

OCTOBER 2023

# THE COURIER

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



(l-r front row) Kole Auer, Diego Lopez, Megan Byrd, Destiny Hunter, Rachel Torres, Kyah Wiggins, Donna Hay, and Tawny Butterfield. (l-r back row) Jim Roberts, Caleb Knies, Alexander Pomeroy, Mickel Driver, Samantha Luera, Mallakai Knowlden, Kaley Collingwood, Marylynn Martinez, Jayden Lopez, and Harris Maceo. USDA Forest Service photo by Tammy Humphrey.

## WEBER BASIN WELCOMES DOL JOB CORPS NATIONAL DIRECTOR RACHEL TORRES

When Department of Labor Job Corps National Director Rachel Torres visits a Job Corps Center, she is treated like a rock star. Torres was met with this same excitement when she arrived at Weber Basin Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center on September 25, 2023.

“Wow she is so down to earth and easy to talk to, I felt like she really cares about what I think and had to say,” said student Marylynn Martinez. “It was so awesome getting to meet her.”

Standing alongside billowing American flags, Weber Basin students lined up at the center’s entrance to welcome Torres, who from the minute she stepped out of her vehicle, engaged the students in a lively back and forth. Over a lunch prepared by culinary arts students, exemplifying classic servant leadership, Torres questioned students on how she could do a better job, make the program better, and help them succeed.

Following lunch, Student Government Association leadership provided a center tour. Student representatives from each trade demonstrated the skills they were acquiring

and discussed the job opportunities the trade certifications would open up for them in the future. The day Torres arrived, a Weber Basin wildland fire crew was mobilizing to depart for a fire assignment and she had an opportunity to see first-hand how the integration of the CCCs with the Forest Service expands and enhances students’ training and career opportunities.

At the tour’s conclusion, Torres took the opportunity to meet with center staff. She expressed appreciation for their hard-work and commitment to Weber Basin students.

“Visiting centers and being able to see first-hand all the young adults lives’ Job Corps is changing is what makes all the hard work worth it,” shared Torres. Like she did with Weber Basin students, Torres sought feedback from the staff on what could be done to make Job Corps better.

Sadly, Torres will be leaving her position at the end of October 2023. Weber Basin Job is grateful that she carved out time to visit before her departure and her many years of service to the Job Corps program.



Department of Labor Job Corps National Director Rachel Torres talks with a Weber Basin Job Corps student working on a demonstration project during her visit on September 25, 2023. USDA Forest Service photo by Tammy Humphrey.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **LBJ & Schenck Job Corps CCCs:** [Job Corps students welcomed back to Grey Towers](#)
- **Job Corps Mobile Kitchen:** [Job Corps mobile kitchens serve meals firefighters crave](#)



## EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND SERVICE

(l-r front row) Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) Job Corps students Micha Johnson, Malik Turner and Ketwine Saunders stained the wood on the Barbara McRae Memorial Viewing Platform. (l-r back row) LBJ Job Corps Center Director Todd Doolittle, platform committee coordinator Rita St. Clair, County Commissioner Gary Shields, and LBJ Job Corps Painting Instructor Rodney Frerichs. Photo by Mia Overton courtesy of The Franklin Press.

## LBJ PAINTING STUDENTS HELP HONOR LOCAL COMMUNITY INFLUENCER

Friends of the Greenway and the Franklin Bird Club designed and recently constructed a viewing platform to honor community influencer Barbara McRae, creator of the Little Tennessee River Greenway. Painting the platform was the last step needed and County Commissioner Gary Shields, liaison to and a strong proponent of Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) Job Corps, knew exactly who to turn to and suggested its painting students.



A view of the Barbara McRae Memorial Viewing Platform, stained by LBJ Job Corps painting students at the request of County Commissioner Gary Shields. USDA Forest Service photo by Keith Bowers.

Over the course of four days, the students worked 44 hours to prep and stain the wood under the direction of Painting Instructor Rodney Frerichs. "Both organizations are so appreciative and pleased with the Job Corps students' work. The community can be proud to have this vocational training site in our area," said Rita St. Clair, coordinator for the platform planning committee.

LBJ Job Corps students appreciated the opportunity to help memorialize McRae and were recognized for their efforts in an October 4, 2023 feature in The Franklin Press.

*The mission of the 24 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 RUBEN ORRIS FORT SIMCOE JOB CORPS CCC



With 25 years of experience in the trucking industry, CDL Truck Driving Instructor Ruben Orris visited Fort Simcoe Job Corps in 2006 on the advice of a friend. Eighteen years later he's still there. With his days busy with

training, center support, and truck hauls, there's never enough time in the day, but Orris loves his job despite the hustle and bustle. "The best thing about my job is being able to help the students that come into Job Corps with no direction in life," said Orris. "I get to be the one that's gets to direct them in their career and be a role model, mentor, counselor, and friend." Orris, a volunteer firefighter for over 30 years, currently serves as Station Captain in Yakima County District 5 and the satisfaction he finds in firefighting is mirrored in his work with Job Corps students. "It's just like my firefighting. I'm there to help someone having a bad day to make it better or even save a life." Orris and his wife have raised a son and four girls, one of whom has a learning disability. He uses this life experience to help his students navigate life's challenges. One of his students was approaching his two-year mark on-center had yet to earn his CDL. "I asked for a 3-month extension," said Orris. "I had a few co-workers come to me to say he couldn't do it. I had faith in this student and knew he could accomplish his goal with just a little more time." The student earned his CDL and got a truck driving job at a logging company. "This was about thirteen years ago and as of today he is still working at the same company," says Orris. "He keeps in touch with me. Every time he calls me, he says 'thank you boss for believing in me.' He always calls me boss."



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