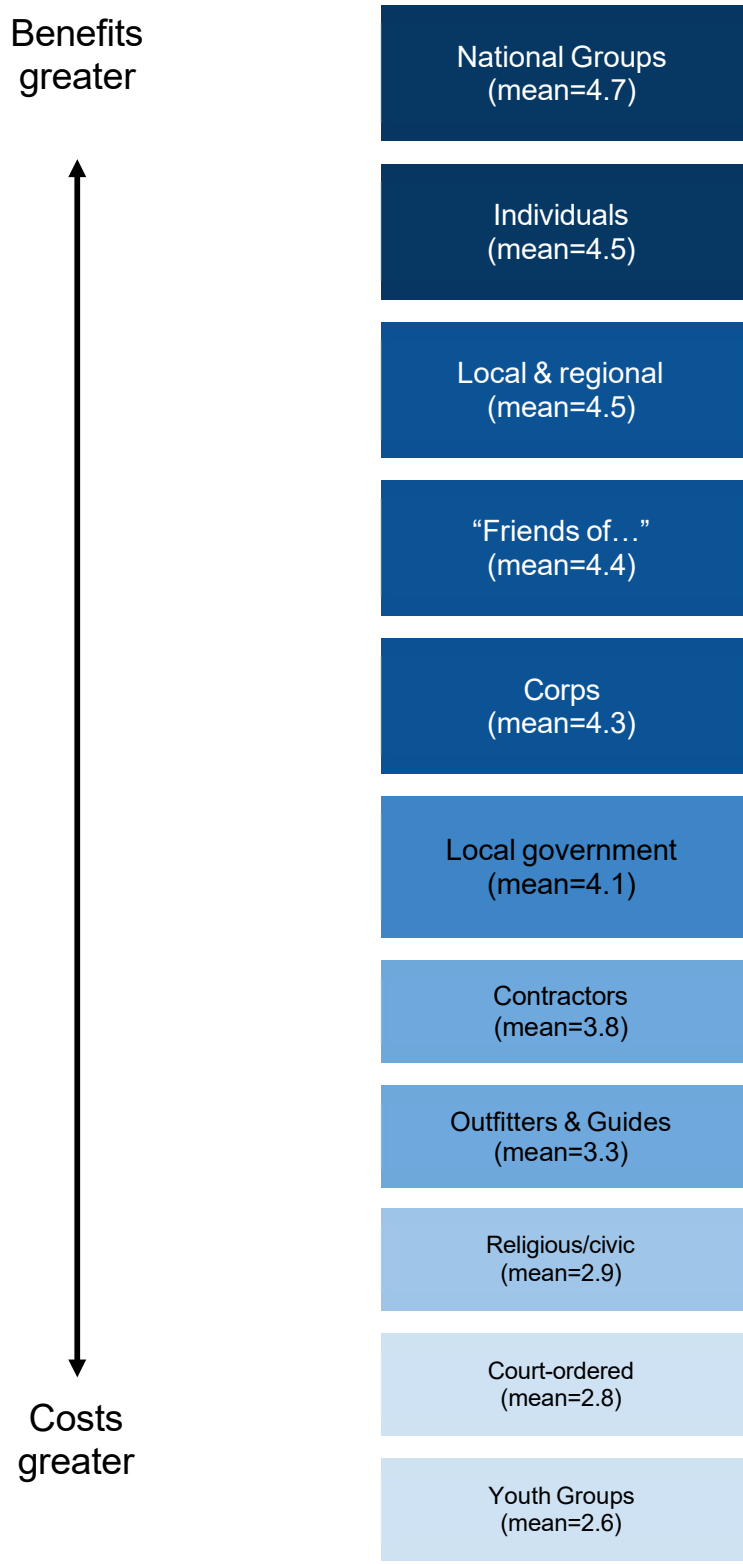


Figure 6. Personnel perceptions of different partnership types, in terms of contributions to community engagement, resources enhancement, agency efficiency, quality, and effort

“Undone Work”

Participants were asked who would complete the work of existing personnel and partners if these entities were no longer available to accomplish currently assigned tasks. In many cases, paid staff would be called upon to complete the work currently being performed by others. In other cases this work would simply go ‘undone’ (i.e., the participant reported that the work being performed by that partner would or could not be replaced and so would not be completed). It was reported that either paid personnel would be used to replace other paid personnel, Corps, contractors, individual volunteers, and the work of local groups or that the work of these groups would be left ‘undone’ through their absence.

Table 10. Wave 1 (2019) land management personnel’s perceptions of who would replace personnel or partners if they were no longer available to complete previously assigned work

If the entities below did not exist, the work they do would be completed by:	Paid Staff <i>% of sample (n)</i>	Another Partner <i>% of sample (n)</i>	Would not be completed <i>% of sample (n)</i>
Paid employees	35% (69)	11% (21)	58% (115)
Corps	35% (70)	23% (45)	33% (66)
Religious & civic groups	5% (10)	5% (9)	8% (16)
Contractors	30% (60)	12% (23)	28% (55)
Court ordered community service	4% (8)	4% (7)	6% (12)
Friends of... groups	18% (36)	7% (14)	27% (53)
Individuals	32% (63)	11% (22)	29% (57)
Local/regional groups	27% (54)	14% (27)	32% (64)
Local governments	9% (18)	8% (15)	9% (17)
National groups	5% (10)	9% (17)	14% (28)
Outfitters & guides	2% (3)	1% (2)	9% (18)
Youth groups	13% (26)	12% (23)	17% (34)

Note: respondents only reported how a partner would be replaced if they worked with that partner type over the past 12 months (so rows may not add to 100%) and respondents could select more than one option (i.e., would be replaced by paid employees AND other partners) therefore row totals may exceed 100%.

Table 11. Wave 2 (2020) and Wave 3 (2021) land management personnel’s perceptions of who would replace personnel or partners if they were no longer available to complete previously assigned work

If the entities below did not exist, the work they do would be completed by:	Paid Staff % of sample ‘yes’ (n)		Another Partner % of sample ‘yes’ (n)		Would not be completed % of sample ‘yes’ (n)	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Paid employees	30% (46)	30% (42)	7% (11)	8% (11)	52% (80)	51% (71)
Corps	22% (34)	25% (35)	10% (16)	11% (15)	29% (45)	32% (44)
Religious & civic	3% (4)	7% (10)	3% (5)	2% (3)	5% (7)	2% (3)
Contractors	22% (34)	17% (24)	12% (19)	8% (11)	21% (32)	22% (30)
Court ordered	5% (7)	5% (7)	1% (1)	6% (8)	3% (4)	11% (15)
Friends of... groups	16% (24)	19% (26)	8% (13)	7% (10)	21% (33)	16% (22)
Individuals	25% (39)	22% (30)	6% (9)	8% (11)	18% (28)	24% (33)
Local/regional groups	16% (24)	11% (15)	10% (16)	10% (14)	21% (32)	26% (36)
Local governments	10% (15)	7% (10)	7% (11)	3% (4)	8% (12)	9% (13)
National groups	3% (5)	4% (6)	6% (9)	6% (8)	5% (7)	5% (7)
Outfitters & guides	3% (4)	2% (3)	4% (6)	1% (2)	7% (10)	7% (9)
Youth groups	12% (18)	8% (11)	5% (7)	9% (12)	10% (15)	15% (21)

Corps were the most “irreplaceable” partner type identified by respondents with about a third of the participants in each wave suggesting that work would not be completed if not performed by Corps partners.

Research Questions & Outcomes

To answer the overall research questions of the evaluation, a sub-sample of 88 matched pairs (N=176) of respondents working for an agency that either partners or does not partner with Corps were identified for further analysis. The matched pairs were selected based on comparable proxy measures for agency capacity, including miles of planned trail maintenance and planned acres of habitat management, agency type, years in current position, and years with current agency for the respondent. Pairs were matched within (not across) survey waves.

