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Successful Youth Conservation Program completed by the Forest Guild and the Cibola National Forest

Santa Fe, NM—The Forest Guild and the Mt. Taylor Ranger District of the Cibola National Forest and Grasslands recently completed a successful collaborative project dedicated to training low-income and tribal youth in conservation jobs in the Zuni Mountains. Funding for this two-year project came from an *America's Great Outdoors: Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists* grant -- a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, USDA Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management Youth Initiative. This project also received funding from a public-private partnership between the USDA Forest Service and Wells Fargo Bank.

The program included a two week-long course in forest and watershed management, followed by seven weeks of field training in the Mt. Taylor Ranger District. Eligible crew members received college credit and AmeriCorps scholarships for their efforts. The crews collected data the Ranger District will use to plan and develop forest restoration projects that will reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires and improve habitat for species such as the northern goshawk, Mexican spotted owl, Abert's squirrel, and the Zuni bluehead sucker.

To date, the project has employed 10 low-income and tribal youth from Cibola and McKinley Counties with an interest in forest restoration and management. The data collection performed by this crew will enable the Cibola to mitigate catastrophic fire across an additional 700 acres. The forest restoration crew has also undertaken water resource protection projects at sensitive habitat locations for an endangered species currently being listed under the Endangered Species Act. The listing identifies unmanaged grazing and wildfire as major threats to the species.

For more information about the project, contact Eytan Krasilovsky at 505-983-8992; e-mail: eytan@forestguild.org.

About the Forest Guild

The **Forest Guild** is a national organization of more than 800 foresters, natural resource professionals, and supporters who practice and promote ecologically, economically, and socially responsible forestry as a means of sustaining the integrity of forest ecosystems and the human communities dependent upon them. www.forestguild.org

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