

What is an inclusive crew?

Traditional conservation corps projects are often located in physically inaccessible areas and require corps members to be in excellent physical condition. In contrast, inclusive crew projects are intentionally selected and designed to include crew members of all abilities. Crew members with disabilities are actively involved in all phases of the project, adding a valuable perspective.

A National Movement

The UCC inclusive crew project is part of a larger Corps movement to take pro-active steps to include Corpsmembers of all abilities. The Minnesota Conservation Corps (MCC) has implemented a program that includes Corpsmembers who are deaf and hard of hearing and Operation Fresh Start in Wisconsin has implemented a program to include Corpsmembers with psychological disabilities. The UCC has worked in partnership with The Corps Network to develop a successful model and toolkit that will provide corps throughout the country with the resources and tools necessary to develop similar inclusive programs.



MCC Youth Corps member teaching American Sign Language

Inclusive Projects

The UCC inclusive crews have focused on two main project areas: 1.) accessibility surveys and transition plans for the U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service, and 2.) the development of an accessible community garden.

Accessibility surveys are a critical first step in the development of **transition plans**. During the survey, each portion of a structure is compared to accessibility standards or guidelines, and compliance and deficiencies are recorded.

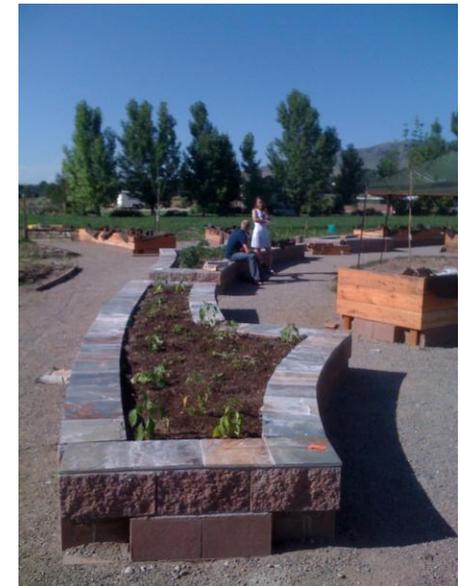
Every Forest Service unit in the nation is required by law to have transition plans in place; however, many do not. The UCC inclusive crew has demonstrated itself to be an effective partner in addressing this federal mandate and making developed areas on federal lands accessible to users of all abilities.

In 2009, the UCC inclusive crew assisted the U.S. Forest Service in the development of a new national **accessibility information database** that will provide the public with information on accessible campsites, facilities and services. The accessibility information gathered and entered into the database by inclusive crews automatically feeds Forest Service District web portals that are accessed by the public. Conservation Corps throughout the country will now be able to enter accessibility information into this new data base in a consistent manner, making the inclusive crew program model easily replicable by other corps.

Inclusive crews not only survey what is out there, they are also a **part of the solution**. All UCC crews are trained in trail maintenance and construction and can remove some barriers while the crew is on site. For example, sections of trail can be widened, rocks can be removed and vegetation can be pruned.

The accessible community garden, designed and constructed by the UCC inclusive crew, is fully accessible to all community members. The UCC partnered with the Cache Valley Community Garden project to turn this dream into a reality. The garden includes raised beds, table top planters, hardened pathways and adapted gardening tools.

UCC members of all abilities conduct gardening workshops every other Friday during the summer months.



Accessible Raised Beds

Successful Partnerships

The U.S. Forest Service has been extremely satisfied with the work the UCC inclusive crew has accomplished. The UCC continues to work with the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest on the development of transition plans for campgrounds and trails and the implementation of many of the suggested changes. The Forest Service National Accessibility Program Manager, Janet Zeller, has given the inclusive crew project her full support and has been instrumental in expanding the program on the national level. In 2009, the UCC inclusive crew partnered with Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks.

Developing Leaders...

Dissolving Stereotypes

One of the most important project goals is to involve people with disabilities in positions of leadership whenever possible. By placing qualified people with disabilities in positions of leadership, limiting outdated stereotypes are lifted and attitudes toward people with disabilities evolve and change.

Funding for Crews

The UCC has received **Fee-for-Service** match dollars through partnership projects with land management agencies and multiple small **grants** for the accessible garden project.

State Commissions often provide funding for **reasonable accommodations** for AmeriCorps members.



Accessibility Survey
Cache National Forest

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utahconservationcorps.org

Thanks...



Utah
Commission on
Volunteers

Utah Conservation Corps Inclusive Crew Project



2007 UCC Inclusive Crew



2009 UCC Crew Leaders