Engagement

Research Question 1 asked: Do Conservation Corps increase host partners' capacity to **engage** communities compared to non-host agencies as indicated by perceived levels of engagement? Mean scores and standard deviations for perceived engagement are presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Perceived level of community engagement by Corps partners and non-partners

	Mean (SD)
Corps Partners	2.15 (0.81)
Non-Partners	2.00 (0.84)

There was no significant effect for corps partnership on engagement, $t(174) = 1.21, p = .23, d = .18$ despite partners reporting slightly higher perceived engagement scores than non-partners.

Efficiency

Research Question 3 asked: Do Conservation Corps increase host partners' **efficiency** compared to non-partners as indicated by fewer organizational resources committed to trail and habitat work and higher perceived quality of trail and habitat work?

Resources

Perceived level of resource commitment to trail/habitat work was measured relative to three periods in the work process: Prior to projects commencing (Pre-Work Phase), while projects were underway (Work Phase), and following the completion of the scheduled project (Post-Work Phase). The means and standard deviations of perceived level of resource commitment by partnership status are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Perceived level of resource commitment to trail/habitat work by partners and non-partners

	Pre-Work Phase Mean (SD)	Work Phase Mean (SD)	Post-Work Phase Mean (SD)
Corps Partner	3.15 (0.64)	3.11 (0.71)	2.45 (0.69)
Non-Partner	3.02 (0.85)	3.21 (0.95)	2.57 (0.92)

Non-partners reported committing slightly fewer resources to trail/habitat work than partners prior to work commencing. However, non-partners reported committing slightly more resources to trail/habitat work while projects were underway and post-work compared to partners. However, MANOVA for resource commitment indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in resource commitment based on Corps partnership status, $F = 2.03$, $p = .111$; Wilk's $\Lambda = .965$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$.

Quality of Work

An overall measure of quality of work was calculated based on the mean perceived quality of work measure for all partners. The mean perceived quality of work for trail/habitat work based on partnership status are presented in Table 14.

Table 14. Perceived quality of work by partners and non-partners

	Quality of Work Mean (SD)
Corps Partner	3.51 (0.72)
Non-Partner	3.40 (0.79)

There was no significant effect for corps partnership quality of work, $t(174) = .694$, $p = .39$, $d = .14$ despite partners reporting slightly higher perceived quality scores than non-partners.

Enhancement

Research Question 2 asked: Do Conservation Corps increase host partners' natural resource **enhancement** compared to non-partners as indicated by increased miles of trails improved/created and acres of habitat improved?

Trails

Table 15 presents miles of trail planned for management and the total miles managed by partnership status.

Table 15. Planned and actual miles of trail managed by partners and non-partners

	Corps Partners Mean (SD)	Non-Partners Mean (SD)
Miles of Trail Planned for Management	89.22 (193.8)	73.94 (215.1)
Actual Miles of Trail Managed	54.95 (135.9)	36.89 (122.3)

Corps partners reported higher mileage of trails maintained, repaired, or constructed than non-partners. There was also an overall increase of trail work conducted in year 2 (2020) and year 3 (2021) of the survey during the peak of the COVID 19 pandemic. Controlling for year, linear models indicated that there was a **statistically significant difference in miles of trails improved or created based on Corps partnership status**, $F = 28.42$, $p = .011$. This difference had a large effect size (partial $\eta^2 = .90$).

Overall, corps partners in the match sample improved or created 1,534 more miles of trail than agencies not collaborating with conservation corps. Partner agencies were able to complete 61.5% of scheduled trail work compared to 50.4% of scheduled work completed by non-partners.

Invasive Species

The mean acres of habitat planned for invasive species management and the total acres managed for invasive species by partnership status are presented in Table 16.

Table 16. Planned and actual acres of habitat managed for invasive species by partners and non-partners

	Corps Partners Mean (SD)	Non-Partners Mean (SD)
Acres of Habitat Planned for Invasive Species Management	467.6 (926.9)	477.1 (1138.6)
Actual Acres of Habitat Managed for Invasive Species	272.4 (503.2)	354.0 (1024.6)

Examining acres of invasive species management, ANOVA models indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in acres managed for invasive species based on Corps partnership status, $F = .192$, $p = .704$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$.

Forest Fuels Management

The mean acres of habitat planned for forest fuels management and the total acres managed for forest fuels by partnership status are presented in Table 17.

Table 17. Planned and actual acres of habitat managed for forest fuels for partners and non-partners

	Corps Partners Mean (SD)	Non-Partners Mean (SD)
Acres of Habitat Planned for Forest Fuels	2,499.4 (9,938.9)	1,364.64 (6,580.4)
Actual Acres of Habitat Managed for Forest Fuels	272.4 (503.2)	354.0 (1024.6)

Examining acres of forest fuel management, ANOVA models indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in acres managed for forest fuels based on Corps partnership status, $F = .668$, $p = .492$, partial $\eta^2 = .23$. However, it was interesting to note that the interaction effect between partner status and year approached significance ($F = 2.54$, $p = .082$) that suggested more acres of forest fuels were managed by corps partner agencies in 2019 than in 2020 and 2021 in comparison to non-partner agencies. The interaction effect of mean fuel acres managed by year and partnership status is illustrated in Figure 7. This result indicates that partner agencies managed more fuel acres in 2019 in comparison to non-partner agencies. By 2021, non-partner agencies were managing more fuel acres than partner agencies.

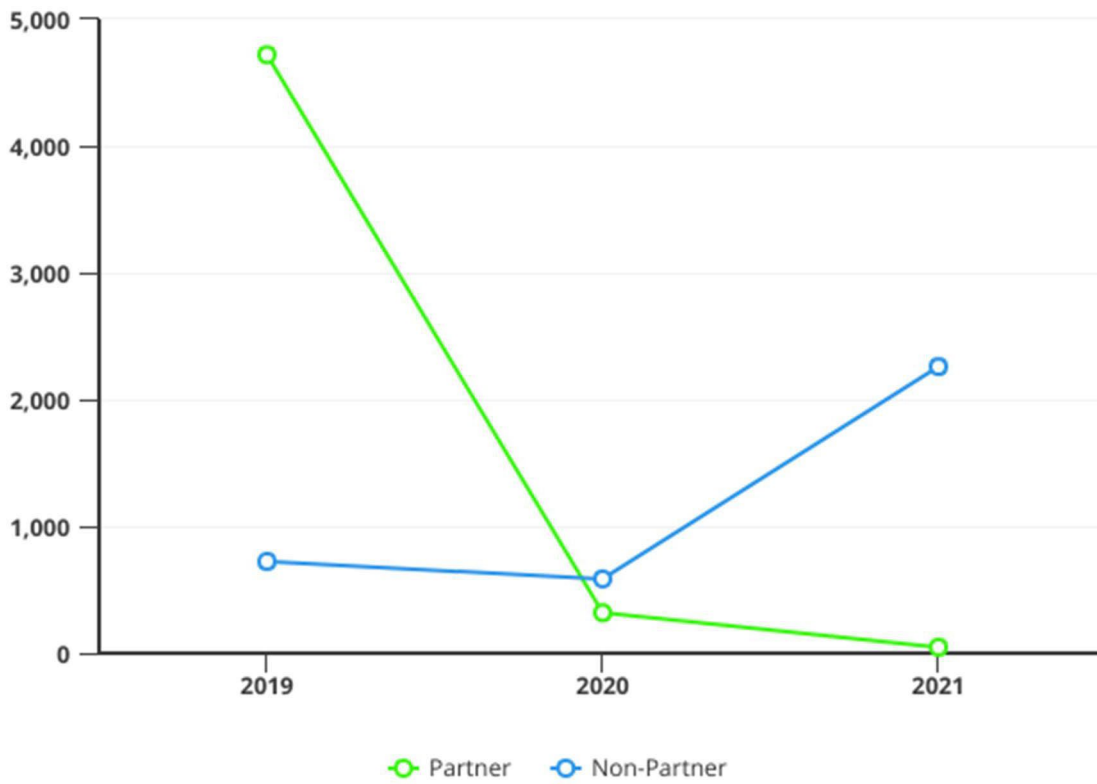


Figure 7. Mean fuel acres managed by partners and non-partners agencies by year

Barriers to Corps Partnerships

Barriers

Participants were able to provide comments about what they perceived to be barriers to engaging more fully with Corps partners. The comments generated by land management personnel in the sample population were analyzed and cataloged into four general categories: (1) funding; (2) communication; (3) agreement processes; and (4) training. The funding barrier was commonly described as a deficit from the agency/host side of the partnership. Personnel stated that using the corps *“costs much more than the work actually accomplished, and the cost continues to rise to use conservation corps groups”* and that their *“projects are often limited by what [they] are able to finance from [their] budget.”*

