



Tennessee AmeriCorps Members #ServeTheEarth

During April, the [Corporation for National and Community Service](#) (CNCS) and [Volunteer Tennessee](#) highlighted National Service's impact on the environment. Environmental Stewardship represents one of the Corporation for National and Community Service's [six strategic focus areas](#).

[Volunteer Tennessee](#) is proud to support these efforts through the Tennessee AmeriCorps programs that are conserving and restoring natural habitats, making homes more energy efficient, cleaning up local waterways, and engaging youth in environmental stewardship. You can join the conversation on social media by using #ServeTheEarth.

As Tennessee's only environmental corps, [CAC AmeriCorps](#) members are continually serving the earth, but April is their busiest time of year for environmental projects.

CAC AmeriCorps and community volunteers removed thousands of pounds of trash & litter, discarded appliances, shopping cars, and tires from East Tennessee waterways during the annual [Ijams Nature Centers River Rescue](#) on April 1.



River Rescue photo courtesy of CAC AmeriCorps



Earthfest photo courtesy of CAC AmeriCorps

On April 15, CAC AmeriCorps took part in Knoxville's 18th annual Earthfest, which drew thousands of residents interested in learning about sustainability. [The Knoxville News Sentinel ran a piece](#) on the event, highlighting the important contributions CAC AmeriCorps members made as volunteers.

Environmental stewardship continues for CAC AmeriCorps alums. Isaac Hopkins of the Great Smoky Wildland Fire Module (GSWFM) just completed his term of service and will be continuing in fire operations with the U.S. Forest Service.

While serving with CAC AmeriCorps, Isaac made a significant impact by treating over 1,500 acres of public lands with prescribed fire, and he also responded to the East Tennessee wildfires. Read more about Isaac Hopkins year on the GSWFM [here](#).

Adam Caraco, a 2008-2009 CAC AmeriCorps alum, is now the Assistant Urban Agriculture Director of [CAC Beardsley Community Farm](#). During Adam's year with CAC AmeriCorps, he served with [Keep Knoxville Beautiful](#). In his current role, Adam believes his purpose is to influence people to think of food systems and make more thoughtful choices, because gardening creates healthy habits and community gardens help build communities. Read more about Adam in this [recent blog post](#).



Isaac Hopkins photo courtesy of CAC AmeriCorps



Members from [Appalachia CARES](#) (Community, Action, Responsibility, Education, and Service) AmeriCorps program at Clinch-Powell Resource Conservation & Development Council, serve at multiple agencies in East Tennessee focused on environmental stewardship.

Through the [United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (USDA / NRCS) members are placed in direct service with farmers and landowners to educate them and draw up plans for more efficient agricultural practices. These practices preserve the environment, make better use of the land, and save the landowners money. Appalachia CARES currently has three AmeriCorps members at USDA / NRCS sites in Hawkins, Hamblen and Grainger Counties. The USDA / NRCS soil conservation office members also do recycling and watershed programs with students in local schools.

Appalachia CARES AmeriCorps members with [Tennessee State Parks](#) encourage hands-on experiential education about the environment and conservation with a heavy focus in youth programs. In addition to facilitating outdoor recreation opportunities, Tennessee State Parks utilizes service-learning facilitated by AmeriCorps members in their recycling programs, trail building projects, native species propagation initiatives, and cultural history programs.



Partnerships with non-profit housing organizations such as Clinch-Powell, Lakeway Area Habitat for Humanity, and Knoxville Habitat for Humanity; allow members to educate the community about energy efficiency in the household and reducing their carbon footprint. Through service-learning and hands-on activities on build sites, at event booths and at community resource fairs, low-income individuals are equipped with the knowledge and resources needed to make everyday decisions that save money and the earth.



Photos courtesy of Appalachia CARES

[Volunteer Tennessee](#) is a 25 member bipartisan board appointed by the Governor to encourage volunteerism and community service. Volunteer Tennessee pursues its mission through administration of AmeriCorps grants, training and collaborations and coalitions with public and private organizations interested in volunteerism and service. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

AmeriCorps is a program of the [Corporation for National and Community Service](#) (CNCS), a federal agency that engages more than 5 million Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. As part of their continued efforts to engage the public with national service, CNCS has released their [2017 Public Engagement, Outreach, and Education Plan](#). As part of this plan, the agency has designated monthly themes throughout the year, centered on CNCS focus areas.