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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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Student Conservation Association CEO Visits AmeriCorps Trail Crews Across Alaska

Friday, July 28th, 2023 (Anchorage, AK)— The Student Conservation Association (SCA) CEO, Lidia Soto-Harmon, met with the SCA Alaska Corps this week, marking her first visit to Alaska since taking on the role of President and CEO earlier this year. This is also the first time an SCA president has visited Alaska in the program's history.

The SCA Alaska Corps is an AmeriCorps program focused on leadership development and the completion of trail work projects. The program currently has trail crews and female fire teams that serve across Alaska for a period of 14 weeks. The SCA emphasizes the importance of community building and growth in interpersonal skills throughout the program.

"The SCA is grateful for the support from AmeriCorps Serve Alaska and energized by our longstanding relationship. Together, we are enhancing Alaskan communities through conservation, climate action, equity, and workforce development," said **SCA President and CEO Lidia Soto-Harmon**. "With nearly a record number of crew members at locations across Alaska, we are able to continue our long history of environmental protection and commitment to equitable access to the outdoors for all."

Soto-Harmon met with SCA staff who are coordinating and facilitating hands-on conservation work in the outdoors through networks of government agencies, Alaska Native corporations, and local organizations. She visited Alaska Corps crew members that are serving partner agencies like the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and Alaska State Parks in Anchorage, Seward, Talkeetna, and Denali.

"Our collaborative efforts with the SCA play a huge role in the engagement and workforce development of Alaska Native teens providing them with skills and experience to enter the career paths in conservation and State parks," said **Katie Abbott, Executive Director of the Serve Alaska State Commission**. "In recent years, this partnership reached a four-fold increase in the number of Alaskan Native teens participating in habitat protection, trail construction, and historic restoration."

Serve Alaska promotes and supports volunteerism across the state and brings AmeriCorps programs to Alaska. It is overseen by no fewer than 15 and no more than 25 voting Commission members appointed by the Governor. The Serve Alaska sub-grantees operate in almost every region of the state, bringing much-needed support and training to rural and urban Alaska. Serve

Alaska is housed within the Division for Community and Regional Affairs and the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development at the State of Alaska.

***AmeriCorps**, the federal agency for volunteerism and national service, provides opportunities for Americans to serve their country domestically, address the nation's most pressing challenges, improve lives and communities, and strengthen civic engagement. Each year, the agency invests more than \$800 million in grants for local nonprofit, community, tribal, and state organizations; places more than 250,000 AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in intensive service roles; and empowers millions more to serve as long-term, short-term, or one-time volunteers. Learn more at AmeriCorps.gov.*

***The Student Conservation Association (SCA)** is the largest provider of hands-on environmental conservation programs for youth and young adults. Program participants protect and restore national parks, marine sanctuaries, cultural landmarks, and community green spaces across the country. The SCA is devoted to building equitable access to nature, providing green job opportunities for young people, and teaching members how to become environmental stewards. Founded in 1957, the SCA is committed to building the next generation of conservation leaders dedicated to the lifelong protection of the environment and our communities. For more, visit www.thesca.org.*

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