

AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS (AGO) YOUTH INITIATIVE

A PROMISE TO FUTURE GENERATIONS

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WHAT IS AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS INITIATIVE?

❖ Instead of dictating policies, the AGO initiative turns to communities for local, grassroots conservation ideas. Makes the Federal Government a better partner with states and local communities.

❖ Lasting conservation solutions should rise from the American people – that our protection of our natural heritage is a non-partisan objective shared by all.



AGO FOCUSED ON ADDRESSING THE
FOLLOWING:

❖ Providing Quality Jobs, Career Pathways, and Service Opportunities.

❖ Enhance Recreational Access and Opportunities.

❖ Raise Awareness of the Value and Benefits of America's Great Outdoors.

❖ Engage Young People in Conservation and the Great Outdoors.

❖ Strengthen the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

❖ Make the Federal Government a More Effective Partner.

❖ Etc...

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FOCUSED ON THE YOUTH AGENDA FOR AGO INITIATIVE

❖ 4 Key Goals

- Make the outdoors relevant to today's young people: make it inviting, exciting and fun.
- Ensure that all young people have access to outdoor places that are safe, clean and close to home.
- Empower and enable youth to work and volunteer in the outdoors.
- Build upon a base of environmental and outdoor education, both formal and informal.

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LETS GET STARTED

- ❖ On May 26, 2011, Secretary Salazar and Colorado Governor Hickenlooper announced Colorado's focus upon three conservation, recreation, and open space areas under President Obama's AGO initiative.
- ❖ Community Leaders had mixed emotions on various project directions, however showed enthusiasm for a community "youth in natural resources program".
- ❖ Recommendation: Support the community efforts in Costilla and Conejos Counties to build and coordinate Youth in Natural Resources programs, as well as build stronger community relationships with state and federal agencies.

WHY YOUTH IN CONEJOS AND COSTILLA COUNTIES?

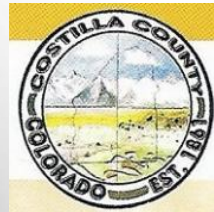
History

- ❖ Conejos and Costilla Counties are located in the San Luis Valley
- ❖ These two counties have large native Hispanic populations and are two of the poorest and least populated counties in the state.
- ❖ These counties have been under three different jurisdictions including Spain, Mexico and the United States.
- ❖ Area remains cultural unchanged
- ❖ Public Lands and Private Lands



Historical Adobe Structures that dot the landscape

WHO WAS INVOLVED?



South Conejos School District
North Conejos School District

Sanford High School

Centennial School District

Sierra Grande High School

Private Land Ranches

ASU and Trinidad Junior College

Plus many, many, more!

WHAT WAS DEVELOPED?

- ❖ Monthly meetings and conference calls were held.
- ❖ Monies were funded through the National Park Service.
- ❖ National Park Service entered agreement with Southwest Conservation Corp.
- ❖ Southwest Conservation Corp. hired and trained the crews.
 - 6 youth were hired from each county for a one month long stint, outreach in cooperation with the school.
 - As well as one full time supervisor from each county.

WHAT WAS DEVELOPED CONT....

- ❖ Training
- ❖ Education and Career
Development
- ❖ Various Conservation
Projects
- ❖ Weekly Stipend and
Graduation/Recognition



TRAINING

What were students trained in?

- ❖ Safety Awareness and Policies
- ❖ Team Building Exercises
- ❖ Wilderness Importance
- ❖ Agency Histories
- ❖ LNT
- ❖ Roles and responsibilities to the environment and the citizenry



EDUCATION AND CAREER

What was shared?

- ❖ Met at local school computer labs, county or agency buildings.
- ❖ Outdoor related career fields
- ❖ Student Career employment opportunities.
- ❖ Job Application through USA jobs.
- ❖ Application readiness.
- ❖ Cover letters, asking for references and resume readiness.
- ❖ College campus tours and professor presentations.
- ❖ Agency employee presentations.
- ❖ Local workforce presentations.
- ❖ Scholarship application and financial literacy.

FIELD PROJECTS

Where did we go?

- ❖ Worked on BLM, USFS, NPS and Privately Managed Ranch Projects.
- ❖ Camped in the field with gear Wednesday through Friday.
- ❖ Completed various projects...



WHAT PROJECTS WERE COMPLETED?

- ❖ BLM – Riparian and River Ecological Restoration on the Rio Grande Natural Area.
- ❖ FS – Spruce Bark Beetle Mapping, Recreation and Range Oriented Projects.
- ❖ Trinchera Ranch – Various Projects geared toward the education of private land management.
- ❖ NPS – Great Sand Dunes Recreation, Trail and National Park Management Projects



GRADUATION AND RECOGNITION



WHAT'S NEXT?

❖ Follow-up Meeting to discuss:

- Pro's
- Communication was Key
- Lesson's Learned
- Building on the process for the future?

QUESTIONS?