Communication barriers included challenges in agency-corps communication and in agency-member recruitment. One participant stated that *“better communication between both parties [Corps and agency] related to expectations, training, and resources sharing”* was needed. Another commented that, *“there is always room for improving communication and outreach efforts to get more youth interested and engaged.”* Related to barriers to agency-corps communication, was a perceived barrier related to the agreements process, specifically, agency partners found the agreement process to be difficult to navigate and inefficient. Personnel stated that *“the Grants and Agreements portion of working with conservation corps has been a stumbling block”* and a need for *“increased efficiency in [the] agreement process.”* In terms of training barriers, personnel felt that the Corps themselves lacked the necessary training, for example: *“conservation corps lack sufficient training,”* and that there needed to be *“improvements to training regimen so Corps come in with the skills they need”* and, that they as agency hosts needed better training, specifically *“more training or information on how to hire a crew.”*

Communication about how to set up agreements and recruit Corps members could be effective in overcoming perceived barriers to forming successful Corps partnerships in state parks and national forests.

Value Added from Corps Partnerships

Value Added

Participants were offered a space to share about their experiences of how value is added to their work from partnering with the corps. From the responses, it seems that the corps brings value that can be categorized in four general themes: 1) recruiting; 2) relationships; 3) youth engagement; and 4) accomplishing tasks. These categories are aspects of partnerships that seem to contribute to a positive experience, according to respondents.

The first of these themes was related to **recruiting**. Many of the respondents noted that they hope to use the corps as a hiring pool for the future, and that corps members tend to be really great candidates for working within the agencies because they already know the name of the game and can be further trained pretty easily. Personnel shared that they *“find that the conservation corps contain a strong candidate pool for such future leaders”* and *“Conservation Corps produces some of the best young, well-trained and motivated individuals for employment in state parks.”*

The second theme that emerged from the responses was the idea that the agencies are highly appreciative of the **relationships** built through working with the corps, and the sense of community that comes along with that. It seems like there’s a great deal of community building surrounding the agencies and corps members, and the responses highlighted that. For example, respondents stated that they want to *“work and mentor, side by side, every work day with corps to achieve this goal to protect natural and cultural resources”* and that corps members are *“easier to work with than state agency employees.”*

The third theme emerged as many of the respondents noted that **youth engagement** was a key value gained from working with the corps, stating the importance they felt of teaching today’s youth and engaging them in environmentalism and conservation. They felt that part of the value added from the corps was the *“intrinsic value of working with youth and help them develop a land/habitat/wildlife conservation and work ethic.”* Additionally, agencies discussed the value of *“working with young people and working to foster an interest in conservation,”* noting that fostering that sense of responsibility to the environment and conservation in youth was something that was highly valued. Lastly, the fourth theme that came from the responses was that the corps could accomplish things that would not get done without them or their assistance. Personnel noted that without the corps, things wouldn’t get done: *“The work they accomplish would simply go undone due to a lack of time/staffing if we did not have access to the crews.”*

Conclusions

Conservation Corps were among the most frequently reported partners among public land managers. Results suggested that Corps were important partners for land management agencies, primarily in tasks related to trail management. **Land management agencies who reported partnering with Corps were able to accomplish significantly more trail management work than agencies who did not partner with Corps.**

In terms of contributions to partners' organizational capacity, land management personnel perceived Corps partnerships make a substantial contribution to resource enhancement. **Conservation corps' contribution to resource enhancement was rated the highest among all partner types.** Corps were also perceived to make a considerable contribution to agency efficiency (ranked second among all partner types).

Land managers perceived the quality of work performed by Corps to be joint highest among all partner types. In terms of agency resources required to manage partnerships, managers suggested that Corps required considerable resources from their host before they arrive, moderate resources once they are on-site, and few resources after their work is complete. **Corps were perceived as highly contributing to their hosting agency's goals, to perform high-quality work, and to require moderate resources or effort from agency hosts.**

Across all waves of the survey, **Corps were the most "irreplaceable" partner type identified by respondents** with approximately 1/3 of the sample suggesting that work would not be completed if not performed by Corps partners.

Additionally, respondents were able to provide comments about what they perceived to be the added value of working with Corps as well as barriers to engaging more fully with Corps. Corps provide added value through (1) youth engagement, (2) relationships, (3) recruitment into the workforce, and (4) accomplishing tasks. Barriers included: (1) funding; (2) communication; (3) agreement processes; and (4) training.

This report provides ongoing evidence of positive impacts to land management partners by Conservation Corps in relation to other types of partner organizations. Corps were particularly valuable in assisting partners with achieving trail management goals leading to higher levels of resource enhancement in comparison to other partner types. Corps were also seen as an irreplaceable partner in terms of providing high quality work for the amount of agency resources required to manage.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – References

Duerden, M. D., Edwards, M. B., Lizzo, R. (2015). Participant impact of the conservation corps experience. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership*, 7(1), 35-47.

Appendix 2 – Survey Instrument - 2019

Public Lands & Partnerships - Personnel Perceptions

Start of Block: Intro

Public Lands & Partnerships - Survey of Personnel Perceptions

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. The intent of this survey is to understand the perceptions of agency personnel who work to varying degrees (or not at all) with agency partners, such as Youth Corps, volunteers, and contractors, to complete trail and habitat tasks. As a public agency employee, your participation in this study will help improve the knowledge of how partnerships influence public land management agencies' ability to engage with nearby communities, complete resource & recreation management tasks, and run as efficiently as possible.

Your participation is voluntary and you may choose to exit the survey at any time. All data will be confidential; any potentially identifying information (agency name or location, or position title) will not be reported with your responses. There are no known risks for participating. An optional incentive (\$15 electronic Amazon gift card) is offered for those who complete the survey that will take you to a separate form (to protect anonymity of survey responses). If you elect to accept this incentive you will do so through a prompt at the end of the survey where you can provide an e-mail address to which the gift card will be delivered. Participation will take approximately 15-20 minutes.

For more information or questions please contact:

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Q1 In your current position, do you work for:

a State Park system (1)

a National Forest system (2)

Some other agency (not a state park or national forest) (3)

Q2 What is your official position title?

(e.g., Partnership coordinator, Recreation Technician, Park Manager, etc.)

Page Break

Throughout this survey we would like you to consider each question in relation to your current position and the primary tasks you are involved with on a day-to-day basis. *Your ratings should reflect your feelings towards the scope of activities for which you are responsible.*

Perceptions of Capacity

In this section we'd like you to consider, and rate, your capacity to achieve organizational goals related to community engagement, agency efficiency, and resource or recreation management and estimate your program's capacity (the scope for which you are responsible) to complete work targets. Specifically, we would like you to "grade" the extent to which you perceive you are able to accomplish programmatic goals related to (i) community engagement, (ii) resource enhancement, and (iii) the efficiency of your program or area of responsibility.

