



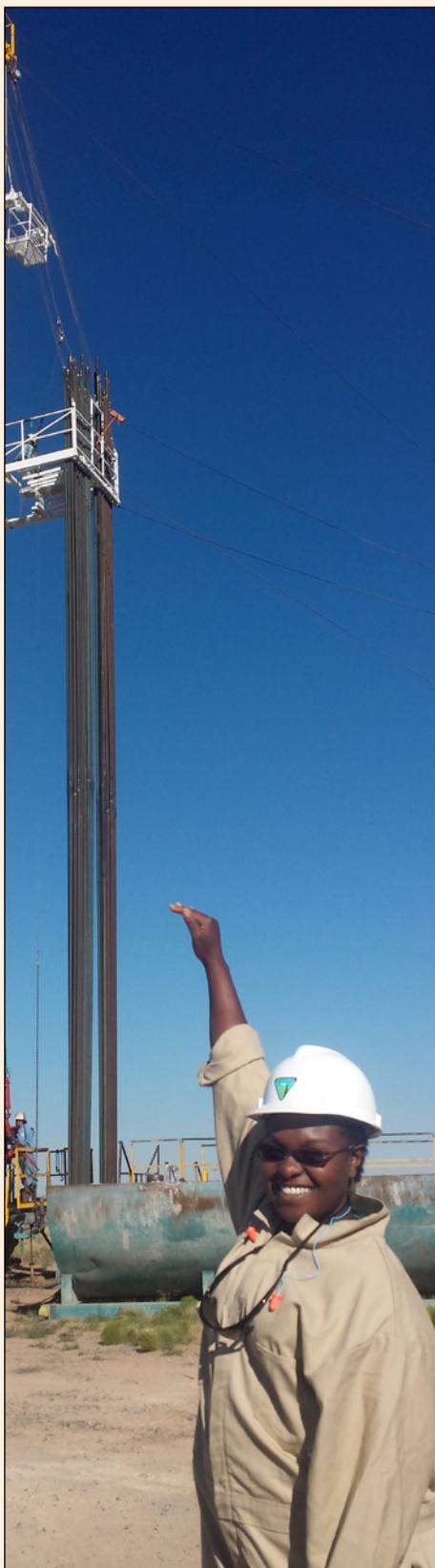
2015 Annual Report



THE
GEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY
OF AMERICA®



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An Introduction to GeoCorps™ America

"There is no greater way to learn than to immerse oneself in experience. This is the essence of GeoCorps; it is both a fuel for passion of geoscience and conservation alike."
- Mackenzie Englund, GeoCorps Participant, Price 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 2015 GeoCorps partnered with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and the National Park Service (NPS) Geoscientists-in-the-Parks (GIP) program. Through GeoCorps America, GSA places geoscientists from all walks of life in temporary, short-term projects on America's public lands. GeoCorps participants are rewarded with new and valuable experience and training in career-related projects. They have the opportunity to conduct fieldwork, interpretation, or research in some of the most stunning natural settings in the United States. The BLM, USFS, and NPS gain access to the knowledge and experience of geoscientists to complete geoscience related projects that otherwise might not be possible.



Victoria Coraci, GIP participant, hiking through a slot canyon in Grand Canyon National Park, AZ.

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:

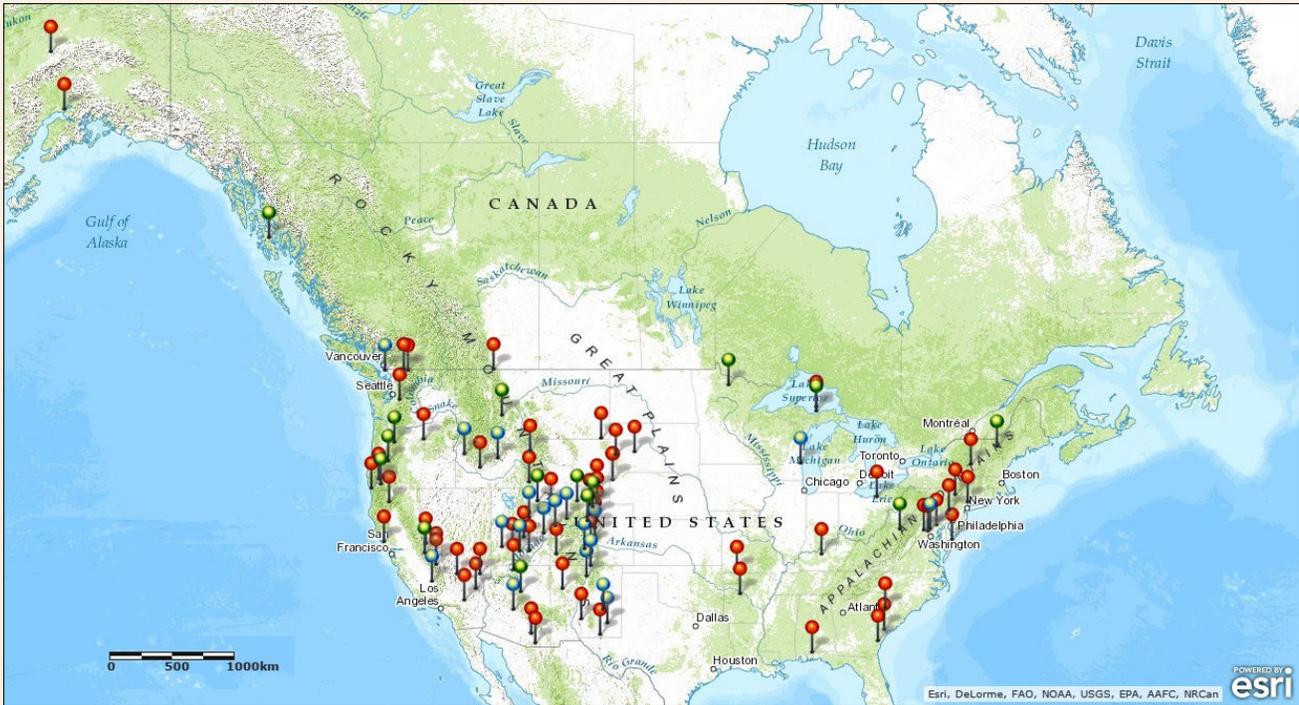
- a. Increase the number of geoscientists interested in conducting research, education, and resource management on America's public lands by providing rewarding opportunities for hands-on education and career development;
- b. Broaden the diversity of the geoscience community by providing inclusive opportunities 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.



