



# the greenway

## Conservation and Adaptation: A SIGN OF THESE TIMES

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### SCA Names Stephanie Meeks CEO

The Student Conservation Association is pleased to welcome Stephanie Meeks as president and chief executive officer. Meeks brings extensive leadership experience in the conservation and nonprofit sectors. She was president of the National Trust for Historic

Preservation for eight years, and served in several senior roles with The Nature Conservancy, including interim president, chief operating officer, and chief administrative officer over an 18-year period.

“Stephanie is an ideal leader for our organization and our time,” stated SCA Board of Directors Chairman Bob Unsworth.

Acknowledging the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Meeks said scaling SCA’s impact on conservation and youth development will require the organization to adapt to the still-evolving new normal.

“SCA has long been a leader in engaging young people through transformative, hands-on conservation,” Meeks said. “Even now, our members continue to serve in creative ways, and we will use this interim period to innovate and strategize new ways of extending our remarkable natural heritage.”

Meeks began her new duties on May 15. Interim SCA president Kathy Bonavist, who shifted from the organization’s board of directors last summer, has returned to her role on the board.

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CHAIRMAN'S  
MESSAGE

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SCA'S MILLION  
DOLLAR CHALLENGE

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VIRTUAL SERVICE,  
REAL SUCCESS

# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE: A Post to Lean On

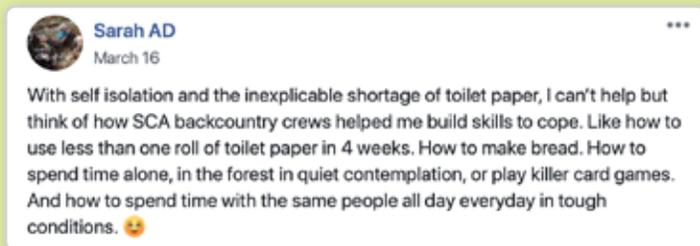


**BOB UNSWORTH**  
BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friend:

I hope you are of good health and spirit. We have been severely tested of late and more challenges are yet to come. Still, there has been a bounty of deeds, words, and thoughts that have helped us endure.

One moment that stood out for me occurred early in the pandemic—a Facebook post by an SCA alumna:



As an SCA alum myself (Chaco Canyon, 1978), I can relate to Sarah's resilience. She is gracious to trace her strength back to SCA and I truly do believe such fortitude is part of this organization's DNA. In fact, it is precisely what enabled us to bring on new leadership in the middle of a global crisis.

On May 15, Stephanie Meeks took over as president and chief executive officer of SCA (see Page 1). With decades of senior level conservation experience, and success in both youth corps and diversity and inclusivity initiatives, she made our choice an easy one.

On the topic of extraordinary leadership, SCA joins the chorus of a grateful nation in thanking the many responsible officials at the federal, state, and local levels; our dedicated health care professionals and first responders; and the neighbors aiding the more vulnerable in our hardest-hit communities.

As we forge forward together, count on SCA to continue to build young leaders for our time. We have adapted to *this* time by rescheduling some projects, converting others to teleservice, and instituting new measures to safeguard our volunteers. Their perseverance is nothing if not inspiring. Just ask Sarah AD.

## Conservation and Adaptation: A SIGN OF THESE TIMES

*The health and well-being of our volunteers is always SCA's top priority. We have scaled back programs and ramped up safety procedures in response to the Covid-19 outbreak, and while we have all had to adjust in recent months, most SCA volunteers faced the added challenge of doing so far from home and family. These are just a few of their stories.*

### JENSEN, UT

On January 6, Katie Wareham began a four-month internship here at Dinosaur National Monument (see cover photo). The 23-year-old from Frederick, MD approached her assignment with unbounded enthusiasm, stating in her SCA application "I am a recent graduate with no bounds...I have nothing holding me back."

One of three education interns who started that day, Katie and her degree in Environmental Studies and Outdoor Education seemed perfectly suited to her new duties: developing an array of online curricula and virtual field trips.



Erica Watkins

As the SCA team got to work, the first news reports surfaced about a mysterious new virus halfway around the world.

Katie embraced the creative aspects of her efforts and the group's online posts proved popular.

"We were ahead of our time," she would later reflect, referring to the video conferencing that would become ubiquitous.

As mid-March approached, Katie was eager for a break. By then, the coronavirus was global, but domestic cases were concentrated in Washington State and New York, so Katie flew to South Carolina to spend a free weekend with a friend. The next day, her supervisor phoned.

“She said they were closing the Monument and asked what I wanted to do,” Katie recalls. “I decided I might as well stay [in Myrtle Beach] and wait for it to blow over. But it didn’t blow over, it just kept getting worse.”

## CAVE JUNCTION, OR

A thousand miles from Dinosaur, Zack Rowatt and Erica Watkins were all set to begin interpretive internships at Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve. On their first day, the White House issued a work-from-home advisory, the Dow fell 3,000 points, and the outbreak moved into a new phase.

The Caves soon closed and, rather than leading tours, Zach, 25, and Erica, 21, shifted to program development, online research, social media, “and putting together some programs to present on Zoom,” Zack says. They never considered leaving.