Q3 Based on your experience, how well are you able to accomplish goals related to community engagement within your program area or area of responsibility? (for example, connecting with community members, educating the public, or raising awareness about the agency)

In answering these questions, please considering the following grading scale:

A: you are accomplishing the right amount of community engagement currently

B: you are accomplishing almost the right amount of community engagement

C: while your doing some community engagement, you believe there is room for improvement D: community engagement efforts are limited, there is great room for improvement

F: you do not currently feel that you are meeting your goals for community engagement

Grade slider

Q54 Based on your experience, how well are you able to accomplish goals related to resource enhancement within your program area or area of responsibility? (for example, building and maintaining trails or managing for invasive species or forest fuels)

In answering these questions, please considering the following grading scale:

A: you are accomplishing the right amount of resource enhancement currently

B: you are accomplishing almost the right amount of resource enhancement

C: while your doing some resource enhancement, you believe there is room for improvement

D: resource enhancement efforts are limited, there is great room for improvement

F: you do not currently feel that you are meeting your goals for resource enhancement

Grade slider

Q5 How efficient is your program or area of responsibility? (for example, at reducing the cost of getting work done or effectively accomplishing goals with fewer resources)

In answering these questions, please considering the following grading scale:

A: Extremely efficient

B: Very efficient

C: Moderately efficient

D: Slightly efficient

F: Not at all efficient

Grade slider

Page Break

Q6 Over the past 12 months, how many miles (best estimate) of trail managed by your program or area of responsibility were:

Please enter a number in each block below. If none, enter "0"

Scheduled for repair, maintenance, or creation (i.e., new trails)

Actually repaired, improved, or created

Repaired, maintained, or created with the help of partners

Q7 Over the past 12 months, how many acres (best estimate) of land managed by your program or area of responsibility were:

Please enter a number in each block below. If none, enter "0"

Scheduled for invasive species maintenance/management

Actually maintained/managed for invasive species

Maintained/managed for invasive species with the help of partners

Q8 Over the past 12 months, how many acres (best estimate) of land managed by your program area or area of responsibility were:

Please enter a number in each block below. If none, enter "0"

Scheduled for maintenance/management for forest fuels

Actually maintained/managed for forest fuels

Maintained/managed for forest fuels with the help of partners

End of Block: Intro

Start of Block: Benefits & Quality

Perceptions of Roles, Benefits & Quality

In this section, we would like you to consider who is completing work in your program area and their roles, how they benefit your program/agency, and the quality of work they deliver.

Q9 Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to:

Check all that apply.

	TRAILS (1)	INVASIVE SPECIES MGMT. (2)	FUELS MGMT. (3)
Paid agency employees			
Conservation corps (e.g., SCA, AmeriCorps, Youth Conservation Corps, Job Corps, etc.)			
Religious or civic groups (churches, Rotary, Elks, etc.)			
Paid contractors/concessionaires			
Court-ordered community service/prisoners			
"Friends of..." group			
Individuals (campground hosts, volunteers)			
Local/regional groups (hiking, equestrian, biking, hunting clubs)			
Local governments			
National groups (IMBA, Sierra Club, etc.)			
Outfitters/guides			
Youth groups (4-H, Scouts, etc.)			

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply."

Q10 Below are categories of individuals, groups, and organizations that you identified as completing trail and habitat work for your program area. Please respond to the following sets of questions related to your perceptions of these individuals, groups, and organizations.

To what extent have the partners you work with contributed to these three outcomes over the past 12 months?

Community Engagement: connecting with community members, educating the public, raising awareness

Agency Efficiency: reducing cost of getting work done, effectively accomplishing goals with fewer resources

Resource/Recreation Enhancement: effectively managing and maintaining habitats and trails, providing opportunities to visit, addressing maintenance backlogs

5 = Substantial Contribution, 4 = Considerable Contribution, 3 = Moderate Contribution, 2 = Little Contribution, 1 = No contribution

	Community engagement	Agency efficiency	Recreation/resource enhancement
Paid agency employees			
Conservation corps (e.g., SCA, AmeriCorps, Youth Conservation Corps, Job Corps, etc.)			
Religious or civic groups (churches, Rotary, Elks, etc.)			
Paid contractors/concessionaires			
Court-ordered community service/prisoners			
"Friends of..." group			
Individuals (campground hosts, volunteers)			
Local/regional groups (hiking, equestrian, biking, hunting clubs)			
Local governments			
National groups (IMBA, Sierra Club, etc.)			
Outfitters/guides			
Youth groups (4-H, Scouts, etc.)			

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Q11 Using the stars below, how would you rate the quality of work provided by the following entities over the past 12 months?

For example, 5 stars indicates the highest level of quality. Please note that you may assign half stars.

- Paid agency employees
- Conservation corps (e.g., SCA, AmeriCorps, Youth Conservation Corps, Job Corps, etc.)
- Religious or civic groups (churches, Rotary, Elks, etc.)
- Paid contractors/concessionaires
- Court-ordered community service/prisoners
- "Friends of..." group
- Individuals (campground hosts, volunteers)
- Local/regional groups (hiking, equestrian, biking, hunting clubs)
- Local governments
- National groups (IMBA, Sierra Club, etc.)
- Outfitters/guides
- Youth groups (4-H, Scouts, etc.)

Page Break

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Q12 Now, we would like you to consider: if, within the next year, the following individuals, groups, or organizations did not exist, who would complete those tasks they are currently performing?

*Think about this generally, such as **who is most likely to** or **who would the majority of the time**. Choose the response(s) that best describes how the work these partnerships complete would be replaced.*

	Be completed by paid staff (1)	Be completed by another partner (2)	Not be completed (3)
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- Paid agency employees
- Conservation corps (e.g., SCA, AmeriCorps, Youth Conservation Corps, Job Corps, etc.)
- Religious or civic groups (churches, Rotary, Elks, etc.)
- Paid contractors/concessionaires
- Court-ordered community service/prisoners
- "Friends of..." group
- Individuals (campground hosts, volunteers)
- Local/regional groups (hiking, equestrian, biking, hunting clubs)
- Local governments
- National groups (IMBA, Sierra Club, etc.)
- Outfitters/guides
- Youth groups (4-H, Scouts, etc.)

Page Break

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Q13 Over the past 12 months, how much agency resources (consider financial, human, and time resources) were required to provide training and/or oversight for the following individuals, groups, or organizations?

"Pre" work consists of completing preliminary paperwork, identifying work projects, and securing personnel/partners.

On-site work consists of the actual on-the-ground management of programs/services.

"Post" work consists of reporting requirements, evaluations, etc. that must be completed after the work is finished and/or on a regular (e.g., annual) basis.

5 = Substantial Resources, 4 = Considerable Resources, 3 = Moderate Resources, 2 = Few Resources, 1 = No Resources

	"Pre" work					On-site work					"Post" work				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
											(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

Paid agency employees (x13)

Conservation corps (e.g., SCA, AmeriCorps, Youth Conservation Corps, Job Corps, etc.)

Religious or civic groups (churches, Rotary, Elks, etc.)

Paid contractors/concessionaires

Court-ordered community service/prisoners

"Friends of..." group

Individuals (campground hosts, volunteers)

Local/regional groups (hiking, equestrian, biking, hunting clubs)

Local governments

National groups (IMBA, Sierra Club, etc.)

Outfitters/guides

Youth groups (4-H, Scouts, etc.)

Page Break

End of Block: Benefits & Quality

Start of Block: Effort & Recognition

Q14 In your opinion, how important are partnerships in providing the following benefits to your agency?

	Extremely important (1)	Very important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Slightly important (4)	Not at all important (5)	<i>Not sure</i> (6)
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Community engagement - connecting the agency to the community, serving as a type of PR, or raising awareness about the agency

Agency efficiency - increasing capacity and reducing the costs of getting work done

Recreation and/or resource enhancement - providing services that improve the recreation infrastructure and ecological integrity of the public land

Q15 To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your administrative unit's (state park, ranger district) partnership approach?