Emily Baer, GeoCorps participant, Hiawatha National Forest, MI.

GeoCorps™ America in 2015

2015 GeoCorps Projects by Location



Legend

● Bureau of Land Management

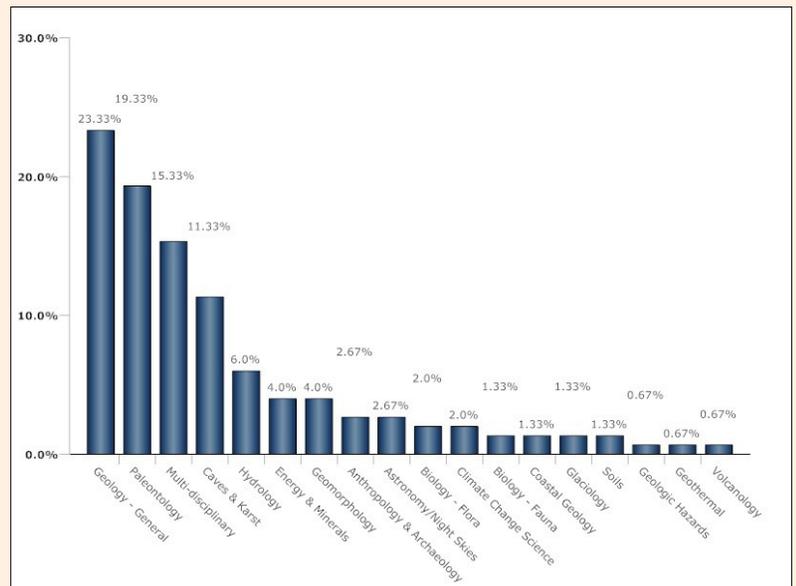
● National Park Service GIP Program

● U.S. Forest Service

2015 GeoCorps Projects by Discipline

GeoCorps America Projects

In 2015 the GeoCorps program included 190 projects and 189 participants. These projects took place at 17 BLM Units, 13 National Forests, and through partnership with the NPS GIP program, at 59 National Parks. In total the number of locations participating grew by 27% between 2014 and 2015, and the number of projects and participants grew by 19%. This growth may be attributed to the program's reputation, the career development opportunities for students and early career professionals, and the value of having geoscience expertise on federal lands. The program had 2,187 applicants to the 190 projects that took place. The continued growth of the program, as well as the high demand, are strong indicators of the program's relevance. Projects in 2015 focused on inventory and monitoring, education and interpretation, research, GIS and other technologies, conservation and management, and curation. Projects included a wide range of disciplines, with a large focus on general geology, paleontology, and caves and karst. Many projects were multidisciplinary in 2015.



2015 GeoCorps America Project Highlights

Tongass National Forest,
U.S. Forest Service, Alaska

Anna Harris, Matthew Stark, and Erin Young-Dahl ventured out to Prince of Wales Island, Tongass National Forest in 2015 to act as Interpretive Cave Guides for El Capitan cave. These three GeoCorps participants spent three months living and working in very remote conditions, delivering guided tours of the cave. Their tours highlighted the intertwined geological, archaeological, and biological history and relevance of El Capitan. During their time in Tongass National Forest, they all gained confidence in their science communication skills, and communication skills in general. The wide variety of visitors to the cave, from residents of the island to visitors from Australia, required that they learn to tailor their tour to their audience, and pay attention to how the visitors wanted to learn. Living in such remote conditions also meant that these GeoCorps participants needed to rely on each other, and they all gained valuable skills and experience working as a team. The team also performed maintenance on the area around the cave, contributed to a new brochure and interpretive materials, and had the opportunity to get involved with biology and archaeology work taking place in the forest. The team also left Tongass with an inspiring sense of what conservation and sustainability work looks like in practice, and what it means to small communities like the one on Prince of Wales Island.



Un-Cruise Adventure guests receiving a tour of El Capitan Cave from Anna Harris, GeoCorps participant, Tongass National Forest, AK.

"...Prince of Wales is perhaps the most acutely aware of what sustainability actually means because it is the island's entire livelihood. The economy is almost completely dependent upon fishing and logging industries; its residents are all involved in related processes. In doing so, they recognize the importance not for protecting the area, but instead harvesting responsibly. I realized that people disconnected from the source of their food and other amenities don't have the same appreciation and respect for responsible harvest. It is all too easy for them – and I include myself before I experienced Alaska – to adopt a "don't touch anything" or "preserve everything" stance on the environment when they are so distant from the raw materials/ animals. The problem is that such a stance is unfeasible. What is feasible is sensible and careful usage of our resources."

