



the GreenWay

SCA's Conservation Quarterly

Fall 2010



SCA's Schcari Wade says making a difference for Detroit is "important because I live here."

SCA Crews Drive Motor City Makeover

Many SCA stories are about changing a student's life. Others focus on changing the fortunes of a national park. This one is about changing the mindset of an entire city.

It's August. A blazing sun stokes the temperature into the 90s. The heat index is well into triple figures. The mosquitoes are omnipresent and voracious.

Welcome to Detroit, where a crew of local high school students is cutting a new trail through Rouge Park. The soil is dry and hard as a half dozen teens spread out, Pulaskis in hand, to grade a stretch they cleared the day before.

"We need to get a 5% angle to make it better for bikers," says crew member Schcari Wade. "It's hard work, tiring. But we're getting the job done."

SCA Detroit is part of a nationwide, community-based SCA program that provides outdoor summer jobs to underrepresented youth. Some 80 students participate in the Motor City alone, and they have much in common. The majority are in their second or even third summer with SCA. They constantly refer to the camaraderie spawned by their diligent teamwork. And a common theme runs through their reasons for being there.

(continued on page 2)

**THIS
ISSUE:**



**Discovering
the Past is
All Relative**
page 4



**Saving
Endangered
Butterflies**
page 6



**Inside
Seattle's
Community
Crew**
page 7

**CONSERVATION
BEGINS HERE**
Student Conservation Association
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

First Things First

SCA's 53rd summer of service was punctuated by a number of "firsts"—and it's nice to know that after more than a half century, we are able to set some exciting new milestones. Before I get to those highlights, however, there's something I want to do...*first*.

Thank you for your continued support of the young men and women of SCA. Their efforts on our public lands and the personal growth that results from their experiences simply could not take place without your generosity. One of the absolute joys of my job is recognizing your commitment to SCA.

Another is watching the accolades mount for SCA Founder Liz Putnam. In August, Liz received the Presidential Citizens Medal from Barack Obama at the White House, becoming the first conservationist ever to earn the award. No one is more deserving of this honor.

This summer also marked the first time that membership in SCA's community crews outpaced the crew and intern programs we conduct in national parks and forests.

I hope you will share in the accomplishments achieved by all SCA volunteers this summer. And with many urgent fall projects at hand, I also hope you will consider renewing your support for SCA today. Our mission of "building the next generation of conservation leaders" continues and will always come first.

Sincerely,



SCA crew members building benches for an outdoor classroom.

Cover Story *continued from page 1*

"It feels good to be out here knowing we're improving the city," Schcari says. "There's all this talk that Detroit is raggedy, that people are leaving because of unemployment or because the city's dirty. We need more people like us to come out and make Detroit a place where people want to live."

A couple of hundred yards down the trail, 17-year-old Brian Moss is among four students constructing a footbridge. A few feet below, the slow-moving water is a breeding ground for bloodsucking insects and Brian protects himself under a head net, hard hat and sun hat. Perspiration streams into his eyes as he tries to read a level to ensure proper placement.

"Some days it's hot, some days it's raining. There are always mosquitoes, but it's worth it," he states. "Everybody looks at Detroit like it's so bad but we're out here every day showing that young people are working, doing good, and making the city look good so when people come here they don't just see the dirty things but the trails and the other environmental stuff we're doing out here."

Some of that other stuff includes capturing rainwater and supporting community gardens on vacant properties. "We need a healthy outdoors to keep us healthy," says Terrysa Green, a 19-year old who says her SCA experience prompted her to pursue a forestry degree.

Another SCA crew is putting the finishing touches on an outdoor classroom behind an elementary school. They installed a series of wooden benches under a large shade tree. You hear birds here, not the clang of locker doors or the noise of passing traffic. And the breeze is both cooling and calming. When asked what they've learned through the experience, the group is quick to respond. "Perseverance," says one. "Hard work," adds another. "I learned a lot about myself." "A new attitude." "That we can do anything." "Pride."

That's when the conversation takes a familiar turn. "I once heard on the news that Detroit is the seventh worst city in America," states Gregory Harris. "That's not accurate at all. But it made me want to make the city better."

