



Rocky Mountain Conservancy

CONSERVATION CORPS

2025

HSLC Yearbook

Program History

1931

Rocky Mountain Conservancy is founded as the Rocky Mountain Nature Association

Since 1931, Rocky Mountain Conservancy has supported Rocky Mountain National Park and other public land partners through educational programs and philanthropic donations. Early on, the focus of the Conservancy was developing educational materials and publications for visitors to use while in Rocky Mountain National Park. Over the past ninety years, the Conservancy has grown to support its public land partners in a breadth of ways.

1962

Rocky Mountain Conservancy - Field Institute is established to provide visitors with enhanced educational opportunities

Rocky Mountain Conservancy contains five departments:

1985

The Conservancy begins providing substantial financial support to RMNP through philanthropic outreach

Retail – manages nature stores throughout Colorado and Wyoming to provide visitors with educational materials to enhance their experience.

Publications – produces nature guides, children's literature, natural and cultural history books, and more.

2003

Rocky Mountain Conservancy - Conservation Corps is created

Philanthropy – raises funds for Rocky and Conservancy programs through donor outreach, grant proposals, a membership program, and community engagement. Funds are used for specific projects including land acquisition, historical preservation, trail maintenance, wildlife conservation, search and rescue, and environmental education.

2006

Next Generation Fund was created as an endowment to support youth education efforts

Education – provides field classes, memberships, nature-based activities, and fellowships for people of all ages to further understand and connect with public lands.

2014

Rocky Mountain Conservancy changes its name from Rocky Mountain Nature Association

Stewardship – hosts service-learning programs for people of all ages through the Conservation Corps, High School Leadership Corps, and Volunteer Stewardship programs.

2017

Rocky Mountain Conservancy High School Leadership Corps is implemented into the Stewardship Program

In its first year in 2003, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy Conservation Corps supported seven members on one crew in Rocky Mountain National Park. The program has grown to provide 50-60 young adults with a summer long AmeriCorps member opportunities across several different crews based in seven locations.

HSLC Program Goals

Environmental Stewardship

Participants develop an understanding of natural systems and an awareness of public land agencies by completing service work and participating in educational programs. Service work includes trail maintenance, habitat restoration, fire management and mitigation, and historic preservation.

Personal and Team Leadership

Youth practice valuable leadership skills related to communication, teamwork, and group management through in-classroom workshops and field-based skills training sessions.

Outdoor Skills

Students will become competent in the skills required to comfortably travel and camp in the outdoors through experiential learning opportunities while camping and engaging in programming focused on backcountry skills.



The High School Leadership Corps (HSLC) is an immersive 11-day experience in Rocky Mountain National Park. During the program, participants camp, work with various project partners, and go on a backpacking/work trip to Poudre Valley. The experience emphasizes teamwork, professionalism, and collaboration. Participants receive a \$400 stipend upon successful completion of the program. Additionally, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy provides free camping, work clothing, and gear for the experience. In 2025, the Conservancy hosted two HSLC crews.

JUNE SESSION



JUNE 17TH - JUNE 27TH, 2025

JUNE CREW



Santiago 🧭

"A little water never hurt anybody."

Hometown: Broomfield, CO

Carlo 🧭

***"All doors open
if you kick them down."***

Hometown: Longmont, CO



Allie

"Go to bed early."

Hometown: Denver, CO

🧭 – **Youth Mentors**

JUNE CREW



Becca

"At least I didn't stick my head in the fire."

Hometown: Boulder, CO

Jonny

"You may say you give up, but don't give up."

Hometown: Lafayette, CO



Sara

"This program is fun because it's unique, and unique because it's fun!"

Hometown: Albany, CA



JUNE CREW



Rose

"I swear I didn't eat all the Fritos."

Hometown: Estes Park, CO

Finn

"Don't trust me with sharp things."

Hometown: Lafayette, CO



Leah

"You can't hurt me because I'm already broken."

Hometown: Boulder, CO



Jerome

"I really liked going to the rec, getting pizza, and going on hikes."

Hometown: Erie, CO



DAY ONE

DAY ONE meant picking up the crew in Denver and Boulder, with a stop at the Mountain Shop for new boots and socks before heading to Glacier Basin. It started raining just in time for us to set up tents and get our lunches a little soggy. A moose sighting through the rain was a welcome surprise to kick things off. After lunch, we dove into lessons on safety, hygiene, crew culture, first aid, the SPOT device, and RMC policies.

Between the rain and the info overload, day one was slow and soggy — but it set a solid tone for the session. Fajitas for dinner wrapped up the day before everyone settled into their tents for the first night.



