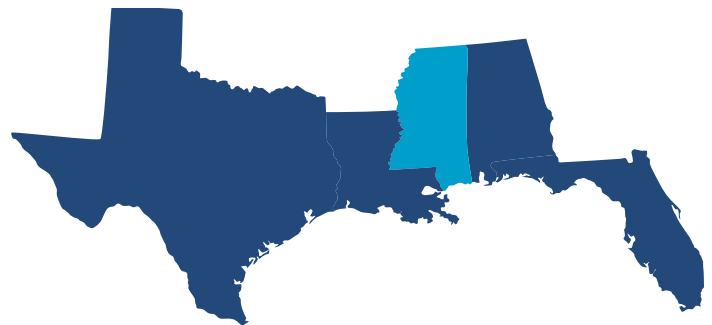




© John Stanmeyer

In 2018, GulfCorps launched a ten-person crew in Gulfport with Climb Community Development Corporation. In Years 2 and 3, Climb managed two crews per season and down-sized to one crew again in Year 4 during the COVID-19 pandemic surge. In April 2021, the RESTORE Council approved a new award and GulfCorps 2.0 launched in the fall of 2021. Climb manages two crews that partner with federal, state, county and municipal agencies as well as local nonprofits to implement restoration and conservation projects throughout the Mississippi Gulf Coast. This work includes mapping and treating invasive plant species; planting native marsh vegetation; restoring pitcher plant bogs; participating in prescribed burns; and building and maintaining trails and boardwalks. Crews also locate and remove invasive apple snails and apple snail egg masses along the Pascagoula River. Since the GulfCorps Program started, Climb crews have impacted over 3,300 acres of coastal habitats on 15 project sites.



LOCATION Mississippi

INVESTMENT \$2.456 million over 8 years

PROGRAM PARTNERS The Nature Conservancy, The Corps Network, Student Conservation Association, The Ember Alliance

FUNDING AGENCIES Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (RESTORE), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (sponsor)

PROJECT DATES 2017 - 2025

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MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Project Highlights

① Climb CDC - MS1-3: Mississippi Sand Hill Crane National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)

In January 2018, the Climb crews began working with the Mississippi Sand Hill Crane NWR. Over the last four years, the crews maintained nearly eight acres of trails and boardwalks and assisted on prescribed burns totaling 52 acres. The crews assisted in activities to protect two endangered species found on the property. The crews also removed and treated 193 acres of invasive species and other nuisance vegetation located within Sand Hill Crane nesting pens. Additionally, the crews assisted in collecting, tagging, cataloging, and releasing endangered Dusky Gopher Frogs in ponds across the refuge.



© Lauren Kissel

② Climb CDC - MS1-5a-k: Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain Properties

In September 2018, the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain began working with the Climb crews. Over the last three years, the crews helped to restore and maintain five of the Land Trust's properties. Across these properties, the crews treated 29 acres of invasive species and nuisance vegetation, maintained an acre of trails, and assisted on a four-acre prescribed burn at the Land Trust's Ramsey Spring Preserve. Lastly, the crews collected seed from native grass species across three acres to be planted and propagated on multiple Land Trust properties.



