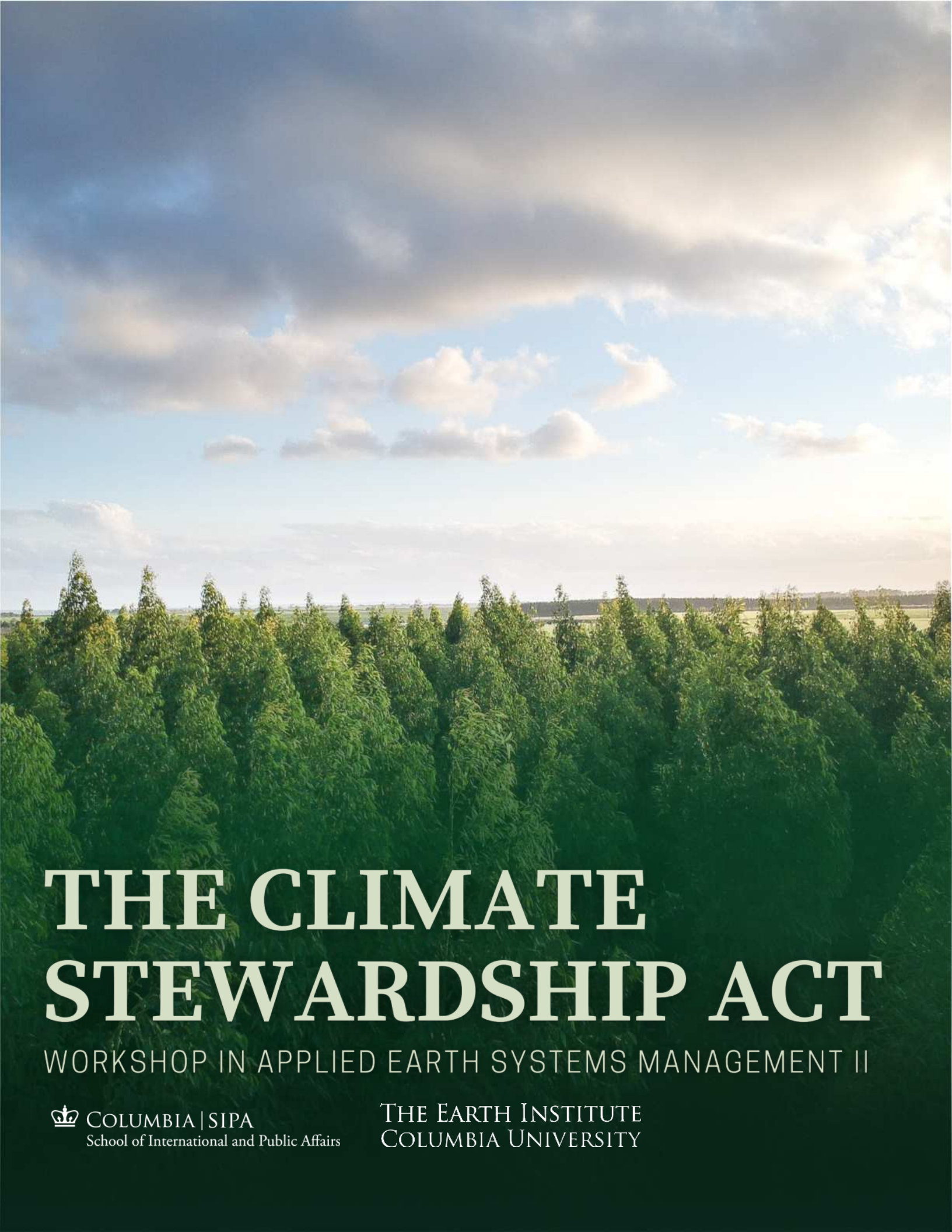




THE CLIMATE STEWARDSHIP ACT

WORKSHOP IN APPLIED EARTH SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT II

 COLUMBIA | SIPA
School of International and Public Affairs

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The effects of anthropogenic climate change can be observed globally. Catastrophic storms are destroying homes and livelihoods, sea level rise is overwhelming coastal communities, and changing weather patterns threaten economic security. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report released in August 2021, global surface temperature was 1.09 degrees Celsius higher between 2011 and 2020 than during pre-industrial times, and the past five years have been the hottest on record since 1850. Without meaningful climate policies, climate change will continue to accelerate, and people—especially those in historically and socially marginalized communities—and the planet’s rich biodiversity will suffer the consequences of environmental degradation, altered local climates, and increasingly catastrophic weather events (IPCC 2021).

When properly managed, farms, forests, and wetlands have the ability to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and prevent further warming of the planet (Nave et al. 2018). However, the effects of climate change have weakened the ability of these systems to absorb and store carbon and, in some cases, poor management of these systems has turned them into carbon sources (Kirilenko and Sedjo 2007; National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration n.d.; Walthall et al. 2013). Therefore, there is an imperative to restore these systems and utilize their potential as nature-based solutions to combat climate change.

The Climate Stewardship Act is comprehensive legislation sponsored by Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) that seeks to strengthen climate change

mitigation efforts in the United States. The Climate Stewardship Act would increase funding, technical assistance, and career development opportunities within agriculture, forestry, and wetland management in order to implement nature-based solutions that address climate change. This legislation empowers farmers, ranchers, governmental agencies, indigenous tribes, and local municipalities to implement projects that will increase carbon sequestration in these natural systems. It would also reinforce climate change mitigation and resilience planning, all while promoting socially-equitable economic development (United States Congress 2021).

Given the expansive scope of the proposed legislation, this report will focus on providing an analysis of Title II of the Climate Stewardship Act, which focuses on the climate stewardship of forests. The report will primarily discuss the design and implementation of the Stewardship Corps, a new program proposed in Title II, that incorporates both environmental justice and science-based forest management practices. The Stewardship Corps will employ the nation's young adults, prioritizing those from socially-marginalized communities, to carry out forest and wetland restoration projects across the country and gain experience in environmental management.

This report details the mission and program design of the Stewardship Corps and will outline staffing requirements to support the Corps, general budget allocations, a performance management system, and an implementation timeline for the first year of the program.