DAY TWO



DAY TWO took us over Trail Ridge Road to Green Mountain, where the crew jumped into a trail remodel project on the west side of Rocky. It was a full day of hands-on trail work using a variety of tools to dig new tread, make crush for turnpikes, and peel logs for future stairs. Before dinner, we held a backpacking and backcountry lesson, then dug into some well-earned stir fry.



DAY THREE - HITCH DAY 1

DAY THREE marks the beginning of the crew's hitch. We spent the morning packing our backpacks and driving up to the Emmaline Lake Trailhead near the Poudre Wilderness. Our hike in was about 3 miles before we could set up our tents on the outskirts of the beautiful Cirque Meadow. We had a quick lunch before meeting with the Poudre Wilderness Volunteers, then spent the rest of the day working completing trail maintenance alongside them. We ended day one of hitch with dinner.



DAY FOUR - HITCH DAY 2

DAY FOUR, our second day on hitch, was much like the first. We spent the entire day working on the trail. From clearing huge logs off the trail, ripping out old dilapidated bridges and replacing them with stone water crossing steps, removing rebar and swinging tools, it was a very productive day!



DAY FIVE - HITCH DAY 3



DAY FIVE was our final day of hitch. The wind the night before was so aggressive that it prevented just about everyone from sleeping, as well as knocking down some trees near the meadow. As the wind persisted through the morning, the decision was made to end hitch early. While everyone was bummed about leaving early, the safety of everyone is more important than one more day of hitch.

DAY SIX/SEVEN



DAY SIX saw the crew hiking to Sky Pond. Roughly 9 miles round trip, the hike was long but the view when we arrived made it all worth it. Pizza party and soda after the hike raised spirits even higher. **DAY SEVEN** was a rec and laundry day with a Safeway budgeting trip.



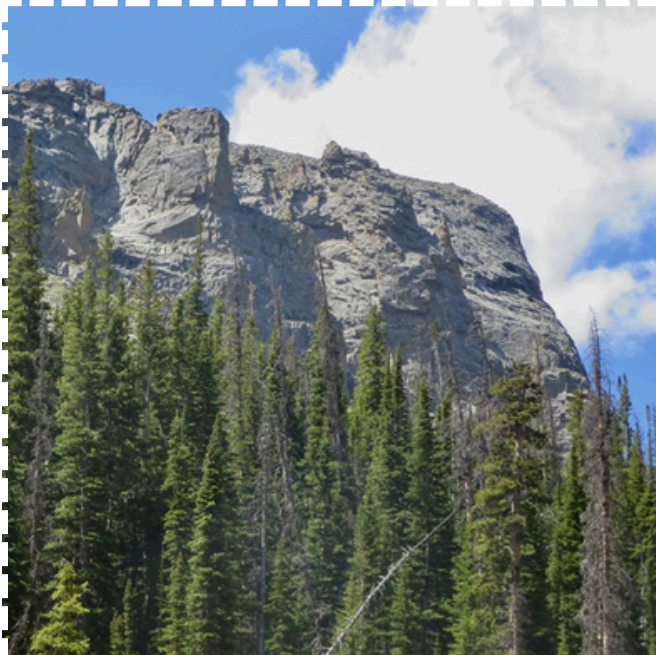
DAY EIGHT



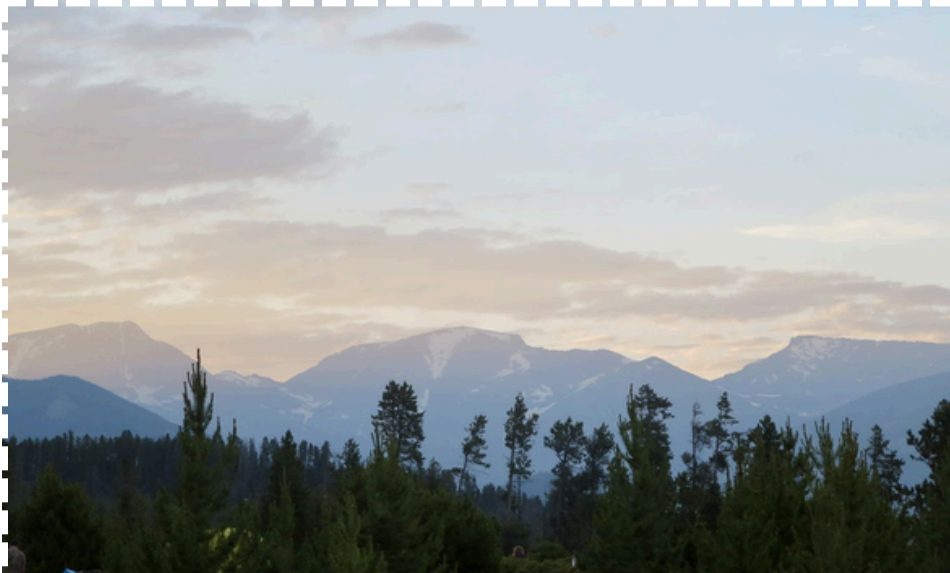
DAY EIGHT was a nice hike to Gem Lake. The geology of the area was truly amazing. We ate lunch at the lake and then hiked out to work on end of session speeches. Everyone did a great job practicing their speeches in front of the rest of the crew, and we ended the day with a visit to Rocky's packers, horses, and mules and learned about their role in the park.