© John Connor Robison

Mississippi By the Numbers



GULFCORPS HOURS



94

ACRES MONITORED



ACRES IMPACTED



12,462

PAID TRAINING HOURS

2,835

ACRES OF UPLAND ENHANCEMENT



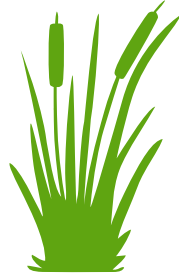
12

ACTIVE PROJECTS



118

ACRES OF INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT



18

ACRES OF WETLAND RESTORATION

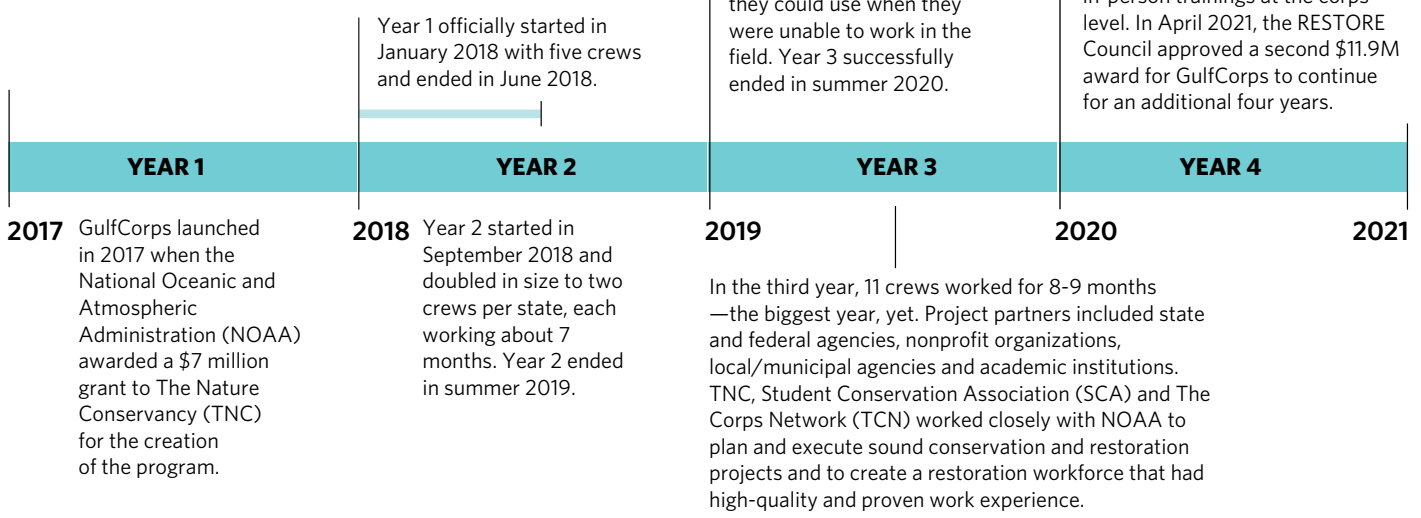


2,700

ACRES OF PRESCRIBED FIRE

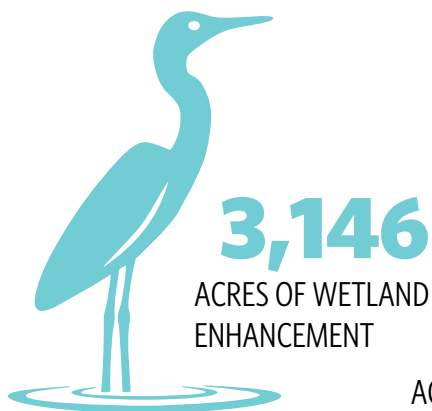
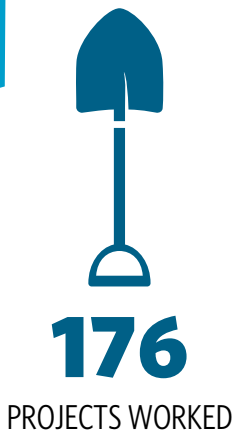
273

ACRES OF WETLAND ENHANCEMENT





GC 1.0 By The Numbers





© Daniel Moss

Mississippi Project Partners

During Years 1 – 4, Climb crews worked on meaningful coastal restoration projects under the direction of a range of federal, state, and community partners:

- Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
- Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain
- Covington Civil and Environmental
- Hancock County
- US Forest Service
- The Nature Conservancy in Mississippi
- US Fish and Wildlife Service

Local Crews, Local Communities

At its heart, GulfCorps is about rebuilding the environment and local communities. This means working with and relying on organizations that know and are deeply rooted in the local communities GulfCorps is helping.

