

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**\*\*INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE UPON SCHEDULING:** WisCorps Director, Eric Robertson, AmeriCorps Members at The Nature Place or WisCorps Partner Sites

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## AmeriCorps Funding Cuts Threaten Conservation, Education, and Community Well-Being in Wisconsin

**La Crosse, WI —** A well-kept hiking trail, a bridge that makes the outdoors accessible to everyone, and a summer camp that sparks a lifelong love for nature. These are the things we cherish in our communities and often overlook. Behind each one is the quiet, steady work of AmeriCorps Members. However, that work is now in jeopardy.

On Friday, April 25, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) abruptly terminated nearly \$400 million in AmeriCorps funding nationwide—a decision that affects Central Conservation and its programmatic divisions, *The Nature Place* and *WisCorps*, which have served Wisconsin communities and our public lands for over 16 years.

**This is not just a funding cut.** It's a blow to habitat restoration, trail maintenance, invasive species removal, reforestation, environmental education, and accessible outdoor programming — including summer camps and environmental education events that connect people to nature.

As of Monday, April 28, Central Conservation lost funding for 17 existing AmeriCorps positions — 6 at The Nature Place and 11 Individual Placements serving across WisCorps partner sites. AmeriCorps funding to support 43 new AmeriCorps members for statewide summer service has been terminated.

*“AmeriCorps Members support so much of what our programs offer — caring for trails, teaching kids, and protecting the ecosystems that make Wisconsin unique,”* said Emily Post, Interim Executive Director of Central Conservation. *“Without them, communities across the Midwest will feel the impact.”*

After nearly a year of planning and coordinating, *WisCorps'* Crew Program was set to launch on Tuesday, April 29. However, the launch has been postponed as staff tirelessly adjust operations due to a significantly reduced budget.

*“For 15 years, I have supported the conservation corps movement and national service, firmly believing in our mission and the individuals who make it happen. Currently, WisCorps’ primary focus is on maintaining our commitment to our participants, project partners, placement sites, and staff. We are actively exploring various models that enable us to operate independently of AmeriCorps funding. We recognize that we cannot achieve this alone, and financial support will be crucial as we work to reestablish ourselves.” - Eric Robertson, WisCorps Director*

Central Conservation is now calling on individuals, foundations, and local businesses to help fund people—not just programs. Donations and sponsorships are urgently needed to keep terminated AmeriCorps members on staff through the remainder of their service term.

*“We’re now working with significantly less than what was originally awarded to support our programs through August 2025.” said Post. “Still, our commitment remains. We will keep showing up — for our mission, for our members, and for the public land and communities we serve. But there’s no denying this will limit what we can accomplish.”*

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#### **About Central Conservation:**

Central Conservation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit conservation agency empowering a constellation of environmental organizations working to care for our earth. Our current programmatic divisions include: The Nature Place and WisCorps.

#### **Immediately Affected WisCorps Partner Organizations with AmeriCorps Members:**

- Upham Woods Outdoor Learning Center
- Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
- Aldo Leopold Nature Center
- Ottawa National Forest
- Kickapoo Valley Forest School
- Dane County Facility Sustainability Program

Donation Links:

**WisCorps:** [wiscorps.org/donate](https://wiscorps.org/donate)

**The Nature Place:** [natureplacelacrosse.org/donate-online/](https://natureplacelacrosse.org/donate-online/)

**Central Conservation:** [Central Conservation Donation Link - BlackBaud Donor Support](#)