DAY NINE



DAY NINE was spent in the Rocky nursery with members of the park's vegetation crew. We were tasked with re-potting monarda into larger pots. By the end of the day, we had re-potted 498 plants. It was a very chill day spent laughing and listening to music. Mac and steez dinner!!!



DAY TEN



DAY TEN was back to trail work, reviving a neglected trail that leads to Rocky's William Allen White Cabin, where the Artists in Residence stay. That night was then spent hiking up Emerald Mountain and drinking hot chocolate at the camp upon our return.



DAY ELEVEN



DAY ELEVEN marked the end of the HSLC June session. After tearing down camp and taking care of all the gear, we all headed to Lyons for a barbecue. Burgers, hot dogs, sunshine, and speeches were enjoyed by all before final goodbyes were shared and we all went our merry ways.



JUNE SESSION PHOTO DUMP











JULY SESSION



JULY 15TH - JULY 25TH, 2025

JULY CREW



Eli 🛠️

"That's boss."

Hometown: Lafayette, CO

Heidi 🛠️

"Sure does."

Hometown: Boulder, CO



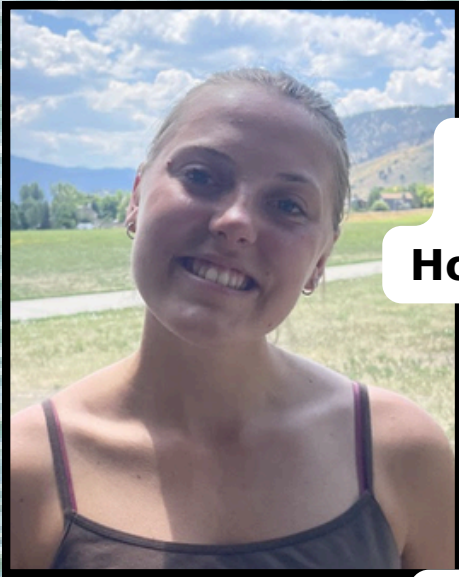
Nick

" . " - Zach

Hometown: Centennial, CO

🛠️ – **Youth Mentors**

JULY CREW



Sienna

"Let's hack that sack."

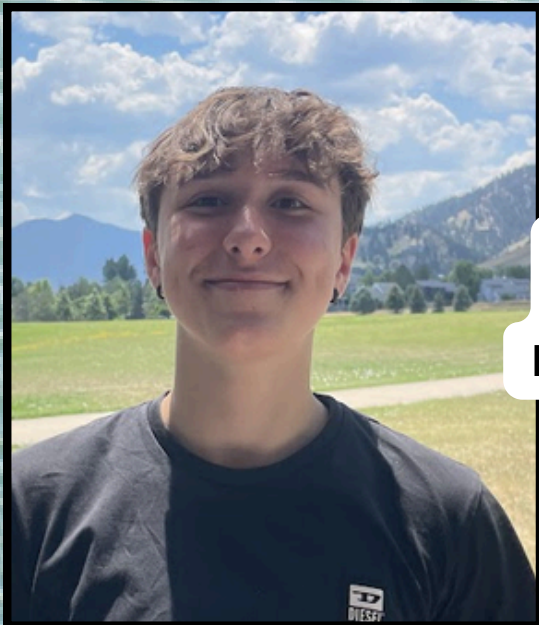
Hometown: Broomfield, CO



Alex

"Don't stop eating til you hate yourself."

Hometown: Boulder, CO



Lauren

"It's chapstick time!"

Hometown: Renton, WA



Habib

"The river isn't as cold when you fall in."

Hometown: Denver, CO

JULY CREW



Zenon

"You'll get nose blind to it eventually"

Hometown: Westminster, CO



Katya

"I really want to stretch right now."

