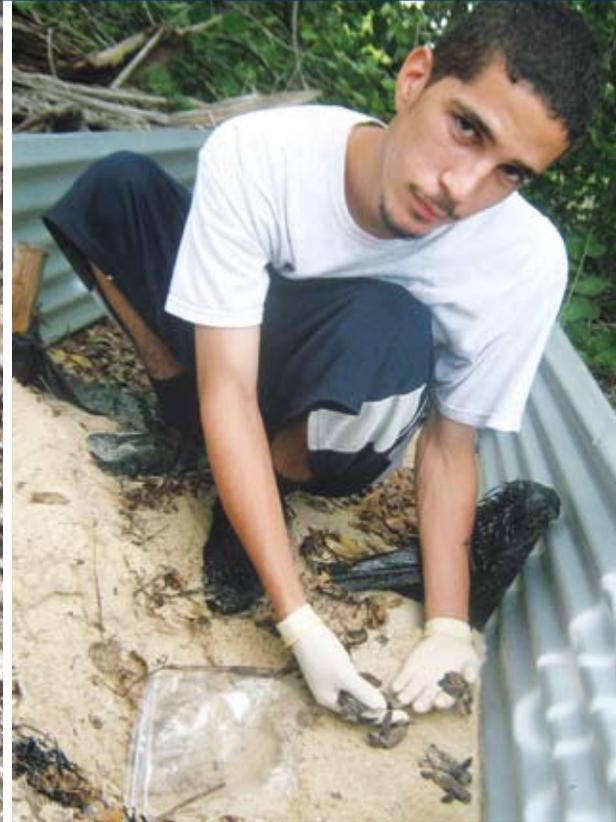




# the GreenWay

SCA's Conservation Quarterly

Spring 2010



SCA intern Juan Miguel lends a hand to protect threatened hawksbill turtles

## Saving Endangered Sea Turtles

Juan Miguel Cruz is 19, a St. Croix native, a scholarship student at the University of the Virgin Islands, and an SCA intern. But to his friends, he is "Turtle Boy." He laughs at the moniker. "It's okay," he says.

On any given night during nesting season, while they search for turtles, Juan and his NPS colleagues walk the beach, sit in the warm sand, watch shooting stars and discuss how philosophy, religion, and science come together in biology. "I'm working with so many great people, and have learned so many amazing things. This has shown me what's in my environment, that it's very important, and not to take it for granted."

When female sea turtles are spotted coming ashore under cover of darkness, Juan and his team observe where each species lays its eggs in order to track seasonal reproduction success. They tag, measure and photograph the huge turtles.

They also monitor the location to make sure the eggs are safe from tides, the public, even hurricanes. And, if not, they carefully move the eggs, in the dark, to a safer spot.

Juan is serving at the Christiansted National Historic Site, Buck Island Reef National Monument, and the Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve in St. Croix, completing a 9-month, 20-hour per week assignment in resource management. His NPS Buck Island Sea Turtle Research Team is assigned to monitor green, loggerhead, leatherback and especially hawksbill turtles—all endangered or threatened by water pollution, loss of habitat, waterfront light pollution, illegal harvesting and fishing nets.

The hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricate*), smallest of the species nesting in the US Virgin Islands, is the most highly endangered, having been harvested almost to extinction for its beautiful

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**CONSERVATION BEGINS HERE**  
Student Conservation Association  
[thesca.org](http://thesca.org)



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Keeping the Great Outdoors Great

Protecting endangered sea turtles. Eradicating invasive snakes. Boosting park employee recycling efforts.

SCA's busy summer season has yet to begin but, thanks to your support, many interns and volunteers are already hard at work across our land. For them, the just-passed Earth Day is not an annual event, it's an every day lifestyle.

As I write to you, I am preparing to attend a White House Conference on America's Great Outdoors. The session will focus on maximizing conservation practices and reconnecting Americans—particularly families—to the wonders of nature.

I'm looking forward to exchanging views and pursuing opportunities, in part because the conference reflects the very premise upon which SCA was founded: to augment the ongoing protection of our public lands, SCA was one of the first organizations to tap into the potential of young people and provide them with hands-on training and experience. History shows this has been a tremendous win-win.

Thank you for continuing to support SCA's mission and the diverse, young adults who give so much to our wilderness and communities while asking for nothing more than the chance to make a difference. Have a great summer, and when you see SCA members at your favorite park, please be sure to thank them, too.

