

COYCC 2019 Season Report

Name of organization: Heart of Oregon Corps

Amount awarded: \$6,500

Program title: Central Oregon Youth Conservation Corps

Dates of program: 6/24/2019 – 8/15/2019

Project locations: Ochoco National Forest (the focus of the funds provided by OHA),
Deschutes National Forest, Crooked River National Grassland

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We are extremely grateful to OHA membership and board for supporting the Central Oregon Youth Conservation Corps Ochoco crews and the work they accomplished in 2019. Central Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (COYCC) is a partnership between Heart of Oregon Corps (HOC), the US Forest Service (USFS), and the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC). The purpose of this program is to complete natural resource projects on public land while providing jobs, training, and career options for local young people. The COYCC program had a successful 2019 season and ran for eight weeks over the summer. HOC was able to serve 67 Central Oregon young people—40 male and 27 female—on 15 crews. Our partner, COIC, ran three additional crews in the program, serving 14 more young people and bringing the total to 81 youth served program-wide. Crew members earned over \$230,300 in wages (\$261,020 in wages and fringe) for more than 20,450 hours of service on public lands.

We had great recruitment response this year; as part of our outreach efforts we visited 14 high schools, spoke on radio programs, and attended career fairs, as well as recruiting via social media platforms. There were 168 applicants for 75 crew member positions.

All crew members received training in tool use for jobs ranging from fencing to trail construction to planting and caging plants. In addition to those skills, the extra benefit of COYCC is the element of employability skills training. Crew leaders and US Forest Service personnel worked with youth to find strategies to overcome their barriers so that they could get to work on time, understand their paychecks, develop a routine, act professionally, and represent the program in their appearance and words. Additionally, crew leaders each bring their own brand of expertise to their crews. We had a crew leader with a TV meteorology background, for example, who shared weather knowledge with his crew, and another leader with a Forest Service botany background who shared her expertise.

We surpassed our goal of 1,000 acres and improved 1,475 acres of public land, in addition to completing 42 miles of fencing and trail work.

Ochoco Crews and Accomplishments:

The Crook County (Prineville) crews primarily worked in the Ochoco National Forest, with Jefferson County (Madras/Culver and Warm Springs) crews helping on occasional projects.

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Crook County	Jefferson County
3 Crews	4 Crews
15 youth (5 female, 10 male)	20 youth (8 female, 12 male)
Youth Wages: \$45,663	Wages: \$46,563
Hours worked: 4,059	Hours worked: 4,139

HOC works with partners to recruit all local youth age 16-18, but we focus our efforts on recruiting youth that face barriers to success. In Crook County, 60% of the COYCC youth were considered disadvantaged, 7% reported having a disability, and 13% were considered low income. In Jefferson County, 75% of the COYCC youth were considered disadvantaged, 15% reported having a disability, and 25% were considered low income.

For 20% of Crook County and 25% of Jefferson County crew members, COYCC was their first employment experience. The program actively develops employable job skills and teamwork and serves as an introduction to a range of USFS work. Crew leaders and USFS specialists work side-by-side with youth, providing natural resource education and acting as mentors and job coaches. The shared resources of the partners involved in COYCC give youth participants great work experience, but also show them potential career paths, lifestyles, and recreation opportunities that they may not have known about before. Amy E., a crew member, said, "I was planning on getting a job as a barista, but now I know that I can do this type of work and I think I want to do that." A season of COYCC exposes crew members to the vast areas of public land where they live, and forges a connection to that land through work and service projects that are recognized and celebrated by each community.

This program has a long history in the Forest Service, and since it evolved into a partnership model, has benefitted from the expertise of its partners and support organizations. Young people across Central Oregon have a fantastic opportunity to grow in this program and we continue to be impressed by our alumni that start a career path, make a change in their life, or use public lands previously unknown to them because of COYCC.

Please see the attached documents and don't hesitate to contact HOC with any other requests or information! Thank you again for your support of COYCC, Central Oregon youth, and our public lands.