



*“Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it.
Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”*

Howard Thurman

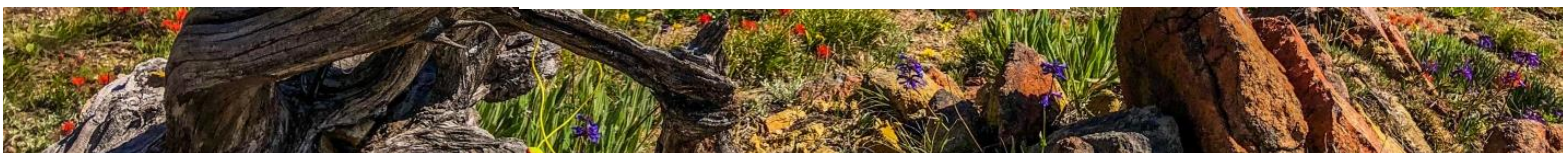
STRATEGY FOR RECOVERY AND RENEWAL 2021-2023

*“Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is
the chance to work hard at work worth doing.”*

Teddy Roosevelt



Tools for Living. Experience for Life.



State of the MCC

In 2014, MCC adopted a bold strategic vision to more than double the number of participants to 1,000, to diversify our offerings with an emphasis on engaging younger Montanans, and to explore opportunities to partner with indigenous communities while strengthening our practices around diversity, inclusion and equity. This vision would require a robust increase in partnerships and philanthropic support, and development of new organizational capacities – financial, human resource, technological, operational, and board governance.

By 2019, MCC had doubled the number of participants with innovative and specialized adult crews, new Individual Placement programs, partnerships with tribal communities and schools, and innovative summer and after-school programs serving high school and middle school students. MCC's progress was reflected in Project of the Year awards for the Women's Fire Corps and a Corps Member of the Year award to Piikani (Blackfeet) Lands Crew member, Rosy Chavez.

This growth came with stresses and strains. While philanthropy had increased nearly four-fold, it still significantly lagged the needs created by the rapid growth of multiple outstanding programs. Though our staffing had expanded, it became evident that the rapid development of the youth programs in particular taxed MCC's financial resilience and strained staff beyond their limits. In December 2019, MCC made the decision to pause growth to reassess the resources and capacity needed to sustain our programs, support our staff, and ensure MCC's long term financial resilience.

In March 2020, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted MCC at the time of year when MCC's financial resources are at their thinnest. The loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars of project revenue and inability of members to serve AmeriCorps hours forced MCC to make severe cuts to remain solvent. All youth and tribal programs were suspended for the year necessitating layoffs of 13 staff and extended furloughs for 26 employees. These unprecedented cuts shook the organization and resulted in a deep loss of institutional knowledge and talent.

Yet during the 2020 field season, MCC developed safety protocols that allowed us to operate adult crew and intern programs in the middle of the pandemic. With the diligence of staff and corps members, MCC deployed crews and interns to continue our conservation service on public lands. Many MCC champions – some longstanding and others new, including a cadre of donors and grant investors – contributed to MCC's rebound through this difficult period. Funding from a CARES Act PPP loan helped restart field operations.

For 2021 we seek to take the proven performance of our staff and corps members together with the support of key stakeholders to strengthen our operations – even as we continue to implement demanding safety and health procedures as the pandemic continues into a second year. Accounting for the lessons learned since 2014 and the turbulence of 2020, the MCC Board of Directors and management have developed a strategic framework for 2021-2023 to rebuild MCC better than before. This strategy builds on MCC's greatest strengths, anticipates for the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, increases financial resilience, and reinvents operating systems and management capacity to enhance MCC's capacity to sustain its mission and programs.

Chastened by lessons from recent years, and responsive to emerging needs and opportunities during and following the COVID-19 pandemic, MCC is rising to the forefront of the conservation corps movement and delivering transformative experiences to a new generation of leaders, stewards and engaged citizens who are serving on the frontlines of conservation across the Northern Rockies and Great Plains.

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A New Day for MCC

Recovering from impacts of the pandemic, MCC resolves to inspire the next generation of conservation leaders and community-builders. By 2023, MCC will be the preeminent corps of the Northern Rockies and Plains serving at the front lines of conservation and igniting purpose in a new generation of leaders for our communities and democracy. MCC will mobilize thousands of young people in transformative service leadership experiences that accomplish priority conservation projects to enhance our public lands and communities.

