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Christian Matthews, GeoCorps participant, BLM Royal Gorge Field Office, Colorado.
An Introduction to GeoCorps™ America

“Rescuing dinosaurs from thieves, watching a long-neck dinosaur fly, and recording a plug on local radio. GeoCorps; it just keeps getting better.” - Jessica Uglesich, GeoCorps Participant, Moab Field Office, BLM, UT

What is GeoCorps America?

GeoCorps America is a program of the Geological Society of America (GSA) operated in partnership with government agencies and other organizations committed to science and stewardship. In 2016 GeoCorps America partnered with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and the BLM Direct Hire Authority.

Through GeoCorps America, GSA places geoscientists from all walks of life in temporary, short-term geoscience and stewardship focused projects with government agencies. GeoCorps participants are rewarded with a new and valuable experience and training in a career-related field. They have opportunities to conduct field work, interpretation, and research in some of the most stunning natural settings and ground-breaking government offices in the United States. The program’s agency partners gain access to the knowledge, skills and experience of geoscientists to complete geoscience projects that otherwise might not be possible.

The GeoCorps America Mission

GeoCorps America furthers geoscience research, education, and awareness by providing inclusive, hands-on, career development opportunities in partnership with government agencies and other organizations committed to science and stewardship, and by meeting the following objectives:

a. Increase the number of geoscientists interested in conducting research, education, and resource management on America’s public lands by providing rewarding opportunities for hands-on education and career development;

b. Broaden the diversity of the geoscience community by providing inclusive opportunities to gain valuable, career-related experience;

c. Promote the adoption of a land ethic by current and future geoscientists, resource managers, and policy makers;

d. Build public and professional awareness of the role of the geosciences in resource management and policy making; and

e. Raise public knowledge of the value of geological, and other, natural resources.

Related Programs

GSA partners with the National Park Service and Stewards Individual Placement Program, providing recruitment services for the Geoscientists-in-the-Parks (GIP) Program.

GSA is also beginning a new program called “GeoCorps Enterprise,” which seeks to place participants in short-term geoscience positions within industry sectors, including mining, petroleum, geotechnical, environmental, and hydrogeological businesses.

Julia Franceshi, GeoCorps participant, Tongass National Forest, Alaska
GeoCorps America in 2016

GeoCorps America Today

In 2016 the model for the GeoCorps America program changed significantly. Where GeoCorps participants were considered volunteers in the past, participants in the program are now considered employees of the program’s new staffing partner, Aerotek, Inc. Each participant receives an hourly wage equal to the minimum wage for federal contractors.

GeoCorps Projects in 2016

In 2016 the GeoCorps America program included 55 Projects taking place at 30 different BLM and Forest Service locations across the country. The number of BLM and Forest Service locations participating in the program remained the same as in 2015, despite the change in program model and increase in the cost of participation. Application numbers also stayed consistent. There were 1,738 applicants to the 55 projects. Projects in 2016 focused on inventory and monitoring, research, GIS and other technologies, conservation and management, and education and interpretation. Projects included a wide range of disciplines, with a large focus on general geology.

GeoCorps Participants, Partners and the Public

Participants

The geosciences play a pivotal role in how we understand the earth, its climate, and its resources, and in how we approach stewardship as a society. In order to help foster a strong geoscience community GeoCorps aims to provide foundational career development opportunities to participants, and to provide those who have established their career with opportunities to contribute to stewardship efforts. The program helps participants develop job-related and technical skills and gain a feeling of having contributed to the stewardship of America’s public lands.

In keeping with this aim the majority of GeoCorps participants are current students or early career professionals who are within 5 years of having completed their last degree. Sixty two percent of GeoCorps participants in 2016 were current students, and 33% were still in the early stages of their career.

As part of the professional development offered through the program every year current and past participants of GeoCorps participate in the GSA Annual Meeting, presenting in the GeoCorps session, and in other technical sessions. At the 2016 GSA Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado, 13 GeoCorps and NPS GIP participants gave oral presentations, and 17 participants gave poster presentations as part of the joint GeoCorps and GIP technical session. You can view abstracts and a selection of presentations from the GeoCorps session by searching abstracts for the 2016 Annual Meeting on the All Past Meetings page of the GSA website. Search for session T27 to see GeoCorps-related presentations.

GeoCorps participants, GeoCorps mentors, interested students and GSA Staff meeting at the GSA Foundation Booth at the 2016 GSA Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado.
Partners

The GeoCorps America program also benefits GSA’s public land agency partners at the BLM and USFS. The program participants contribute valuable time to geoscience projects focused on areas of need at each location. Many of these projects would not get completed without the help of program participants, and the value that each participant brings to their location is well above the hourly wage that they receive. In total, GeoCorps participants contributed 43,348 hours of service to GSA’s public land agency partners during 2016. Based on the Independent Sector’s value of volunteer time, the estimated value of the service contributed by GeoCorps participants in 2016 is $1,046,420.

