

**National Forest Association
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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San Bernardino National Forest Association Awarded AmeriCorps Funding

The San Bernardino National Forest Association (SBNFA) is proud to announce receipt of a coveted award of \$250k annually over three years to operate an AmeriCorps program on the San Bernardino National Forest. This funding will expand the SBNFA's newly-launched Urban Conservation Corps to 40 members. 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. A key partner and funder of this new program is LA-based TreePeople. TreePeople, the San Bernardino National Forest and SBNFA began working together this past spring on one of the most ambitious restoration projects on public lands. "We are proud and delighted to be a supporter of this very important program, which should contribute greatly to our work in the San Bernardino National Forest. TreePeople has long believed in the importance of including youth in our work, and knows that starting now can lead to a lifetime of service to the environment," shared Jim Summers, Director of Reforestation Initiative.

"The San Bernardino National Forest is the Southern California's emerald that embodies the people and the environment," stated SBNFA executive director Sarah Miggins. "These resources are critical in supporting the demands for restoration and maintenance work on the nation's most populated and recreated national forest." 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. Through their service, participants will learn the necessary skills and develop the attitudinal qualities and confidence to position them for meaningful job opportunities. Projects will include tree planting, trail building, native plant nursery maintenance and restoration of fire burned lands. Additionally, SBNFA's AmeriCorps program will be an excellent employee recruitment tool for agencies like the U.S. Forest Service. SBNFA will recruit the 40 available positions, ages 18 +, from Inland Empire communities, including the mountain communities of Big Bear Lake and Lake Arrowhead to fulfill its 40-person capacity. Recruitment will begin in July.

The AmeriCorps grant application together with its Urban Conservation Corps positioned SBNFA to receive funding from the U.S. Forest Service under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that President Obama signed into law January 2009. With the infrastructure in place, SBNFA was one of the first programs to be awarded the funds to fully launch its own AmeriCorps program. SBNFA is the key non-profit partner on the San Bernardino National Forest and possesses the experience, expertise, trained

volunteers, and infrastructure. Through this award and its expanded capacity, the Forest Association is positioned to support the U.S. Forest Service in implementing restoration work on public lands like the efforts of FDR's Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930's.

The **San Bernardino National Forest Association** was created as the nonprofit arm of the San Bernardino National Forest in 1993. The Forest Association had a vision to bring additional resources – volunteers, money, and partnerships – to help with the management of the Forest. The Forest Association has since been extremely successful in achieving this mission by building upon the vision of the original founders. “We have succeeded in creating a synergy that has helped leverage and maximize our limited resources. This meant thinking beyond our usual way of doing things.” states Forest Supervisor, Jeanne Wade Evans. Miggins explains that “in addition to leverage, leadership needs to encourage the integration of existing resources and identify how they may meet the demands of a changing world.” The Forest Association re-energized and did just that in 2005 and it was embraced by the Forest Service, allowing the organization to gain new strength and influence. The SBNFA has over 1,000 volunteers and 50 paid staff that are responsible for helping the Forest Service care for the land and serve the people. If you are interested in volunteering at the San Bernardino National Forest, visit online at www.sbnfa.org to learn more.

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