*Dak M Penny*

## Solitude is a Step Outside

by Leah Duran, SCA '09 - '10, Kenneth Dubuque Memorial State Forest

A wood stove exuding warmth. A lake with shimmering ripples. One bunkhouse. Sixteen people. No cell phone service. The setup sounds like Survivor, The Real World or even Walden, but in actuality, this place is our new home. Welcome to SCA Massachusetts. Our goals: to live as a community, to learn from each other, to enrich ourselves and others, and to complete hands-on conservation projects, split into five months of environmental education service and five months of trail work.



Snapshot: "We are pro-love," says our director Jonah Keane at our first community meeting. Life at Kenneth Dubuque Memorial State Forest demands intimacy with the land and each other. You could compare our first meeting to a blind date, except that you couldn't just pay the restaurant bill and leave. Point blank: You will be with these people for the next 10 months.

Snapshot: "We're here. We're actually here," says corps member Caleb Ruopp over cereal on a Sunday morning in early October. With unpredictable dynamics and little privacy, community life can be challenging, but we work through trials together. Almost everything, including how we delegate chores, is open for change through collective debate and consensus, a flexible system refreshingly different from the typical handed-down set of instructions for living our lives.

We started as strangers and, as we build connections, the relationship shifts to friends. Through the power of play, open communication and hard work, we engage in the continual process of creating a space that simultaneously fosters comfort and the stretching of personal boundaries...We can laugh when we make epic falls in front of each other while sliding on icy sidewalks. We can have impromptu dance parties in the kitchen.

The more comfortable we become with each other, the more we continue to surprise one another. We have seen each other struggle to chop wood, learn how to bandage a burn during Wilderness First Responder training, and teach a classroom of expectant kids. And if we ever tire of constant company, solitude is a step outside. We are learning how to better treat the earth and each other. We are SCA Massachusetts.

You can read more from Leah at [thesca.org/hands-on](https://thesca.org/hands-on)

## Did You Know? Surprising facts about America's wild places



Acadia National Park contains more than 120 miles of historic hiking trails, many established in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Biscayne National Park is home to hundreds of species of plants, including the semaphore prickly-pear cactus, one of the world's rarest.



With over 367 miles of surveyed passages, Mammoth Cave is the world's longest known cave system.



# Do Something GRAND

for Our Youth and Our Land

## Leave a Legacy to SCA

There are many ways to create a legacy that will help to build new generations of conservation leaders who will protect our parks, forests, refuges, seashores and urban communities.

Many people are reviewing their estate plans in light of the temporary repeal of the estate tax that took effect in January. If it is time to create or review your will or living trust, you can designate SCA as a beneficiary of a set dollar amount, a particular asset or a percentage of your estate or trust assets.

You can also use do-it-yourself techniques. Leave the following assets to SCA by completing simple forms on your own:

Retirement Plan • Life Insurance Policy  
Bank or Brokerage Account

*All legacy gifts, large or small, are greatly appreciated.*

For more information, please contact Hugh Montgomery, SCA's Director of Gift Planning, directly at 603.504.3241 or [hmontgomery@thesca.org](mailto:hmontgomery@thesca.org).



LEGAL DESIGNATION: The Student Conservation Association, Inc., a charitable organization with its principal office located at 689 River Road, Charlestown, New Hampshire 03603. SCA's federal tax identification number is 91-0880684

[thesca.org](https://thesca.org)

Saving Endangered Sea Turtles *continued from page 1*

"tortoise" shell. (On St. Croix, hawksbill turtles are nesting with some success at Buck Island Reef National Monument, a fully protected island.) Reaching maturity between 15 and 30 years, females will nest once every two to three years, returning to their natal beach. After 60 days incubation, when the hatchlings emerge to make their first trip down to the sea, Juan's team will be there to protect and assist if need be. Only 1-2% will survive to adulthood and reproduction.

**"We must take the initiative to show people what is going on and what needs to be done. We need to work together."**

Monitoring sea turtles is not all Juan does.

He helps with the St. Croix ground lizard project and identifies, records data, and conducts control treatments on exotic plants to ensure the survival of native plants for future generations. Invasive lionfish are another most unwelcome newcomer and Juan has become a certified diver to help in the search and removal of these voracious predators.

"I'm working with so many great people, and have learned so many amazing things. This has shown me what's in my environment, that it's very important, and not to take it for granted."