“The contributions of GeoCorps participants could potentially impact 211 million members of the public who visited a BLM unit or National Forest.”

The Public

Through the course of their GeoCorps projects on public lands, participants in the GeoCorps America program often interact with members of the public. Some participants have projects that bring them in contact with hundreds of people per day while they lead guided tours and deliver programs for schools and other groups. Other participants interact with the public on a more informal basis, answering questions while they go about their fieldwork or research, or assisting occasionally with public events. In 2016 GeoCorps participants estimate that they interacted with 8,685 people visiting BLM units and National Forests.

The projects that GeoCorps America participants complete, however, impact more than the members of the public with whom they interact directly. Many of the GeoCorps participants leave behind a legacy that will impact members of the public for years to come. The legacies of GeoCorps participants take the form of resources that have been conserved for the future, research that improves resource management, and materials that make the resources more accessible to the public, such as signs, guidebooks, and updated websites. Based on visitor use numbers in 2016 the contributions of GeoCorps participants could potentially impact 211 million members of the public who visit a BLM unit or National Forest.
The Bureau of Land Management Direct Hire Authority Program

in partnership with
GeoCorps™ America
What is the BLM Direct Hire Authority Program?

The Bureau of Land Management Direct Hire Authority (BLM DHA) Program is run by the BLM Office of Special Programs Recruitment and Retention Programs. The direct hire authority program is focused on engaging the next generation of federal employees, by providing rigorous career experience opportunities for students and recent graduates with a high level of interest in working with the Department of Interior (DOI).

GeoCorps America began partnering with the BLM DHA program in 2015. The GSA GeoCorps America program recruits participants for the BLM DHA program, administers the participants’ payments, and manages their submission of required project materials. During their projects participants work with BLM offices to gain experience and skills that will be valuable in a DOI job, and familiarity with the opportunities available to them in the DOI. Once participants have completed their 11-week projects, and graduated from their most recent degree, they become eligible for direct hire into certain DOI positions.

2015 & 2016 BLM DHA GeoCorps Projects by Location

GeoCorps America and the BLM Direct Hire Authority Program in 2016

In 2016 GeoCorps worked with the BLM DHA program to place 5 participants into 4 different geoscience related projects.

GIS Resource Assistant, BLM Wyoming State Office
Minerals Resource Assistant, BLM National Minerals Testing Laboratory
Paleontology Resource Assistant, BLM Las Cruces District Office
Solid Minerals Resource Assistant, BLM Washington Office, Division of Solid Minerals

Over the two years that GeoCorps has worked with the BLM DHA Program all participants have responded that they enjoyed working with the BLM, and that they would recommend participating in the program to a peer. All participants also responded that the program helped them to develop valuable job skills, and 88% responded that the program helped them to grow as a person, develop a land/public land ethic, and develop valuable life skills.
“Going into this position, I had an idea about what the Bureau of Land Management was and what it does. I knew they oversaw federal land and maintained public parks, but what I didn’t realize was how proactive they are in preserving public lands, and the animals that depend on it. The BLM’s mission statement is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. I saw this being upheld day in and day out this summer.” – Taylor Grysen, BLM DHA Participant, Wyoming State Office

BLM Washington Office,
Division of Solid Minerals

Sarah Hill
Solid Minerals Resources Assistant, Geology Series, 1350

Sarah Hill recently graduated from the University of Mississippi with an undergraduate degree in Geological Engineering (GE). The GE program interested Sarah because it drew together her favorite academic interests: math, science, and history. These same interests are what brought her to apply for the BLM DHA program. Sarah’s main career interests are geology, geologic hazards and geomorphology.

The main focus of Sarah’s work with the BLM Washington Office was the federal coal program, and the mining law program. As part of her work Sarah attended a congressional hearing, participated in a Public Scoping meeting in Pittsburgh, and participated in reconnaissance for a placer mineral validity exam. During this work she learned about balancing social and economic needs as it applies to mineral resources, gained first-hand field experience, and gained a deeper understanding of how policies apply to claims and the conflicts that can arise with overlapping interests. Sarah also worked on a project, inspired by the congressional hearing, to gather data for a national inventory of Tailing Storage Facilities. The data Sarah gathered will help to manage these facilities by making who is responsible for the facility clearer. While working on this project Sarah also identified the need for an inventory of tailing storage facilities on BLM surface land, and initiated the process of getting such a project started by writing a memo for the Division of Solid Minerals to propose the project. Sarah also received training on writing National Environment Protection Act (NEPA) documents during her project.

Sarah now has a permanent position as a Physical Scientist with the BLM Southeastern States District Office.
Colin Dunn

Paleontology Resource Assistant, Natural Resources Management Series, 0401

Colin Dunn has an undergraduate degree in Geology from Michigan Technological University, a certificate in Museum Studies from Black Hills State University, and a Master’s of Science from South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. His focus is paleontology, specifically in Cenozoic freshwater gastropods.