- Erin Young-Dahl, Interpretive Cave Guide, Tongass National Forest, USFS, AK

Nicholas Schmuck, a graduate student from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, also spent time as a GeoCorps participant on Prince of Wales Island during the summer of 2015. Though his assignment title was "Geologist/Karst Resource Technician," Nicholas' work was truly interdisciplinary, engaging with the geology, archaeology and biology that the other three Tongass participants were highlighting in their cave tours. In his karst work Nicholas was involved in surveying plots being considered for timber sales. His work ensured that areas where water was entering and leaving the karst system, in particular, were being protected. Part of his work, related to the valuable water resources within the karst system, was creating a database of rare troglobitic invertebrates that are reliant on the cave ecosystem, and where they can be found in Tongass National Forest. As a student of anthropology, Nicholas' work with the karst landscape at Tongass also informed how he looked at the archaeology. During some of his karst survey work he located a spring, and was able to follow that water source to an area of exposed ancient coastline. Where this coastline was accessible he found an early Holocene archaeological site, complete with microblades. He also had the opportunity to be involved in work related to his graduate studies, focused on how humans in the Holocene adapted to sea level change, by taking elevations for a paleo-shoreline model of southeast Alaska with Jim Baichtal and Risa Carlson of the U.S. Forest Service.



Nicholas Schmuck, GeoCorps participant, Tongass National Forest, AK.

Dinosaur National Monument, National Park Service, Colorado
Geoscientists-in-the-Parks Program



Trinity Stirling, GIP participant at Dinosaur National Monument, CO, working at the Saints and Sinners Quarry.



Left to right: Thea Kinyon Boodhoo, Elliott Smith, Maria Jimenez, and Trinity Stirling, GIP and Mosaics in Science participants at Dinosaur National Monument, CO.



Thea Kinyon Boodhoo, GIP participant at Dinosaur National Monument, CO, taking a picture of Steamboat Rock during a weekend hike.

Thea Kinyon Boodhoo, Elliott Smith, Trinity Stirling, and Marie Jimenez worked as a team this summer to accomplish tasks on three important projects at Dinosaur National Monument. Thea, Elliott, and Trinity were all GIP participants, and Marie was a participant in the National Park Service Mosaics in Science program. Between the four of them, they worked to create a map of the fossils present along the Dinosaur Discovery Trail, complete the Monument's annual museum inventory, and create an interactive website of the Carnegie Quarry at Dinosaur National Monument. Trinity, Elliott, and Marie worked together to record and map all of the fossils along the spur of the Morrison formation accessible from the Dinosaur Discovery Trail. As these fossils are visible and accessible to visitors, and potentially in danger of being damaged, the map will be a valuable resource for monitoring the fossil resources along the trail. Trinity took the lead on the annual museum inventory, where she updated the information in the museum's catalogue and made sure it accurately described the state and location of each fossil.

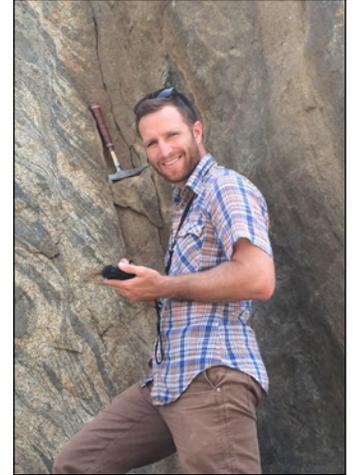
Each team member took on projects, and made their own valuable contributions, related to the creation of an interactive website of the Carnegie Quarry. The aim of this project is to make Carnegie Quarry, the in situ "wall of bones" visible at Dinosaur National Monument's visitor center, accessible online to both the public and to researchers not able to visit in person. The "Digital Quarry Project" will eventually allow visitors to the website to click on silhouettes of fossils, present in the quarry today and excavated throughout the quarry's history, and access information about that specific fossil. This year's team focused on getting this website up and running, which required an astounding amount of work. The team spent hours scanning archives related to the quarry to make digital copies that could be linked to the website. Marie and Elliott took on the bulk of this work, as well as describing these documents, so that they would be searchable once they were online. Elliott then wrote biographies and scientific and historical articles based on this information that could be included on the website. In addition to helping with the archive, Trinity designed the website's logo and created a survey to collect feedback on the website. Thea took on the task of taking all of this information - images, archives, and a map of the quarry - and designing the interactive website. By October 2015 the team successfully managed to pull all of these pieces together and get the Digital Quarry online. Five hundred of the bones present in Carnegie Quarry can be explored through the online quarry wall by visiting www.carnegiequarry.com.

Thea, Trinity, Elliott, and Marie are active GSA members. All four of them attended the 2015 GSA Annual Meeting and presented at the conference. Thea also contributed an article to GSA's blog "Speaking of Geoscience" (<http://geosociety.wordpress.com/2015/06/23/looking-to-the-future-from-the-jurassic/>). More information about Thea and the Dinosaur National Monument team's GIP experiences can be found on this blog, and at Thea's individual blog, www.futuristnaturalist.com.

Bakersfield Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, California Direct Hire Authority Program

Vincent Beresford and Jordan Martin spent 11 weeks working with the BLM Bakersfield Field Office in California, as part of a partnership between GeoCorps America and the BLM Direct Hire Authority program. Vincent and Jordan worked with the office's geologist to help complete the annual inspection of mines, mineral localities, and abandoned mine sites on the lands managed by the office. Their time with the BLM included travel to many different areas within California working with claim owners and mine operators to make sure they operated under the law, inspecting and recording abandoned mine sites, mapping bedrock and placer deposits in historic gold-silver mining districts, and checking in with contractors' progress where mines were being closed. The pair investigated over 50 sites during their 11 week project, and wrote reports on their investigations, which were then passed on to stakeholders. They had the opportunity to work collaboratively with archaeologists, biologists, petroleum engineers, well inspectors and recreation managers when their investigations coincided, including when a biologist was researching bats roosting in some of the abandoned mines. Vincent and Jordan also participated in some work being performed by the Ridgecrest Field Office, and visited three separate active precious metal and industrial mines.