The biggest challenge Juan sees is educating the public. "We must take the initiative to show people what is going on and what needs to be done. We need to work together."

Zandy Hillis-Starr, NPS Chief of Resource Management and Juan's supervisor said, "He's very much a people person, committed to helping others and his community. He is an outstanding young man with great promise."

You can read more about Juan at [thesca.org/hands-on](https://thesca.org/hands-on)

**We'd like each issue to be better than the one before.**

If you have suggestions for stories you'd like to see published or ideas on how to improve the newsletter, write to us at [thegreenway@thesca.org](mailto:thegreenway@thesca.org)



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Become an SCA **facebook** fan! Connect and share with thousands of conservation-minded people.



Watch and listen to member stories on SCA's YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/user/conservationinaction](https://www.youtube.com/user/conservationinaction).

## Scene + Heard

### The 3-Minute Interview with Jenna Randerson

Jenna Randerson, a 22-year-old from Manitowoc, AZ,

is currently an interpretive intern working for the Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument, located 12 miles north of Flagstaff, Arizona. Randerson spends her days talking to visitors about the site, what there is to see and do, and why it's important to preserve the 1,000-foot high cinder cone volcano.



**What about Sunset surprised you?** That it's wonderfully chilly and snowy during the winter, and the youngest of 600 volcanoes in the area.

**Have you always had the conservation bug?** I have always been very passionate about the outdoors. Working at Sunset gives me the opportunity to help visitors find a sense of wonder and love for our environment. To quote Stephen Jay Gould, "We will not fight to save what we do not love."

**What do you want to accomplish as an SCA intern?** To pass on the admiration I feel for the outdoors. It's the first step to protecting our planet.

**So, what's next after Sunset?** Another SCA internship might be possible. I'd like to keep working in conservation, maybe see if there is a career in the parks. I have a degree in Spanish, which hopefully I can use.

For more alumni stories and profiles, visit [thesca.org/blog](http://thesca.org/blog)

## Putting the Squeeze on Constrictors in the Keys

Officials at Crocodile Lake Fish and Wildlife Refuge routinely track endangered wood rats via radio telemetry. But sometimes their findings are anything but routine. "We recently tracked a wood rat directly to the inside of a python," says wildlife biologist Ron Rozar.

Large, invasive constrictors, primarily Burmese pythons, are something of a plague in southern Florida. In Everglades National Park alone, authorities estimate the entrenched reproductive python population at 30,000. With the help of SCA intern Sarah Dewees, the Fish and Wildlife Service is making a stand in Key Largo.

Key Largo is home to two endangered rodents; further down the Keys are Key deer, marsh rabbits and other vulnerable native species, underscoring the urgency of Crocodile Lake's python control project. Rozar, part of a U.S. Geological Survey team managing the effort for the FWS, says Sarah provided the refuge with critical expanded capacity. "Sarah was an integral part of the project," he states.

"The amount of work to be done here is daunting, as our responsibility extends throughout the Florida Keys. Sarah's done a lot of trapping, surveying. She's a great kayaker, really adept on the water, and that enabled us to cover a lot of area, which was crucial. Sarah has allowed us to accomplish a lot of things we couldn't otherwise do. She's recovered a fair number of pythons during her surveys and allowed us to participate in larger regional studies. The information gleaned from these tests has been absolutely critical."

Sarah's captures, which were featured on *ABC's World News Tonight*, were also part of a *National Geographic* special. She also served as liaison to the community, providing important python education and outreach and promoting a "snake spotter" hotline in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy. Rozar credits Sarah with helping the FWS hold the line against exotic pythons.

"Once a species like this becomes established it's an immense challenge to eradicate them," he says. "It's a lot easier to prevent a problem than to deal with one."



SCA intern Sarah Dewees with captured Burmese python



Left: Before and after trail work. Right: Team members puts the finishing touches on Ganwood Trail

### Triple Your Gift Today through sca's Million Dollar Challenge

America's national parks need 1,600 SCA volunteers this season! Help us raise \$275,000 by May 31 so we can make this happen.

Your contribution of...

\$35 = \$140

\$100 = \$400

\$250 = \$1,000

of conservation service!

Visit [thesca.org/challenge](http://thesca.org/challenge) to take action today.



## No Time Off for These Teens

They signed up for an Alternative Spring Break. No one said anything about an "alternative spring."