	Strongly agree (13)	Agree (14)	Neutral (15)	Disagree (16)	Strongly disagree (17)
--	---------------------	------------	--------------	---------------	------------------------

We have more projects to do than our current available partners can handle.

We do not have enough partners to meet the work we need to accomplish.

We have access to many potential partners, but don't have time to solicit them.

We would benefit if there were one coordinating group who could facilitate our work with all other partners.

We find it more efficient to work with organized groups who bring more resources and skills to the table than individual volunteers or informal groups.

Q16 Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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I work with partners to further my natural resource conservation efforts.

I work with partners to build trust and enhance community support of agency decisions.

The emphasis that agency leaders have placed on partnerships has influenced me to work with partners more.

I work with partners primarily to obtain the synergy (i.e., combination of skills and resources) needed to accomplish specific program tasks and projects.

Working with partners is an expected job responsibility.

End of Block: Effort & Recognition

Start of Block: CorpsSpecificQs

Carry Forward Selected Answers from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Q17 You indicated that you work with conservation corps, which corps specifically have you engaged with in relation to trails management *in the past 12 months*?

Carry Forward Selected Answers from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Q18 Which corps specifically have you engaged with in relation to habitat management *in the past 12 months*?

Q53 Earlier we asked you to report your best estimate of trail mileage and acres maintained for invasive species or forest fuels. Now, we would like you to consider how much (miles, acres) of this work was done with the help of the Conservation Corps that you have worked with over the past year.

Mileage/Acres estimate (1)

Miles of trail repaired, maintained, or created with the help of Conservation Corps specifically
Acres maintained/managed for invasive species with the help of Conservation Corps specifically
Acres maintained/managed for forest fuels with the help of Conservation Corps specifically

Carry Forward Selected Answers from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Q19 Is there anything you'd like to add about the “value added” your agency gets by working with conservation corps?

By "value added" we want you to think about all aspects of work, including but not limited to your ability to meet programmatic goals and targets, as well as your aspects of job satisfaction.

Carry Forward Selected Answers from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Q52 Is there anything you'd like to add about potential improvements that could be made between your agency and the conservation corps?

Potential improvements could be communication, training, resources in-print or on-line, etc.

End of Block: CorpsSpecificQs

Start of Block: Demographics

Q21

Demographic Items

Your responses to the following items will allow us to make comparisons based on spatial, temporal, and demographic items.

Q22 **Gender:**

Male

Female

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

Q56 **In what ethnicity and race would you place yourself (check all that apply)?**

Ethnicity:

Hispanic or Latino

Not Hispanic or Latino

Q23 **Race:**

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

White

Hispanic

Some other race, ethnicity, or origin

Prefer not to say

Q24 Years with current agency:

▼Less than 1 year (1) ... More than 20 years (9)

Q55 Years in current position:

▼Less than 1 year (1) ... More than 20 years (9)

Q25 Postal code of work station:

Of the park, district, or forest office you typically work out of in your current position.

Page Break

Lastly, if you know of anyone else working in trail and habitat management at any state park or USDA Forest Service unit that may also want to participate in this survey opportunity please provide their email addresses below and we will follow up with them individually.

Thank you!

We appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey. As a thank you, we are offering \$15 Amazon gift cards (electronic gifts cards with a redemption code sent directly to your email). If you are interested in receiving this incentive for your thoughts & time, answer yes below. You will be directed to a separate form for submitting your e-mail address (so that it is collected separately from your responses here).

Yes (4)

No (5)

End of Block: Demographics

Appendix 3 – Survey Instrument - 2020

Public Lands & Partnerships - WAVE 2 - 2020

Start of Block: Qualifier

Public Lands & Partnerships - Survey of Personnel Perceptions

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. The intent of this survey is to understand the perceptions of agency personnel who work to varying degrees (or not at all) with agency partners, such as Youth Corps, volunteers, and contractors, to complete trail and habitat tasks. As a public agency employee, your participation in this study will help improve the knowledge of how partnerships influence public land management agencies' ability to engage with nearby communities, complete resource & recreation management tasks, and run as efficiently as possible.

This is the the final year (Year 3) of a multi-year study examining how public land personnel complete work. You may have participated in the first part of the study last year. If so, we thank you for your continued involvement with this project. For a summary of findings from the Wave 2 assessment, you can download a PDF here: [Wave 2 results summary report](#)

Your participation is voluntary and you may choose to exit the survey at any time. All data will be confidential; any potentially identifying information (agency name or location, or position title) will not be reported with your responses. There are no known risks for participating. An optional incentive (\$15 electronic Amazon gift card) is offered for those who complete the survey that will take you to a separate form (to protect anonymity of survey responses). If you elect to accept this incentive you will do so through a prompt at the end of the survey where you can provide an e-mail address to which the gift card will be delivered. Participation will take approximately 15-20 minutes.

For more information or questions please contact:

Mike Edwards, Assoc. Professor

Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management

North Carolina State University

mbedwards@ncsu.edu

Q2 First, we are exploring how work is **accomplished** by national forest and state park/state land management units **specifically. In your current position, do you work for:**

- a State Park system or State land management agency
- a National Forest system
- Some other agency (not a state park/land agency or national forest)

Q3 What is your official position title?

(e.g., Partnership coordinator, Recreation Technician, Park Manager, etc.)

Q4 Throughout this survey we would like you to consider each question in relation to your current position and the primary tasks you are involved with on a day-to-day basis. *Your ratings should reflect your feelings towards the scope of activities for which you are responsible.*

Q5

Perceptions of Capacity

In this section we'd like you to consider, and rate, your capacity to achieve organizational goals related to community engagement, agency efficiency, and resource or recreation management and estimate your program's capacity (the scope for which you are responsible) to complete work targets. Specifically, we would like you to "grade" the extent to which you perceive you are able to accomplish programmatic goals related to (i) community engagement, (ii) resource enhancement, and (iii) the efficiency of your program or area of responsibility **over the past year**.

Q6 Based on your experience over the past 12 months, how well are you able to accomplish goals related to community engagement within your program area or area of responsibility? (for example, connecting with community members, educating the public, or raising awareness about the agency)

In answering these questions, please considering the following grading scale:

<i>A: you are accomplishing the right amount of community engagement currently</i>	<i>B: you are accomplishing almost the right amount of community engagement</i>	<i>C: while your doing some community engagement, you believe there is room for improvement</i>	<i>D: community engagement efforts are limited, there is great room for improvement</i>	<i>F: you do not currently feel that you are meeting your goals for community engagement</i>
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Q7 Based on your experience over the past 12 months, how well are you able to accomplish goals related to resource enhancement within your program area or area of responsibility? (for example, building and maintaining trails or managing for invasive species or forest fuels)

In answering these questions, please considering the following grading scale: A: you are accomplishing the right amount of resource enhancement currently B: you are accomplishing almost the right amount of resource enhancement C: while your doing some resource enhancement, you believe there is room for improvement D: resource enhancement efforts are limited, there is great room for improvement F: you do not currently feel that you are meeting your goals for resource enhancement

Q8 Based on your experience over the past 12 months, how efficient is your program or area of responsibility? (for example, at reducing the cost of getting work done or effectively accomplishing goals with fewer resources)

In answering these questions, please considering the following grading scale: A: Extremely efficient B: Very efficient C: Moderately efficient D: Slightly efficient F: Not at all efficient

Q9 How has COVID-19 impacted your program or area of responsibility in terms of community engagement, resource enhancement, and efficiency?