“[Monument officials] told us we’re more akin to a family unit than co-workers,” he continues. “We’re comfortable with each other. Things are in a good place.”

“We’re 30 minutes away from civilization,” adds Erica. “We’re ultimately safer here than anywhere else.”

Oregon Caves Ranger Jamie Cleaver praises the interns’ work ethic. “Zack and Erica are super-stars!” she declares. “They are each engaged on some very worthy projects during their telework service.”

“The SCA folks are doing great work,” confirms Chief of Interpretation George Herring. “It’s good to know that treating the team as ‘family’ has [enabled] a meaningful experience that will impact their future.”

## MYRTLE BEACH, SC

Working remotely from her friend’s home, Katie Wareham completed various Dinosaur assignments. Then, after 20 days of sheltering in place, she was permitted to return to Utah, though upon arrival she self-quarantined at the Monument for another two weeks.

Although Katie wasn’t able to work directly with her cohorts during that time, “we had some group video calls,” she notes, “as other parks were contacting us about virtual field experiences because we’d already been doing them. Through our supervisor, we advised on how to avoid the speed bumps associated with Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, even Google Hangout.”

Before long, they were getting additional inquiries. “Teachers, parents at home with kids,” she says. “They’d call and say ‘Hey, my kids love dinosaurs. Can you talk to them for a little bit?’ and we’d say ‘Sure, why not?’”



## MOBILE, AL

By the time a municipal stay-at-home order took effect here on April 6, the twenty members of SCA’s GulfCorps were halfway through their third season of restoring local shorelines impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. All locals, members had been commuting to their work sites each day.

“My crew planted thousands of sea oats and grasses on Dauphin Island, cleared miles of trails, removed or treated countless invasive plants, conducted trash pickup for ecosystem restoration, and assisted in prescribed burns,” says Austin Ray. “But the ultimate goal for me is to help educate others in conservation.”

At this writing, however, corps members are still working from home. “I would love to be in the field,” states Boris Kresevljak, 23, “but I would much rather love to stay healthy to ensure my ability to be a useful member of this program once the outbreak is settled.”

Cody Plotniak of Daphne, AL doesn’t mind days of online training and GoToMeetings, but he’ll be glad to trade his laptop for his tool box when the appropriate time comes. “I was part of an SCA crew that picked up 234 bags of litter weighing over 3,500 pounds and nearly 100 tires from Three Mile Creek,” he says. “It wasn’t the most fun I had, but it was impactful.”

## JENSEN, UT

For Katie Wareham, the feelings of relief and disappointment came simultaneously. After five weeks of precautionary isolation, split between her friend’s home and Dinosaur National Monument, she was finally free. But through the cruelest of fates, her internship had only two more days to run. It was time to prepare for home.

“I definitely don’t regret it,” she remarks. “Despite the unusual circumstances, it was an amazing experience.”

Today, there are signs Katie’s luck may be improving. A friend won a rafting permit lottery and “I’m planning on a river trip through the monument in July,” she says. “I’m really hoping things will be a little more normal by then.” 📍



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The Student Conservation Association (SCA) is America's largest and most effective youth conservation service organization. SCA conserves lands and transforms lives by empowering young people of all backgrounds to plan, act, and lead, while they protect and restore our natural and cultural resources. Founded in 1957, SCA's mission is to build the next generation of conservation leaders.

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# ANNOUNCING SCA'S *Million Dollar* Challenge

Our Million Dollar Challenge is kicking off with a **\$100,000 MATCH** and we wanted you to be the first to know about it! If you send a gift today in the enclosed envelope, we'll make sure it qualifies for the match and doubles in value to put students to work in our parks and green spaces this summer! Thank you for helping to kick off a successful Million Dollar Challenge!

## Virtual Service, Real Success



IN NORMAL YEARS, SCA WOULD DRAW 300 OR MORE EARTH DAY VOLUNTEERS for the annual Anacostia Park clean-up in Washington, DC and host other projects nationwide. This year, however, SCA conducted "virtual" events amid the Covid-19 outbreak.

SCA alumni produced video modules on "social distance" hiking, pollinator plants, energy reduction, and other topics. They may be viewed at [thesca.org/virtual-programs](https://thesca.org/virtual-programs).

SCA also partnered with Google Earth, NBA Cares, and Forager Project to promote Earth Day activities, and we presented interactive green webinars to partners including Nestle, AllTrails, American Express, and the Sustainable Brands community.

In addition to working with agency partners to convert hundreds of active members to teleservice, SCA launched numerous online pilots and early indicators show that environmental education, building peer relationships, and opportunities for reflection translate well to a virtual setting. Online programming may also combat the loneliness reported among young people during the pandemic and, in the future, may permit those who otherwise would not be able to participate, to still enjoy the benefits of SCA service.



## They Have New Trails to Protect and Discover... You can provide them with the tools.

Once the coronavirus passes and we emerge from our homes, the great natural places await. However, they will need more care than ever. A tax-free gift from your IRA is a great way to help SCA meet the challenge. To learn more: [plannedgiving.thesca.org/IRA](https://plannedgiving.thesca.org/IRA)