Vincent and Jordan greatly enjoyed the diversity of work and experiences that were offered to them through their project with the BLM Bakersfield Field Office, as well as the opportunity to work as a team, and build on each other's strengths. Their work with the BLM allowed them to build on their mapping and geological identification skills, as well as gain familiarity with archaeology and biology. It helped to broaden their perspectives on conservation, focused their career and academic interests, increased their familiarity with geology in industry, and provided them with insight and appreciation into the work involved in managing public lands. After completing his GeoCorps project Jordan returned to graduate school, but he looks forward to an opportunity to work on public lands again in the future. Vincent was recently hired by the Bakersfield Field Office as an Environmental Protection Specialist.



Left to right: Vincent Beresford and Jordan Martin, GeoCorps/BLM DHA participants at the Bakersfield Field Office, BLM, CA.



Denali National Park and Preserve, National Park Service, Alaska Geoscientists-in-the-Parks Program

GIP projects at Denali National Park and Preserve have engaged in a wide range of geoscience related disciplines over the years, including paleontology, geologic hazards, glaciology, soundscapes, hydrology, and geoscience education and interpretation. The completion of these projects has helped to manage fundamental resources in the park as well as increase the public's geoscience knowledge and awareness. Completing these projects has allowed participants to develop key skills and build a foundation for future success as geoscience students and employees. In 2015, four participants took on four different projects at Denali.



GIP participant Sandra Cronauer and a citizen science group hiking in Denali National Park and Preserve, AK.

Denali National Park and Preserve, National Park Service, *continued.*



Sandra Cronauer, GIP participant at Denali National Park and Preserve, AK.

Sandra Cronauer spent her time at Denali National Park and Preserve as a Glacial Monitoring Assistant. During her project she assisted with the logistics of planning field trips out onto the glaciers, collected measurements of winter snow accumulation, summer melt, and glacial terminus measurements, and assisted with processing the data. Sandra also played a significant role in writing up results and creating figures for this research. During her project Sandra enhanced her skills in collecting and processing GPS data, gained experience working independently, and developed a great deal of confidence in her leadership abilities. The experience renewed her confidence in her research skills, and reaffirmed her goal to become a professor.



Andrew Collins, GIP participant at Denali National Park and Preserve, AK.

Andrew Collins returned to Denali National Park and Preserve in 2015 as a GIP Guest Scientist to continue work analyzing geologic hazards. During his second year focusing on geohazards at the park, Andrew contributed to the development of an interagency, nationwide, Unstable Slope Management Program, explored remote hazards in the park to integrate them with the existing hazard database, and developed and implemented an interpretation program based on natural hazards. Andrew presented his work as part of the GeoCorps session at the 2015 GSA Annual Meeting. He is continuing his engagement with Denali by volunteering time to the park's social media efforts, crafting short posts on science at the park.



Gabe Joseph, GIP participant at Denali National Park and Preserve, AK.

Gabe Joseph focused on preserving the natural soundscape of Denali National Park and Preserve. As a soundscape technician Gabe spent five months at Denali setting, monitoring, and troubleshooting stations to record natural and human-generated sounds all over the park. Once collected, Gabe helped to analyze all of the sound data. This data will provide information on how the amount of natural and human-generated sound within the park is changing over time. Gabe also contributed work to developing computer code that will make it easier to compare the different sounds over multiple sites. In the long term Gabe's project will help to preserve the solitude of the wilderness at Denali and ensure that future visitors can enjoy the silence and sounds of nature.



Rebecca Rice, GIP participant at Denali National Park and Preserve, AK.

Rebecca Rice worked with the Education and Interpretation Divisions of Denali National Park, to make the geoscience being explored at the park more accessible to visitors. Rebecca helped maintain resources for the Junior Ranger program, discovery packs, and the kids corner. She also roved the campground to answer visitor questions, delivered campground talks, led family programs, and helped with special events. Rebecca is in training to become a high school science teacher, and hoped the opportunity to work with education and interpretation at a National Park would teach her more about outdoor education and how to get her future pupils more excited about science. When she completed her project Rebecca felt that participating in the GIP program was a great professional development opportunity, and she hopes to work in national parks during future summers as seasonal staff or as part of the Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program.

GeoCorps America Participants, Partners, and the Public.

"My favorite aspect of my experience through GeoCorps was the overwhelming sense of community that comes with working at a small park. Everyone was willing to help and lend direction where needed. It really fostered a creative and intellectual environment in which I was able to really thrive as person and as a scientist."
- Elizabeth Reinthal, GIP Participant, Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument, NPS., CO

Participants

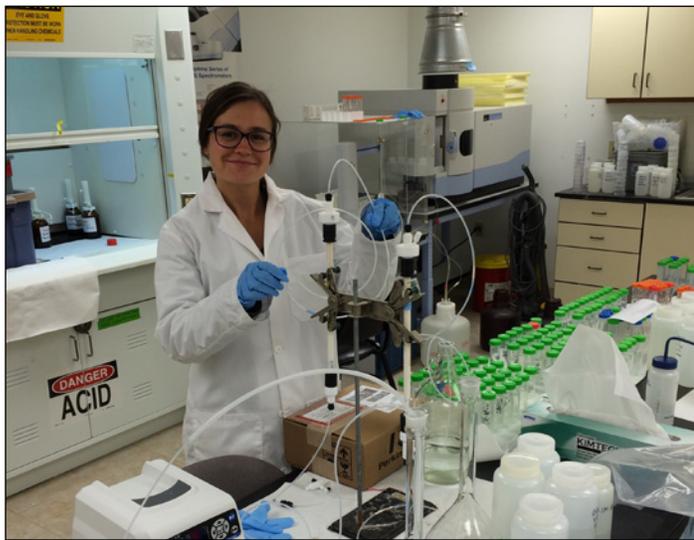
The geosciences play a pivotal role in how we understand the earth, its climate, and its resources, and in how we approach stewardship as a society. In order to help foster a strong geoscience community GeoCorps aims to provide foundational career development opportunities to as wide a variety of participants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

In 2015, fifty-two percent of participants were female, 38 percent were male, and 9 percent either provided no answer, or do not identify with a binary gender. There was an increase in 2015 of participants who chose not to answer gender and ethnicity related questions. Twelve and a half percent of participants identified as being part of an underrepresented minority group, and 77 percent identified as White/Caucasian.