In answering these questions, please considering the following definitions:

Weak/Strong - refers to how intensely you felt the impact of COVID-19

Positive/Negative - refers to the direction of the COVID-19 impact

	Strong, positive impact	Moderate, positive impact	Weak, positive impact	Neither positive nor negative	Weak, negative impact	Moderate, negative impact	Strong, negative impact
Community engagement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resource enhancement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Efficiency

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

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Q10 Over the past 12 months, how many miles (best estimate) of trail managed by your program or area of responsibility were:

Please enter a number in each block below. If none, enter "0"

	Mileage
Scheduled for repair, maintenance, or creation (i.e., new trails)	

Actually repaired, improved, or created

Repaired, maintained, or created with the help of partners

Q11 Over the past 12 months, how many acres (best estimate) of land managed by your program or area of responsibility were:

Please enter a number in each block below. If none, enter "0"

Acreage

Scheduled for **invasive species** maintenance/management

Actually maintained/managed for **invasive species**

Maintained/managed for **invasive species**
with the help of partners

Q12 Over the past 12 months, how many acres (best estimate) of land managed by your program area or area of responsibility were:

Please enter a number in each block below. If none, enter "0"

Acreage

Scheduled for maintenance/management for
forest fuels

Actually maintained/managed for **forest fuels**

Maintained/managed for **forest fuels** with the help of partners

Q13

Perceptions of Roles, Benefits & Quality

In this section, we would like you to consider who is completing work in your program area and their roles, how they benefit your program/agency, and the quality of work they deliver.

Q14 Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to:

Check all that apply.

TRAILS

INVASIVE
SPECIES MGMT.

FUELS MGMT.

Paid agency employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conservation corps (e.g., SCA, AmeriCorps, Youth Conservation Corps, Job Corps, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religious or civic groups (churches, Rotary, Elks, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paid contractors/concessionaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Court-ordered community service/prisoners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Friends of..." group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individuals (campground hosts, volunteers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local/regional groups (hiking, equestrian, biking, hunting clubs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local governments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

National groups (IMBA, Sierra Club, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outfitters/guides	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth groups (4-H, Scouts, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Q15 Below are categories of individuals, groups, and organizations that you identified as completing trail and habitat work for your program area. Please respond to the following sets of questions related to your perceptions of these individuals, groups, and organizations.

To what extent have the partners you work with contributed to these three outcomes over the past 12 months? *Community Engagement: connecting with community members, educating the public, raising awareness* *Agency Efficiency: reducing cost of getting work done, effectively accomplishing goals with fewer resources* *Resource/Recreation Enhancement: effectively managing and maintaining habitats and trails, providing opportunities to visit, addressing maintenance backlogs*

5 = Substantial Contribution, 4 = Considerable Contribution, 3 = Moderate Contribution, 2 = Little Contribution, 1 = No contribution

	Community engagement					Agency efficiency					Recreation/resource enhancement				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Paid agency employees															
Conservation corps (e.g., SCA, AmeriCorps, Youth Conservation Corps, Job Corps, etc.)															
Religious or civic groups (churches, Rotary, Elks, etc.)															
Paid contractors/concessionaires															
Court-ordered community service/prisoners															

**"Friends of..."
group**

Individuals
(campground
hosts,
volunteers)

**Local/regional
groups**
(hiking,
equestrian,
biking, hunting
clubs)

**Local
governments**

**National
groups** (IMBA,
Sierra Club,
etc.)

Outfitters/guides

Youth groups
(4-H, Scouts,
etc.)

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Q16 Using the stars below, how would you rate the quality of work provided by the following entities over the past 12 months?

For example, 5 stars indicates the highest level of quality. Please note that you may assign half stars.

Paid agency employees

Conservation corps (e.g.,
SCA, AmeriCorps, Youth
Conservation Corps, Job
Corps, etc.)

Religious or civic groups
(churches, Rotary, Elks, etc.)

**Paid
contractors/concessionair
es**

**Court-ordered community
service/prisoners**

"Friends of..." group

Individuals (campground
hosts, volunteers)

Local/regional groups

(hiking, equestrian, biking,
hunting clubs)

Local governments

National groups (IMBA,
Sierra Club, etc.)

Outfitters/guides

Youth groups (4-H, Scouts,
etc.)

Page Break

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Q17 Now, we would like you to consider: if, within the next year, the following individuals, groups, or organizations did not exist, who would complete those tasks they are currently performing?

*Think about this generally, such as **who is most likely to** or **who would the majority of the time**. Choose the response(s) that best describes how the work these partnerships complete would be replaced.*

	Be completed by paid staff	Be completed by another partner	Not be completed
Paid agency employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conservation corps (e.g., SCA, AmeriCorps, Youth Conservation Corps, Job Corps, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religious or civic groups (churches, Rotary, Elks, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paid contractors/concessionaire s	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Court-ordered community service/prisoners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Friends of..." group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals (campground hosts, volunteers)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local/regional groups (hiking, equestrian, biking, hunting clubs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Local governments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National groups (IMBA, Sierra Club, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outfitters/guides	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth groups (4-H, Scouts, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Q18 Over the past 12 months, how much agency resources (consider financial, human, and time resources) were required to provide training and/or oversight for the following individuals, groups, or organizations? *"Pre" work consists of completing preliminary paperwork, identifying work projects, and securing personnel/partners. On-site work consists of the actual on-the-ground management of programs/services. "Post" work consists of reporting requirements, evaluations, etc. that must be completed after the work is finished and/or on a regular (e.g., annual) basis. 5 = Substantial Resources, 4 = Considerable Resources, 3 = Moderate Resources, 2 = Few Resources, 1 = No Resources*

	"Pre" work					On-site work					"Post" work				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Paid agency employees															
Conservation corps (e.g., SCA, AmeriCorps, Youth Conservation Corps, Job Corps, etc.)															
Religious or civic groups (churches, Rotary, Elks, etc.)															
Paid contractors/concessionaires															
Court-ordered community service/prisoners															

**"Friends of..."
group**

Individuals
(campground
hosts,
volunteers)

**Local/regional
groups**
(hiking,
equestrian,
biking, hunting
clubs)

**Local
governments**

**National
groups** (IMBA,
Sierra Club,
etc.)

Outfitters/guides

Youth groups
(4-H, Scouts,
etc.)

Page Break

End of Block: Benefits & Quality

Start of Block: Effort & Recognition

Q19 In your opinion, how important are partnerships in providing the following benefits to your agency?

	Extremely important	Very important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not at all important	<i>Not sure</i>
<u>Community engagement</u> - connecting the agency to the community, serving as a type of PR, or raising awareness about the agency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Agency efficiency - increasing capacity and reducing the costs of getting work done

Recreation and/or resource enhancement - providing services that improve the recreation infrastructure and ecological integrity of the public land

Q20 To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your administrative unit's (state park, ranger district) partnership approach?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree

We have more projects to do than our current available partners can handle.

We do not have enough partners to meet the work we need to accomplish.

We have access to many potential partners, but don't have time to solicit them.

We would benefit if there were one coordinating group who could facilitate our work with all other partners.

We find it more efficient to work with organized groups who bring more resources and skills to the table than individual volunteers or informal groups.

Q21 Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I work with partners to further my natural resource conservation efforts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I work with partners to build trust and enhance community support of agency decisions.

The emphasis that agency leaders have placed on partnerships has influenced me to work with partners more.

I work with partners primarily to obtain the synergy (i.e., combination of skills and resources) needed to accomplish specific program tasks and projects.

Working with partners is an expected job responsibility.

Page Break

End of Block: Effort & Recognition

Start of Block: CorpsSpecificQs

Q22 Earlier we asked you to report your best estimate of trail mileage and acres maintained for invasive species or forest fuels. Now, we would like you to consider how much of this work (what percentage of the miles, acres managed) was done with the help of the Conservation Corps that you have worked with over the past year.

