



Summary of Proceedings Pathways to Natural Resources Careers Inventory Inventory Meeting, April 24, 2012

The Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) co-hosted a Pathways to Natural Resources Careers Summit on February 23, 2012 in Denver, Colorado.

Attendees included 40 representatives from public land management agencies, non-profit organizations, and higher education institutions. The Summit focused on identifying challenges, barriers, and actions to create more pathways for young people to enter and develop professional, sustainable natural resources careers. Special thanks to Katie Navin, Executive Director of the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education for co-facilitating this meeting.

Participants agreed to pursue collaboratively two immediate next steps and identified several additional short- and long-term actions for the future (*Figure 1*). The two immediate next steps were completed in April and May 2012:

- Organize a summit to inventory existing gaps and resources for natural resources job seekers – **DONE**. CYCA hosted a meeting on April 24, 2012 with the goal of inventorying.
- Create an electronic forum to facilitate communication among partners – **DONE**. CYCA launched a LinkedIn page and discussion group with accompanying Box.net file sharing in May 2012.

This document details the results of the April 24 Inventory meeting attended by 25 representatives from public land management agencies, non-profit organizations, and higher education institutions.

Figure 1: Additional conclusions from the Pathways to Natural Resources Careers Summit

Short-term Actions	Long-term Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broaden network of partners• Organize an education session and job fair for young adults• Train non-profit staff to be effective natural resources career coaches• Partner with organizations already reaching students and schools-educate school counselors• Create a "How-to" Guide for accessing public land agency positions• Identify successful and replicable higher ed/non-profit/agency partnerships and work to replicate them	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a comprehensive online clearinghouse of positions and resources• Identify agency challenges and determine opportunities for partners to mitigate them• Research and replicate successful internship programs• Create a mentor system

This summary describes the process the group undertook for the Resources Inventory, the conclusions at which they arrived, and agreed upon next steps.

INVENTORY PROCESS

Setting the Stage

CYCA set the stage by identifying some guiding parameters for the Pathways Initiative based on feedback from the Summit and ongoing research.

Target Populations – The target population for the Pathways Initiative is any youth or young adult that has gotten a “spark” of the outdoors and wants to explore a career in natural resources. We especially want to target young people who are currently not enrolled in 4-year natural resources degree programs, under the assumption that these students already have significant support from their institutions. However, the tools developed by the Initiative may very well be helpful to these students.

Target Employers – The Initiative grew from a common understanding that a significant number of state and federal government agency staff would be retirement eligible in the coming years and that these agencies have stringent hiring requirements. Therefore, the focus for breaking down barriers and enhancing career opportunities in these agencies remains a focus of the Initiative. However, the tools developed may very well be useful for connecting young people to careers in private industry and with municipalities.

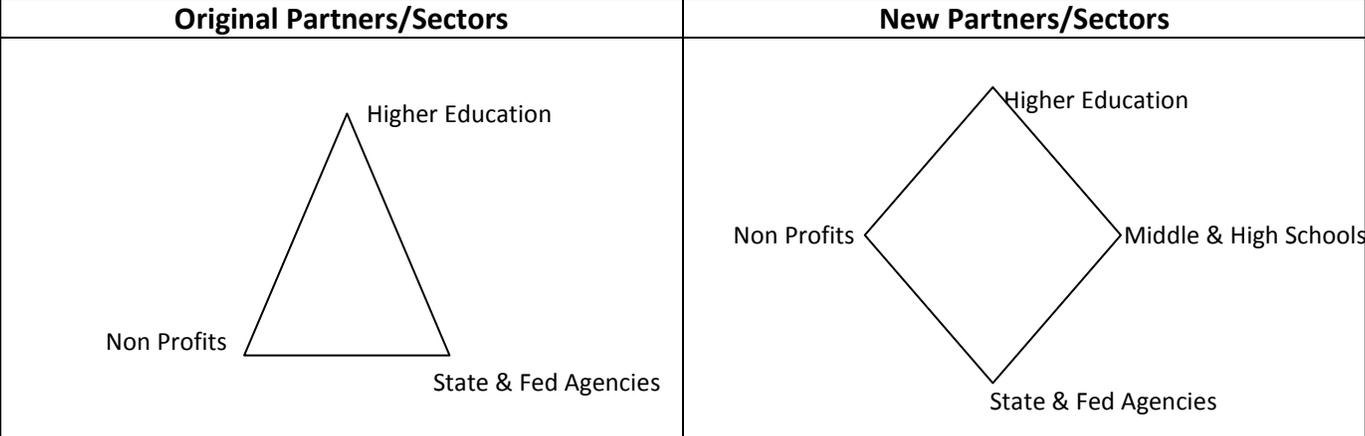
Target Job Types – At the original Summit, attendees asked, “What do you mean by the term *natural resources careers*?” Our answer is “anything that has to do with the outdoors – including all of the job types that support public lands such as communications, accounting, human resources, information technology, and more. This Initiative is not solely focused on “park rangers” or “environmental educators”. We know that, as with other industries, it takes a wide variety of skills and experience to achieve an organizational mission. With this inclusive approach to defining *natural resources*, we hope to attract any individuals who can contribute their talents for the benefit of the outdoors. We will use the term *natural resources* as a shorthand term, but feel free to translate that term to mean things like *outdoor recreation, conservation, stewardship, environmental education, etc.*

Target Partners – *The goal of the original Summit was to convene three primary sectors:*

1. Higher education
2. State and Federal land management agencies
3. Non-profit partners

However, it became clear that one sector was missing – middle schools and high schools, especially the counselors who guide students in their career exploration. Therefore, we have added this sector as a critical partner for our efforts (figure 2).

