



OCTOBER 2024

# THE COURIER

FOREST SERVICE JOB CORPS CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CENTERS  
Creating the Next Generation of Conservation Stewards



Hurricane Helene's rain and high winds downed trees across Oconaluftee Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center. USDA Forest Service photo by James Lawler.

## CCCS RECOVER FROM IMPACTS OF HURRICANE HELENE

Hurricane Helene wreaked havoc on Civilian Conservation Centers (CCC) in its path. Buildings and campuses were heavily damaged but, unlike many communities, the Forest Service Job Corps program was fortunate to experience no loss of life. All Job Corps students and staff are accounted for and safe. In its aftermath, CCCs are assessing the damage; however immediate actions have included conducting inspections and coordinating recovery efforts for those centers most heavily affected. Jacobs Creek Job Corps students were temporarily relocated to Pine Knot and have now returned. Schenck students were moved to Pine Knot, Flatwoods, Great Onyx and Lyndon B. Johnson centers for their safety and to allow them to continue their training.

Schenck Job Corps center, sitting on the Pisgah National Forest, was particularly hard hit. Flooding was so extensive that Center Director Angela Langstaff was forced to use a canoe to access her campus. However, because of the hard work of center staff and the national forest, Schenck has already begun returning students to campus.

Oconaluftee Job Corps, and other CCCs that weathered the storm's impact better, was able to contribute significant support to community organizations. *Mountain Projects, Inc.* gave a social media shout out to Oconaluftee students who provided support for local relief efforts. The Forest Service Job Corps community is fortunate in that it is composed

of individuals that invariably demonstrate a sense of community, teamwork and and esprit de corps during the good times and the bad.

“ I WAS PARTICULARLY UPLIFTED BY THE COORDINATION BETWEEN CENTERS TO MOVE STUDENTS AND KEEP THEM SAFE AND ACCOUNTED FOR SO THEY CAN CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING GOALS. EVERYONE PITCHING IN IS A BEAUTIFUL REMINDER THAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO SERVING STUDENTS WELL AND THE UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO ONE ANOTHER SHOWCASES THAT AT THE HEART OF THIS PROGRAM ARE TRUE BONDS OF CAMARADERIE. ”

— JERRY INGERSOLL, FOREST SERVICE JOB CORPS NATIONAL DIRECTOR



Oconaluftee Job Corps students loaded supplies for Mountain Projects, Inc. to be distributed to citizens impacted by Hurricane Helene. USDA Forest Service photo by James Lawler.



Oconaluftee Job Corps students sort fruit for Mountain Projects, Inc. to be distributed to citizens impacted by Hurricane Helene. USDA Forest Service photo by James Lawler.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Cass & Mingo Job Corps:** [Job Corps Masonry students help restore Goose Bay Shelter](#)
- **Boxelder Job Corps:** [Building Futures: The Impact of Box Elder Job Corps](#)
- **Blackwell Job Corps CCC:** [Connecting the Dots](#)



## EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND SERVICE

Acting Department of Labor Secretary Julie Su and Oconaluftee Job Corps Center Director Jerry Buschmann talk to forestry conservation students. USDA Forest Service photo by James Lawler.

## OCONALUFTEE HOSTS DIGNITARIES TO CELEBRATE AMERICAN CLIMATE CORPS

Oconaluftee Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center hosted Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su and USDA Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment Meryl Harrell on Tuesday, September 24, 2024.

As a member of the American Climate Corps, Oconaluftee Job Corps is working to tackle the climate crisis in neighboring communities while also preparing for clean energy jobs of the future. Oconaluftee's youth have identified climate change as one of their primary concerns.

Students' concern is reflected in their volunteer efforts. They have participated in construction projects on the Nantahala National Forest, worked on Great Smoky Mountain National Park maintenance crews to improve recreational areas, and worked with the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indian on the Qualla Boundary. Over 90 days, Oconaluftee students and staff logged over 8,600 hours of working on camp crews and as wildland firefighters on fires threatening the nation's public lands.

Secretary Su had the opportunity to tour the training areas, asking questions to students on what they are learning and how they plan to use this training in the future.

Electrical student Malachi Lee shared that he's earned his training credentials and had already accepted a job at an electrical shop in his hometown of Jacksonville, North Carolina.

Lee is looking forward to start earning money and obtaining a master's degree in the future. Lee is one of the many Oconaluftee graduates who will be utilizing their training to land good paying jobs to tackle the climate crisis.

*The mission of the Forest Service Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers is to train eligible youth ages 16 to 24 with educational, social, and vocational skills while assisting in the conservation of the Nation's public natural resources.*

## MEET ZENOBIA ALMARAZ LBJ JOB CORPS CORPS



You may think it unusual to find Los Angeles, California, native Zenobia Almaraz, Lyndon B. Johnson's program support clerk, living in rural North Carolina. But then you learn she is a Navy veteran who has lived across the globe. That experience has allowed her

to develop the soft skills of being open with the ability to adapt to diverse conditions and environments, along with a willingness to take on new challenges while adjusting to new environments. Being the eldest of four siblings and a mother of four adult children, Almaraz has honed her active listening skills and developed a measure of patience that allows her to help push Job Corps students to keep going forward in life.

One student confided to Almaraz "You helped me decide to not give up." Suffering from depression, they were dealing with serious mental health issues. In another instance, she recognized that a student was being harassed to the point where they planned to resign. Almaraz alerted the appropriate staff who corrected the situation. These aren't the only instances of her impact.

Almaraz credits Job Corps students with helping HER enhance her daily perspective on life, giving her the tools to give back to them in return. Her experience shows how all CCC staff, no matter how removed they are from the direct care of the students, have the power to alter the course of a Job Corps student's life.

Fun facts about Almaraz include that her greatest extravagance is cosmetics. She also would like to morph from a night owl into a morning person.



## STAY IN THE KNOW!

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- #jobcorpsfire

More exciting news can be found on our [Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers!](#) website!

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