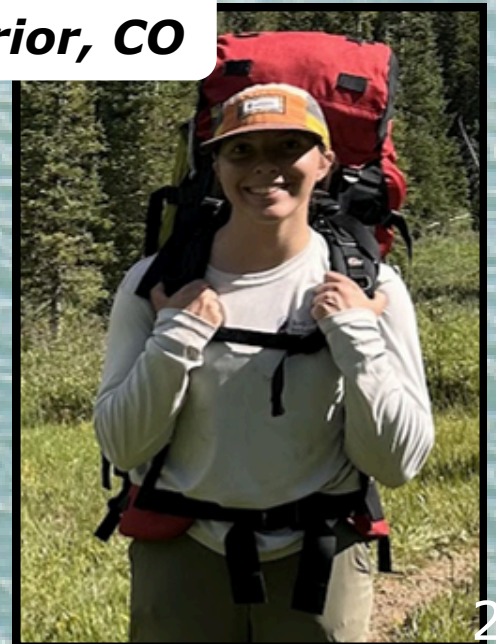
Hometown: Laramie, WY



Megan

"Good golly gumdrops!"

Hometown: Superior, CO



Delaney

"I lost the latrine."

Hometown: Fort Collins, CO

DAY ONE



DAY ONE, crew members were picked up in Denver, Boulder, and Loveland, then stopped by the Estes Park Mountain Shop for new boots and socks before heading to Glacier Basin to set up camp. After lunch, the crew was blessed to receive lessons on safety, hygiene, crew culture, first aid, the SPOT device, and RMC policies, prepping them for the days to come. Fajita dinner was delicious, and the sun set on our first day.



DAY TWO

DAY TWO, the crew joined an NPS trails crew on the west side of the park to help put the finishing touches on the