CONSERVATION CORPS FOR THE GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOORS

America's public lands are exceptional – especially the Northern Rockies and Plains with Yellowstone, Glacier, the Tetons, Missouri River Breaks, and the Bob Marshall and Frank Church River of No Return wilderness areas. There's no place so wild in the Lower 48, nor so rich in the cultures of people's who've made their homes here for thousands of years. And there's no place better to renew America's legacy of conservation, restore our health following the COVID-19 pandemic, foster equity and respect for all, and rekindle our spirit as a nation united in purpose – to form a more perfect union.

During the next three years, MCC will be on the front-lines of conservation for our public lands, adding capacity to enact the Great American Outdoors Act of 2020. MCC will deploy more crews and interns with specialized skills to address the billions of dollars of deferred maintenance, and we will launch innovative programs that create exceptional opportunities for under-represented groups in the outdoors.

There's no place better suited to renew America's legacy of conservation, restore our health following the COVID-19 pandemic, foster equity and respect for all, and rekindle our spirit as a nation united in purpose – to form a more perfect union.

REIMAGINING YOUTH SERVICE

Following the complete shutdown of MCC programs for teens in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MCC is reimagining our youth corps programs to serve greater numbers of youth who are more diverse and from more communities across Montana. Since our founding in 1991, MCC has demonstrated the transformative power of conservation service and teamwork to develop character, resilience, purpose and everyday life and work skills in young Montanans. Moving forward, MCC is rebuilding our programs and leadership structure to enable broader reach and greater innovation with our corps model of teamwork, mentorship, and hands-on service in the outdoors. Restarting from a group of 96 youth members in 2021, MCC aims to double the number of teens in service by 2023.

DEEPENING ENGAGEMENT WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Montana's indigenous communities celebrate values of service and relations to the land. Guided by these principles, and with respect for the sovereign Indian nations of the Northern Rockies and Plains, MCC is aligning its capacity to support the aspirations of Indian communities who are guiding us in adapting the corps model to address their communities' needs. MCC will be a leader in promoting an Indian Youth Service Corps serving Native American youth in ways that are culturally responsive and locally supported.

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WHO WE ARE

VALUES: Our work and actions reflect our commitment to the following:

- **Instilling Purpose**
 - MCC instills hope, joy and direction in young people. We are a catalyst for change, cultivating character and resilience, and teaching work and life skills that help young people lead change in their own lives and in their communities.
- **Active Stewardship**
 - In connecting to a sense of place and completing meaningful work to conserve the environment, we grow as stewards of the land and of our communities.
- **Service Before Self**
 - The spirit of service guides our commitment to our colleagues, our corps members, our project partners, and to our communities and all their residents.
- **Hard Work for Quality Results**
 - We strive for personal and organizational achievement with perseverance and a growth mindset. We honor that each person has the right to define and celebrate its own measures for excellence – yet we share a quest to be and to do our best.
- **Creating Connection and Community**
 - Authentic connection enables us to relate across differences, build empathy, value inclusion, advocate for equity, and lean into challenges together.

VISION and MISSION

Vision: Young people who have “come alive” with hope and purpose, and who are motivated to act as compassionate and active citizens engaged in serving for the greater good of their community and dedicated to being stewards of the environment.

Mission: To inspire young people through hands-on conservation service to be leaders, stewards of the land, and engaged citizens who improve their communities.

ATTRIBUTES: Additional qualities that matter to us.

- MCC connects young people to something greater than themselves while preparing them with “skills for living and experience for life.”
- MCC is the front lines of conservation – we get things done.
- MCC is fun, with a welcoming and inclusive community
- MCC employees are exceptional - skilled, responsive, accountable, consistent.
- MCC rocks AmeriCorps

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LEARNING FRAMEWORK

At MCC, we believe that it is at the intersections of challenge and experience where profound opportunities for growth emerge. Thus, our programs are created with intention to allow corps members to push beyond their everyday comfort zone to a place where they may learn more, give more, and do more than they had previously imagined for themselves. Their self-concepts and world views are expanded. They can imagine new possibilities for themselves, their communities and their world. They can see how their efforts make a difference.