Colin’s BLM DHA project focused on paleontology monitoring at Prehistoric Trackways National Monument (PTNM) and Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks National Monument. PTNM was designated as a National Monument in 2009, and a Resource Management plan for PTNM was finalized in 2015. One of the goals for Colin’s project was to develop a paleontology monitoring plan for PTNM. This included developing standardized data collection and impact assessment forms. During his project Colin also designed and implemented a fossil inventory of Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks National Monument, and assisted with placing monument boundary signage that will help protect fossils and enforce fossil collection laws.

Colin is an active member of GSA, presented some of his research at the GSA North-Central Section Meeting in 2014, and at the 2016 GSA Annual Meeting. His project was extended through a standard GeoCorps term at the end of his DHA placement. At the end of his extension Colin was hired into a permanent paleontology position at the BLM Las Cruces District Office.

Taylor Grysen

GIS Resource Assistant, GIS Series, 0301

Taylor completed her undergraduate degree in GIS and Meteorology, and has recently received a master’s degree in Geology. Her main career interests are energy, minerals and geology.

In the first week of her project Taylor learned about mapping Federal Exploratory Units and Participating Areas, the depositional environments in her project area and their effect on oil production, and started mapping and working along with the Reservoir Management group. Throughout her project she worked closely with the division of land leases and oil exploration. The goal of her project was to develop a user friendly way to use CarteView in ArcGIS to make the process of verifying and reviewing oil and gas applications more efficient. During her project Taylor tested and developed this system, created Arc Tools, a geodatabase system, and a guidebook for staff on the process of using the tools for mapping creation. The guidebook was geared for someone with no GIS training. During the testing process for these tools Taylor created 40 oil and gas maps, and over 2000 township and range maps for the Reservoir Management group. During her project Taylor also had the opportunity to participate in outreach, by assisting with talks about geology to the Casper Boys and Girls Club. She also had the opportunity to cross train with other geologists and recreation planners working for the BLM.

Taylor presented the results of her work at the 2016 GSA Annual Meeting, and was hired into a permanent position as a GIS Specialist with the BLM.
Elizabeth Benge and Laura Opall
Minerals Resource Assistants, Geology Series, 1350

Elizabeth Benge has an undergraduate degree in Geology, and graduated with a master's degree in Geology from the University of Nevada, Reno in August of 2016. Her main interests are sedimentology and stratigraphy. Elizabeth is interested in a career in geology or geomorphology, and was interested in the BLM DHA program because of the opportunity to learn, network and explore working for the federal government.

Laura Opall is a recent graduate from Florida International University with a Bachelors in Geoscience, and mining engineering coursework from West Virginia University. She is a current member of the Geological Society of America and Society of Mining Engineers. Laura’s career interests are in energy and minerals, and hydrology. Laura applied for the BLM DHA program because of the opportunity it offered to gain work experience, network, and work with a federal land management agency.

The main function of the National Minerals Testing laboratory, where Elizabeth and Laura’s project took place, is to test the validity of mining claims, particularly bentonite. The lab also produces Mineral Potential Reports and Validity Exams for Placer Claims on BLM lands. The lab works with other BLM offices and other federal agencies, such as the Forest Service, in preparing and identifying minerals. The focus of Elizabeth and Laura’s work was analyzing samples, collected by the BLM Wyoming office in Casper, from Buelah Bell Lake. The lake could represent a crater formed by impact. Previous analysis of samples from the lake identified the mineral erionite, which could pose health risks. The analysis they worked on will help determine the amount of erionite present. The process included learning how to use a large rock saw and properly prepare samples for analysis, and learning to use X-ray diffraction and energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDS) using the Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM). During their project they also helped scan hard copy mineral reports, going back to the 1950s, in order to create an online catalogue of these reports, and had the opportunity to participate in cross training and field excursions with other BLM Wyoming geology departments. They visited and collected samples from a bentonite mine during a mine inspection, visited a reclaimed mine site and learned about the reclamation processes, shadowed a field geologist, and went on numerous excursions to geologic sites within Wyoming.

Laura Opall was hired as the hydrologist for the BLM Safford Field Office in Arizona. Elizabeth was hired by the BLM Rock Springs Field Office as a Geologist.
GSA partnered with the BLM Direct Hire Authority program for the first time in 2015. The six 2015 BLM DHA participants have continued on to further education and careers in the geosciences. Here is an update on what they did after their project.

**Vincent Beresford**
Vincent Beresford was a Geology Assistant at the BLM Bakersfield Field Office through the Direct Hire Authority program during the summer of 2015. Shortly after finishing his summer project, he was hired by the BLM Bakersfield Field Office as an Environmental Protection Specialist.

**Christopher Bolen**
Christopher Bolen was a BLM Direct Hire Authority Geology Assistant with the BLM Roswell Field Office during the summer of 2015. Christopher was hired by the BLM Roswell Field Office directly after completing his BLM DHA project.

