GulfCorps in Alabama

In 2018 GulfCorps launched in Alabama with one Student Conservation Association (SCA) crew in Mobile, which grew to two SCA crews in Year 2. These crews partner with Federal and State agencies, as well as local non-profits, to conduct restoration and conservation projects throughout the Alabama coast. This work includes locating and removing invasive species; planting native marsh vegetation and restoring rare pitcher plant bogs; and conducting trail and boardwalk maintenance. The crews also spent time locating and removing invasive apple snails and apple snail egg masses along waterways. Since GulfCorps began, the crews have impacted over 2,000 acres of coastal habitats on 10 projects.

GulfCorps

Reaching across the Gulf of Mexico, GulfCorps is restoring communities and ecosystems impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The program, with the support of the RESTORE Council and NOAA, is a regional conservation corps that is putting young adults to work restoring and preserving some of the most important places along the Gulf. Working hand-in-hand with local governments, community leaders, and non-profit organizations, GulfCorps crews are committed to broad, positive impact in their communities and across the Gulf of Mexico.
Points on map indicate project locations for all 3 years of GulfCorps.

- **927 Acres of Wetland Enhanced**
- **2,341 Apple Snails Removed**
- **23K+ GulfCorps Hours**
- **10 Active Projects in First 2 Years of GulfCorps**
- **8K+ Plants Planted**

Alabama Map Points: Points on map indicate project locations for all 3 years of GulfCorps.
Alabama Project Highlights

1. Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (WBNERR)
GulfCorps crews are working on a variety of projects to protect and restore habitat with the WBNERR. Since 2018 crews have created and maintained fire lanes, removed invasive plant species including popcorn trees and showy rattlebox, and planted native vegetation. Crew members have also helped to restore pitcher plant bogs and collected water quality samples for Alabama Water Watch.

2. Dauphin Island Parks and Beach Stewardship Project
At the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary, SCA GulfCorps crews worked to remove invasive popcorn trees, installed sand dune fencing and planted sea oats along the Gulf of Mexico shoreline. Other projects on Dauphin Island include prescribed fire preparation, beach debris and trash removal, and rebuilding a boardwalk to promote public access within the Bird Sanctuary.

- 7 Trails/Boardwalks constructed or maintained
- 2,484 acres impacted through September 2019
- 5,839 apple snail egg masses removed
- 28 short-term jobs created in first 2 years of GulfCorps
- 9 acres of wetlands planted
- 27 acres of forest/upland conservation
Local Crews, Local Communities

At its heart, GulfCorps is about rebuilding the environment, and local communities. This means working with, and relying on, organizations that know and are deeply rooted in the local communities where GulfCorps crews serve.

In Alabama, GulfCorps is working with the Student Conservation Association (SCA), which was founded in 1957 with a mission to build the next generation of conservation leaders and inspire lifelong stewardship of the environment and communities by engaging young people in hands-on service to the land. Nationwide, 7 out of 10 SCA alumni go on to obtain careers or studies that make the planet more sustainable, and in this year alone members across the nation have volunteered over 1.5 million hours of conservation service to public lands. SCA efforts in the Gulf of Mexico have included Everglades restoration projects after Hurricane Andrew in 1992, endangered sea turtle protection, and more recently helping the Gulf States recover from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in Alabama.

“Responsible and engaged. This team gave me great confidence for year three. I have high expectations and have objectives for year three that may be a little more challenging (and fun) than prior years.”

- Eric Brunden, Stewardship Coordinator, Weeks Bay Reserve
The work done by the GulfCorps crews would not have been possible otherwise. As a very small organization, we would have been unable to set aside the manpower or funds to make these projects happen. We are extremely happy about this partnership and everything it lets us achieve.”

—Yael Girard, Executive Director, Weeks Bay Foundation
GulfCorps by the Numbers

ESTIMATED OVER $190K IN LEVERAGED FUNDING AND MATERIAL COSTS

5,728 ACRES IMPACTED

965 ACRES OF MARSH/BEACH ENHANCEMENT

47 ACRES OF MARSH/ WETLAND PLANTED

114K PAID PROJECT AND TRAINING HOURS FOR YEARS 1 AND 2

1,871 ACRES OF INVASIVE SPECIES TREATED

369 ACRES BEING MONITORED

2,333 ACRES OF UPLAND CONSERVATION

3K+ HOURS OF TIME SAVED BY PROJECT PARTNER STAFF IN YEAR 2

Points on map indicate project locations for all 3 years of GulfCorps

PHOTOS JOHN STANMEYER/NATGEO CREATIVE
GulfCorps mobilized with one crew in each of the five Gulf states in early 2018 that worked for 6 months. The designated RESTORE Representative from each State provided GulfCorps with a list of projects or partners for the program to get started with in Year 1.

### YEAR 1

- GulfCorps launched in 2017 when NOAA awarded a $7 million grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for the creation of the program, a collaboration of TNC, the Student Conservation Association (SCA), and The Corps Network (TCN).

### YEAR 2

- In Year 2, the program doubled in size to 2 crews per state, each working about 7 months of time.

### YEAR 3

- Now in its third year, there are a total of 11 crews that are working for 8-9 months – the biggest year yet. Project Partners include state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, local/municipal agencies, and academic institutions. TNC, SCA and TCN work closely with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to plan and execute sound conservation and restoration projects and to create a restoration workforce that has high-quality training and proven work experience.

### The GulfCorps Crews for Year 3:

- Conservation Corps of the Forgotten Coast – Franklin County (FL)
- Conservation Corps of the Emerald Coast - Bay County (FL)
- Conservation Corps of the Emerald Coast – Escambia County (FL)
- Student Conservation Association – (AL)
- Climb CDC (MS)
- Limitless Vistas Inc. (LA)
- Louisiana Conservation Corps (LA)
- Texas Conservation Corps (TX)
- American Conservation Experience (TX)

“The crew took pride in what was accomplished, and it showed in the work completed.”

—Shelley Stiaes, Refuge Manager for Bayou Sauvage, Bayou Teche and Mandalay National Wildlife Refuges, US Fish and Wildlife Service

“Responsible and engaged, this team gave me great confidence for year three.”

—Eric Brunden, Stewardship Coordinator, Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
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