Green Mountain trail remodel project. Connecting the new trail to the old trail was very rewarding, and stopping at scenic overlooks on Trail Ridge Road was a nice treat to end our day on the West side. Fantastic tofu stir fry for dinner was an even better treat!



wow so pretty!

DAY THREE



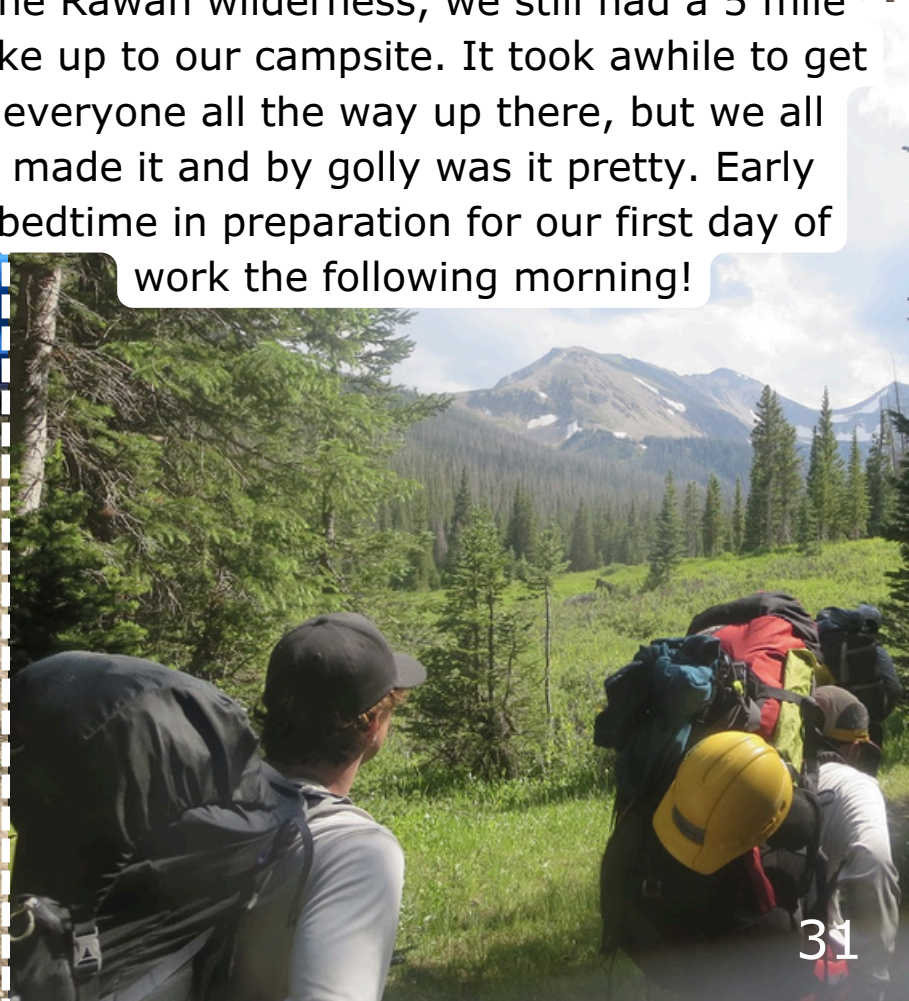
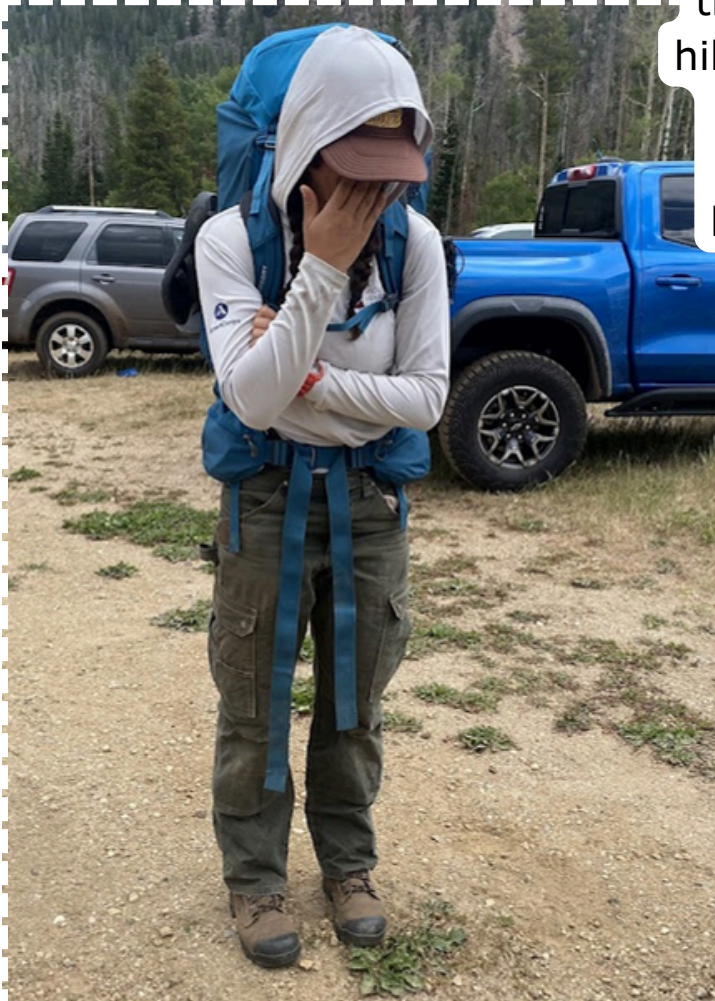
DAY THREE, was veg day! We worked with an NPS biological science technician who led us in removing invasive elk thistle and mullein from a half mile square area along the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center water line. The sun was hot and the work was tough but it was very rewarding to see a visible impact as a result of our work.