	<p>% of Mileage/Acres managed with the help of Corps (<i>best estimate</i>)</p>
<p>Miles of trail repaired, maintained, or created <i>with the help of Conservation Corps specifically</i></p>	

Acres maintained/managed for **invasive species** with the help of Conservation Corps specifically

Acres maintained/managed for **forest fuels** with the help of Conservation Corps specifically

Carry Forward Selected Answers from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Q23 Is there anything you'd like to add about the "value added" your agency gets by working with conservation corps?

By "value added" we want you to think about all aspects of work, including but not limited to your ability to meet programmatic goals and targets, as well as your aspects of job satisfaction.

Carry Forward Selected Answers from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Q24 Is there anything you'd like to add about potential improvements that could be made between your agency and the conservation corps?

Potential improvements could be communication, training, resources in-print or on-line, etc.

End of Block: CorpsSpecificQs

Start of Block: Demographics

Q25

Demographic Items

Your responses to the following items will allows us to make comparisons based on spatial, temporal, and demographic items.

Q26 **Gender:**

Male

Female

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

Q27 In what ethnicity and race would you place yourself (check all that apply)?

Ethnicity:

Hispanic or Latino

Not Hispanic or Latino

Q28 Race:

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

White

- Hispanic
- Some other race, ethnicity, or origin
- Prefer not to say

Q29 Years with current agency:

▼Less than 1 year ... More than 20 years

Q30 Years in current position:

▼Less than 1 year ... More than 20 years

Q31 Postal code of work station:

Of the park, district, or forest office you typically work out of in your current position.

Q32 Lastly, if you know of anyone else working in trail and habitat management at any state park or USDA Forest Service unit that may also want to participate in this survey opportunity please provide their email addresses below and we will follow up with them individually.

Thank you!

Q33 We appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey. As a thank you, we are offering \$15 Amazon gift cards (electronic gifts cards with a redemption code sent directly to your email). If you are interested in receiving this incentive for your thoughts & time, answer yes below. You will be directed to a separate form for submitting your e-mail address (so that it is collected separately from your responses here).

Yes

No

End of Block: Demographics

Appendix 4 – Survey Instrument - 2021

Public Lands & Partnerships - WAVE 3 - 2021

Start of Block: Qualifier

Public Lands & Partnerships - Survey of Personnel Perceptions

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. The intent of this survey is to understand the perceptions of agency personnel who work to varying degrees (or not at all) with agency partners, such as Youth Corps, volunteers, and contractors, to complete trail and habitat tasks. As a public agency employee, your participation in this study will help improve the knowledge of how partnerships influence public land management agencies' ability to engage with nearby communities, complete resource & recreation management tasks, and run as efficiently as possible.

This is the the final year (Year 3) of a multi-year study examining how public land personnel complete work. You may have participated in the first part of the study last year. If so, we thank you for your continued involvement with this project. For a summary of findings from the first year assessment, you can download a PDF here: [Wave 2 Summary Report](#)

Your participation is voluntary and you may choose to exit the survey at any time. All data will be confidential; any potentially identifying information (agency name or location, or position title) will not be reported with your responses. There are no known risks for participating. An optional incentive (\$15 electronic Amazon gift card) is offered for those who complete the survey that will take you to a separate form (to protect anonymity of survey responses). If you elect to accept this incentive you will do so through a prompt at the end of the survey where you can provide an e-mail address to which the gift card will be delivered. Participation will take approximately 15-20 minutes.

For more information or questions please contact:

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Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management

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First, we are exploring how work is **accomplished** by national forest and state park/state land management units **specifically. In your current position, do you work for:**

- a State Park system or State land management agency
- a National Forest system
- Some other agency (not a state park/land agency or national forest)

Page Break

End of Block: Qualifier

Start of Block: Intro

What is your official position title?

(e.g., Partnership coordinator, Recreation Technician, Park Manager, etc.)

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Throughout this survey we would like you to consider each question in relation to your current position and the primary tasks you are involved with on a day-to-day basis. *Your ratings should reflect your feelings towards the scope of activities for which you are responsible.*

Perceptions of Capacity

In this section we'd like you to consider, and rate, your capacity to achieve organizational goals related to community engagement, agency efficiency, and resource or recreation management and estimate your program's capacity (the scope for which you are responsible) to complete work targets. Specifically, we would like you to "grade" the extent to which you perceive you are able to accomplish programmatic goals related to (i) community engagement, (ii) resource enhancement, and (iii) the efficiency of your program or area of responsibility **over the past year**.

Based on your experience over the past 12 months, how well are you able to accomplish goals related to community engagement within your program area or area of responsibility? (for example, connecting with community members, educating the public, or raising awareness about the agency)

In answering these questions, please considering the following grading scale:

- A: you are accomplishing the right amount of community engagement currently
- B: you are accomplishing almost the right amount of community engagement
- C: while your doing some community engagement, you believe there is room for improvement
- D: community engagement efforts are limited, there is great room for improvement
- F: you do not currently feel that you are meeting your goals for community engagement

Based on your experience over the past 12 months, how well are you able to accomplish goals related to resource enhancement within your program area or area of responsibility? (for example, building and maintaining trails or managing for invasive species or forest fuels)

In answering these questions, please considering the following grading scale:

- A: you are accomplishing the right amount of resource enhancement currently
- B: you are accomplishing almost the right amount of resource enhancement
- C: while your doing some resource enhancement, you believe there is room for improvement
- D: resource enhancement efforts are limited, there is great room for improvement
- F: you do not currently feel that you are meeting your goals for resource enhancement

Based on your experience over the past 12 months, **how efficient is your program or area of responsibility?** (for example, at reducing the cost of getting work done or effectively accomplishing goals with fewer resources)

In answering these questions, please considering the following grading scale:

A: Extremely efficient

B: Very efficient

C: Moderately efficient

D: Slightly efficient

F: Not at all efficient

How has COVID-19 impacted your program or area of responsibility in terms of community engagement, resource enhancement, and efficiency?

In answering these questions, please considering the following definitions:

Weak/Strong - refers to how intensely you felt the impact of COVID-19

Positive/Negative - refers to the direction of the COVID-19 impact

	Strong, positive impact	Moderate, positive impact	Weak, positive impact	Neither positive nor negative	Weak, negative impact	Moderate, negative impact	Strong, negative impact
Community engagement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Resource enhancement	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Efficiency	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Page Break

Over the past 12 months, how many miles (best estimate) of trail managed by your program or area of responsibility were:

Please enter a number in each block below. If none, enter "0"

	Mileage
Scheduled for repair, maintenance, or creation (i.e., new trails)	

Actually repaired, improved, or created	
Repaired, maintained, or created with the help of partners	

Over the past 12 months, how many acres (best estimate) of land managed by your program or area of responsibility were:

Please enter a number in each block below. If none, enter "0"

	Acreage
Scheduled for invasive species maintenance/management	

Actually maintained/managed for **invasive species**

Maintained/managed for **invasive species** with the help of partners

Over the past 12 months, how many acres (best estimate) of land managed by your program area or area of responsibility were:

Please enter a number in each block below. If none, enter "0"

Acreage

Scheduled for maintenance/management for **forest fuels**

Actually maintained/managed for **forest fuels**

Maintained/managed for **forest fuels** with the
help of partners

End of Block: Intro

Start of Block: Benefits & Quality

Perceptions of Roles, Benefits & Quality

In this section, we would like you to consider who is completing work in your program area and their roles, how they benefit your program/agency, and the quality of work they deliver.

Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to:

Check all that apply.

	TRAILS	INVASIVE SPECIES MGMT.	FUELS MGMT.
Paid agency employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conservation corps (e.g., SCA, AmeriCorps, Youth Conservation Corps, Job Corps, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religious or civic groups (churches, Rotary, Elks, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paid contractors/concessionaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Court-ordered community service/prisoners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Friends of..." group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individuals (campground hosts, volunteers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Local/regional groups (hiking, equestrian, biking, hunting clubs)

Local governments

National groups (IMBA, Sierra Club, etc.)