To this end, MCC's curriculum is based upon this fundamental assertion: When we intentionally support our members in connecting to **people**, to a sense of **place**, to a personal sense of **power** and future **pathways**, they more deeply connect to a sense of purpose.

- ✓ **People:** Cultivate greater self-awareness and connection to others through compassion, positive communication and healthy relationships.
- ✓ **Power:** Develop confidence that fosters resilience, self-efficacy and well-being.
- ✓ **Place:** Explore our connection to the land, community, culture and heritage.
- ✓ **Pathways:** Envision future pathways to express personal civic and professional values in the world.

In connecting with a **sense of purpose**, young people come alive with the energy and momentum to pursue actions or endeavors that are meaningful to themselves.

METHODS: Our approach relies on three additional inputs

- **Invested Conservation Partners:** Our partners (public land agencies, host sites, schools, Indigenous communities, and more) provide the context for this transformation. Challenging service opportunities in the outdoors where young people can make a meaningful contribution to the lands and to communities spark the growth that occurs in our participants. These partners may also provide financial resources, training, opportunities for innovative programs, and resources or expertise.
- **Place-Based Learning:** The wild Northern Rockies and expansive Plains, and the far-flung communities that span this most wild landscape of the United States provide a wide canvas for wonder and experience. MCC is thankful for these beautiful lands, the rich communities, and people that host our corps members' passage through the MCC experience.
- **Intentional Mentorship:** Every facet of the MCC corps member experience is thoughtfully constructed to maximize learning, reflection and growth. Through guided lessons, skills practice, career mentoring, and personal coaching, MCC brings intention to every aspect of our work.

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WHAT WE WILL PRIORITIZE

By 2023, MCC will be the preeminent corps of the Northern Rockies and Plains serving at the front lines of conservation and igniting purpose in a new generation of leaders for our communities and democracy. MCC will mobilize thousands of young people in transformative service leadership experiences that accomplish priority conservation projects to enhance our public lands and communities.



In pursuit of these goals, MCC is laser-focused on excellence in all its programs and services, on building financial resilience, and on honing its management efficacy. These priorities are mutually dependent and of equal import to MCC's health and impact.

a) ENSURE CORPS EXCELLENCE

- **Deliver Transformative Experiences:** MCC programs are consistently exceptional in quality and impact. Our programs are designed with intention to remain relevant to the needs of young people, as well as the needs of our partners and communities. We integrate innovative leadership training with challenging and meaningful service through a portfolio of programs that engage diverse high school-aged teens and young adults.

PRIORITIES

- Mitigate for the risks of COVID transmission in all our operations.
- Sustain leading edge training for leaders – crew leaders, youth, and I.P.'s.
- Enhance member opportunities for reflection, mentorship & professional development
- Cultivate collaborative engagement with tribal communities for local corps solutions
- Relaunch and pioneer innovative and sustainable programs for high school students.
- Integrate equity-practices to enhance inclusion & increase diversity
- Continually question our relevance with needs assessment, peer review, evaluation
- **Implement Programs across the Northern Rockies and Plains Region:** MCC will deliver programs for older teens and young adults across the full Northern Rockies and Plains area (MT, WY, ID, ND, SD)
 - Pursue National Direct AmeriCorps grant with strong relations with state commissions
 - Cultivate partnerships with diverse agencies & communities across the region
 - Strengthen connections to rural communities for partnerships, service, and recruitment
 - Assess need and opportunity for name change
 - Evaluate need for satellite offices to improve efficiency and community investment
 - Deepen community engagement with a diverse and engaged Board of Directors.
- **Be the go- to Partner for Conservation:** MCC is the go-to partner for federal and state agencies working to realize the promise of the Great American Outdoors Act.
 - Increase number of young adult crews and interns
 - Sustain high caliber member training and staff expertise for high performance
 - Provide peerless support to project partners.
 - Enhance technical competencies through staff & member training and specialized crews

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b) BUILD FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