"I agree. That [reputation] is irritating," says Kira Peoples. "It doesn't take much to improve your community. Everybody can do a little something to make things better. Just try. I mean, it's your city."

Altering people's perceptions is sometimes more challenging than transforming a landscape. But these Detroit teens are confident their efforts are influencing public thinking. After all, notes Chris Moore, people change their minds every day. "But what we're doing," he says, "will last until...*forever!*"

SCA Detroit is sponsored by Johnson Controls in partnership with The Greening of Detroit and Amtrak.

For more stories and profiles, visit thesca.org/blog.

Conservation Begins Here Photo Contest



First Place winner
Gigi Ebert

Meet Our Winners!

This summer, we asked you to show us the green spaces that you love and passionately want to conserve. You responded with over 7,000 truly gorgeous photos depicting everything from mountaintops and canyons to community gardens and backyards. Thank you!

It wasn't easy, but our esteemed panel of judges was unanimous in their choice of winners.

First Place: Gigi Ebert, San Diego, CA – *The Watchmen*

Second Place: B Brent Young, Pleasant Grove, Utah – *Sunrise on July 4th*

Third Place: Kelly Hibbs, Flagstaff, AZ – *Mirror Lakes*

People's Choice: Sarah Palmisano, Spring Lake, MI – *Smoky Mountain River Scene*

View the winning photos and read an interview with Gigi Ebert at contest.thesca.org

Special thanks to sponsors:



Charge! Reliving the Battles of Bull Run at Manassas

For casual or avid Civil War buffs, Manassas National Battlefield Park in Virginia is *the* place to “dig deep” into our country’s rich history. Visitors to the park can travel back in time and relive (through a variety of educational programs and self-guided tours) the war that divided our nation.

For SCA’s Kelsey Wetherbee and Mary Elizabeth Walters, both interpretive interns at Manassas this summer, spending the day sharing their knowledge of the land, people and battles is a dream come true. In addition to making history come alive for visitors, Kelsey and Mary Elizabeth also lead guided walks and historic house tours, and even have the chance to design their own battlefield tours.

“This is such an important site; it was the first major battle of the Civil War,” says Wetherbee. “A lot of the soldiers thought the war would be quick and that there would only be one battle. But Manassas changed so many ideas of the war for the soldiers. They realized it wouldn’t be an easy war.”



Interpretive interns help to bring the past to life for park visitors.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the internship is the chance to help people learn more about their personal history. “A man came in looking for ancestors for his friend, who was really sick at the time,” Mary Elizabeth remarks. “I was able to find both of the names he was looking for, and the history of the units they were in. I even showed him on the battlefield where the ancestors would have been so he was able to take all the information back to his friend.”

For more stories and profiles, visit thesca.org/blog.

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



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Today’s Work, Tomorrow’s Leaders.



Help SCA reach more young men and women who are looking to shape a greener, healthier future through hands-on conservation projects!

The coming autumn months are some of the most critical for the public lands we care for.

Donate to our Fall Campaign today.

Visit thesca.org/take-the-lead

Scene + Heard

The 2-Minute Interview with Sarah Palmisano

Climate change is on everyone's minds these days.

It's in the news, it's in the boardroom, it's in government plans and policy. For this 23-year-old graduate of Michigan State University, taking action to mitigate climate change means signing on for a 10-month stint as a member of SCA's Green Cities Sustainability Program.



What are you doing as a sustainability fellow?

I'm currently working in Pittsburgh for Mayor Ravenstahl's Office of Sustainability and Energy Efficiency, helping to implement the Climate Action Plan.

How do you engage the public?

Mostly through community service days and tree giveaways. Last spring, I helped organize a giveaway of 2,000 saplings that was supposed to last two hours. We ran out of trees within a half hour! It was incredible to see that many people so eager to green their community.

You recently held a community service day. How'd it go?

Great! Thirty people spent their Saturday morning helping us expand and improve two community food gardens. It was hard work, but we got a lot done and it felt awesome to give back to the community.