Outfitters/guides

Youth groups (4-H, Scouts, etc.)

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Below are categories of individuals, groups, and organizations that you identified as completing trail and habitat work for your program area. Please respond to the following sets of questions related to your perceptions of these individuals, groups, and organizations.

To what extent have the partners you work with contributed to these three outcomes over the past 12 months? *Community Engagement: connecting with community members, educating the public, raising awareness* *Agency Efficiency: reducing cost of getting work done, effectively accomplishing goals with fewer resources* *Resource/Recreation Enhancement: effectively managing and maintaining habitats and trails, providing opportunities to visit, addressing maintenance backlogs*

5 = Substantial Contribution, 4 = Considerable Contribution, 3 = Moderate Contribution, 2 = Little Contribution, 1 = No contribution

	Community engagement					Agency efficiency					Recreation/resource enhancement				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Paid agency employees															
Conservation corps (e.g., SCA, AmeriCorps, Youth Conservation Corps, Job Corps, etc.)															
Religious or civic groups (churches, Rotary, Elks, etc.)															
Paid contractors/concessionaires															

**Court-ordered
community
service/prisoners**

**"Friends of..."
group**

Individuals
(campground
hosts,
volunteers)

**Local/regional
groups** (hiking,
equestrian,
biking, hunting
clubs)

**Local
governments**

National groups
(IMBA, Sierra
Club, etc.)

Outfitters/guides

Youth groups
(4-H, Scouts,
etc.)

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Using the stars below, how would you rate the quality of work provided by the following entities over the past 12 months?

For example, 5 stars indicates the highest level of quality. Please note that you may assign half stars.

Paid agency employees

Conservation corps (e.g., SCA,
AmeriCorps, Youth
Conservation Corps, Job Corps,
etc.)

Religious or civic groups
(churches, Rotary, Elks, etc.)

**Paid
contractors/concessionaires**

**Court-ordered community
service/prisoners**

"Friends of..." group

Individuals (campground
hosts, volunteers)

Local/regional groups (hiking,
equestrian, biking, hunting
clubs)

Local governments

National groups (IMBA, Sierra
Club, etc.)

Outfitters/guides

Youth groups (4-H, Scouts,
etc.)

Page Break

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Now, we would like you to consider: if, within the next year, the following individuals, groups, or organizations did not exist, who would complete those tasks they are currently performing?

*Think about this generally, such as **who is most likely to** or **who would the majority of the time**. Choose the response(s) that best describes how the work these partnerships complete would be replaced.*

	Be completed by paid staff	Be completed by another partner	Not be completed
Paid agency employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conservation corps (e.g., SCA, AmeriCorps, Youth Conservation Corps, Job Corps, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religious or civic groups (churches, Rotary, Elks, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paid contractors/concessionaires	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Court-ordered community service/prisoners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

"Friends of..." group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals (campground hosts, volunteers)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local/regional groups (hiking, equestrian, biking, hunting clubs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local governments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National groups (IMBA, Sierra Club, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outfitters/guides	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth groups (4-H, Scouts, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Over the past 12 months, how much agency resources (consider financial, human, and time resources) were required to provide training and/or oversight for the following individuals, groups, or organizations? *"Pre" work consists of completing preliminary paperwork, identifying work projects, and securing personnel/partners. On-site work consists of the actual on-the-ground management of programs/services. "Post" work consists of reporting requirements, evaluations, etc. that must be completed after the work is finished and/or on a regular (e.g., annual) basis. 5 = Substantial Resources, 4 = Considerable Resources, 3 = Moderate Resources, 2 = Few Resources, 1 = No Resources*

	"Pre" work					On-site work					"Post" work				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Paid agency employees															
Conservation corps (e.g., SCA, AmeriCorps, Youth Conservation Corps, Job Corps, etc.)															
Religious or civic groups (churches, Rotary, Elks, etc.)															

**Paid
contractors/con
cessionaires**

**Court-ordered
community
service/prisone
rs**

**"Friends of..."
group**

Individuals
(campground
hosts,
volunteers)

**Local/regional
groups** (hiking,
equestrian,
biking, hunting
clubs)

**Local
governments**

National groups
(IMBA, Sierra
Club, etc.)

**Outfitters/guid
es**

Youth groups
(4-H, Scouts,
etc.)

Page Break

End of Block: Benefits & Quality

Start of Block: Effort & Recognition

In your opinion, how important are partnerships in providing the following benefits to your agency?

	Extremely important	Very important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not at all important	<i>Not sure</i>
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Community engagement -
connecting the agency to the community, serving as a type of PR, or raising awareness about the agency

Agency efficiency -
increasing capacity and reducing the costs of getting work done

Recreation and/or resource enhancement
- providing services that improve the recreation infrastructure and ecological integrity of the public land

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your administrative unit's (state park, ranger district) partnership approach?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
We have more projects to do than our current available partners can handle.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We do not have enough partners to meet the work we need to accomplish.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have access to many potential partners, but don't have time to solicit them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

We would benefit if there were one coordinating group who could facilitate our work with all other partners.

We find it more efficient to work with organized groups who bring more resources and skills to the table than individual volunteers or informal groups.

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree

I work with partners to further my natural resource conservation efforts.

I work with partners to build trust and enhance community support of agency decisions.

The emphasis that agency leaders have placed on partnerships has influenced me to work with partners more.

I work with partners primarily to obtain the synergy (i.e., combination of skills and resources) needed to accomplish specific program

tasks and projects.

Working with partners is an expected job responsibility.



Page Break

End of Block: Effort & Recognition

Start of Block: CorpsSpecificQs

Earlier we asked you to report your best estimate of trail mileage and acres maintained for invasive species or forest fuels. Now, we would like you to consider how much of this work (what percentage of the miles, acres managed) was done with the help of the Conservation Corps that you have worked with over the past year.

	<p style="text-align: center;">% of Mileage/Acres managed with the help of Corps (<i>best estimate</i>)</p>
<p>Miles of trail repaired, maintained, or created <i>with the help of Conservation Corps specifically</i></p>	
<p>Acres maintained/managed for invasive species with the help of Conservation Corps specifically</p>	
<p>Acres maintained/managed for forest fuels with the help of Conservation Corps specifically</p>	

Carry Forward Selected Answers from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Is there anything you'd like to add about the "value added" your agency gets by working with conservation corps?

By "value added" we want you to think about all aspects of work, including but not limited to your ability to meet programmatic goals and targets, as well as your aspects of job satisfaction.

Carry Forward Selected Answers from "Over the past 12 months, who has completed work for your program area or area of responsibility related to: Check all that apply. "

Is there anything you'd like to add about potential improvements that could be made between your agency and the conservation corps?

Potential improvements could be communication, training, resources in-print or on-line, etc.

End of Block: CorpsSpecificQs

Start of Block: Demographics

Demographic Items

Your responses to the following items will allow us to make comparisons based on spatial, temporal, and demographic items.

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

In what ethnicity and race would you place yourself (check all that apply)?

Ethnicity:

- Hispanic or Latino
- Not Hispanic or Latino

Race:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Hispanic
- Some other race, ethnicity, or origin
- Prefer not to say

Years with current agency:

▼Less than 1 year ... More than 20 years

Years in current position:

▼Less than 1 year ... More than 20 years

Postal code of work station:

Of the park, district, or forest office you typically work out of in your current position.

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Lastly, if you know of anyone else working in trail and habitat management at any state park or USDA Forest Service unit that may also want to participate in this survey opportunity please provide their email addresses below and we will follow up with them individually.

Thank you!

We appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey. As a thank you, we are offering \$15 Amazon gift cards (electronic gifts cards with a redemption code sent directly to your email). If you are interested in receiving this incentive for your thoughts & time, answer yes below. You will be directed to a separate form for submitting your e-mail address (so that it is collected separately from your responses here).

Yes

No

End of Block: Demographics