Sixty-two percent of participants are between the ages of 21 and 25. An additional 23 percent are between the ages of 26 and 30. The majority are undergraduate students, have graduated within the last five years, or are working on a graduate degree. Most participants have visited a national park, national forest or BLM unit prior to starting their project, but they are more familiar with geoscience career options in academia than with options in state and federal agencies.

According to participants, the GeoCorps program gives them the opportunity to grow as a person, gain valuable job skills, connect more strongly with the natural world, and gain valuable life skills. Ninety-seven percent of participants enjoyed working with the federal agency that hosted their project, and 94 percent would recommend participation in the program to their peers. Throughout the program participants gained more familiarity with public land agencies in general, and more familiarity with the career opportunities offered by state and federal agencies, as well as with opportunities available in industry.

Every year current and past participants of GeoCorps participate in the GSA Annual Meeting, presenting in the GeoCorps session, and other technical sessions. At the 2015 GSA Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland, eight participants presented posters and 11 gave oral presentations as part of the GeoCorps session. An additional 11 recent participants presented posters and talks related to their GeoCorps work in other technical sessions. Four GeoCorps mentors gave presentations related to work completed by GeoCorps participants, and two GeoCorps alumni also presented at the meeting. You can view abstracts and a selection of presentations from the GeoCorps session by searching abstracts for the 2015 Annual Meeting on the All Past Meetings page of the GSA website. Search for session T76 to view GeoCorps related presentations. (<http://www.geosociety.org/meetings/searchabstracts.htm>)

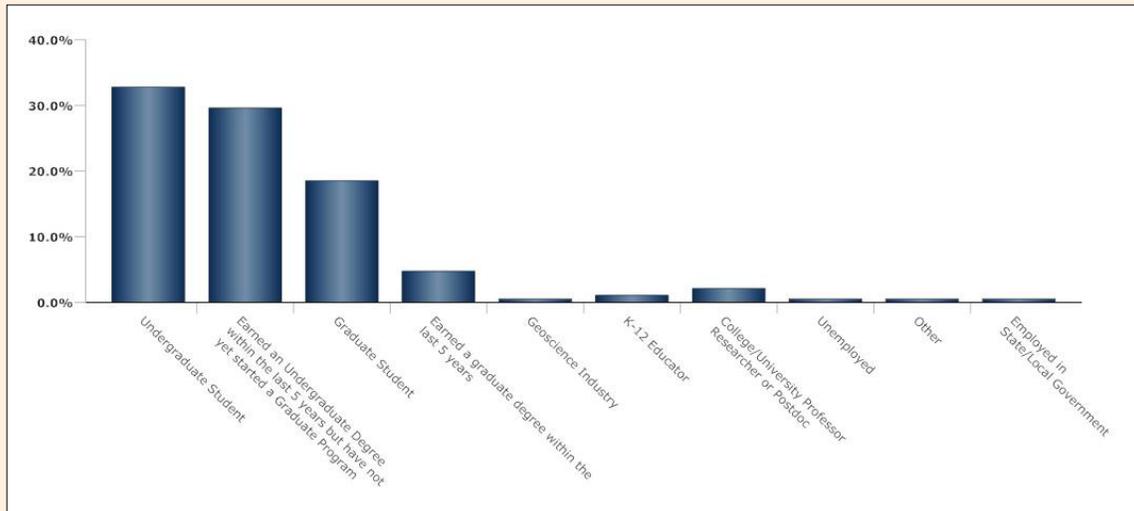


Kerri Spuller, GeoCorps participant at BLM Royal Gorge Field Office, CO.

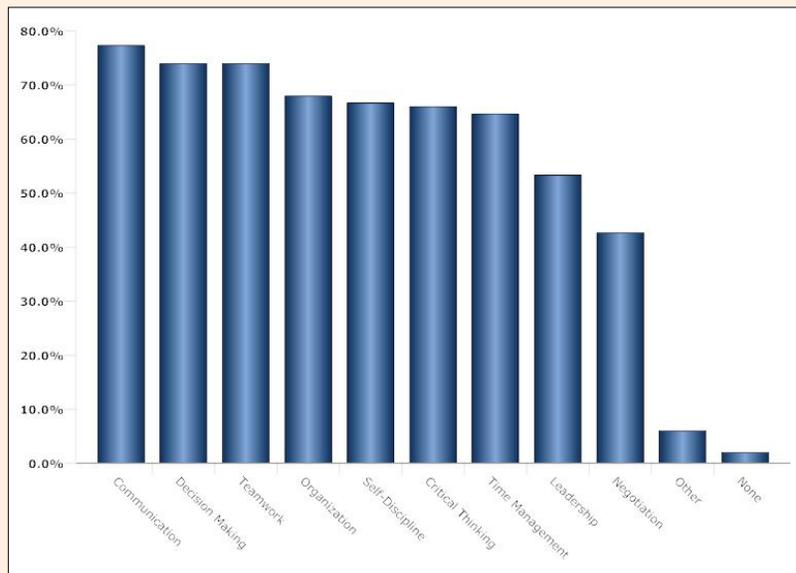


GeoCorps/GIP participant Paige Latendresse and GeoCorps participant Michael Johnson at the 2015 GSA Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland.