Your fellowship ends in December. What's next for you?

My majors in college were psychology and social sciences. However, this SCA experience and a previous internship with the City of Grand Haven, MI really opened my eyes to the possibility of pursuing a career as a sustainability coordinator for a city or college.

For more alumni stories and profiles, visit thesca.org/blog

Discovering the Past is All Relative

"I often remind myself how lucky I am to work here," Olivia Cothren says of her SCA internship at Ellis Island National Monument. "This place represents everything that's good about America."

Olivia has a personal reason for saying this. Marie Imp, her own great-grandmother and a native of Austria, was among the more than 12 million immigrants who entered America through Ellis Island. Pinned above Olivia's desk is a family picture taken on Ellis Island 20 years ago that includes five-year old Olivia and her grossmutter.

"I can't even comprehend sailing from Europe to America as she did in 1922, on her own, at the age of 16," says Olivia. "When I was 16, I was worried about going to the mall!" As for standing in her grandmother's footprints, she simply states "this internship was meant to be."

Olivia, 23, grew up near New York City and made many childhood visits to Ellis Island and the nearby Statue of Liberty. From there she developed a keen interest in history (her major) and museum studies (post grad, starting this fall).

For the past year, she has been preserving a range of artifacts—passports, Bibles, clothing and more—for Ellis Island's 'Treasures from Home' exhibit. One display focuses on a Lebanese family of 11, many of whom worked in silk factories. Olivia has been in contact with their great-grandchildren regarding a stunning collection of robes and tapestries. "Many of these items were keepsakes to remind the original owners of home," she says. "I'm sure they never expected their belongings would one day be put in a museum."

When asked why anyone who is generations removed from Ellis Island should care about the landmark, Olivia has a ready answer. "Forty percent of Americans can trace their roots back to here and today we continue to be a mix of cultures. That's so cool," she states.

"People come here and see how hard the immigrants worked to make something of their lives and realize that they can do it too. This is what the American story is all about: independence, liberty, and opportunity. I truly am lucky to work here."



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An SCA charitable gift annuity will pay you a steady return for the rest of your life, while providing young people with awe-inspiring and life-changing experiences on the land.

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65	7.1%	9.8%

For further information on gift annuities or other ways to do something grand for our youth and our land, please contact Hugh Montgomery directly at (603) 504-3241, toll-free at 1-888-722-9675 ext. 151, or at hmontgomery@thesca.org.



SCA's Liz Putnam is the first conservationist to receive the Presidential Citizens Medal.

Liz in the Limelight

Elizabeth Cushman Titus Putnam, who launched the American conservation service movement more than 50 years ago with the founding of the Student Conservation Association, has received the 2010 Presidential Citizens Medal.

The medal was presented by President Barack Obama at a White House ceremony in August for “performing exemplary deeds of service for her country and fellow citizens.”

Putnam became the first conservationist to receive the Citizens Medal, the nation’s second-highest civilian award, since its creation in 1969.

“Serving nature is among the most important and rewarding callings humankind can ever know,” she states. “I am humbled by this honor and I share it with all the young women and men of SCA, whose hands-on service protects our public lands and lifts our people’s hearts.”

SCA Board Chair Jane Goedecke asserts the honor is well-deserved. “Liz Putnam is both a giant and pioneer in the conservation field.”

Previously, Putnam received President Ronald Reagan’s Volunteer Action Award, two different Rachel Carson awards, and the Cornelius Amory Pugsley Medal for contributions to public parks, among many other honors.

Watch video from the White House ceremony at thesca.org/blog



SCA intern Lindsey Phillips helps to track and protect the remaining Karner blue butterflies in the Albany Pine Bush region of New York.



Saving Endangered Karner Blue Butterflies

One of the most beautiful creatures on earth is also among the most endangered.

The Karner blue butterfly population has declined 99% over the past century. Its grassy range, which once stretched from the Midwest to New England, has been reduced by development and fire suppression and today the butterflies remain in only a few locations.

One of those areas is the Albany Pine Bush region of New York, where SCA intern Lindsey Phillips is helping The Nature Conservancy protect and grow an original Karner blue colony at the Wilton Wildlife Preserve.

