



*"To me, being a part of YCC means preparing for the future. Not just learning how to do the job right, and go home, but how to work as a part of a team. How to make connections. How to utilize everyone's unique skills that they bring to the table."
YCC Community Gardens Crew Member, 2022*

SUPPORTING RACIAL EQUITY

Portland Parks & Recreation's (PP&R) Youth Conservation Crew (YCC) attracts and hires from a diverse applicant pool. These emerging environmental leaders will have the opportunity to participate in paid internships through age 25, as funding allows. This program directly contributes to a more diverse hiring pool for seasonal and full-time employees, in line with PP&R's racial equity goals.

Demographics

Fifty teens worked in summer 2022, including 36 new hires and 14 returning crew members. Of the 36 new hires:

- Teens came from over 23 different middle and high schools
- At least 47% qualify for free and reduced lunch programs at school
- 36% speak a language other than English at home
- 83% identify as people of color

ALUMNI RETENTION AND ADVANCEMENT

- 40 alumni have worked as crew leaders for Environmental Education programs (YCC, Teen Nature Team, Summer Nature Day Camp).
- Of the 10 crew leaders and one office assistant hired in 2022, four were alumni of YCC. Hiring YCC alumni helps sustain a continuity of culture for teen crew members and furthers mentorship and career opportunities for crew leaders. One of this year's crew leaders was part of the first cohort of PP&R's Teen Nature Team (then known as Jr. GRUNT) in 2011.
- When crew members turn 18, they have the option of applying to be Assistant Crew Leaders (ACL). This year, there were three ACL's, all of whom have been part of YCC for over three years each.
- YCC alumni are eligible to participate in paid internships and year-round work on Saturdays and no-school days with a variety of PP&R work units. This year, City Nature West, Environmental Education, Horticultural Services, and North Zone Developed Parks all hosted interns. During YCC Saturdays last year, crew members planted hundreds of plants and trees, cared for young plants, supported the Urban Forestry Yard Tree Giveaway, removed invasive plants, and helped maintain community gardens. In addition, returning crew members helped interview and select new YCC applicants.
- With funding from the Parks Local Option Levy, a new Stewardship Coordinator position was created to focus on volunteer engagement on soft surface trails, and to serve as a sponsor for the YCC Trail Crew. The person hired into the role is a YCC alum.



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION SM

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland



YOUTH CONSERVATION CREW (YCC)

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Including the City Nature East Crew, Community Gardens Crew, No Ivy League, Trail Crew, and Tree Crew.

Ahmed Yusuf, Trails Crew Sponsor 2022 | JILL VAN WINKLE Trails Crew Sponsor 2016-2021

Anne Marie Santos, City Nature East Crew Sponsor

Gina Dake, Environmental Education Supervisor

Marissa Richerson, Tree Crew Sponsor

Mary Verrilli, No Ivy League Sponsor

MAXINE RODRIGUES, Community Gardens Crew Sponsor 2022

Nichole Bruno and Mikael Brust, Community Gardens Crew Sponsors 2021

Rachel Felice, City Nature Manager

Yoko Silk, Program Coordinator 2022 | Kelly Rosteck, Program Coordinator 2014-2022

COMMISSIONER DAN RYAN
DIRECTOR ADENA LONG
PORTLANDPARKS.ORG/PARKS/YCC





The Youth Conservation Crew (YCC) provides employment opportunities for a diverse population of Portland-area youth. Crews protect, restore, and manage Portland Parks and Natural Areas while developing job skills and exploring environmental career paths.

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

With community health concerns and work restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, YCC staff adapted and modified the program to be able to provide meaningful summer jobs for youth. Below are some of the notable highlights and modifications over the past 3 summers.

2020

- 18 returning youth were employed as one full crew.
- Due to the City hiring freeze, no new youth were hired.
- No transportation was provided (to limit COVID-19 transmission risk) so projects were focused in sites accessible by public transportation options.
- 2 alumni served as crew leaders; 1 alum became a full-time permanent staff member with Environmental Education.

2021

- YCC was able to hire new youth again.
- 40 teens total worked in 4 separate crews. Each crew had 2 adult crew leaders.
- No transportation was provided so all sites needed to be accessible by public transportation.
- Due to staff capacity, there was no No Ivy League crew, but Community Gardens staff sponsored the first YCC Community Gardens Crew in YCC history.

2022

- With a new coordinator, 4 new sponsors (one of whom is an alum of YCC), 10 first-year crew leaders, and 72% new crew members, 2022 was a year of transition.
- Because of additional funding from the Parks Local Option Levy, we were able to offer jobs to 50 youth and 10 crew leaders.
- Levy funding also allowed the program to provide transportation for all crews, which provided more flexibility for selecting sites in which crews could work.
- Providing transportation facilitated easier collaboration between crews, and more options for enrichment activities.

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

BeProud | Carhartt | Columbia Slough Watershed Council | Estuary Partnership | Everybody Climbs | Friends of Trees | Green Lents Initiative | Johnson Creek Watershed Council | Leach Botanical Garden | Metro Regional Government | Native Gathering Garden Subcommittee | OMSI | PDX Climbers of Color | Zenger Farm

APPRECIATION TO THE FOLLOWING PP&R TEAMS:

City Nature East | City Nature West | Community Gardens | Urban Forestry



PROTECTING OUR PARKS

The number of YCC staff hired more than doubles the number of staff Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) has working to improve our natural areas and trails each summer, allowing us to complete backlogged projects and essential work. This summer, we worked at 27 sites citywide and accomplished the following:



No Ivy League cleared 11,876 square feet of ivy and other invasively growing plants in PP&R natural areas, and rescued 205 trees from ivy, supporting habitat restoration goals without the use of pesticides.



Tree Crew identified and inventoried 702 street trees, weeded and mulched 53 trees, and watered 9 recently planted trees, supporting the goals of the Citywide Tree Inventory and stewarding the City's urban forest.



Community Gardens Crew helped care for current community gardens, mulched 5,857 square feet of new garden beds, and cleared 17,098 square feet of unwanted plants like vetch and spikey lettuce at the Native Gathering Garden.



Trail Crew built 2,500 linear feet of new trails, maintained 686 linear feet of established trails, deconstructed 83 linear feet of trail, and built 305 square feet of rock wall, helping to increase safe access to PP&R natural areas and parks, and protect natural areas.



The City Nature East Crew cleared 23,595 square feet of invasively growing plants, weeded and mulched over 300 recently planted shrubs and trees, and built 336 linear feet of split rail fence, helping further habitat restoration goals for PP&R natural areas and trees.

Enrichment Activities

- YCC partnered with Everybody Climbs and PDX Climbers of Color to give teens the experience of rock-climbing.
- To learn more about urban farming, YCC crew members toured Zenger Farm and participated in a harvesting work party.
- The Estuary Partnership and Columbia Slough Watershed Council gave YCC members canoeing experiences on local waterways.

"YCC is an opportunity where I get to try out different types of work, where I get a chance to visit places that I have never gone, where I get to know people and create a beautiful bond with the crew members, sponsor and crew leaders."
- Tree Crew Member, 2022

"YCC is a group of people who are interested in learning about themselves, nature, and other people around them. It is a very unique experience that is not only good for your resume but allows you to think about what you want for your future and what goals you have. It is a safe and open space for learning and growth!" - No Ivy League Crew Member, 2022