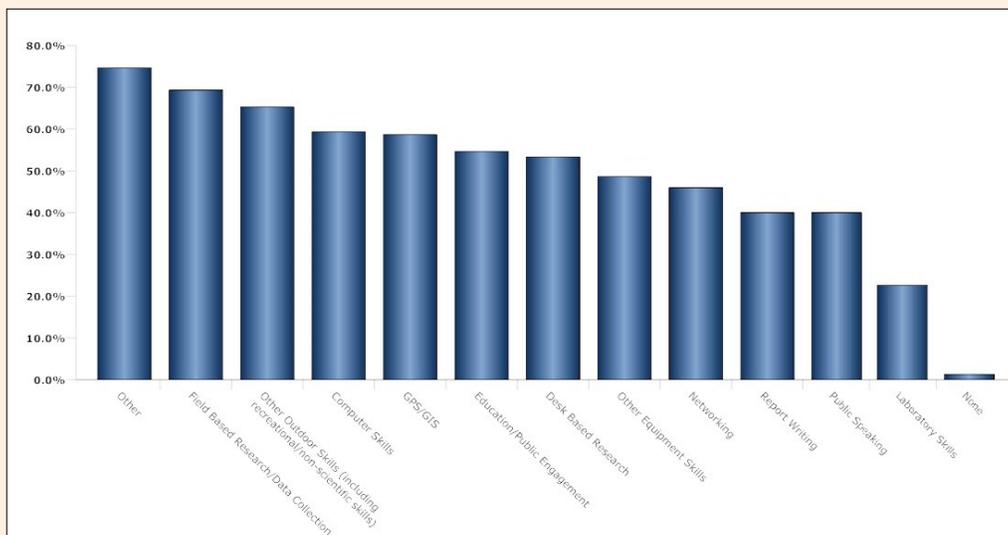
2015 Participants by Education & Employment Status



Life Skills Gained by 2015 Participants



Jobs Skills Gained by 2015 Participants



Partners

The GeoCorps America program also benefits our public land agency partners at the BLM, NPS, and USFS. The program participants contribute valuable time to projects focused on inventory and monitoring, education and interpretation, research, GIS and other technologies, conservation and management, and curation. Many of these projects would not get completed without the help of program participants. In total, GeoCorps participants contributed 114,000 hours of volunteer service to our public land agency partners in 2015. Based on the Independent Sector's Value of Volunteer Time, the value of the time contributed by GeoCorps participants in 2015 is \$2,629,980.



Left to Right: Levi Windingstad and Lillian Rubi, participants at Sierra National Forest, presenting their GeoCorps project at the YCC Awards Ceremony in Clovis, California.

"My discussions with participants changed my views on interactions with students and how to reach out to others to promote positive changes in belief and, in turn, action. In addition, they changed my understanding of conservation. I finally understood. These were the people NPS is trying so hard to preserve our precious landscapes and ecosystems for. No longer a faceless mass labeled, "The Public," I found a renewed sense of awe and respect for conservationism and those who take the time to experience the fruits of its labor."

- Sandra Cronauer, Denali National Park and Preserve, NPS, AK.

The Public

Through the course of their projects on public lands, participants in GeoCorps America 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 or deliver programs for schools and camp groups. Other participants interact with the public on a more informal basis, answering questions while they go about their fieldwork or research. In 2015, GeoCorps participants estimate that they interacted with 228,288 people visiting BLM units, national parks, 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, or materials that make resources more accessible such as signs, guidebooks, and updated websites. Increasingly participants are working to integrate the use of new technologies, such as phone applications, into the interpretation available on public lands, and beyond their boundaries. Based on visitor use numbers, in 2015 the contributions of GeoCorps participants could potentially impact 450 million members of the public (Pomarico, 2014; U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service; USDA Forest Service).



GIP participant Mequette Gallegos giving a tour at Shenandoah National Park, VA.

GeoCorps™ America Success Stories



Vincent Beresford, Environmental Protection Specialist, Central California District, Bakersfield Field Office, BLM, CA, and GeoCorps/BLM Direct Hire Authority participant in 2015.

Vincent Beresford

Environmental Protection Specialist, Central California District, Bakersfield Field Office, Bureau of Land Management

Vincent Beresford was a Geology Assistant at the BLM Bakersfield Field Office through the GeoCorps/BLM Direct Hire Authority program during the summer of 2015. Shortly after finishing his summer project, he was hired by the Bakersfield Field Office as an Environmental Protection Specialist. He works with aspects of geology and environmental analysis following National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents. Major projects that he works on include the Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) program, solid locatable and leasable mineral resources, and hazardous material assessment including land shared with EPA Superfund sites. Many of these projects are a continuation of his summer work. His tasks consist of working with mining claimants, site characterization, mine reclamation, and hazardous waste remediation. Vincent works with various professionals in both the minerals and resources sectors of the office to manage public lands. His average workweek consists of two to three days in the field collecting data and two to three days in the office writing reports. Vincent was excited to return to Bakersfield and begin his career with the Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management.



Christopher Bolen, Geologist, Pecos District, Roswell Field Office, BLM, NM and GeoCorps/BLM Direct Hire Authority participant in 2015.

Christopher Bolen

Geologist, Pecos District, Roswell Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico

Christopher Bolen was a GeoCorps/BLM Direct Hire Authority Geology Assistant with the BLM Roswell Field Office during the summer of 2015. Christopher was hired by the Roswell Field Office directly after completing his GeoCorps/BLM DHA project. He assesses geology, paleontology, and mineral resources for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents, issues permits for removal of material from solid mineral material pits, and reviews well logs for Applications for Permit to Drill (APD). Recently he has begun working with the Lincoln County Road Department in an effort to supply it with the necessary mineral materials for maintenance needs. His job involves working closely with an interdisciplinary team of highly qualified professionals in a variety of fields to ensure that multiple use public lands and the resources they contain are managed and used responsibly and in the best interest of the public. Chris' average week consists of between two to three days in the field collecting data for various projects, and two to three days in the office writing reports, NEPA documents, and creating maps for projects and field use. Christopher's career inside the Department of the Interior is just beginning and he is looking forward to exploring the different paths offered to him in his role as a geologist.