**Carolyn Helm**
Carolyn Helm participated in the BLM-DHA program as a Geology Resource Assistant at the BLM Northeastern States District Office. Carolyn was hired by the Northeastern States District Office as a Geologist when her project was completed.

**Lauren Kahre**
Lauren Huffman Kahre recently completed an bachelor’s degree in Geology at the University of Florida. She is excited to pursue a position with the BLM.

**Jordan Martin**
Jordan Martin was a BLM Direct Hire Authority Geology Assistant with the BLM Bakersfield Field Office. Jordan was hired into a position at the state government level as an Engineering Geologist by the California State Water Resources Control Board.

**Jason McKinnon**
Jason McKinnon graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Geology at Boise State University in 2016. He is currently looking for a position with the BLM.
Acknowledgements

The GeoCorps America partnership with the Bureau of Land Management Direct Hire Authority program is supported by the Bureau of Land Management, and the individual offices and mentors that host positions. Thank you to our partners at the BLM, participant mentors, and to the participants themselves. Without their generous support of time and funding the contributions that GeoCorps America makes to the geosciences would not be possible.

Partners

Ian Herron (2017) and Kim Flanders (2016)
Special Hiring Authorities Program Coordinators
Office of Recruitment and Retention Programs,
Bureau of Land Management

2016 Mentors

J. David Chase, BLM Wyoming State Office
David Legare, BLM Las Cruces District Office
   Jason Powell, BLM Washington Office
Marilyn D. Wegweiser, BLM National Minerals Testing Laboratory,
   Wyoming State Office

2016 Participants

Elizabeth Benge, BLM National Minerals Testing Laboratory,
   Wyoming State Office
Colin Dunn, BLM Las Cruces District Office
Taylor Grysen, BLM Wyoming State Office
Sarah Hill, BLM Washington Office
Laura Opall, BLM National Minerals Testing Laboratory, Wyoming
   State Office
GeoCorps™ America
and
The Bureau of Land Management
The BLM has been a partner in the GeoCorps America program since 2005. Since then there have been 193 GeoCorps projects with the BLM. In 2016 there were 28 BLM participants at 14 different BLM locations.

2016 BLM GeoCorps Projects by Location

"Prior to my GeoCorps internship, I had never even considered a government job as a career option. Now that I’ve experienced it, I find the combination of technical work and legal puzzles fascinating. I’m excited about the opportunities for improving and automating more program areas and finding solutions with technology in order to free up skilled program specialists to do work that a computer can’t. – Kelsey Crocker, GeoCorps Participant, BLM New Mexico State Office

Laura Hartman, GeoCorps Participant, Craters of the Moon National Monument, Idaho.

Kevin Madalena, Allison Stegner, and Jessica Uglesich, GeoCorps Participants, BLM Moab Field Office, Utah.
Kelsey Crocker & Idu Opral Ijeoma, Oil and Gas Assistants

2016 was Idu Opral Ijeoma’s second year participating in the GeoCorps program. Idu worked in a similar role as she did during her first project, reviewing existing oil and gas bonds to determine whether they were adequate, or needed any increases. Kelsey took on a GIS related project, developing a model that would take information from different BLM databases and use that data to identify areas of fluid mineral drainage. A fluid mineral drainage is when a well on non-federal lands produces so much that resources begin to flow from adjacent federal lands to that well. Currently the process of identifying these areas is mostly done by hand, and is very time consuming. Kelsey’s project aimed to make the process more efficient. Both participants also got to work on helping to implement new regulations by creating tables of new requirements, helping with implementation schedules, helping to develop a new inspection and enforcement handbook, and presenting at industry outreach sessions.

Both Idu and Kelsey have found positions with the BLM. Idu is working as a Geologist for the BLM New Mexico State Office, and Kelsey accepted a year-long position as a Technical Geology Assistant with the same office.
Linda Reitz
Stream Restoration Monitoring Assistant

Linda Reitz served as a Stream Restoration Monitoring assistant at the Grants Pass Interagency Office in Oregon. Linda went into the project wanting to find out if she was interested in hydrology as a career, and if she wanted to pursue it through graduate study. She says that she got so much out of the project that it was hard to go home.

Linda’s project focused on stream restoration through a collaboration with the Partnership for the Umpqua River and the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians. The project was centered on two tributaries that were identified as critical habitat for salmon. The overall project aimed to stabilize the salmon habitat by creating dams that emulate natural log jams that slow sediment, increase organic matter, provide cover for juvenile salmon, and ensure successful passage for the fish during spawning season. Linda’s work aimed to create methods to track the success of the project. She collected base level data on characteristics of the tributaries prior to the dams being constructed, permanently marked cross sections and points for tracking data as the project continued, and collected information on tributary bedload characteristics upstream of the dam sites. Linda also had the opportunity to work on hydrogeology related skills, including placing thermologgers and monitoring water quality. Linda found her summer transformative, and learned a lot about herself and her career path during her project. She plans to pursue hydrology in graduate study.