DAY FOUR - HITCH DAY 1

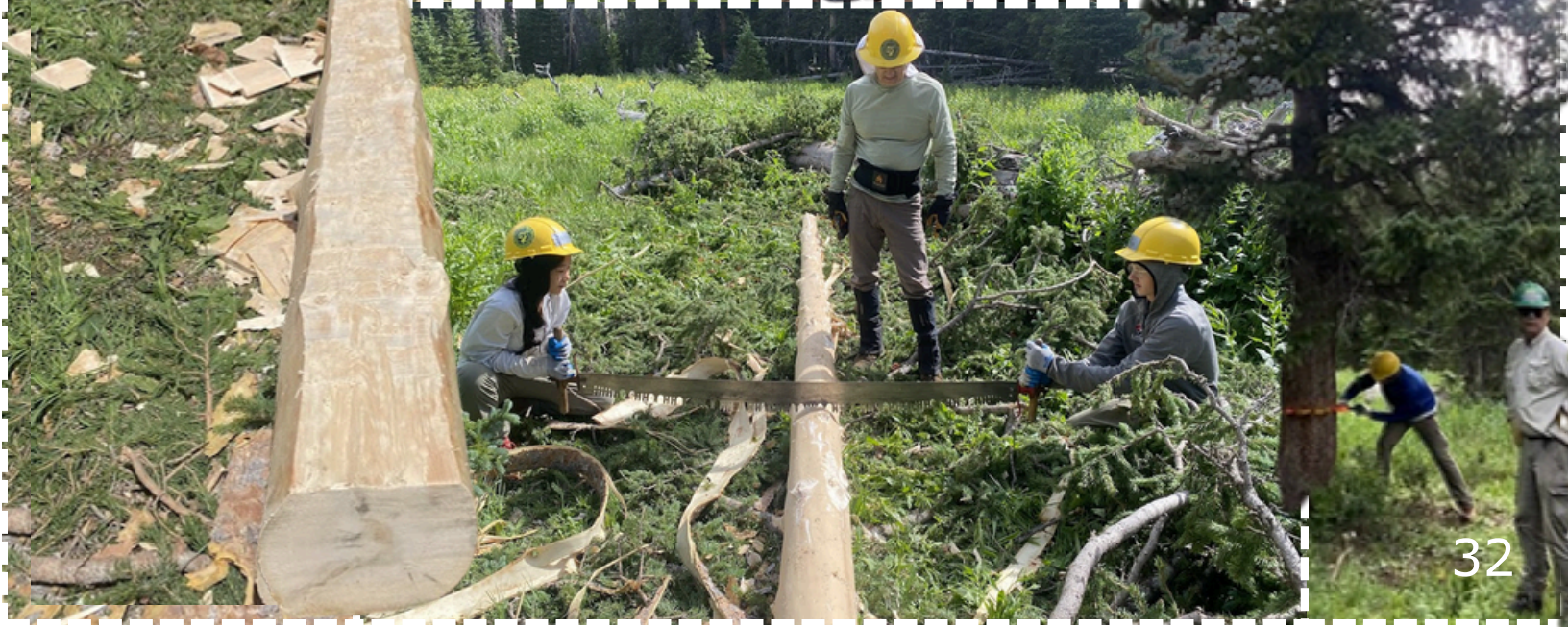


DAY FOUR, marked the beginning of our backcountry hitch. After a three and a half hour drive to the West Branch trailhead in the Rawah wilderness, we still had a 5 mile hike up to our campsite. It took awhile to get everyone all the way up there, but we all made it and by golly was it pretty. Early bedtime in preparation for our first day of work the following morning!



DAY FIVE - HITCH DAY 2

DAY FIVE is when the work begins. To start our bridge project, first a tree must be dropped. After selecting and felling one, next comes delimbing and debarking, followed by cutting it to size and flattening one side of the tree. While one half of the crew spent the day working on the tree itself, the rest gathered rocks and built abutments for the following days work on the project. Day one of backcountry work was VERY productive!



DAY SIX - HITCH DAY 3

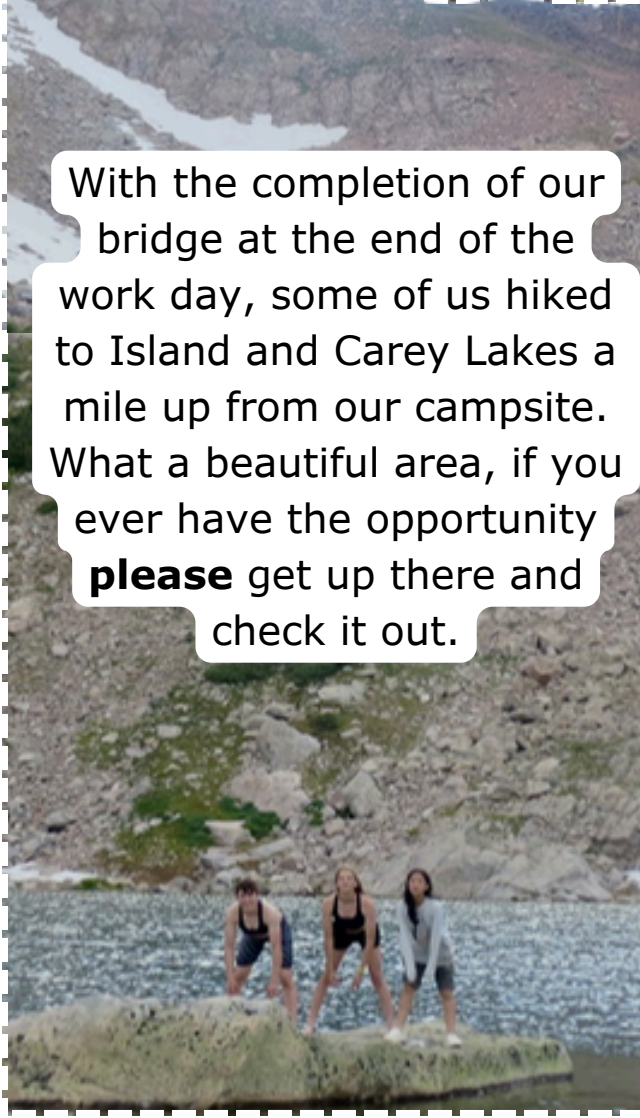
DAY SIX it all starts coming together. With all of the logs and abutments prepared, we began the grueling process of transporting the two 18 ½ foot logs from where the tree was felled to where they would be crossing the river. Using log tongs, a lot of communication, and all the hands we had, the logs were set in place before spiking them into their lifelong position.



DAY SIX - CONT'D



With the completion of our bridge at the end of the work day, some of us hiked to Island and Carey Lakes a mile up from our campsite. What a beautiful area, if you ever have the opportunity **please** get up there and check it out.