Clayton Schmidt

Planning and Environmental Specialist, National Landscape Conservation System, Bureau of Land Management, Washington, DC.

Clayton Schmidt participated in the GeoCorps program at the BLM National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) as a GIS, Website, and Recreation Specialist. Clayton was hired by the NLCS as a Planning and Environmental Specialist in April of 2015.

Robert J Gay

Biology and Paleontology Teacher, Mission Heights Preparatory High School, Graduate Student, University of Arizona

Robert participated in the GeoCorps program with the BLM Moab Field Office in 2013. He runs the only public school paleontology program in the United States at Mission Heights Preparatory High School, in Arizona. He is also a graduate student at the University of Arizona. Robert's work was recently featured in Phenomena, a National Geographic Science Salon. You can read more about Robert's work by visiting the Phenomena blog post, "Taking Students to the Triassic: An Interview with Paleontologist Robert Gay."

(<http://phenomena.nationalgeographic.com/2015/08/31/taking-students-to-the-triassic-an-interview-with-paleontologist-robert-gay/>)

Mariah Richards

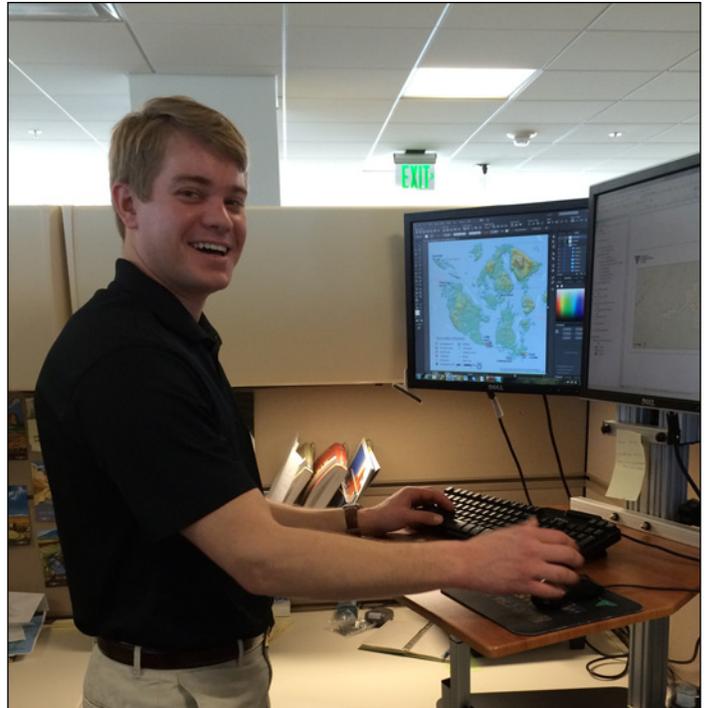
Graduate Student, Colorado State University

Mariah attended Colorado College and majored in Geology with a minor in Studio Art. After graduation she took a GIP position at Denali National Park and Preserve and the next year was hired as a seasonal physical science technician. Most of her work in Denali was focused along a reach of the braided, glacially-fed Toklat River. Whether it was hiking up tributaries to look for dinosaur tracks or measuring geomorphic change along the floodplain, her respect for and familiarity with the Toklat River expanded. That work in turn expanded her appreciation of rivers and led to her master's research project with Colorado State University. This research aims to quantify the impacts of eight decades of human disturbance along a reach of the Toklat River in Denali National Park and Preserve. Additionally, her job in Denali provided extensive opportunities to combine art and science through scientific illustration and schematic diagram design, a passion that is now incorporated into her thesis as well. She hopes to continue to work with impacted river systems and community involvement in river protection through conservation, education, and illustration. Mariah received the Howard Award from the Quaternary Geology and Geomorphology Division of GSA at the 2015 GSA Annual Meeting.

Peter Bonsall

Geographer/GIS Specialist, Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Division, National Park Service, Washington, DC

Peter Bonsall was a GIP GIS Specialist Guest Scientist with the National Park Service Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Division in 2012, and again in 2014. Peter was hired by the Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Division in 2015 using the Public Land Corps noncompetitive special hiring authority.



Clayton Schmidt, Planning and Environmental Specialist, National Landscape Conservation System, BLM and GeoCorps participant, BLM NLCS, Washington, DC



Mariah Richards, Graduate Student, Colorado State University, Howard Award Recipient, and GIP participant at Denali National Park and Preserve, AK.



Trevor Hobbs, Soil Scientist, Huron-Manistee National Forest, MI.

Trevor Hobbs

Soil Scientist, Huron-Manistee National Forest, U.S. Forest Service, Michigan.

Trevor Hobbs was a GeoCorps Soil Geomorphologist Guest Scientist at Huron-Manistee National Forest. He now has a full-time position as a soil scientist with Huron-Manistee. His primary responsibility is to collect field data to update Forest Service ecological landtype phase maps. He also works on inventorying groundwater-dependent ecosystems, and designing geologic interpretive signs for the forest. Beyond resource inventory mapping, he assists with planning forest service management projects that require NEPA analysis, ensuring that the effects of proposed activities on soils in our forest are fully analyzed and disclosed to the public. He has also been fortunate to lead a variety of proposal efforts that seek funding to acquire LiDAR data for Forest Service resource management applications. In addition to his work at Huron-Manistee National Forest he has had the opportunity to provide soil scientist specialist input for a project on the Mark Twain National Forest in Missouri.

Mary Ruth Armbruster

Forestry Technician, Medicine-Bow Routt National Forest, U.S. Forest Service, Wyoming and Colorado.