The nine teens—all students at Vermont Academy—traveled in March to Arizona's Saguaro National Park for a two-week SCA service project. During that time, they endured ping pong ball-sized hail, bone-chilling rain, and winds that literally ripped open their tents. They were turned into pin cushions by the park's myriad cacti and also moved tons of rock and earth. The toughest part? "Not showering," said Anna Brown.

The crew's assignment was to reroute a badly worn stretch of Garwood Trail. Heavy equestrian use had created a narrow gully up to three feet deep in some places. Both horses and hikers were at risk, so the team constructed a bypass before refilling and revegging the old section.

Sixteen year-old Mike Reilly admits he's never worked so hard in his life. "Around the house, probably not. This is definitely one of the toughest things I've ever done," Mike says. "But I've enjoyed it. There's a difference between challenging yourself mentally and challenging yourself physically."

Shelby Johnson states she's never done anything like this before, either. But asked if she'd do it again, she doesn't hesitate. "Absolutely!" says Shelby. "You see how hard everyone works here. When you're just walking the trails, you don't really think about them. You just say 'oh, this is a nice trail.' But when you're doing the work you see how difficult it can be.

"Like when we put in the switchback, it was hard to get the rocks to stay in the right position. But if I had been just walking by, I wouldn't have given it a thought. I'm really going to appreciate nature and my surroundings more than I have in the past."

Crew leader Jeff Glenn notes that the students were never daunted by the work or the weather—even when temps climbed to near 90 degrees under a blazing sun. "Every day, the hikers and riders thank them for the work they are doing to improve the trail," Jeff says. "That provided even more incentive to get out there and finish the job."

On their final day, the crew swelled with pride as rider after rider paraded by on the brand new spur of trail. "To be paid off by having other people say the trail looks great is really awesome," says Samantha "Sam" Gillingham. "It makes it all worth it."



“Our work with the SCA contributes to the transformation of Detroit and our surrounding cities, and creates a mindset for others to be inspired by our actions. It’s amazing how many people [in the community] take time to watch us work and thank us all one by one... I am proud to say that, through my efforts, the city of Detroit is now cleaner, greener and beautified.”

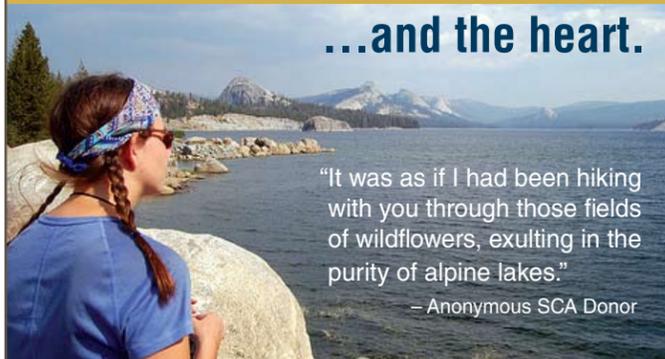
— Lauren Sowell, Detroit Community Conservation Crew, '08 - '09



“My SCA experience opened my eyes to the environment, and I worry more and more about our earth. I would like to become a representative speaker for an eco-friendly company.”

— Elena Marroquin, Houston Community Conservation Crew, '08 - '09

## Become an SCA Sponsor and receive a letter from the field ...and the heart.



“It was as if I had been hiking with you through those fields of wildflowers, exulting in the purity of alpine lakes.”  
— Anonymous SCA Donor

The SCA tradition of sponsorship connects you directly with an SCA member. When you give at least \$250 annually, you will receive a biography and a personal letter describing the impact of the SCA experience and the tangible accomplishments achieved along the way.

You can become a sponsor by making a sustaining monthly gift for as little as \$21 through our Partners in Conservation giving program—use the included reply envelope, or visit [thesca.org/donate](http://thesca.org/donate)

## Beyond Park Boundaries

by Joshua Sweet, SCA '09 –'10, Tonto National Monument

John Muir wrote that “in every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.” But what about those who reside in a classroom rather than in nature?



My internship with the SCA at Tonto National Monument in Arizona has given me many outstanding opportunities. The most noteworthy was providing outreach programs to three 4th grade classes at Dr. Charles A. Bejarano Elementary School in neighboring Miami, Arizona.

For six weeks, we discussed topics ranging from local geology and wildlife to ancient Native American culture and architecture. This outreach curriculum is in addition to the already vibrant programming provided by the staff at the monument which includes night hikes, photography tours, heritage days, and Junior Park Ranger activities.