DAY SEVEN - HITCH DAY 4

WATER CROSSING BEFORE

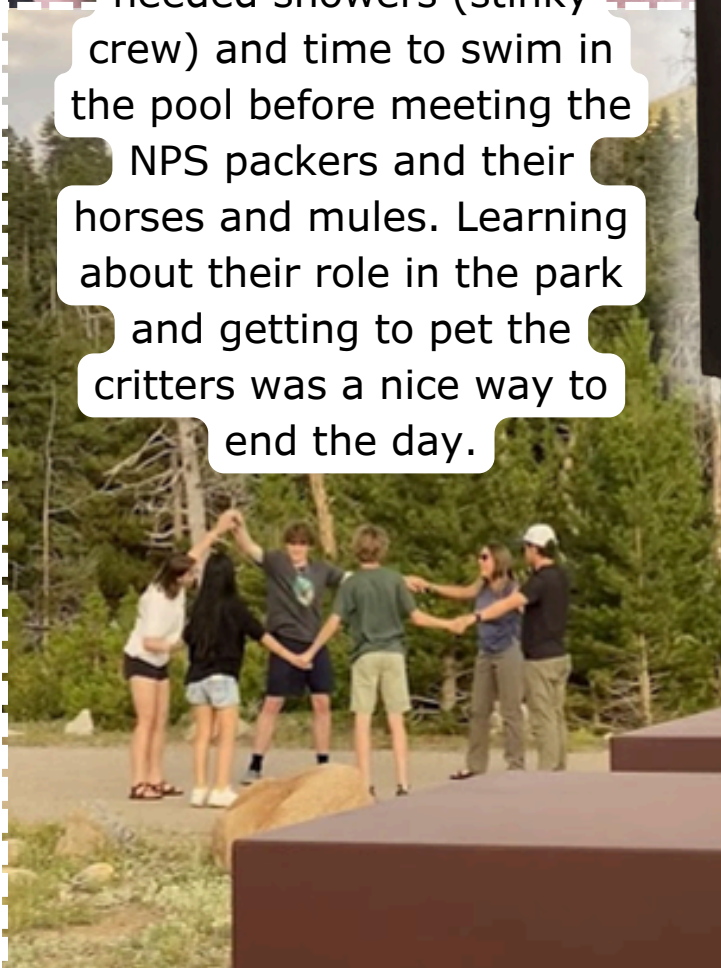
BRIDGE AFTER

DAY SEVEN was hiking out of the Rawah and driving back to Estes Park. Our return was met with enough pizza to fill everyone up and have some tasty leftovers for lunch the next day.

DAY EIGHT



DAY EIGHT was a recreation day for the crew! We went to the Estes Park rec center for some much needed showers (stinky crew) and time to swim in the pool before meeting the NPS packers and their horses and mules. Learning about their role in the park and getting to pet the critters was a nice way to end the day.



DAY NINE



DAY NINE our crew worked alongside an NPS crew on the Twin Sisters Trail. We spent the first few hours of our day with them collecting huge rocks for their retaining wall project, before we started getting hailed on like crazy.

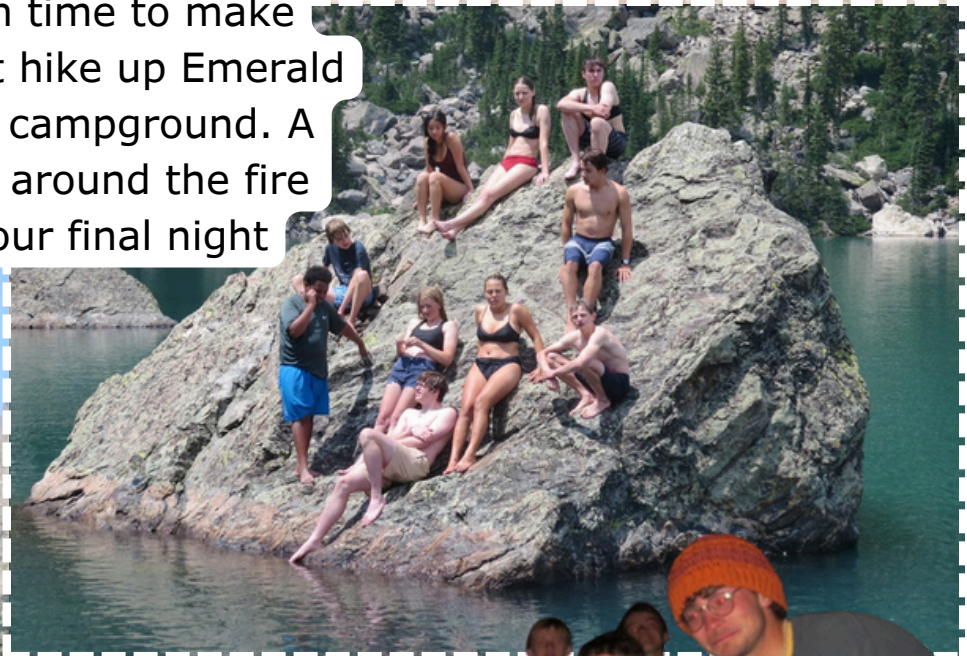


DAY TEN



DAY TEN was a fun hiking day to close out our final full day of the session. We hiked to four lakes: Nymph, Dream, Emerald, and Haiyaha.

