



AUGUST 2023

# THE COURIER

FOREST SERVICE JOB CORPS CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CENTERS

Creating the Next Generation of Conservation Stewards



(l-r) Great Onyx students Latreae McMillan, Amand White, Brett Buckett, fire overhead staff Paul Clement, Drew Myer, and Cori Butkiewicz, and Great Onyx student Avery Orange complete S212 SAW training on the Shawnee National Forest on March 14, 2022. USDA Forest Service photo by Robert Goulding.

## CCC MODULE PROGRAM GROWS UP



Gabriel Templeton, JCNO-FAM Field Coordinator. USDA Forest Service photo by Nathan Van Schaik.

In 2015, the Job Corps National Office Fire Program (JCNO-FAM) partnered with Southern Region (R8) and Washington Office Fire and Aviation Management (WO-FAM) to use hazardous fuels funding and enable Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center (CCC) students to gain experience conducting prescribed burns using Public Land Corps (PLC) agreements and the Healthy Forest Restoration Act. While working

on prescribed burns and other non-suppression activities, Job Corps students earn PLC hours in lieu of being paid. Four modules were successfully deployed during the spring Rx season in R8 in 2015.

This program has grown each successive year, providing students employment opportunities and national forests much needed resources. By 2019, Job Corps had deployed 15 modules in R8 and 29 modules in the Eastern Region (R9), where the program had recently expanded. Seventy-one students helped treat 114,000 acres with prescribed fire

across 21 separate locations that year. With the program increasing in size, a module guide was created specifying that modules would consist of four employees and four students with a 1:1 ratio of employees to students. This ratio ensures students the opportunity to work with and learn from career employees from diverse fire backgrounds. Hiring managers can observe students' work proficiency and students learn agency culture and gain life skills.

The prescribed fire modules were such a success that R8 and JCNO-FAM decided to use the same module standards for suppression. In the fall of 2019, 19 modules were staffed for fire suppression in R8. The following year was gearing up to be a success with 22 modules already out on assignments when COVID-19 sent all Job Corps students and modules home in March of 2020. COVID-19 had a cooling effect across all of Job Corps, but especially its fire program modules.

WO-FAM and JCNO-FAM used this down time to increase capacity to CCC fire programs by adding employees and vehicles. WO-FAM also created a pathway to pay students while implementing prescribed fire and hazardous fuels reduction, ensuring CCC students were fairly compensated for the hard and dangerous work they accomplished. This paved the way to increase the number of available modules, giving students more meaningful opportunities and our fire employees a better work-life balance. The Job Corps CCC module program continues to grow both its capacity and its reputation for providing a consistent, reliable fire resource. Regions 8 and 9 are leaders in prescribed fire implementation. Every year, approximately 1,327,678 acres are treated with prescribed fire in R8 and 101,891 acres are treated in R9. The CCC module program is adding to this success with its strong presence in these two regions. In the Spring of 2023, the JCNO-FAM provided 42 modules to R8 and R9, with 170 students participating in 97,000 acres of prescribed fire. The Job Corps CCC module program is an important tool, not only in providing pathways for students to gain employment and life skills but also in providing career advancing training for employees.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Ft. Simcoe CCC:** <https://www.fs.usda.gov/inside-fs/delivering-mission/excel/reviving-relationships-fort-simcoe-job-corps-employee-restores>
- **Oconoluftee CCC:** <https://www.fs.usda.gov/inside-fs/delivering-mission/excel/job-corps-advanced-forestry-instructor-comes-full-circle>





## EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND SERVICE

*Timberlake Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center Wastewater Treatment Operator Brian Hickman played a critical role in restoring the center's wastewater treatment plant after Riverside Fire burnover. USDA Forest Service photo by Preston Keres.*

## PHOTO DOCUMENTARY OF TIMBERLAKE JOB CORPS' REBUILD AFTER THE RIVERSIDE FIRE

Within weeks of joining USDA Forest Service, National Photographer/Videographer Preston Keres stumbled upon the Job Corps program. What he saw has spurred a commitment to tell the story of the Civilian Conservation Centers. Frequently on the road, if the opportunity pops up, Keres does not hesitate to take a detour that lands him on either a center or a CCC project. Keres' visit to Portland in June 2023 presented just such an opportunity. Upon learning the recent history of Timber Lake Job Corps, he reworked his schedule to spend a day capturing photos and video documenting Timberlake's recovery from the Riverside Fire, along with photos and video for a Job Corps student recruitment campaign.



Timberlake's reopening, after the Riverside Fire burned through the Timber Lake Job Corps CCC in September 2020, was a victory for Forest Service Job Corps. Rebuilding and restoration was challenging. Students and staff evacuated safely ahead of the fire and most of the core facilities survived. However, damage was significant. Some staff lost their homes, the campus was without water, power, or reliable access for a long time. Keres' imagery captures this story. The critical role Wastewater Treatment Operator Brian Hickman played in the rebuilding efforts after the fire can be found on Flickr here: <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjAQ77J>.

*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 ROBERTA MCCOY OCONALUFTEE JOB CORPS CCC



Mothers are known for sharing their hard-earned wisdom and experience to teach others; over the past 20 years, Residential Living Manager/LTE Coordinator Roberta McCoy has used the knowledge she's earned raising six

children to help guide the youth she serves at Oconaluftee Job Corps CCC. Many of these young people come from unstable, traumatic home environments and struggle with the challenges unique to their generation. "Raising six kids definitely provided me with the patience to listen and navigate different personalities," stated McCoy. "I think a lot of times people see the action or reaction without ever trying to understand why someone acted a certain way." McCoy understands better than most the issues teenagers face daily. "Social media has made it almost impossible for them to escape negativity and find a safe space."

McCoy began her career with Job Corps as a night shift contract social services assistant (SSA) on December 7, 2001, when the National Park Service operated Oconaluftee. She developed a talent for building rapport with students during her years as a floater across various dorms. "It took some time to earn the students' trust and for them to realize I really cared about their success in the program," she shared. "Their failure or success was my failure and success." McCoy's career journey progressed in fits and starts--complicated by Oconaluftee's closure and reopening under Forest Service management. Promoted to her current position in October 2022, McCoy feels blessed and grateful that she's had the opportunity to serve Job Corps students for the past 20 years and make a difference in so many lives.



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