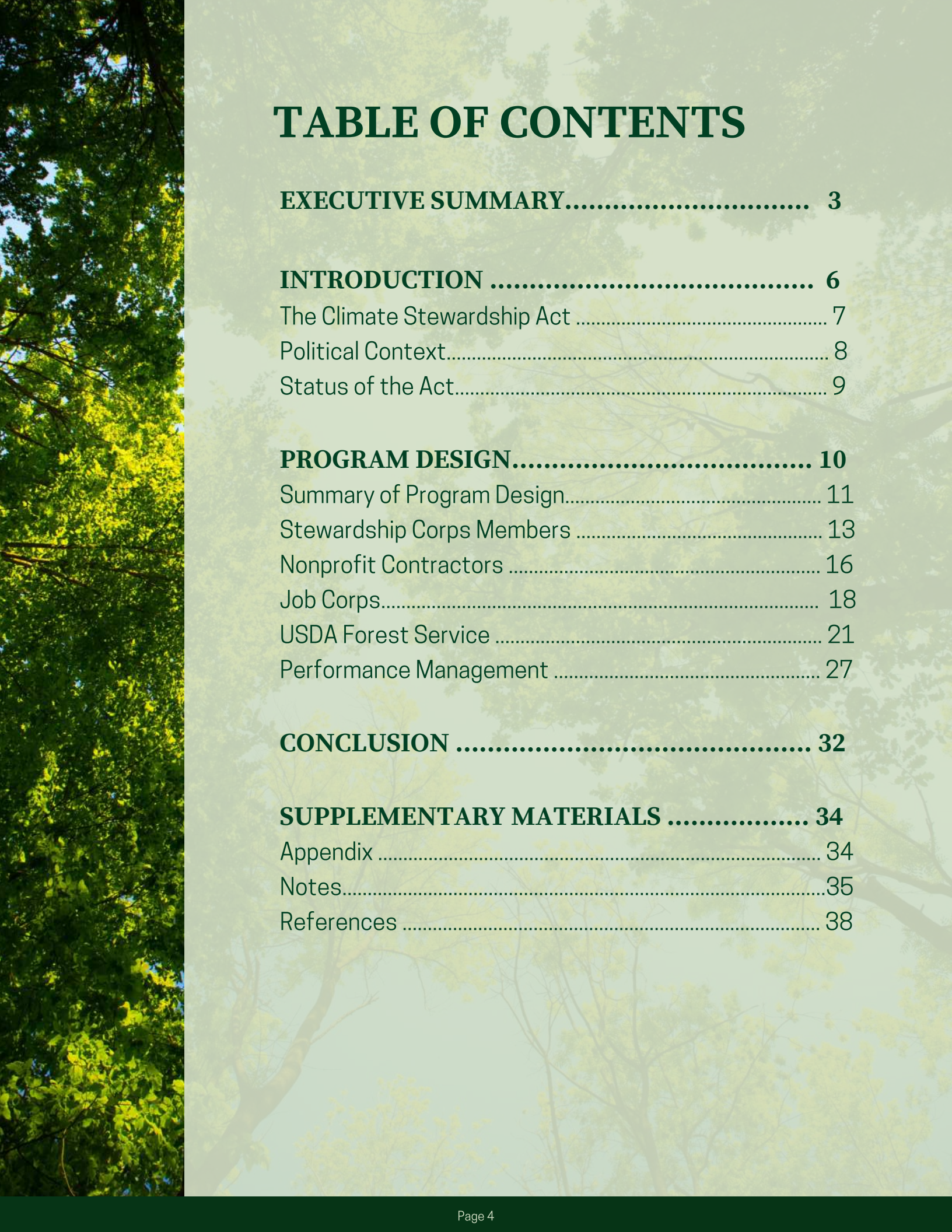


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INTRODUCTION



THE CLIMATE
STEWARDSHIP ACT



POLITICAL CONTEXT



STATUS OF THE
ACT IN 2021

THE CLIMATE STEWARDSHIP ACT

Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and altering local climates, with profound effects on both ecosystems and human society (Environmental Protection Agency 2021). If not addressed, climate change will continue to accelerate. In addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, another way to mitigate climate change is to increase the carbon sequestration potential of natural systems. Agricultural lands, forests, and wetlands in the United States store vast amounts of carbon and have the potential to act as natural climate sinks by sequestering more carbon from the atmosphere than they release (Griscom et al. 2017). However, recent research shows that climate change is weakening the ability of these systems to sequester carbon. Additionally, climate change is threatening the productivity and capacity of these lands to provide ecological services, habitats that foster biodiversity, and natural protective barriers against extreme weather events (Kirilenko and Sedjo 2007; National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration n.d.; Walthall et al. 2013).

The Climate Stewardship Act (S. 1072), hereafter referred to as “the Act,” seeks to improve agriculture, forestry, and coastal wetland management to increase the carbon storage potential of these systems in an effort to address climate change. The Act defines “Climate Stewardship” as practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase capacity for carbon sequestration, and improve

water quality and soil and plant health. U.S. forestland is estimated to have an additional carbon sequestration capacity that equates to nearly 20 percent of domestic economy-wide emissions (Domke et al. 2020). Therefore, this program design focuses on Title II of the Act, which outlines forest restoration efforts for carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation, while promoting economic recovery and environmental justice. Title II largely focuses on increasing federal funding for reforestation projects; one significant provision of this Title scales up annual funding for the Reforestation Trust Fund from \$30 million to \$5.5 billion, an increase of over 18,000 percent. Title II also calls for 1.7 billion trees to be planted by 2030. This effort will be partially carried out by a newly-formed Stewardship Corps. Priority will be given to restoration efforts in depleted ecosystems and disadvantaged communities, including forests on or near Indigenous lands, low-income neighborhoods, and wildfire-prone regions (United States Congress 2021).



POLITICAL CONTEXT

The Climate Stewardship Act was originally introduced in 2019 and revised in committee but it was dismissed before it went to the floor hearings (Hughey 2021). The Act was reintroduced to the Senate on April 12, 2021 and, as of December 2021, is awaiting committee hearings (United States Congress 2021). The Act is sponsored by Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) and co-sponsored by Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), and Bernie Sanders (I-VT) (GovTrack 2021).

SUPPORT

Many prominent voices among political leaders and environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have expressed their support for the Climate Stewardship Act. Political leaders are motivated by pressure from constituents and international organizations to adhere to climate targets, and therefore support legislation that invests in America's climate mitigation measures and other environmental solutions. Of the 12 largest NGO contributors to federal candidates, parties, and outside groups during the 2020 election cycle, six groups endorsed the Climate Stewardship Act of 2019 (OpenSecrets 2021). Experts within some of these groups also helped to shape the provisions in the bill, including the funding allotments for each program, the list of stewardship practices, and the tree-planting targets (Hughey 2021).

OPPOSITION

Those who oppose the Act fall into two main categories: those who are skeptical of the bill's benefit when compared to the cost of the bill, and environmental groups who are critical of the bill's proposed land management practices.

In regards to the former, there is a divide in the Senate about how to effectively accomplish climate change adaptation and mitigation (Hughey 2021). Some legislators deny the effects of climate change, and therefore will not support federal funding for its mitigation, especially at the scale that the bill proposes. Additionally, some legislators, who believe in climate change, prefer to prioritize climate policies that implement technology-based solutions before investing in nature-based strategies (Grandoni and Dennis 2021). In regards to environmental groups, some may believe that focusing on nature-based solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change removes pressure from large greenhouse gas emitters and distracts from the need to decarbonize the economy.



The Stewardship Corps is inspired by the Civilian Conservation Corps from Franklin Roosevelt's presidency. This New Deal program, active from 1933 to 1942, gave the unemployed at the time a chance to work and simultaneously address soil erosion and diminishing timber resources (National Park Service 2015).

STATUS OF THE ACT IN 2021

As of December 2021, there is only a two percent chance of the Climate Stewardship Act passing in its entirety (GovTrack 2021), but concepts within this bill such as an environmental jobs program are both popular and politically viable among voters, political leaders, and environmental organizations. In fact, some concepts proposed in the bill have already been included in other legislation. According to polling conducted by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication in March 2021, 82 percent of registered voters, including 81 percent of liberal and moderate Republicans and 64 percent of conservative Republicans, support the idea of re-establishing the Civilian Conservation Corps, which is similar to the Stewardship Corps proposed in the Climate Stewardship Act (Leiserowitz et al. 2021). The Civilian Conservation Corps was a New Deal program active in the 1930s and 1940s that employed workers for forest management and ecological protection (National Park Service 2015). Similarly, the Stewardship Corps would employ workers to protect natural ecosystems and plant trees in rural and urban areas (United States Congress 2021).