We got back to camp just in time to make dinner and prepare for a night hike up Emerald Mountain from Glacier Basin campground. A group of us cowboy camped around the fire after getting back to end our final night together.



DAY ELEVEN

DAY ELEVEN is the end of it all. Our closing cookout at the Foothills Shelter in Boulder was a massive success, and the support from family was awesome to see. Everybody's speeches were incredible, and it was lovely to hear each of their takeaways from an incredible time in July.





JULY SESSION PHOTO DUMP











HSLC Staff



Sasha Lott

"Just a leg cramp."

Position: HSLC Program Lead

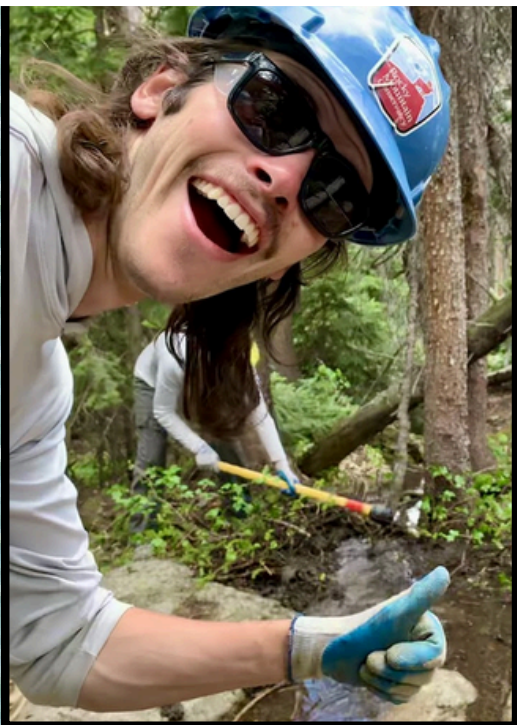
Education: UC-Boulder, B.A. in Elementary Education

Owen "Oba" Bass

"Existentialism at the back of the bus."

Position: HSLC Field Coordinator

Education: Central Michigan University, B.A. in Liberal Arts and Social Sciences



Connor Neal

"For the love of the game."

Position: RMC-CC Field Coordinator

Education: Virginia Tech, B.A. in National Security Studies and Foreign Affairs

HSLC Staff



AJ Lullo

"Leaving RMC to become a full time Grill Master"

Position: RMC-CC Field Coordinator
Education: University of Illinois, B.S. in Environmental Science

Eli Bolick

"Being yourself can be like a never ending barbecue."

Position: RMC-CC Field Coordinator
Education: Kent State University, B.S. in Environmental Science



Dani Woods

"Who needs a gym membership when you have a crosscut saw."

Position: Field Manager
Career/Education: Montana State University, B.A in Natural Resources and Rangeland Ecology

History, Information, and Applications

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy's High School Leadership Corps (HSLC) was started in 2017 as a program devoted to helping young people from urban Colorado get outside. It ran in 2017, 2018, and 2019. Then, the program took a break for a couple years. In 2022, the RMC was able to restart its High School Leadership Corps.

The HSLC is a program for Colorado students who are excited to try something new, develop as young adults, and have an unforgettable outdoor teambuilding experience. There are no requirements or prerequisites for this program; all are welcome!

RMC provides hiking boots, work clothes (shirt, pants, socks, hat) safety equipment, transportation, housing, and food for the program. Camping equipment (tent, sleeping bag and pad, backpacking equipment, stoves) is rented at no cost.

Participants earn \$400 upon completion of the 11-day session and keep their boots and work clothes for future careers and camping trips.

For information about the 2025 High School Leadership Corps, please visit the RMC website at <https://rmconservancy.org/work-with-us/high-school-leadership-corps/>

Special Thanks

The 2025 High School Leadership Corps would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their invaluable contributions to this program. Thank you!

Mike Corbin, Jeanne Corbin, Poudre Wilderness Volunteers

Jim Bromberg, National Park Service Vegetation

Kevin Riggs, National Park Service Fire and Fuels Module 32

Laura Moore and Peter Kingham, National Park Service Trails

Rachel Brett, Thorne Nature Experience



Poudre Wilderness Volunteers

Caring For Northern Colorado Wilderness