Linda’s project was fully-funded by the Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers.

Speaking of Geoscience Blog

For more GeoCorps America highlights you can visit GSA’s Speaking of Geoscience blog, and read about paleontology taking place in Utah, paleontology and GIS work in New Mexico, and the work the BLM does in Washington, DC.
2016 BLM Success Stories

In 2016, 25% of the GeoCorps participants who worked at BLM sites reported that they went on to find employment in geoscience or environmental science with a federal agency.

Egan Cornachione, Economic Technician, US Geological Survey

Egan participated in the GeoCorps America program with the National Landscape Conservation System, BLM Washington Office as a Conservation Economics and Ecosystem Services Assistant. Egan was hired as an Economic Technician by the US Geological Survey in March of 2017.

Kelsey Crocker, Technical Geology Assistant, BLM New Mexico State Office

Kelsey participated in the GeoCorps America program at the BLM New Mexico State Office as an Oil and Gas Assistant. Kelsey was hired by the BLM New Mexico State Office as a Technical Geology Assistant after her project finished.

Idu Opral Ijeoma, Geologist, BLM New Mexico State Office

Idu Opral Ijeoma has participated in the GeoCorps America program twice, both times as an Oil and Gas Assistant for the BLM New Mexico State Office. In December of 2016, part way through her second project, Idu was hired by the BLM New Mexico State Office as a Geologist.

William Jenkins, Geologist, BLM Royal Gorge Field Office, Colorado

William Jenkins participated in the GeoCorps America program at the BLM Royal Gorge Field Office as a Geology Assistant. William was hired as a Geologist at the Royal Gorge Field Office using the Public Land Corps Hiring Authority in October of 2016. William also received an award in recognition of outstanding support from the Royal Gorge Field Office.

Kara Kirkpatrick-Kreitinger, NEPA Specialist, BLM Boise District, Idaho

Kara Kirkpatrick-Kreitinger participated in the GeoCorps America program at the BLM Bruneau Field Office as a Wilderness Character Management Assistant. Kara was hired as a NEPA specialist by the Boise District of the BLM.

Brian Longstreth, Geologist, BLM Shoshone Field Office, Idaho

Brian Longstreth participated in the GeoCorps America program as a Cave Technician/Speleologist for the BLM Craters of the Moon National Monument. Brian was hired as a Geologist for the BLM Shoshone Field Office in January of 2017.

Khurram Rafi, Physical Scientist, Region 4, Environmental Protection Agency

Khurram Rafi participated in the GeoCorps America program as a Geologist/AML Program Assistant with the BLM Royal Gorge Field Office. Khurram was hired as a Physical Scientist for the EPA not long after his GeoCorps project finished.
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Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers
http://www.umpquarivers.org/

Partners

Matt Preston, Ph.D.
Science Advisor, National Conservation Lands,
Bureau of Land Management

Mentors

Bill Auby, BLM Las Cruces District Office
Kelly Burns, BLM National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center
Sally Butts, BLM National Landscape Conservation System
Stephanie Carter, BLM Royal Gorge Field Office
Lorraine Christian, BLM Arizona Strip District
TJ Clifford, BLM Bruneau Field Office
Rody Cox, BLM Arizona Strip District
A.J. Donnell, BLM Grants Pass Interagency Office
David Draheim, BLM Bruneau Field Office
Chel Ethun, BLM Fairbanks District Office
Scott Feldhausen, BLM Washington District
David Freiberg, BLM Craters of the Moon National Monument
Phil Gensler, BLM New Mexico State Office
James Glover, BLM New Mexico State Office
Nikki Hoffman, BLM Grand Junction Field Office, McInnis Canyons
Kevin Hyatt, BLM Grand Junction Field Office, McInnis Canyons

Jennifer Jones, BLM Canyon Country District Office
John Kurtz, BLM Craters of the Moon National Monument
Signa Larralde, BLM New Mexico State Office
Sarah LeCompte, BLM National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center
Bob Lange, BLM Grants Pass Interagency Office
David Legare, BLM Las Cruces District Office
M. Jared Lundell, BLM Moab Field Office
Donald Montoya, BLM Moab Field Office
Nikki Moore, BLM National Landscape Conservation System
Deke Naaktgeboren, BLM Fairbanks District Office
Molly Purnell, BLM Royal Gorge Field Office
Melissa Smeins, BLM Royal Gorge Field Office
John Smeins, BLM Royal Gorge Field Office
Andy Tenney, BLM Washington Office
Chris Teske, BLM Las Cruces District Office
Tom Zelenka, BLM New Mexico State Office