Another example of a similar Corps is found in the recent Build Back Better legislation, passed by the House of Representatives in November 2021, and currently awaiting a vote in the Senate. Bundled into the nearly \$2.2 trillion bill is \$27 billion for forest conservation, restoration, and the creation of a workforce of forest stewards who will restore public forestland as to promote carbon sequestration and biodiversity in forest ecosystems (Jones 2021). The consistent integration of Civilian Conservation Corps-inspired programs indicates that this aspect of the Climate Stewardship Act has political appeal, and has a high likelihood of appearing in a different bill of higher congressional priority. As a result, this report details a potential strategy for implementing a civilian-based Corps for reforestation in the United States.

PROGRAM DESIGN



STEWARDSHIP
CORPS MEMBERS



NONPROFIT
CONTRACTORS



JOB CORPS



USDA FOREST
SERVICE



PERFORMANCE
MANAGEMENT

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM DESIGN

The primary goals of the Stewardship Corps are to mitigate the effects of climate change through forest and wetland restoration projects and to empower low-income and historically disadvantaged communities to pursue careers in these sectors. While the bill includes forestry and coastal wetlands as part of the Stewardship Corps responsibilities, this report focuses on Stewardship Corps activities in forests only. As specified in the Act, the Stewardship Corps will focus on recruiting young people from low-income and Indigenous communities, as well as communities of color. From there, the Stewardship Corps Program will provide skills training and career development for American youth to gain experience in environmental restoration and explore conservation work. Members of the Stewardship Corps are required to perform no less than 20 percent of federal forest and wetland restoration projects between 2021 and 2025, and 40 percent of the projects in 2026 and each subsequent year. Corps membership is limited to two years of service and members will be provided with housing accommodations, fair compensation, and job placement services after completing their terms of service. All funding for the Stewardship Corps will come from the Reforestation Trust Fund (United States Congress 2021).



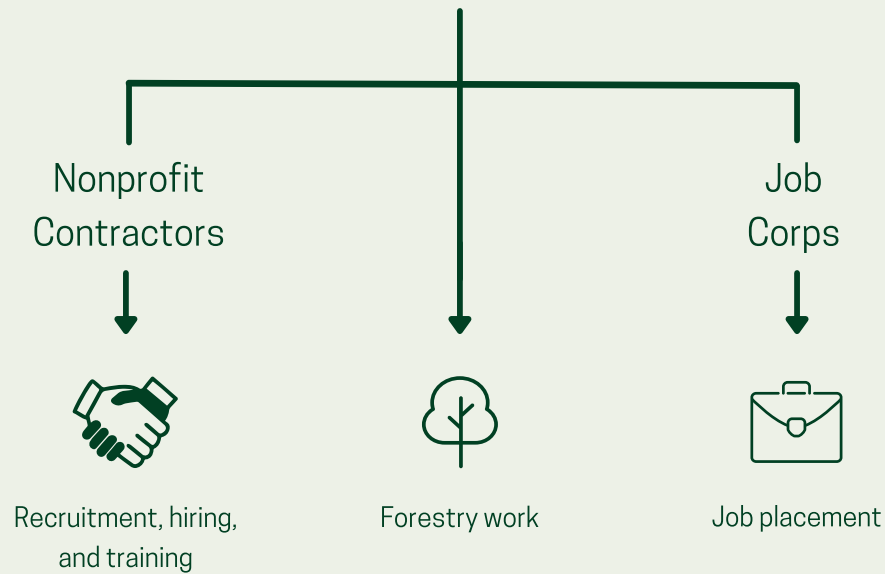
KEY GOALS OF THE STEWARDSHIP CORPS

Enhance the workforce specializing in forest management

Provide employment opportunities to historically and socially underserved communities

Provide critical skills training and career development in environmental conservation.

USDA Forest Service



The Stewardship Corps program is managed by the USDA Forest Service, who will directly oversee nonprofit contractors, the Job Corps, and on-the-ground forestry work.

While the Act mandates certain programmatic elements, it also allows for flexibility in designing and implementing the Stewardship Corps program. Therefore, this report will outline a potential strategy to implement the Stewardship Corps based on the outcomes mandated in the Act and the existing structure of the USDA Forest Service. This program will be implemented through national, regional, and local action, including the expansion of the USDA Forest Service at multiple organizational levels and strategic partnerships with nonprofit organizations. Based on the precedent set from the Civilian Conservation Corps, Stewardship Corps members will serve a maximum of two years, renewing their service every six months for a maximum of four terms. To support the Stewardship Corps, additional personnel will be hired to identify high-priority forest restoration projects across the country, recruit and assign Corps members to these projects, and support Corps members throughout their service.

The responsibilities of each organizational level are detailed in their respective program design sections and a master calendar of the first year of program implementation can be found in Appendix A1. A general budget of \$48.25 million will be required for the first year of the program to provide the resources needed to support the Corps members themselves, as well as the increase in government employees and nonprofit contractors who will organize and administer the program (Appendix A2). A first-year timeline provides guidance on program phases and timing of recruitment which will ultimately help the Stewardship Corps achieve their goals of reforestation and afforestation work. Additionally, a performance evaluation protocol establishes an accountability structure and identifies personnel who will define and evaluate outcomes based on key performance indicators. This report will first outline the administrative details regarding the Stewardship Corps, nonprofit contractors, the Job Corps, and finally the USDA Forest Service at national and regional levels.



STEWARDSHIP CORPS MEMBERS

The Stewardship Corps members are the primary focus of the program, as these individuals will be hired to conduct forestry work that improves the carbon sequestration capacity and climate change resilience of America's forests. Approximately 2,750 Stewardship Corps members will be recruited each year in three cohorts of around 900 members. This approximate number of Corps members, derived from assumptions based on the Act's targets for federal forestland restoration and conservation as well as budget allowances, informs the number of new support staff to be hired. Stewardship Corps members will spend their first two weeks in the cities from which they are hired for orientation and basic training in forestry and sustainability. This first phase of onboarding will occur at urban Stewardship Corps Centers, which are discussed in more detail later in this report. Corps members will then travel to their work locations in National Forests, where they undergo at least one month of formal training in sustainable, climate-smart forest management practices led by Forest-level coordinators.

During this training period, Corps members will learn skills such as how to cluster plant, clear brush, and manage forest composition to foster a more carbon-dense and climate-resilient forest.

Following the service term protocols modeled in the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s and 1940s, Stewardship Corps members will serve six-month terms and can serve up to four terms in total (National Park Service 2015).

To account for the time needed to begin program operation, only two cohorts will be hired in the first year—one pilot cohort of 275 members and one full cohort of 900 members. The first pilot Stewardships Corps cohort will begin their initial two-week training period on June 1 and complete their first term at the end of November. The second, full Stewardship Corps cohort will have their two-week introduction at the urban Stewardship Corps Centers during the first two weeks of September.

Stewardship Corps Calendar	Quarter One			Quarter Two			Quarter Three			Quarter Four		
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Basic training at Job Corps Center						■			■			
Forest-level training						■			■			
Reforestation and forest management												

Overview of the first-year activities of the Stewardship Corps members.

