



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR VETERANS



BACKCOUNTRY TRAILS PROGRAM VETERANS CREW

****FOR MILITARY VETERANS ONLY****

Veterans Green Corps
AND
CCC Backcountry Trails Program

A Journey from Active Duty to Civilian Life through Building Trails

A Joint Project of Veterans Green Jobs & Backcountry Trails Program

The Backcountry Trails Program and Veterans Green Corps (VGC) is launching an all Veterans Backcountry Trails Crew. This project will provide work and training opportunities for veterans, age 20-30, returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. The missions of both VGC and the Backcountry Trails Program are dedicated to natural resource conservation, service to others, and providing young adults opportunities to transition into the workforce. The effort to establish this **Backcountry Trails Program Veterans Crew** is a product of this shared commitment.

The Backcountry Trails Program is putting together a backcountry trail crew made entirely of veterans. This all-veterans crew will be recruited and deployed as a special unit within the CCC's long-standing and nationally recognized Backcountry Trails Program to construct and maintain trails in Sequoia National Park, Los Padres National Forest, Yosemite National Park, and other California wilderness areas.

The CCC Backcountry Trails Program Description

Established in 1979, as a special program within the California Conservation Corps, the Backcountry Trails Program is:

- Dedicated to preserving the remaining wilderness areas, making them safer and more accessible to the public through hard work and national service; and
- Committed to building strong functional communities based on respect, sobriety, cooperation, and the tireless effort of each member.

Each spring, the Backcountry Trails Program assembles crews of 15-17 young adult men and women, from widely diverse backgrounds, who leave behind the conveniences and luxuries of modern life and venture into the mountains to spend five months doing some of the most challenging and ultimately rewarding work of their lives. Crews are typically based in Yosemite, Kings Canyon, Sequoia and Pinnacles National Parks, National Forests including Stanislaus, Sierra, Trinity Alps, Klamath, and State Parks such as Big Basin

Members learn through experience the skills of trail maintenance, construction, and the process of building healthy productive communities.

Elements past participants cite as essential for success:

- Ability to work and live cooperatively with others
- Desire, self-motivation
- Enthusiasm for hard work
- Ability to remain sober
- Desire to live in and explore remote wilderness area

Life in the Backcountry is extremely physically and mentally demanding.

- Crews live for five months in remote wilderness camps with few luxuries.
- Participants are required to hike at high elevations from two to twenty miles per day at a minimum of two miles per hour.
- Crews are assigned to log, brush, build new trail, clean water bars and other drainage structures, reroute trails around fragile areas, repair damaged meadows, build and repair bridges, build water bars, steps, retaining walls and causeways out of rock, wood and other native materials
- Backcountry camps can be located up to thirty miles from the nearest road, store, phone or electrical outlet.
- Camps can be established at elevations up to 11,000 feet and conditions are Spartan.
- Food is delivered by mules or helicopter once a week, and prepared by a staff cook with member assistance, (Mail and other supplies are delivered at the same time).

For most participants, learning how to maintain a healthy and productive community life is the most challenging aspect of the program. It is essential that every member of the crew learn that building a functional community demands that everyone have integrity, treat each other with great respect, consideration, and have an open mind to the ideas and feelings of others.

In addition to the daily work requirements there is an extensive program of education and personal development held during orientation and in the evenings. Topics include:

- native fauna and flora identification
- natural history classes
- wilderness survival
- career development and planning
- community building
- health and safety

Crew members are encouraged to leave camps on weekends to explore the rivers, lakes, peaks, forests, and canyons that surround them and have become their "backyard."

How does the BC Trails Program translate to Veterans?

The Backcountry Trails Program Veterans Crew:

- Engages Honorably Discharged Veterans from all military branches and backgrounds
- Provides a structured program of work, service and personal development
- Is guided by trained Veteran Crew Leaders
- Performs important projects to meet environmental needs on public lands

- Pays wages and benefits to Veteran participants
- Provides training for future employment in trails and/or other conservation related areas with various land management agencies like the NPS, USFS, and CA State Parks.

Cohorts of 10-15 veterans are recruited and placed on crews under the supervision of an experienced Crew Leader, and supported by a Veteran Advocate. A Veteran Advocate, also a crew member, is a peer leader who assists other crew members with veteran specific support and needs. The crew is assigned to work on a project defined and directed by the partnering public land agency such as the US Forest Service or National Park Service. Representatives of the sponsoring agencies also live and work with the crew providing technical and logistical support.

The Veterans Crew of the BC Trails Program will provide the following experiences for Veterans:

- **Cohort Experience:** Crews of veterans working together toward a common goal is the centerpiece of the model. The cohort model provides a safe environment for Veterans to share experiences, struggles and knowledge and support one another in their adjustment and transition from military life to civilian life.
- **Structure:** For many military veterans, this is a favorable reminder of their military experience and the structured VGC program provides an important transition between the more structured military and the less structured civilian worlds.
- **Service:** While the VGC provides a different type of service, the key elements of helping others and being part of something bigger than oneself bring forth a similar sense of commitment and engagement. Our members will be part of a National Service Movement that focuses on environmental conservation.
- **Challenge:** VGC provides a physical and – at times – emotional challenge that is unlike most civilian jobs but in some ways similar to aspects of the military experience.

Through this restorative transitional experience, Backcountry Trails Program delivers tangible public benefits through the performance of important environmental work.

Pay and Benefits

- Crew members are paid a taxable, monthly stipend of \$1,387. There is a Standard Maintenance Deduction of \$325/month that is taken from all crew members' checks for the cost of food. Both the stipend and maintenance deduction are subject to change.
- Health insurance is provided for all crew members.
- Backcountry crew members who have not already received an equivalent of two full-time AmeriCorps Education Awards will receive a \$2,675 Education Award upon successfully completing the Backcountry Trails Program.
- The Backcountry Trails Program provides all non-CCC members with safety gear (hard hat, safety glasses, and gloves), three sets of uniforms, as well as rain gear. In addition to this equipment members must supply their own backpacks, sleeping bags, daypacks and other personal items as outlined in our [Personal Equipment List](#).

How to Apply

Interested Veterans should contact Garrett Reppenhagen for information on the application.

Backcountry Trails Program VETERANS CREW Contact Information

Veterans Green Jobs

Veterans Green Corps

2627 West 6th Avenue

Denver, CO 80204

<http://www.veteransgreenjobs.org>

<http://veteransgreenjobs.org/facebook>

<http://veteransgreenjobs.org/twitter>

Garett Reppenhagen

OIF Veteran 1st Infantry Division

Director of Veteran Development

Veterans Green Jobs

VGC@veteransgreenjobs.org

(719)235-7030