In Mississippi, GulfCorps is working with Climb Community Development Corporation, a Mississippi-based nonprofit organization that promotes strong communities by providing individuals access to opportunities that inspire self-reliance. Climb helps homeless young people aged 16 -24 by providing individualized case management, connections to resources, improved access to services and support, and assistance with basic needs. Climb is also a part of YouthBuild, a Department of Labor community-based alternative education program that provides job training and educational opportunities in culinary and hospitality, conservation, construction, and medical assistant tracks.

Member Highlights



© Mike Dumas

Levi Creel

Levi began as a crew member for Climb during Year 2 of GulfCorps and returned as a crew leader in Year 3. During this time, he obtained his Wildland Firefighter Type 2 (FFT2) qualification as well as his Wildland Fire Chainsaws certification. While at Climb, Levi received project-related and workforce development training, such as invasive species control, trail maintenance, and resume building. After he completed his second term, Levi used the experience and skills he gained in GulfCorps to become a member of Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Jackson Interagency Hotshots based in Pearl, MS.



© Mike Dumas

Morgan Skinner

Morgan was a crew member for Climb during Year 3 of GulfCorps. During this time, she was able to attain her Wildland Firefighter Type 2 qualifications as well as her Wildland Fire Chainsaws certification. In addition to her project-related work and training, Morgan also completed workforce development workshops that allowed her to land a position as a chemist for TRADEBE Environmental Services, LLC.



© John Stanmeyer

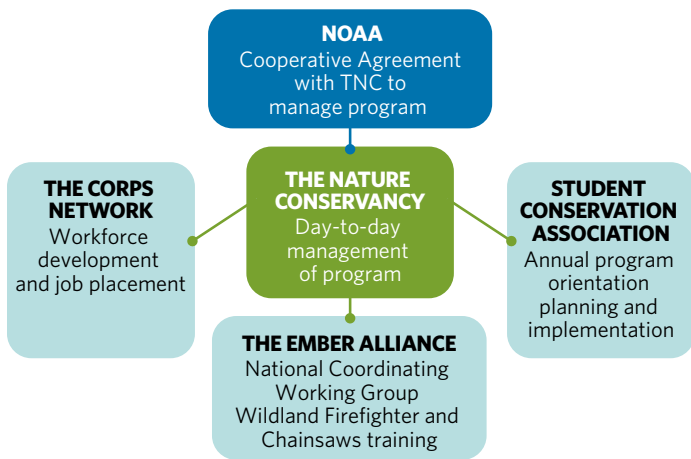
The GulfCorps Program Team

- NOAA Fisheries – Fiscal sponsor, environmental compliance, program advisor
- The Nature Conservancy – Program day-to-day operations, conservation and project planning, monitoring, implementation
- The Corps Network – Professional / Workforce development, member preparation to pursue careers in conservation and restoration, job placement, post-program tracking
- Student Conservation Association – Orientation planning and implementation

Through this project, NOAA, TNC and partners are

- Providing support to local conservation corps that recruit young adults from their communities. These young adults want to better their communities through restoration and conservation work. GulfCorps aims to recruit 75% of each crew from Gulf Coast communities.
- Providing young adults with the highest quality training, including project-related training, industry-recognized certifications, and workforce development opportunities. This combination of training, work experience and professional development fuels placements in environmental jobs, internships, externships and post-secondary educational opportunities.
- Working with stakeholders to select restoration projects that address ecological impacts of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and that are consistent with the RESTORE Act’s Comprehensive Plan.
- Monitoring progress over the course of the entire program to make certain the work is producing the desired environmental results.

Partner Roles



Sample Project Partners

US Fish and Wildlife Service (FL, AL, LA, TX) US Forest Service (MS), National Park Service (FL, MS, LA, TX), National Estuarine Research Reserves (FL, AL, TX)

Florida – St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve, St. Andrew Bay Resource Management Association, Northwest Florida Water Management District, Florida Forest Service

Alabama – South Alabama Land Trust, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Dog River Clearwater Revival, Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary

Mississippi – Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain

Louisiana – Louisiana Office of State Parks, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, North Lake Nature Center

Texas – Armand Bayou Nature Center, Artist Boat, City of Port Aransas, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Galveston Bay Foundation



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