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Conservation Corps of Long Beach to Receive National Award from The Corps Network for their Urban Lumber Program

Long Beach, CA — The Conservation Corps of Long Beach has received one of three 2024 Projects of the Year Award from The Corps Network in recognition of their Urban Lumber Program. The Corps Network, the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, presents this prestigious award on an annual basis to select organizations from their membership of more than 140 Corps across the country. Awardees are chosen through a competitive nomination and review process.

As defined by The Corps Network, Corps are local, state, or national programs that engage young adults in service activities addressing conservation and community needs. Through a term of service that could last from a few months to a year, Corps participants – or “Corpsmembers” – complete meaningful projects while gaining job experience and developing in-demand skills. The Conservation Corps of Long Beach engages young adults in conservation work projects such as urban forestry, habitat restoration, wildfire mitigation through fire fuels reduction, drought tolerant landscaping, tree planting, and more in the gateway cities area.

Project of the Year Awards are presented on an annual basis to Corps that have undertaken especially influential or innovative initiatives. Projects of the Year are noteworthy for their ability to provide both a positive experience for Corpsmembers and meaningful improvements to the community. The Lumber Yard is a conduit for CCLB to remain mission-driven - providing skill development and employment opportunities to Corpsmembers. Along with learning about arboriculture, they broaden their knowledge base to include the use of specialized equipment. These skills can lead to various employment opportunities in fields such as landscaping, horticulture, forestry, and environmental conservation, thereby enhancing their future employability. This project was funded by the State’s Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, better known as CAL FIRE.

“This project could not have become reality without the financial support from CAL FIRE. Through a \$1 million grant, we joined forces with the City of Long Beach, Public Works and West Coast Arborists to remove 1,000 dead / dying / diseased trees and replaced them with 2,000 newly planted trees as part of a multi-pronged workforce development program. We were able to provide training to dozens of Corpsmembers that is now paving the way for job-specific training

leading to gainful employment in the arboriculture field,” shared Dan Knapp, CCLB’s Executive Director and CEO.

“Projects of the Year demonstrate the power of national service programs to change communities and change lives. The Urban Lumber Program of the Conservation Corps of Long Beach shows the amazing outcomes possible when local organizations give young people a chance to serve and lead,” said Mary Ellen Sprenkel, President and CEO of The Corps Network. “With this award, we recognize extraordinary programs from our network. Initiatives like this shed light on the vast capabilities of Corps and show how a Corps can deliver meaningful results and comprehensive career development programming. The Corps Network is humbled to represent such inspiring and impactful organizations as the Conservation Corps of Long Beach.” The three winners of the Project of the Year Award will be honored at The Corps Network’s 38th annual national conference, taking place in March 2024.

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THE CONSERVATION CORPS OF LONG BEACH

Since 1987, the Conservation Corps of Long Beach has been providing youth workforce development and education services to young people ages 18-26. Many of the young people served come from and live in historically under-resourced communities, as well as communities where environmental justice issues like inadequate access to healthy food, air and water pollution, and inadequate transportation are prevalent. The Conservation Corps of Long Beach currently manages a \$12 million budget, 63 full-time staff and 130 Corpsmembers.

CCLB is the 4th largest Conservation Corps in the State of California and is one of 14 State-certified Local Conservation Corps. As a certified Corps, CCLB operates under the California Public Resources Code which mandates important and essential program standards and components such as job skills training, education, life skills training and post-program transition, retention, and supportive services. Certified Corps may also be called upon to provide local disaster relief. CCLB maintains its certification each year through an annual review process conducted by the California Conservation Corps. To learn more about the Conservation Corps of Long Beach, visit www.cclb-corps.org.

THE CORPS NETWORK

The Corps Network, the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, provides leadership and support to over 140 Corps across the United States. Through advocacy and providing Corps access to funding opportunities and expert guidance, The Corps Network annually enables approximately 25,000 Corpsmembers to strengthen communities, improve the environment and transform their lives through service. To learn more about The Corps Network, visit www.corpsnetwork.org.