COHORT EXPERIENCES

Three possible outcomes of a Stewardship Corps member's service in the program.



STEWARDSHIP CORPS BUDGET OVERVIEW: FIRST YEAR*

Category	Item	Cost Per Individual	Total
Salary and Fringe Benefits	Corps Members (1,175; GS5**)	\$11,000	\$12,925,000
Direct Support	Clothing, housing, transportation, monthly stipend	\$7,000	\$8,225,000
Total			\$21,150,000

SECOND YEAR

Salary and Fringe Benefits	Corps Members (2,750; GS5)	\$43,000	\$118,250,000
Direct Support	Clothing, housing, transportation, monthly stipend	\$18,000	\$49,500,000
Total			\$167,750,000

Costs of compensation for the Stewardship Corps members.

**Prorated for partial year of operations.*

***See Note N2 for more information.*

Members of the Stewardship Corps will be paid a wage aligned with the prevailing rate for federal employees of a similar class and receive housing accommodations, subsistence, clothing, transportation, and a cash allowance. Stewardship Corps members will receive a base salary of \$30,000, with an additional 44.7 percent in fringe benefits that include health insurance and retirement contributions based on average compensation levels for federal workers (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021; Congressional Budget Office 2017).

Combined with mandated benefits—housing, clothing, food, initial transportation to the training centers, transportation to and from projects from residences, and a cash allowance—direct funding to these Corps members in the first year will thus total \$21.15 million. In the following year, when the full 2,750 Stewardship Corps members will be hired throughout the year, direct funding to Stewardship Corps members will total \$167.75 million.

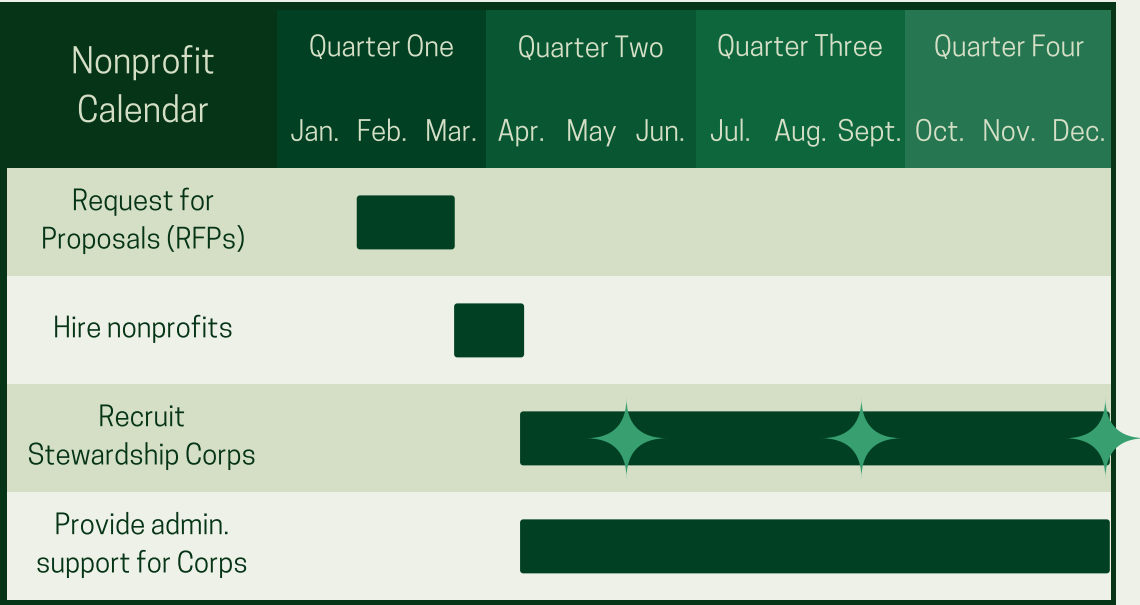


NONPROFIT CONTRACTORS

Nonprofit contractors located across the United States will recruit and hire Stewardship Corps members and support them throughout their terms with ongoing human resources services. The program design utilizes nonprofits due to their familiarity with priority groups and neighborhoods, with the intention of deepening these connections to local communities.

In February of the program's first year, the USDA Forest Service will write, publish, and publicize a Request for Proposals (RFP) in which they will detail the responsibilities of the nonprofit contractors. Nonprofits across the country may then apply for these contracts, and the USDA Forest Service will select the most qualified applicants in each region. By the end of March, the contracts with the nonprofits will be executed by both parties, and the nonprofits will begin recruiting Stewardship Corps members from their communities.

In April and May, the nonprofits will spend two months conducting outreach in their respective cities, with the goal of hiring 275 new members to begin their terms on June 1. Once this pilot cohort has started, the nonprofits will begin recruitment for the next cohort, which will start on September 1. After these two slightly abbreviated recruitment periods, the nonprofits will enter a recurring cycle in which they have four months to recruit each cohort. During this time, the nonprofits also provide ongoing administrative support for Stewardship Corps members and continue to build community relations.



Overview of the first-year activities of the program's nonprofit contractors. Diamonds represent endpoints of Stewardship Corps recruitment periods.

In order to carry out their responsibilities, nonprofit contractors will be allotted \$9.9 million in the first year and \$22.95 million in the following year (Note N3). Nonprofit contractors will be assessed per the process outlined in Program-Wide Performance Management described later in this report. Performance metrics will also be used to evaluate contractor performance and assess compliance with diversity and inclusion targets.

If a nonprofit contractor is underperforming, regional Forest Services offices may choose to work with the contractor to improve their performance or terminate the contract and seek a new nonprofit partner in that region. Before this step is taken, nonprofit contractors will be reviewed to ensure all human resources systems are running effectively and helping the Stewardship Corps meet its diversity goals.

Overview of the first and second year costs of the program's nonprofit contractors.

NONPROFIT FUNCTIONS BUDGET OVERVIEW: FIRST YEAR*		
Category	Cost Per Contractor	Total
Outreach, Communications, Hiring, HR Support	\$150,000	\$9,900,000
Total		\$9,900,000
SECOND YEAR		
Outreach, Communications, Hiring, HR Support	\$150,000	\$22,950,000
Total		\$22,950,000

*Prorated for partial year of operations.