ReBecca Hunt-Foster (GeoCorps Alumni), BLM Moab Field Office
Participants

Jennifer Becker, BLM Grand Junction Field Office
Gordon Bowman, BLM Royal Gorge Field Office
Darion Carden, BLM Fairbanks District Office
Egan Cornachione, BLM National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS)
Kelsey Crocker, BLM New Mexico State Office
Colin Dunn, BLM Las Cruces District Office
Laura Hartman, BLM Craters of the Moon National Monument
Nicholas Hermann, BLM Arizona Strip District
William Jenkins, BLM Royal Gorge Field Office
Danielle Jolette, BLM National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center
Kara Kirkpatrick-Kreitinger, BLM Bruneau Field Office
Sedona King, BLM Canyon Country District Office
Jenna Lente, BLM Las Cruces District Office
Ashley Long, BLM Moab Field Office
Brian Longstreth, BLM Craters of the Moon National Monument
Kevin Madalena, BLM Moab Field Office
Lauren Martz, BLM New Mexico State Office
Christian Matthews, BLM Royal Gorge Field Office
Idu Opral Ijeoma, BLM New Mexico State Office
Khurram Rafi, BLM Royal Gorge Field Office
Linda Reitz, BLM Grants Pass Interagency Office
Briana Smith, BLM New Mexico State Office
Andrew Smith, BLM Royal Gorge Field Office
Allison Stegner, BLM Moab Field Office
Jessica Uglesich, BLM Moab Field Office
Danielle Ward, BLM Royal Gorge Field Office
Eric Welsh, BLM Las Cruces District Office
Kelsey Zabrucky, BLM Royal Gorge Field Office
GeoCorps™ America and
The USDA Forest Service
"Having the opportunities offered to me through this GeoCorp internship has changed the way I understand the world around me. It has made me a more independent student and has made me more confident in my fieldwork abilities... This summer was important for learning to thrive in a new and different environment, and some of the skills I acquired and memories I made will stay with me forever. – Julia Franceschi, GeoCorps Participant, Tongass National Forest

The U.S. Forest Service has been a partner in the GeoCorps America program since 2000. In the past 16 years there have been 228 GeoCorps projects with the U.S. Forest Service. In 2016 there were 21 U.S. Forest Service participants at 12 different National Forests.

2016 Forest Service GeoCorps Projects by Location
Andrew Shannon,
Soil Science Assistant

Andrew’s GeoCorps project with Sierra National Forest was focused on the monitoring and maintenance of factors affecting soil quality within the forest, such as moisture and erosion in sensitive areas. For a good portion of his project Andrew worked on meadow restoration. He worked on tree counts, studied past and present aerial photographs to assess tree encroachment in meadows, and supervised Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) participants working on restoration of a meadow in the Bass Lake Ranger District. As part of working with the YCC, Andrew had the opportunity to act as mentor and discuss career opportunities with the YCC participants.

Andrew also completed a project monitoring off-highway vehicle trails, looking for loss of soil and sediment deposition into nearby waterways. He conducted fieldwork to assess trails and used GIS to designate trail conditions. The information he collected will be used to plan for trail rehabilitation and closure. During his project Andrew developed his analytical skills, expanded his GIS knowledge, and learned how to plan for fieldwork, in addition in gaining experience as a crew leader.
Benjamin York participated in GeoCorps in 2016 as a Pond Mapping and Assessment Assistant at the Chippewa National Forest, Minnesota. After completing his GeoCorps position he continued his masters degree in Geology, and also started a Pathways position as a Student Hydrologist with the USGS. After graduating and completing his Pathways position, Benjamin was converted to a full-time Hydrologist with USGS in Bismark, North Dakota, in September of 2017.

Eric Alt, Geology Interpretive Guide

Eric Alt had the unique experience of being a Geology Interpretive guide at an archaeological site, the Hudson-Meng Bison Bonebed, during his GeoCorps project. The Hudson-Meng Bison Bonebed is a ten-thousand-year-old Paleoindian archaeological site, where over time, five hundred bison were herded into a basin and then slaughtered. During his project he gained a deeper understanding of geoarchaeology, and more skill and experience working with the public. His main focus during his project was working with visitors to the site, delivering multiple tours per day and greeting visitors. He was also tasked with creating resources related to the geology of the area that could be incorporated into public presentations. Eric took on the task of recreating a stratigraphic column from the site, despite the existence of only one previous stratigraphic report. Eric conducted research to recreate the column, field tested his research, and incorporated the site stratigraphy into his public presentations. The stratigraphic information, along with information on paleoclimate, allowed him to paint a more detailed picture of what the landscape around the site would have been like during its use. Eric thoroughly enjoyed his GeoCorps experience, and would considered pursuing a career with the Forest Service in the future.

2016 USDA Forest Service Success Stories

We encourage GeoCorps alumni to keep in touch and let us know what education and career opportunities they pursue after completing their GeoCorps projects. If you are a GeoCors alumni with the U.S. Forest Service please consider reaching out to us at geocorps@geosociety.org, or giving us feedback through the Alumni Survey, which is available on the Participant Resources section of the GeoCorps webpage.