- **Ensure a sustainable and scalable financial and staffing model for all major programs:** Revise program financial models to ensure that every program has a clear and scalable financial model that allows for targeted program growth once MCC acquires the necessary financial resources.
- **Increase Net Assets and Create a Financial Reserve Fund:** Increase unrestricted net assets to sustain annual cash flow needs and limit reliance on the Line of Credit, and establish a reserve fund and policy adequate to sustain essential operations for 3 months
- **Strengthen Essential Partnerships, Philanthropic Support, and Enterprise:** Increase capacity to cultivate and steward essential relationships with partner agencies, government leaders, donors and foundations, and within the national service community. Sustain our reputation as the partner-of-choice. Explore innovative approaches to generate unrestricted income.
- **Strengthen financial literacy:** Increase understanding of MCC finances and foster ownership and accountability for budget priorities by the board and all staff.

c) ENHANCE MANAGEMENT EFFICACY

- **Adapt Organizational Structure:** Continue to develop the MCC organizational chart to enhance leadership capacity and efficiency, with
 - Independent leadership structures for field, youth, IP and Indigenous programs
 - Culture and systems to promote delegation with accountability
 - Staff-to-participant ratios that foster connection, mentoring, risk management
 - Staffing structures that facilitate advancement and leadership succession
- **Strengthen MCC Community Culture:** Incorporate practices to promote community, teamwork, transparency, and communication to build a culture of care even as we adapt to more virtual meeting and management practices. Foster meaningful interaction between staff & Board.
- **Promote Professional Competency:** Invest in professional development and systems reviews to boost management competency, increase efficiency and retention, and inspire professionalism
- **Advance Equity:** Commit to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion practices that reflect our respect for differences, which dismantle barriers and increase opportunity, foster belonging, and increase diversity of board, staff and participants.
- **Leverage Technology Solutions:** Continue to incorporate technology solutions to improve efficiency and data quality, especially solutions that leverage our Salesforce CRM.
- **Attend to Wellness:** Prioritize practices and attitudes to foster balance between our commitments to work, family, and community, and that support healthy lifestyles.

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PLAN FOR PROGRAMS

- Prioritize Field Crews and Individual Placements in response to Great American Outdoors Act
- Deepen engagement and collaboration with Indigenous communities to promote the federal Indian Youth Service Corps; building programs in response to community-driven solutions.
- Renew approach for youth and relaunch programs for greater impact and sustainability
 - Focus on summer high school crews, with steps of opportunities (intro to gap year)
 - Streamline leadership structure and program design for sustainability and replicability
 - Prioritize programs with strong partner support: USFS YCC, GNPC, Grand Teton YCC
 - Explore new models for operations (i.e.: basecamps, 2-3 weeks x 3 sessions, etc.)

PROGRAM	2020 Responding to COVID pandemic	2021 Continuing with COVID; Responding to GAOA, Reinvesting in youth and tribal programs	2022 Building Capacity (New A*C grant)	2023 Thriving with Corps Excellence, Financial Resilience, Management Efficacy
Conservation Corps # of members (crews) 9 month LDP, 3-5 month mbrs.	198 (31)	230 (40)	242 (44)	242 (44)
Conservation Interns/Fellows 3-5 month Individual Placements	67	80	100	110
Big Sky Watershed Corps 11 months	35	34	34	34
Indigenous Partnerships Piikani Lands Crew (10 wks), Wind River Crew (8wks), Grand Teton YCC (2 x 4 weeks)	0	Adult: 12 Youth: 12 A*C leaders: 2	Adult: 18 Youth: 12 A*C Leaders: 2	Adult: 18 Youth: 24 A*C Leaders: 4
Youth Expeditions & YCC (4wk. Expeditions & 8-10 wk. YCC)	0	A*C Leaders:24 Exped:48 (8) YCC: 36(8) +1000 yth vols	A*C Leaders:30 Exped: 72 (12) YCC:42(7) +1000 yth vols	A*C Leaders:36 Exped: 96 (16) YCC: 48 (8) + 1000 yth vols
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	300	488	552	612
Adult/Youth	300/0	392/96	426/126	444/168
BUDGET PROJECTIONS	Budget \$7 Million A*C: \$2Million Proj: \$3.8M PPP: \$700K Phil: \$400K	Budget \$8.1 Million A*C: \$2.4M Proj: \$5.3M Phil: \$450K	Budget \$8.8Million A*C: \$2.5M Proj: \$5.8M Phil: \$500K	Budget \$9.1 Million A*C: \$2.5M Proj: \$6.0.M Phil: \$600K