

**National Forest Association
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AmeriCorps is SNOW “Shovel Ready”!

During the recent wave of record-breaking snowfall and rain, the National Forest Association’s AmeriCorps crew picked up a different shovel, a snow shovel, answered the call and were literally “shovel ready” to assist mountain communities in need of quick response and shovel power!

The AmeriCorps crew heeded the call when partner organization, The Office of Emergency Services, asked for assistance in shoveling out Big Bear’s Moonridge Animal Park so that the volunteers had better access to feed the animals. In addition, Corpsmembers helped the local fire department rescue an elderly woman from her Angelus Oaks residence. Unfortunately her name was not captured in all the rescue and emotion. Physically incapable and widowed in 2009, she told the crew that she didn’t have any money but only love for their service to her time in need. With tears in her eyes, she gave the whole crew a big hug.

The National Forest Association (NFA) was awarded AmeriCorps grant dollars last fall to operate a three-year program on Southern California inland urban and mountain communities. AmeriCorps provides funding to local and national organizations and agencies committed to using national service to address critical community needs in education, public safety, health and the environment. Crews of young adults from Inland Empire communities have worked on a variety of conservation related projects like tree planting, trail building, sand bagging during heavy rainstorms, native plant nursery work and restoration of fire burned lands.

“We are meeting our goals to provide young people an opportunity to work in public service, within the mountains and foothill communities, while protecting our residents from danger,” shared Sarah Miggins, executive director.

The goal of this program is to provide young adults an introduction to public service on conservation-related projects while earning stipends and scholarships that can be later applied to tuition and books. The National Forest Association’s program director, Sandy Bonilla, is delighted to help our community partners like the Angelus Oaks Fire Department. “Through our service, corpsmembers are learning the necessary skills and building their confidence and resumes to position them for future meaningful job opportunities.”

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About the National Forest Association: The National Forest Association, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and key partner to the U.S. Forest Service, is committed to three initiatives addressing conservation, education and responsible recreation through a year-round portfolio of programming aimed at reaching Southern California’s inland urban and mountain communities, and visitor populations on public lands. Through partnerships and a strong volunteer backbone network, the SBNFA brings communities of people, partners and funding resources to important public lands projects focused on health, stewardship and sustainability. For more information call (951) 682-7513 or visit www.SBNFA.org.