Benjamin York, Hydrologist, U.S. Geological Survey

Benjamin York participated in GeoCorps in 2016 as a Pond Mapping and Assessment Assistant at the Chippewa National Forest, Minnesota. After completing his GeoCorps position he continued his masters degree in Geology, and also started a Pathways position as a Student Hydrologist with the USGS. After graduating and completing his Pathways position, Benjamin was converted to a full-time Hydrologist with USGS in Bismark, North Dakota, in September of 2017.
Acknowledgements

Partners

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Cave and Karst Program Coordinator,
Minerals and Geology Management, Washington Office,
U.S. Forest Service

Mentors

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James F. Baichtal, Tongass National Forest
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Rich Corner, Huron-Manistee National Forests
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Olivia Garcia, White River National Forest
Dave Gloss, Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest
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Steve Ostoja, Sierra National Forest
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Pat Pierson, Custer Gallatin National Forest
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Katie Rooks, Tongass National Forest
Terry Saarela, Huron-Manistee National Forests
Dan Seifert, Custer Gallatin National Forest
Roger Simmons, White Mountain National Forest
Katherine Thompson, Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest
Cynthia Valle (GeoCorps Alumni), Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest
Will Wilson, Monongahela National Forest

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Olivia Patick, White River National Forest
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Andrew Shannon, Sierra National Forest
David Springe, Sierra National Forest
Justin Wells, Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest
Forrest Williams, Huron-Manistee National Forests
Benjamin York, Chippewa National Forest
GSA’s Partnership with the National Park Service Geoscientists-in-the-Parks Program
GSA’s Partnership with the National Park Service Geoscientists-in-the-Parks Program

GSA has been partnering with the National Park Service Geoscientists-in-the-Parks program since 1997. In 2016 GSA provided the recruiting for the program, and Stewards Individual Placement Program managed the projects. GSA recruited 119 participants for the GIP program in 2016.

GIP at Denali National Park and Preserve

In 2016 three GIP projects took place at Denali National Park and Preserve, supported through a generous donation by Sally and Robert Newcombe. These projects are supported by a partnership between GIP, GSA, and the GSA Foundation. In 2016 positions focused on GIS, Paleontology and Geomorphology, and Science Communication.

Abby Buarapha, GIS Specialist

Abby completed a benchmark recovery project, assisting with more complete integration of engineering and other GIS data across the park.

Tyler Hunt, Paleontology/Geomorphology Specialist

Tyler assisted with locating new fossil sites in the park, monitoring the condition of existing sites, and recording sites in the park’s paleontology database.

Lindsey Taylor, Science Communicator

Lindsey worked at the Murie Science and Learning Center to create updated digital education exhibits focused on Climate Change and other ongoing science projects taking place within the park.

Acknowledgements

Funding

Sally and Robert Newcomb contribute generously to the GIP program and work taking place at Denali National Park and Preserve every summer through the GSA Foundation. The added complications and expenses of sending participants to Alaska make these interesting and unique projects more difficult to fund and make Sally and Robert Newcomb’s contributions extremely valuable and much appreciated.
Partners

Lisa Norby
Chief, Energy and Minerals Branch, Geologic Resources Division, Mosaics in Science and Geoscientists-in-the-Parks Program Manager, National Park Service

Limaris Soto
Geoscientists-in-the-Parks and Mosaics in Science Program Assistant
Stewards Individual Placement Program/National Park Service Partner

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Stewards Individual Placement Program

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Mady Eskelson
Program Coordinator, Environmental Stewards Program, Stewards Individual Placement Program

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Nichole Andler, Great Basin National Park
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Lisa Baldwin, Dinosaur National Monument

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Rachel Benton, Badlands National Park
Eric Bilderback, Zion National Park
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Kelly Carroll, Great Basin National Park
Bobby Carson, Mammoth Cave National Park
Dan Chure, Dinosaur National Monument
Geoff Clark, Rocky Mountain National Park
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Mark De Gregorio, Rocky Mountain National Park
Ryan Deslau, Big Thicket National Preserve
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Linda Drees, Biological Resources Division
Christopher Elbich, George Washington Memorial Parkway
Alan Ellsworth, Water Resources Division
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Laura Fawcett, Coronado National Memorial

Rich Fedorchak, Rocky Mountain National Park
Maureen Finnerty, Cuyahoga Valley National Park
Kurt Foote, Fort Matanzas National Monument
Richard Friese, Death Valley National Park
Ryan Frum, Badlands National Park
Ann M. Gallagher, Catoctin Mountain Park
Dorothy Geyer, Colonial National Historical Park

Annie Gilliland, Great Basin National Park
Kathleen Gonder, Bryce Canyon National Park
Hilary Grabowska, Chaco Culture National Historical Park