Mary Ruth Armbruster participated in the GeoCorps America program in 2014 at the Medicine-Bow Routt National Forest as a GIS Specialist. Mary Ruth was hired as a seasonal Forestry Technician in May of 2015.



Heidi Breid (left) , Geologist, Carlsbad Field Office, BLM, NM.

Heidi Breid

Geologist, Carlsbad Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico.

Heidi Breid has participated in GeoCorps twice, the second time as a Geology Assistant Guest Scientist with the Bureau of Land Management Carlsbad Field Office. Heidi was hired by the Carlsbad Field Office in the fall of 2015. As a geologist Heidi manages the potash corehole database and works with the potash companies, helping them with projects and challenges they may face during their exploration, mining, and processing of potash. She completes inspections of mines, both abandoned and currently in production, researches and writes NEPA documents, completes geology reports for oil and gas activities, participates in and leads geologic field trips throughout the region, and helps manage surface mineral material leasing. Heidi hopes to further her education and training related to the NEPA, with the intention of someday taking the lead on the NEPA projects for the Solid Minerals department, and possibly other projects around the office. The Carlsbad Field Office hopes to create a strong geology program with well-rounded geologists from a variety of backgrounds that can collaborate on projects, learn from each other, and offer support to the office as a whole. Heidi is looking most forward to being part of creating this core team of geologists at the Carlsbad Field Office, focused on the overall geologic needs of the region, instead of being divided into strictly fluids and solids geologists.

GeoCorps™ America Milestones

GeoCorps Partners with the BLM Direct Hire Authority Program

In 2015 GeoCorps partnered with the Bureau of Land Management Direct Hire Authority (DHA) program to offer six GeoCorps opportunities. The DHA participants are eligible for noncompetitive hire into certain Department of Interior jobs, under the Direct Hire Authority. This is fantastic opportunity for geoscientists who are highly interested in a career with the BLM and other federal agencies. Two participants have already been hired.

Participants Successfully hired through the Public Land Corps Special Hiring Authority

In 2015, one GIP participant, Peter Bonsall, and one NPS Mosaics in Science participant, Juana Giessell Aguilar, were successfully hired through the Public Land Corps special hiring authority. This authority allows individuals who have successfully completed 640 hours of work in an eligible conservation project, and who also meet other criteria, to compete against a limited pool when applying for certain federal jobs. The requirements for this hiring authority are complex, and having two participants successfully navigate the process is an achievement worth celebrating.

More Alumni Finding Success in the Geosciences

Every year a handful of GeoCorps alumni go on to start careers with federal or state public land agencies, or find success in other geoscience related work. In 2015 more alumni have sent news of success than ever before. It is hoped that this trend continues for years to come.

Alumni Mentoring Program Participants

Over the past few years GeoCorps alumni working in government agencies have been giving back to the GeoCorps program by encouraging their places of work to take on GeoCorps participants, and by becoming mentors for these participants themselves. GeoCorps/GIP alumni such as Scott Beason, Erica Clites, Sarah Doyle, ReBecca Hunt-Foster, Cynthia Valle, and Amy Titterington have all mentored participants over the past few years, expanding and enriching the GeoCorps program with all of GSA's program partners.

Growing Social Media Presence

GeoCorps America is on Facebook and Twitter. Social media is used as another avenue to connect with future, current, and past participants, and promote the science conducted through the program. In 2015 GeoCorps' social media following grew, reaching 7,000 followers on Facebook and 1,000 followers on Twitter.



GeoCorps/BLM Direct Hire Authority participants working with the BLM Northeastern States District Office, WI.



Left to right: Lonnie Pilkington, and GIP participant Anne Miller, with her mentor and GeoCorps Alumna Sarah Doyle.

The Future of GeoCorps™ America

Adapting to Change and Best Practice Standards

The relevancy of programs like GeoCorps America is increasing. Government is putting more emphasis on the diversity of its workforce, and getting young people active, outdoors, and involved in public service. The skills and experiences needed to make the transition from school into the workforce are also changing, making the career development opportunities that GeoCorps provides invaluable to early career professionals. As such, the environment in which programs like GeoCorps operate is also changing with the increased need. Over the coming years GSA will work to adapt to these changing standards while increasing the program’s relevancy and value to participants and partners.

Add Value to the Program

With the demand for GeoCorps positions growing, and many changes taking place to the operation of career development programs, it is more important than ever that concentration centers on the quality of the program rather than the quantity of projects. For the next few years increased focus will be placed on evaluation with the aim of improving the existing characteristics of the GeoCorps program, and monitoring the effects of changes. In addition the program will seek out new ways to add value to the experiences of partners, participants, alumni, and GSA members, as well as to increase the diversity of participants. These efforts to improve the quality and value of GeoCorps America will include working toward the goals outlined in the accompanying diagram.

GeoCorps America: Focuses for the Future

<p>2016–2017</p>	<p>Increase Partnerships Continue to pursue a partnership with USGS</p> <p>Increase Program Value Pursue additional Direct Hire Authority projects. Pursue partnerships to provide additional resources for participants and mentors. Continue to provide guidance for participants and mentors on applicable special hiring authorities. Increase GSA membership involvement in the GeoCorps America program.</p>
<p>2017–2022</p>	<p>Increase Partnership Explore possible partnerships with additional Federal and State Agencies. Explore partnerships to expand the breadth of program opportunities.</p> <p>Increase Program Value Achieve Corps Network Accreditation. Work with agencies to create paths from GeoCorps projects to full-time federal employment. Continue to use evaluation results to drive program improvements. Continue to adapt the program as best practices for youth and career development programs change.</p>
<p>Targets</p>	<p>Maintain project numbers between 40 - 75. Increase participant diversity.</p>

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GIP participant Nicole Collier, Mount Rainier National Park, WA.

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