Figure 2: Expansion of Partners and Sectors as part of the Pathways Initiative



Resource Inventory Process

With the stage set, the attendees proceeded to:

- 1 – Conduct a resource inventory
- 2 – Identify resource gaps, and
- 3 – Identify 2-3 action steps the group can take in the next 12 months to fill those gaps

Inventory – Attendees were divided into small groups and were asked to review and assess 10-15 resources that were provided by CYCA or that other attendees brought with them. The small groups, using a standardized format, categorized the resources and made qualitative assessments about their usefulness for the target populations, age, employers and job types, as well as geographic reach. The inventory form provided attendees with a method for categorizing resources in this manner (see form in appendix):

- Resource Type – e.g., Job Bank, Paid Internships, Job Fair, etc.
- Primary Audience – Middle School, College Age, High School, etc.
- Geography – Denver Area, West Slope, Eastern Plains, Statewide, etc.
- Comments – for narrative assessment of the resource quality and usefulness

After utilizing the form to categorize and assess a number of resources, attendees requested that the form also include categories for the following:

- Resource Type - Young professionals
- Geography – National reach
- Primary Audience – Focus on ethnic diversity

The small groups reviewed and assessed more than 50 resources. A master list of the resources and the qualitative assessments are located in the Box.net section of the [Colorado Pathways to Natural Resources Careers LinkedIn Profile](#).

Resource Gaps – Attendees felt that there were a handful of resources useful for a broad population, including:

- Environmental Protection Agency Website – www.epa.gov
- USA Jobs – www.usajobs.gov
- Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities - <https://www.aplu.org/>
- Multicultural Environmental Leadership Development Initiative - <http://meldi.snre.umich.edu/>
- Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences - <http://www.manrrs.org/>
- Youth Go - <https://youthgo.gov/>
- College In Colorado - <http://secure.collegeincolorado.org/>
- Colorado State University's Warner College of Natural Resources - <http://warnercnr.colostate.edu/>

Attendees were also unified in their assessment of the gaps in resources for youth and young adults seeking natural resources careers in Colorado:

- There are numerous nationwide job banks for general natural resources jobs and for specific professions (herpetologists, geologists, etc.). However, there is no online location that catalogues all internship, fellowship, and job opportunities in the natural resources field. Additionally, the job banks advertise positions for which one needs a specific set of knowledge, skills, and experience which most young people have not yet acquired.
- There are no training opportunities for non-profit staff or middle and high school counselor, who serve as formal or informal “career coaches” for young people.

- While there are some high-quality websites with good “career path” information (see list, above), there is no “how-to” or “all-in-one” resource that helps young people (and their adult coaches) understand what skills, experience, and education they need to secure their dream job in natural resources.
- There are no training opportunities for agency staff on topics such as “how to attract, train, and manage non-traditional and young candidates” as well as how to “design high-quality internships and other entry level work experiences for young people”.
- There are no in-person job fairs of natural resource employers.
- Most resources are nationwide, statewide, or Denver-metro focused, with few resources available elsewhere in the state.

Next Steps - Based on the Short Term and Long Term Actions identified in the February Summit (*figure 1*), the assessment of resources inventoried at the April meeting, and the small and large-group discussions at both gatherings, the attendees of the Inventory meeting identified the formation of three working groups as the most important immediate “next steps”.

Working Groups:

1. Job Fair/Workshop – This working group will implement an in-person job fair and in-person training workshop for non-profit staff regarding how to coach young people into natural resources careers. Colorado State University staff have agreed to take the lead for this working group.
2. Job Bank – This working group will determine the best method for collecting all job bank, fellowship, and internships websites into one on-line location.
3. Career Path Education – This working group will develop tools such as 1) comprehensive information about what experience and education young person needs to get on a career path track, regardless of their age and 2) a clear “how-to” guide for young adults seeking seasonal, SCEP/STEP/Pathways or entry-level positions.

Attendees volunteered for these working groups and they will be staffed by a CYCA employee.

The groups will develop 3-, 6- and 12-month goals and report on their progress at a spring 2013 Summit. Anyone who would like to participate on these groups can contact Grant Sanford at gsanford@cyca.org.

All working group products will be loaded on to the Pathways Box.net site and shared with anyone interested in receiving progress updates.

CYCA has agreed to serve as a lead agency to implement the working groups and support the Pathways Initiative for the next two years.