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Shelley Hall, John Day Fossil Beds National Monument
Allison Harvey, White Sands National Monument
Nathan Hatfield, Chaco Culture National Historical Park
Jonena Hearst, Guadalupe Mountains National Park
Bruce Heise, Picture Rocks National Lakeshore
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George Herring, Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve
Josh Haines, Death Valley National Park
Greg Holm, Grand Canyon National Park
Michael Holt, Coronado National Memorial
Brandon Holton, Grand Canyon National Park
Bill Hulslander, Assateague Island National Seashore
Chad Hults, Alaska Regional Office

Sally Hurlbert, Shenandoah National Park
Curt Jaquot, Mount Rainier National Park
Ryan Janway, Coronado National Memorial

Joseph Jarquin, Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area
Kate Jensen, Valley Forge National Historical Park
Katie Johnson, Lassen Volcanic National Park
Aaron Kaye, Badlands National Park
Dr. Alen E. Keheu, Picture Rocks National Lakeshore
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<td>Pam Tripp</td>
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<td>Herbert Young Jr.</td>
<td>Big Thicket National Preserve</td>
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Participants

Katherine Acosta, Mount Rainier National Park
Elizabeth Adams, Fort Caroline National Memorial
Gwen Antell, Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument
Madison Armstrong, Chickasaw National Recreation Area
Russell Bair, Grand Canyon National Park
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Carmen Carrion, Fort Matanzas National Monument
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Robert Meyer, Capitol Reef National Park
Anne Miller, Grand Canyon National Park
Christy Miller, Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument
Kira Minehart, Grand Canyon National Park
Brittney Moore, Coronado National Memorial
Samuel Nath, Mammoth Cave National Park
Randall Niffenegger, Bryce Canyon National Park
Megan Norr, Yellowstone National Park
Sara Oser, Dinosaur National Monument
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Evelin Preciado, Biological Resources Division
Emily Reich, Bandelier National Monument
Hannah Rice, Valley Forge National Historical Park
Nicole Ridgwell, Dinosaur National Monument
Gina Robert, Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument
Emily Roberts, Hot Springs National Park
Andrea Rocchio, Cuyahoga Valley National Park
Allison Roush, Grand Canyon National Park
Matthew Safford, Grand Canyon National Park
Skye Salganek, Grand Canyon National Park
Christina Seeger, Mount Rainier National Park
Krishna Sharma, Chiricahua National Monument
Salvador Silahua, San Juan Island National Historical Park
Steven Skotnicki, Guadalupe Mountains National Park
Kelly Sokolosky, Hot Springs National Park
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Jacob Thacker, Yellowstone National Park
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Kristen Thiebault, Northeast Coastal and Barrier Network
Megan Thompson-Munson, Mount Rainier National Park
Carolyn Thornton, Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument
Kelli Tolleson, Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument
Genevieve Trafelet, George Washington Memorial Parkway
Stephanie Uriostegui, Catoctin Mountain Park
Michael Verrier, Southwest Alaska Network
Tae Wan Kim, Mount Rainier National Park
Henry Whitenance, Mesa Verde National Park
Susan Wisehart, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
Sarah Zappitello, Grand Canyon National Park
GSA Partnership with the Department of Interior Federal Credit Union

GSA has been working on a new partnership with the Department of Interior Federal Credit Union (DOI FCU). GeoCorps America participants are now eligible to become members of the DOI FCU, and access all of the benefits that credit union membership has to offer. You can find out more about how DOI FCU membership could benefit participants during and after their GeoCorps project by visiting the DOI FCU website.

As part of this partnership GSA will be offering financial literacy webinars to GeoCorps participants, as an added resource for them as they start their careers.

GeoCorps Open Badges

GeoCorps participants now receive a GeoCorps Open Badge when they complete their project and submit their final materials. An Open Badge is a digital badge that includes information about all of the skills and experience participants gained during their project. The badges can be added to participant’s LinkedIn and other social media profiles.

New Efforts to Highlight and Support GeoCorps Alumni

GSA is always looking for ways to support GeoCorps and GIP alumni, and ways to highlight their success. Every year a few more GeoCorps alumni become GeoCorps mentors. This year we are highlighting this in our annual report by placing a GeoCorps Alumni Badge beside the names of mentors who are GeoCorps alumni, and highlighting these names in blue.

GeoCorps Alumna Selected as 2017 GSA Science Communications Intern

GeoCorps alumna Kerri Spuller was selected as a 2017 Science Communications Intern for the GSA Annual Meeting in Seattle. She arranged and conducted interviews with researchers at the meeting, and summarized their work in non-technical terms for lay audiences, under the tutelage of GSA’s first annual Science Communications Fellow, professional writer, Beth Geiger.
GeoCorps America is a program of The Geological Society of America

www.geosociety.org

With support from the GSA Foundation

www.gsafoundation.org

In partnership with the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Aerotek Inc, the National Park Service Geoscientists-in-the-Parks program, and Stewards Individual Placement Program

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