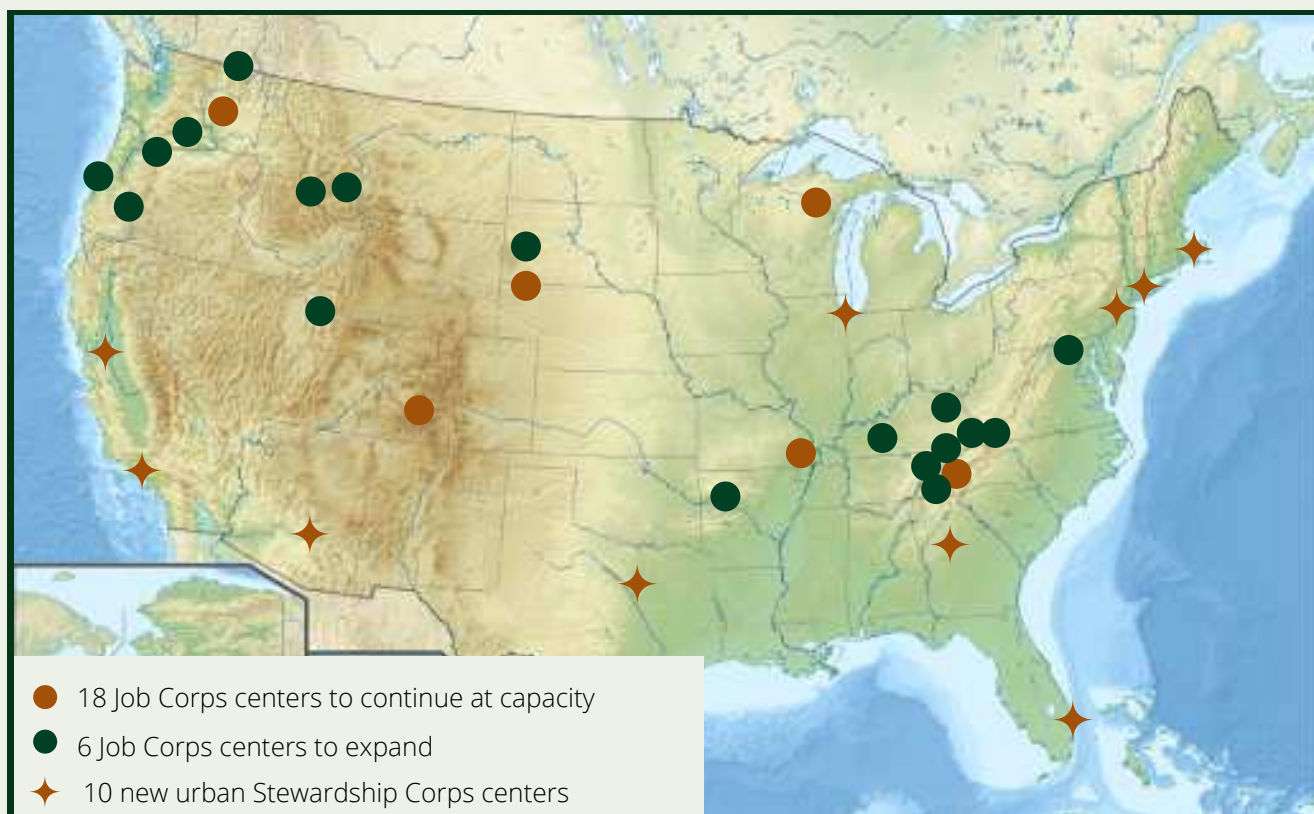


JOB CORPS

THE JOB CORPS

The Job Corps is an existing program run and funded by the Department of Labor that provides training and continuing education for young Americans between the ages of 16 and 24. Through their participation with the Job Corps, young adults working with the USDA Forest Service receive assistance in obtaining long-term employment in the forestry sector. This model will be used for career development and placement services for Stewardship Corps members, with some modifications. The Forest Service will hire Job Corps employees to work from Forest Service-owned Civilian Conservation Centers in order to train the Stewardship Corps.

Currently, there are 24 Civilian Conservation Centers located in large National Forests where Job Corps members do the bulk of their work and training (Forest Service 2020b). Some of these centers will be expanded to provide orientation and training for Stewardship Corps members. This program will also establish new urban Stewardship Corps Centers to support Stewardship Corps members in regions with large populations, significant unemployment, and a limited Forest Service presence. In total, six existing centers throughout the country will be expanded, chosen by current capacity and location, and ten new urban Stewardship Corps Centers will be created, dedicated exclusively to serving the Stewardship Corps.



Map of existing Job Corps Centers and cities where Job Corps Centers for exclusive Stewardship Corps use will be built.

During the first year of program implementation, the focus will be on establishing the new urban Stewardship Corps Centers and hiring 26 new staff members to support them. The Job Corps budget thus has two key components: compensation for Stewardship Corps Center staff, and the costs associated with creating the new urban centers themselves (for GS rankings, see Note N7). Including fringe benefits and contingency, the total cost for staff additions is \$1.47 million. The total area required for new staff and Stewardship Corps training at the Stewardship Corps Centers includes office as well as classroom space. Rent for all space will begin in August to prepare for the pilot cohort members beginning career development and job placement in December.

Combining the price of rent and office supplies, the cost of creating new urban Stewardship Corps Centers is \$468,000. In total, the amount for the Job Corps budget is \$1.93 million in the first year, and \$4.03 million in the following year.

Program performance will be assessed as per the process outlined in Program-Wide Performance Management described below and in Note N8. Performance metrics will also be used to evaluate operations. If a component of the Job Corps is underperforming, specialists in the regional offices' Job Corps departments will be responsible for addressing any unachieved targets or any complaints (Note N8).

Job Corps Calendar	Quarter One			Quarter Two			Quarter Three			Quarter Four		
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Rent Urban Stewardship Corps Centers												
Hire Job Corps Staff												

Overview of the first year activities for the program's Job Corps operations.

JOB CORPS BUDGET OVERVIEW: FIRST YEAR*			
Category	Item	Cost Per Individual	Total
Salary and Fringe Benefits	Career Counselor (16; GS6 - 9)	\$31,000	\$496,000
	Center Director (10; GS13)	\$97,000	\$970,000
Office Expenses	Space and supplies	\$18,000	\$468,000
Total			\$1,934,000
SECOND YEAR			
Salary and Fringe Benefits	Career Counselor (36; GS6 - 9)	\$62,000	\$2,232,000
	Center Director (10; GS13)	\$129,000	\$1,290,000
Office Expenses	Space and supplies	\$11,000	\$506,000
Total			\$4,028,000

Overview of the first and second year costs of operating the Job Corps component of the Stewardship Corps program.

*Prorated for partial year of operations.



USDA FOREST SERVICE

FUNCTIONAL OVERVIEW

The USDA Forest Service is the overarching governing entity responsible for ensuring that all program functions are appropriately resourced with personnel and proper instruction. On the national level, the USDA Forest Service is responsible for allocating funding and setting program-related targets. The USDA Forest Service also has nine regional offices, which oversee 154 National Forests and 20 National Grasslands. Each National Forest has administrative staff, specialists, managers, and district rangers (Forest Service n.d.). USDA Forest Service operations relevant to the implementation of the Stewardship Corps can be divided into three areas: national-level Forest Service operations, regional Forest Service administrative offices, and National Forest-level staff.

NATIONAL OFFICE

The national level of the USDA Forest Service will direct the allocation of funding and set program-related targets. Known as Forest Service Operations (FSO), the national office consists of approximately 3,000 employees (Forest Service 2021a). Several departments across three divisions at the national level are instrumental to the success of the Stewardship Corps: Budget & Finance in the Albuquerque office, the Job Corps Program in Business Operations, and Ecosystem Management Coordination under the National Forest System. However, only the Job Corps Executive Team will hire additional staff specifically to support the Stewardship Corps, receiving a modest expansion of four staff members to support Stewardship Corps operations.

During the first quarter, the focus will be on laying the foundation for the Corps by hiring administrative staff at the national and regional levels in two rounds of hiring. Job openings will be posted at the start of the year and be open for one month. The USDA Forest Service will hire four staff members at the national level, ideally by the end of January; however, this is an ambitious target and hiring may take longer. These new positions will include a Stewardship Corps Program Supervisor, with an Executive Assistant and two Administrative Operations Specialists as direct reports (Forest Service 2021b; for GS rankings, see Note N4). Including fringe benefits and contingency, the total cost for national Forest Service employee additions is \$347,000, while the national office expansion and supplies needed to accommodate the new employees will cost \$21,000. In total, the cost of national staff and office expansion for the Forest Service is \$368,000 for each of the first two years.