“I’ve always been interested in endangered species,” states Lindsey, an Auburn University junior who works part-time at a raptor rehabilitation center. “And the Karner blue butterfly offered an alternative to the game species that are so popular at home.”

Every day, Lindsey patrols miles and miles of predetermined transects in up to eight local sites. With a net in one hand, she gently sweeps the vegetation, stirring the butterflies to flight. In the other hand, Lindsey holds a banded aluminum pole that helps her mark the precise location of each butterfly sighting,

which she captures in a voice recorder. Later, she enters the information into a database that helps state and federal authorities determine the impact of ongoing recovery programs. Lindsey insists her daily routine never gets old. “I’m at peace in the outdoors,” she says, adding she’s encountered numerous other species walking her beat, from napping fawns to Black Racer snakes.

Lindsey notes that for all of its dazzling beauty, the Karner blue is modest in other ways. It has a wing span of only an inch and its life span averages just four days. “People ask me, ‘what’s the point of protecting them?’ and I get real defensive,” she admits. “These butterflies were put here for a reason and it’s not our place to wipe them out.”

It’s easy to understand how this small insect made such a big impression on Lindsey when she relates a story from her first day on the job. “I drove up from Alabama with my parents,” she says, “and when they left, I felt so alone. I sat down and started wondering if I’d made the right decision, and suddenly ten or more Karner blue butterflies started swarming around my feet.

“They were like some kind of welcoming party. That’s when I said ‘I’m good. I know I can do this.’”

Inside Seattle's Community Crew

by Emma Jornlin, SCA staff

When I visited Seattle's two community crews this summer, I was surprised to hear the depth of the conversations these 15- to 19-year-old crew members engage in while working long days to remove invasives and stabilize freshly bare hillsides. They spoke of everything from the Gulf oil spill and pollution to religion and family traditions and, of course, lots of talk about college and dreams of future careers.

At my visit to the Thornton Creek Crew, two girls spoke about the differences between their two religions, Islam and Christianity. Faduma, a Muslim, revealed to us that she gets up two times during the night to pray, one of those times at 4 a.m. in order to beat the rising sun.

As our pile of ivy bundles grew tall and robins bounced around, snatching up worms that we had loosened from the dirt, the topic shifted from religion to animals and pets we have at home. Doan, a student from West Seattle, revealed to us that he has a chicken coop in his backyard, giving his family an endless supply of eggs. He also noted proudly that the chickens are free range.

None of the crew members seemed overly concerned about the wildlife in the area, except for a large hornet's nest everyone was instructed to avoid. But park staff and SCA staff members are working hard to make this change. Weekly environmental education lessons and field trips aim to educate students about their natural surroundings and opportunities in the environmental field.

While I was visiting the Lake Ridge (or "Dead Horse Canyon") crew, a woman named Christine from Seattle Parks came to teach us about the birds that inhabit the park, bringing with her a collection of owl taxidermy.

As the crew members oohed and aahed over the stuffed owls, Christine pointed out to them that there are careers to study birds if they are interested. "Ornithology is a degree you can get in college. Look it up when you go home: ornithology, the study of birds."

Most of the students I talked to plan to go to college, and they will use the money they are earning this summer to help them get there. But what they plan to study remains up in the air. Environmental education is rarely taught in Seattle public schools and many had never heard of words like plant taxonomy, watersheds, or invasive species. It will be exciting to see what lessons each of the 24 crew members take away from their time with SCA this summer. Maybe topics like ornithology will slowly begin to trickle into their everyday conversations, alongside equally important topics like business, religion, and future careers.

For more stories and profiles, visit thesca.org/blog



Students work up a sweat breaking ground for a new trail at Thornton Creek.



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Help Promote Youth Services

We need you to take action! America's Great Outdoors initiative launched by President Obama seeks to connect more people to outdoor spaces.

To promote youth service as part of the 21st century conservation agenda and make sure your voice is heard as part of the SCA community, visit thesca.org/help-promote-youth-service.