



# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## LAND STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN 2013

### *Great Outdoors Colorado Approves Funds to Support Rejuvenation of Historic Farm in Adams County*

**December 12, 2012, DENVER** – The Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) has announced that young people ages 18 to 24 will get jobs next summer thanks to funding approved by the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) board yesterday. The GOCO board voted to disperse \$31,987 in lottery funds to the City & County of Broomfield and the City of Westminster to support rejuvenation efforts of the Metzger Farm/Big Dry Creek Corridor in Adams County.

The City & County of Broomfield and the City of Westminster, which co-own the Metzger Property at 121st Avenue and Lowell Boulevard, will hire the Mile High Youth Corps for four weeks during the summer of 2013. Youth corps crews will remove and chip invasive Russian olive trees, which were planted decades ago as a windbreak, and over time have infested the Big Dry Creek corridor. The Russian olive limits native tree growth along the corridor, deteriorating viable wildlife habitat and impacting trails. This project contributes to a rejuvenation initiative that will increase public access to the historic farm.

The projects are among 45 statewide projects totaling \$6.2 million, awarded by the GOCO board on December 11. In addition to supporting youth corps, projects funded by GOCO will help purchase land in a low-income Denver neighborhood to be used for environmental education; protect 6,720 acres of open space in perpetuity; renovate existing parks; and allow planning for future outdoor recreation projects.

Of the \$6.2 million, the GOCO board dedicated \$500,000 in grants to local governments and land trusts for projects that employed Colorado youth corps crews. It was the second such initiative by GOCO: The organization awarded a \$1 million grant to CYCA in fiscal year 2011, which created nearly 500 land stewardship jobs statewide for youth and young adults throughout the state at no cost to taxpayers.

“The GOCO board is enthusiastic about funding Colorado youth corps projects because they are such sound investments in our outdoors and our youth,” said Lise Aangeenbrug, GOCO’s executive director. “Youth Corps participants perform vital work for local governments and land trusts, including fire mitigation, trail maintenance and water conservation. Through this funding, GOCO is helping to train the next generation of land stewards.”

Support for land stewardship projects is a win/win for young people, Colorado and the economy, according to Jennifer Freeman, CYCA’s executive director. “These jobs provide young people with valuable, transferable skills while giving them an opportunity to enhance and improve our state’s resources. And the economic benefits of these projects shouldn’t go unnoticed: outdoor recreation contributes \$10 billion annually to Colorado’s economy,” she said.

Youth corps teaches job readiness and leadership skills with the goal of preparing young people to be productive and ready for the work force. It also gives them important time in the outdoors and educates them about a range of stewardship issues, including water conservation, land use, fire danger and the impact of invasive species. While in the corps, members can receive high school or college credits or prepare to take their GED. They are also eligible to receive AmeriCorps education awards for college, trade school or student loans. Corpsmembers earn a living allowance for their service.

Youth corps conservation crews throughout Colorado perform land, water, and energy conservation projects to benefit residents, visitors, and wildlife. Making this work available to young people contributes to lowering the youth unemployment rate, which is about 20 percent, more than twice that of the general population.

Adams County young people ages 18-24 who would like to join the Mile High Youth Corps are encouraged to visit [www.milehighyouthcorps.org](http://www.milehighyouthcorps.org) for application information.

### **About Great Outdoors Colorado**

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) is the result of an initiative passed by the voters in 1992. As the recipient of approximately half of Colorado Lottery proceeds—\$57 million in fiscal year 2012—GOCO awards grants to local governments and land trusts, and makes investments through the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife. Since 1994, nearly 3,500 projects in all 64 counties have benefited from GOCO funding. Learn more at [www.goco.org](http://www.goco.org).

### **About Mile High Youth Corps**

Mile High Youth Corps (MHYC) engages 16- to 24-year-old young adults on a variety of land, water, and energy conservation projects. As a part of a crew, individuals have the chance to gain job skills in the green industry, learn more about conservation, and gain leadership experience. During its 20-year history, MHYC has successfully transitioned from a small, seasonal, neighborhood-based organization to a comprehensive, year-round regional agency serving 15 counties throughout metropolitan Denver and the southern Front Range. By integrating paid work experience on community projects with career exploration, education and life-skills training, the MHYC helps corpsmembers succeed in the classroom, the workforce and everyday life. Learn more at [www.milehighyouthcorps.org](http://www.milehighyouthcorps.org).

### **About Colorado Youth Corps Association**

The Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) is a statewide coalition of 10 accredited youth conservation corps that employ and train youth and young adults on land, water and energy conservation projects. Youth corps is a proven strategy for engaging young people in service to their communities and stewardship of their environment while cultivating valuable skills to meet the challenges of the 21st century. For more information about CYCA or the statewide youth corps coalition, visit [www.CYCA.org](http://www.CYCA.org).

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### **Media Contact:**

Jennifer Freeman, Colorado Youth Corps Association

720-273-9861 / [JFreeman@CYCA.ORG](mailto:JFreeman@CYCA.ORG)