The USDA Forest Service will conduct program evaluation on a national level using its own internal scorecard with evaluation criteria based on the Office of Management and Budget and the President’s Management Agenda initiative (Farm Service Agency n.d.). Criteria for evaluation include budget development and execution, management, adherence to federal regulations, communication with Congress, and clearance of Presidential Executive Orders (The White House n.d.). This self-evaluation process will assess the operations of the Stewardship Corps. For example, evaluations would consider the percentage of federal reforestation projects conducted by the Stewardship Corps and the prioritization of underserved communities in hiring. Though unlikely to occur in the first year of the Stewardship Corps program, poor program performance reports from the USDA Forest Service Office of the Inspector General could lead Congress to request an audit from the Government Accountability Office (see Note N10).

USDA FOREST SERVICE NATIONAL LEVEL ANNUAL BUDGET OVERVIEW			
Category	Item	Cost Per Individual	Total
Salary and Fringe Benefits	Stewardship Corps Program Advisor (1; GS14)	\$136,000	\$136,000
	Operations Specialist (2; GS11)	\$81,000	\$162,000
	Executive Assistant (1; GS6)	\$49,000	\$49,000
Office Expenses	Space and supplies	\$5,250	\$21,000
Total			\$368,000

Overview of the first and second year costs of operating the Stewardship Corps at the USDA Forest Service national level.

REGIONAL OFFICES

To accommodate the administration of the Stewardship Corps program, the regional offices will need a significant increase in the number of employees.

Each region varies in their operations depending on size and geography. Therefore, the expansion of each region’s departments will vary.

Overview of the first year and second year costs of operating the Stewardship Corps at the USDA Forest Service regional level.

USDA FOREST SERVICE REGIONAL LEVEL BUDGET OVERVIEW: FIRST YEAR*			
Category	Item	Cost Per Individual	Total
Salary and Fringe Benefits	Human Resources (22; GS8 - GS11)	\$55,000	\$1,210,000
	Budget and Finance (18; GS8 - GS11)	\$55,000	\$990,000
	Grants and Agreements (33; GS8 - GS11)	\$55,000	\$1,815,000
	Equal Employment Opportunities (18; GS9 - GS14)	\$75,000	\$1,350,000
	Job Corps Admin Employees (9; GS6 - GS9)	\$52,000	\$468,000
Office Expenses	Space and supplies	\$2,900	\$290,000
Total			\$6,123,000
SECOND YEAR			
Salary and Fringe Benefits	Human Resources (22; GS8 - GS11)	\$67,000	\$1,474,000
	Budget and Finance (18; GS8 - GS11)	\$67,000	\$1,206,000
	Grants and Agreements (33; GS8 - GS11)	\$67,000	\$2,211,000
	Equal Employment Opportunities (18; GS9 - GS14)	\$90,000	\$1,620,000
	Job Corps Admin Employees (9; GS6 - GS9)	\$62,000	\$558,000
Office Expenses	Space and supplies	\$3,300	\$330,000
Total			\$7,399,000

*Prorated for partial year of operations.

Two employees at each of the nine regional offices will be hired in January. These two employees will oversee the hiring of the remaining 82 regional-level administrative staff, which will start on February 1 and conclude by the end of February, for a total of 100 regional-level employees (for GS rankings, see Note N5).

The Human Resources (HR), Equal Employment Opportunity, and Budget and Finance departments will be expanded to support the increase of federal employees in each region by an average of about two employees per department per region (Forest Service 2021b). The Grants and Agreements departments will also expand to manage the contracting and budget allocation and oversee the nonprofits tasked with recruitment and HR functions for Stewardship Corps members. As the number and funding of nonprofit contractors depends on each region's population size, departments will increase proportionally to these populations, with a minimum of two new staff

members per region. This equates to an average of about 3.5 new employees per office, 33 in total. Finally, each regional office will also expand or create a Job Corps department dedicated to the regional administration of the expanded Civilian Conservation Centers and newly created urban Stewardship Corps Centers, as referenced above. Nine Job Corps administrative employees will be hired in the first year to coordinate with training centers and the national office for post-Corps job placement. The total cost of salaries, benefits, and contingency for all 100 regional administrative employees is \$5.83 million. The cost of regional office expansion and supplies needed to accommodate the new employees is \$290,000. In total, the amount for the administrative expansion budget is \$6.12 million in the first year and \$7.40 million in the following year.



FOREST LEVEL OPERATIONS

Each of the 154 National Forests will hire one new Stewardship Corps Specialist as part of the administrative staff. On-site trainers and supervisors of the Stewardship Corps will be hired according to the number and scope of projects in each forest, which in turn depends on reforestation potential. An average of two new trainers and supervisors will be hired per National Forest. This number accounts for approximately one-third of federal land with reforestation potential (Cook-Patton 2021). Overall, new staff at the National Forest level will amount to 156 Stewardship Corps Specialists and 310 Stewardship Corps-specific on-site trainers and supervisors (for GS rankings, see Note N6).

Since the Stewardship Corps is built up over the course of the year, the National Forest support staff will be hired at a commensurate pace: 10 percent of total National Forest staff will be hired in April to match the first pilot cohort, 30 percent of total staff will be hired in July, and the remaining 60 percent will be hired in November (see calendar below). The cost of salaries, benefits, and contingency for all 466 Regional Administrative employees is \$7.85 million, while the office expansion and supplies needed to accommodate the new employees will cost \$932,000. In total, the amount for the National Forest-level expansion budget is \$8.78 million in the first year and \$32.32 million in the following year.

USDA FOREST SERVICE FOREST LEVEL BUDGET OVERVIEW: FIRST YEAR*			
Category	Item	Cost Per Individual	Total
Salary and Fringe Benefits	Administrator (156; GS10)	\$18,500	\$2,886,000
	Project Supervisor (310; GS8)	\$16,000	\$4,960,000
Office Expenses	Space and supplies	\$2,000	\$932,000
Total			\$8,778,000
SECOND YEAR			
Salary and Fringe Benefits	Administrator (156; GS10)	\$74,000	
	Project Supervisor (310; GS8)	\$64,000	\$31,384,000
Office Expenses	Space and supplies	\$2,000	\$932,000
Total			\$32,316,000

Overview of the first and second year costs of operating the Stewardship Corps at the USDA Forest Service forest-level.

*Prorated for partial year of operations.

USDA-FS Calendar	Quarter One			Quarter Two			Quarter Three			Quarter Four		
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Hire national staff												
Hire regional administrative staff												
Hire national forest-level staff												

Overview of the first year activities for the program's USDA Forest Service operations.

USDA FOREST SERVICE SUMMARY

The USDA Forest Service is in charge of managing the Stewardship Corps at multiple levels. The national Forest Service office is responsible for setting targets and allocating funding. National staff will be hired in January, and the cost of expansion is \$368,000 for the first year. Regional Forest Service offices are responsible for oversight, reporting, and project placement. Regional administrative staff will be hired in January and February, and the cost of expansion is \$6.12 million for the first year.

Forest Service staff in National Forests are responsible for on-site training and supervision. Forest-level staff will be hired in three waves: in April, July, and November. The cost of this expansion is \$8.78 million for the first year.



PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

PROGRAM-WIDE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance management will happen both at each operational level and in a comprehensive full-program performance evaluation. For the first calendar year, program-wide evaluations will take place during the last two weeks of June, September, and December. Stewardship Corps members will provide feedback in the form of a survey at set checkpoints: after hiring, training, and the completion of each six month term. Finally, supervisors will evaluate regional, national, and forest-level personnel by the end of the fiscal year, which occurs on September 30 for the federal government (USAGov 2021; for details, see Note N9). Evaluations will thus begin in August and conclude by the end of September. Stewardship Corps members will also receive performance evaluations at the end of each of their terms.

Stewardship Corps members will be prompted to provide quantitative satisfaction ratings on a ten-point scale, ranking their experiences with nonprofits, training centers, career transition services, and more. Surveys will also include a qualitative written component, allowing respondents to elaborate on any comments or concerns they may have. The target response rate for these surveys is 75 percent or more (McPherson n.d.). Stewardship Corps members will also be able to report bias, discrimination, and harassment outside of the scheduled periodic surveys through an anonymous feedback system to be continuously reviewed by relevant administrators. Survey responses and data from Stewardship Corps members will be aggregated, and a database for all Corps-affiliated entities will then centralize all collected performance evaluation data for review.

Performance Management Calendar	Quarter One			Quarter Two			Quarter Three			Quarter Four		
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
National program level evaluation												
Stewardship Corps training feedback												
Personnel Evaluation												

Overview of the performance management calendar for the Stewardship Corps.





NONPROFIT METRICS

Metric	Description
Stewardship Corps satisfaction	Survey about Stewardship Corps experience with nonprofit contractor organization. Target satisfaction score of 80 percent or higher.
Total number of hires	Reporting on hiring numbers per cohort. Target of approximately 900 Stewardship Corps hires per cohort.
Breakdown of racial demographics	Report on racial demographics of Stewardship Corps members hired, compared to guidelines of equitable demographic hiring based on regional demographic composition.
Breakdown of socioeconomic demographics	Report on socioeconomic demographics of Stewardship Corps members hired. Requirement to hire at least 50 percent of Stewardship Corps members who are below the poverty line, and an additional 25 percent of Stewardship Corps members who earn below median national income (ASPE 2021).
Nonprofit dollars spent per Stewardship Corps member	Report on amount of money spent per Stewardship Corps member by NGO, which is the annual grant allotment to the NGO divided by the number of Stewardship Corps members hired that year.

Performance metric for nonprofit contractors

JOB CORPS METRICS

Metric	Description
Stewardship Corps satisfaction	Survey about Stewardship Corps experience with Job Corps. Target satisfaction score of 80 percent or higher.
Job Corps dollars spent per Stewardship Corps member	Report on amount of money spent per Stewardship Corps member by the Job Corps, which is the amount of money spent at training centers divided by the number of Stewardship Corps members in that training center.
Post-Stewardship Corps employment and retention metrics	Target of 80 percent of employment after Stewardship Corps service; 80 percent retention rate within forestry or related fields after one year of post-Stewardship Corps employment, and 50 percent retention rate after five years of post-Stewardship Corps employment.

Performance metric for Job Corps centers







CONCLUSION

The Stewardship Corps program is designed to strategically achieve reforestation goals outlined in the Climate Stewardship Act, improve carbon sequestration potential of the United State's forests to address climate change, and increase employment of historically underserved and low-income communities in the forestry sector. Forest Service expansions at the national and regional levels will support the implementation, management, and maintenance of the Stewardship Corps for the program's lifetime. Contracting nonprofits for outreach and human resources services will support diversity efforts within the Stewardship Corps and will give members the support they need to succeed in the program. The Stewardship Corps members will also receive professional development opportunities at all phases of their term through the Job Corps to set them up for a successful career in forestry that is well-suited to their backgrounds and preferences, with the goal of equal opportunity for young adults entering the job force.

Costing the USDA Forest Service \$48.25 million in the first year, the implementation of the

Stewardship Corps Program will include mobilization within the national and regional offices, two Stewardship Corps cohorts, contracted nonprofit partnerships, and strategic performance management to inform future program development.

Moreover, the Stewardship Corps will contribute to a long overdue process of improving national employment rates for individuals who are historically disadvantaged, both economically and demographically. The Climate Stewardship Act aims to plant 1.7 billion trees across the United States by the end of 2030, improving forest resilience and forest carbon sequestration capacity while simultaneously stimulating the national economy and improving the outlook for diversity and equity within forestry and sustainability fields. The program design for implementing the Stewardship Corps allows the United States to harness its forests as a critical carbon sink, achieving the goals of the Act to include nature-based solutions in the United State's broader goal of adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.



A1: Year 1 Master Calendar - 2022

[illegible]

A2: Master Budget, First Year and Following Year

First Year Budget Overview			Cost Per Individual	Total	Percentage
Stewardship Corps					
Salary & Fringe Benefits	Corps Members (1175; GS5)		\$11,000	\$12,925,000	
Direct Support	Clothing, housing, transportation, monthly stipend		\$7,000	\$8,225,000	
Total				\$21,150,000	43.8
Nonprofit Contractors					
Nonprofit Functions	Outreach		\$150,000	\$9,900,000	
	Communications				
	Hiring				
	HR Support				
Total				\$9,900,000	20.5
USDA Forest Service National					
Salary & Fringe Benefits	Stewardship Corps Program Advisor (1; GS14)		\$136,000	\$347,000	
	Operations Specialist (2; GS11)		\$81,000		
	Executive Assistant (1; GS6)		\$49,000		
Office Space & Supplies			\$5,200	\$21,000	
Total				\$368,000	0.8
USDA Forest Service Regional					
Salary & Fringe Benefits	Human Resources (22; GS8 - GS11)		\$55,000	\$5,833,000	
	Budget and Finance (18; GS8 - GS11)		\$55,000		
	Grants and Agreements (33; GS8 - GS11)		\$55,000		
	Equal Employment Opportunities (18; GS9 - GS14)		\$75,000		
	Job Corps Admin Employees (9; GS6 - GS9)		\$52,000		
Office Space & Supplies			\$2,900	\$290,000	
Total				\$6,123,000	12.7
USDA Forest Service Forest Level					
Salary & Fringe Benefits	Administrators (156; GS10)		\$18,500	\$7,846,000	
	Project Supervisor (310; GS8)		\$16,000		
Office Space & Supplies			\$2,000	\$932,000	
Total				\$8,778,000	18.2
Job Corps					
Salary & Fringe Benefits	Career Counselor (16; GS6-9)		\$31,000	\$1,466,000	
	Center Director (10; GS13)		\$97,000		
Office Space & Supplies			\$18,000	\$468,000	
Total				\$1,934,000	4.0
Overall				\$48,253,000	