During the first week, students learned about outdoor survival and the importance of being prepared. They participated in hands-on learning experiences during which they were able to use a compass, a signaling mirror, and a crank flashlight. They learned how to tell direction using only shadows on the ground. And they learned how to use a flint stick to ignite a fire.

For the remaining five weeks, we explored the archaeology of the park and learned about snakes of the desert. The U.S. Forest Service in Tonto Basin loaned us their resident king snake. You can imagine it was a big hit. Having a live snake on hand really brought the lessons we were teaching to life. By the end of the demonstration, students were excited and curious to learn more about other desert reptiles, including the infamous Gila Monster.

Since joining the staff at Tonto National Monument, my experiences have been wonderfully rich and memorable. I have performed backcountry maintenance with law enforcement, led three-mile hikes to a prehistoric cave dwelling, and developed presentations for eager elementary students. These programs show how the National Park Service can expand educational experiences beyond park boundaries and, with SCA, build the next generation of conservation leaders.

## Refocus, Reform & Recycle: Redefining the Three R's

SCA intern Allyssa Gabriel was surprised by the amount of plastic bottles, cardboard and fast food wrappers she pulled from a single trash receptacle. Up to 90% of its contents, she estimated, were recyclable.

Yet Allyssa was even more surprised by the source of all the non-sorted recyclables: employees at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) hangar in Fairbanks, AK.

Last summer, Allyssa served as Greening Coordinator for the Arctic, Kanuti and Yukon Flats refuges. Inventorying trash was one of her first actions after being charged with expanding recycling efforts at all three refuges, producing educational materials and working with the greater Fairbanks community to boost local recycling.

The task would not be easy. Past efforts had ended up somewhere between “failure” and “nice try” thanks to economic and logistical challenges posed by the region’s remoteness. The belief was “you can’t get there from here.”

Allyssa, however, had a different view. With an insatiable passion for sustainability, the Kennesaw (GA) State University

graduate dove into her work. She tirelessly researched new recycling opportunities, placed space-appropriate collection bins in key locations, and delivered collected materials to recycling centers at the Fairbanks Rescue Mission, Walmart and the University of Alaska Fairbanks—all of which Allyssa enlisted as refuge recycling partners. But she didn’t stop there.

She also gathered and compiled data on sustainability practices, posted recycling posters, and designed a reusable canvas bag emblazoned with the slogan “Arctic, Kanuti and Yukon Flats Refuges are working together toward a greener future.” Allyssa even volunteered to ride a bicycle to work, weather permitting, which inspired refuge managers to purchase a fleet of bicycles for staff and volunteers to use.

In the program’s first month, more than 1,100 pounds of materials were successfully recycled. “For quite some time, we’ve desired to improve ‘greening’ efforts in the Fairbanks-based refuge offices,” states Deputy Manager Joanna Fox, who spearheaded the effort. Adds Refuge Manager Mike Spindler, “it is only through efforts of people like Allyssa that we will be able to meet our goals for a more sustainable footprint well into the future.”

Allyssa (right) assesses recycling potential at a hangar in Fairbanks, AK with FWS’ Joanna Fox. At press time, FWS had just added Allyssa to its staff.





The American Institute of Philanthropy and Charity Navigator rank SCA among America's top conservation charities for fundraising efficiency.



thesca.org



**Student Conservation Association**  
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Charlestown, NH 03603-0550

SCA is a nationwide conservation force of college and high school volunteers who protect and restore America's parks, forests, and other public lands. SCA's active, hands-on approach to conservation has helped to develop a new generation of conservation leaders, inspire lifelong stewardship, and save our planet.

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## Show Us the Green Spaces You Love!

**SCA's Conservation Begins Here photo contest** to launch in May! At SCA, we want to show the world that conservation matters everywhere, and that all places—from local green spaces to mountaintops—are connected, and need our care.



**Your best photo could win you 4 round trip tickets to visit your favorite green place anywhere Southwest Airlines flies.**

Enter at [contest.thesca.org](http://contest.thesca.org)

Judged by renowned film director and producer **Ken Burns**



the **GreenWay**  
SCA's Conservation Quarterly Spring 2010

## Save the Date!

**Outdoor Nation Summit – June 19-20**



Join SCA and Outdoor Nation for a two-day summit and festival in New York City's Central Park. Youth from across the country will unite to reclaim, redefine and rediscover the great outdoors—and leave no child inside.

For more information, visit [thesca.org/events](http://thesca.org/events)