Following Year Budget Overview				
		Cost Per Individual	Total	Percentage
Stewardship Corps				
Salary & Fringe Benefits	Corps Members (2750; GS5)	\$43,000	\$118,250,000	
Direct Support	Clothing, housing, transportation, monthly stipend	\$16,000	\$49,500,000	
Total			\$167,750,000	71.5
Nonprofit Contractors				
Nonprofit Functions	Outreach	\$150,000	\$22,950,000	
	Communications			
	Hiring			
	HR Support			
Total			\$22,950,000	9.8
USDA Forest Service National				
Salary & Fringe Benefits	Stewardship Corps Program Advisor (1; GS14)	\$136,000	\$347,000	
	Operations Specialist (2; GS11)	\$81,000		
	Executive Assistant (1; GS6)	\$49,000		
Office Space & Supplies		\$5,200	\$21,000	
Total			\$368,000	0.2
USDA Forest Service Regional				
Salary & Fringe Benefits	Human Resources (22; GS8 - GS11)	\$67,000	\$7,069,000	
	Budget and Finance (18; GS8 - GS11)	\$67,000		
	Grants and Agreements (33; GS8 - GS11)	\$67,000		
	Equal Employment Opportunities (18; GS9 - GS14)	\$90,000		
	Job Corps Admin Employees (9; GS6 - GS9)	\$62,000		
Office Space & Supplies		\$3,300	\$330,000	
Total			\$7,399,000	3.2
USDA Forest Service Forest Level				
Salary & Fringe Benefits	Administrators (156; GS10)	\$74,000	\$31,384,000	
	Project Supervisor (310; GS8)	\$64,000		
Office Space & Supplies		\$2,000	\$932,000	
Total			\$32,316,000	13.7
Job Corps				
Salary & Fringe Benefits	Career Counselor (36; GS6-9)	\$62,000	\$3,522,000	
	Center Director (10; GS13)	\$129,000		
Office Space & Supplies		\$11,000	\$506,000	
Total			\$4,028,000	1.7
Overall			\$234,811,000	
Total				

NOTES

N1: Budget Table References

Austin Tenant Advisors n.d.; Axios HR 2021; Boxed Wholesale n.d.; Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021; Carter 2017; Collins 2020; Congressional Budget Office 2017; Dell n.d.a.; Dell n.d.b; Edge 2018; FederalPay 2021; Glassdoor 2021a; Glassdoor 2021b; Glassdoor 2021c; Glassdoor 2021d; Human Technologies Corporation 2019; LoopNet n.d.a; LoopNet n.d.b.; LoopNet n.d.c.; Matheny 2018; Maurer 2018; Microsoft n.d.; Mint 2021; Nationwide n.d.; Pettijohn 2013; PropertyShark n.d.; Staples n.d.; Stroud 2018; Thumbtack n.d.; Ultimate Montana n.d.; United States Congress 2021; U.S. Energy Information Administration 2021; van Vulpen 2020; Vari n.d.; Zillow n.d.a.; Zillow n.d.b.; Zillow n.d.c.

N2: Stewardship Corps Members Compensation

Stewardship Corps Members will be paid a salary commensurate with that of a GS-5 employee. The GS-5 pay grade generally marks an entry-level position, which aligns with the Stewardship Corps role. Each Corps member will receive a base salary of \$30,000, with an additional 44.7 percent in fringe benefits that include health insurance and retirement contributions based on average compensation levels for federal workers (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021; Congressional Budget Office 2017). Combining salary and fringe benefits, each Corps member costs \$43,410.

N3: Nonprofit Contractors

To estimate the budget for the nonprofit contractors, it was first determined how many Stewardship Corps members one HR professional and one recruiter could manage. One HR professional can support between 30 to 95 people (Axios HR 2021; van Vulpen 2020); 67 was chosen as the optimal number of Corps members per HR professional. Recruiters, on the other hand, can recruit between 15 and 40 open positions, with 25 to 30 being the norm. A mid-range estimate of 25 Stewardship Corps positions per recruiter was chosen (Maurer 2018; Stroud 2018). Each contractor will be paid \$75/hour, based on average consulting costs (Thumbtack n.d.).

N4: USDA Forest Service National Office GS Rankings

The Stewardship Corps Program Supervisor will be hired at the GS-14 level to oversee the Job Corps operations dedicated to the Stewardship Corps across all regions, with the new regional department heads outlined below as additional direct reports. Each Administrative Operations Specialist will be hired at the GS-11 level to assist in coordinating Stewardship Corps-specific daily operations between the Job Corps and other related departments. Finally, the Executive Assistant will be hired at the GS-6 level.

N5: USDA Forest Service Regional Offices GS Rankings

Human Resources employees, Budget and Finance employees, and Grants and Agreements employees will be hired with salaries ranging from GS-8 to GS-11 levels. Equal Employment Opportunity employees will be hired with salaries ranging from GS-9 to GS-14 levels. Job Corps Administrative employees will be hired between GS-6 and GS-9 levels. Assuming a pyramid structure of relative experience, administrative employee salary reflects the 33rd percentile salary of the range.

N6: USDA Forest Service National Forest GS Rankings

Administrators will be hired at a GS-10 level, while Project Supervisors will be hired at the GS-8 level. Existing offices will be expanded to accommodate these new employees, and Project Supervisors will also be outfitted with Forest Service uniforms and gear.

N7: USDA Forest Service Job Corps GS Rankings

A director will be hired for each Stewardship Corps Center at the GS-13 level. 16 career counselors will also be hired to support around 74 Stewardship Corps members each; the average salary for career counselors will be the 33rd percentile of baseline salaries from the GS-6 to GS-9 level. All directors and 10 career counselors will be hired in April, and 6 more counselors will then be hired in November; 20 more career counselors will be hired in the following year.

N8: Job Corps Program Assessment

Branch Operations Specialists can use the Job Corps Program Assessment Guide (PAG) in combination with Stewardship Corps-specific metrics to provide a comprehensive, customized review process for the Stewardship Corps Job Corps program (Job Corps 2014). Equal Employment Opportunity Specialists will also be consulted on any workplace bias, discrimination, and harassment issues.

N9: Performance Management

Performance assessments at the Forest Service are based on a five-tier rating system developed by the national Office of Personnel Management, or OPM (Forest Service 2020a). These ratings are based on OPM's Human Capital Accountability Assessment Framework and voluntary Performance Appraisal Assessment Tool (U.S. Office of Personnel Management n.d.a.; U.S. Office of Personnel Management n.d.b.). Forest Service supervisors will issue final performance ratings to their employees by October 30. The rankings are as follows: Unacceptable, Minimally Satisfactory, Fully Successful, Superior, and Outstanding. If an employee is ranked Minimally Satisfactory or below, their rating will trigger the creation and execution of a corrective plan of action (Forest Service 2020a).

To ensure a just evaluation process, OPM prohibits supervisors from assessing an employee until they have been in their position for at least 60 days (Kerrigan 2014). Federal agencies can opt to extend this timeline to gather more information about an employee's performance, but the baseline set by OPM suggests that some Stewardship Corps members will not be evaluated until the program's second year or the next fiscal year, whichever comes first. However, all eligible Stewardship Corps staff will be evaluated by their direct supervisors in the program's first year.

N10: GAO Audit Process

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is an independent, nonpartisan agency that evaluates and advises on government spending and is commonly referred to as the "Congressional Watchdog" (U.S. Government Accountability Office n.d.). To conduct an audit, Congress must first make a request to the GAO, and the Congressional Relations Office will inform Congress whether the request is granted. The GAO then assembles a team, which establishes a timeline for the audit and meets with GAO experts, stakeholders, and management to design an audit method, a process that usually takes three months. A draft report is sent to Congress and the agency being reviewed, after which agencies may respond with comments that will be published at the end of the report. The final report is then issued fourteen days after receiving agency comments (Dodaro 2017).

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