

Nature conservation internships in the United States

Preserving the nature we inherited from our ancestors for the next generation, handing down our knowledge of nature conservation to today's youths, and finding and incorporating their innovative ideas. Our quest for solutions to environmental problems will never end.

Upholding our mission of working to proactively help our neighbors and the communities in which we live and work, and in order to build a better and brighter future, the Mazda Foundation USA has donated more than six million dollars every year since its establishment in 1992 to various worthy programs in broad categories: education, environmental conservation, social welfare and cross-cultural understanding.

One of the foundation's flagship activities is the Save Our American Resources (SOAR) program, which is operated in partnership with the Student Conservation Association (SCA), a US student environmental conservation organization. In this program, each SCA intern is assigned to a national park, forest or monument in each of 50 states every summer to train next-generation leaders of natural conservation activities.

The United States of America is blessed with a large number of parks, forests and other public lands rich in natural scenery. Our ancestors tended and nurtured this land over many generations, and it is our duty to



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pass this heritage on to the next generation in the same condition as we inherited it. Ever since its establishment in 1957, the SCA, which consists of college and high-school student volunteers, has worked ceaselessly to preserve and restore America's parks, forests and other public lands through a wide range of activities.

"We empathize completely with their objectives, and it is our full intention to help train a new generation of nature and environmental conservation leaders in partnership with the SCA," says Jay Amestoy, an executive board member at Mazda Foundation USA.

Dale Penny, president and CEO of SCA, has this to say: "We are extremely grateful for the continued support the Mazda Foundation USA has provided us since 1998. The foundation's contributions have enabled more than 600 student interns to serve over 150 natural resource management sites. Their experiences not only provided them with a deeper understanding of environmental conservation and taught them the importance of taking action, it also had a favorable effect on the more than one million visitors to these sites with whom they came into contact."

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of SCA's establishment, Mazda sponsored the SCA/Mazda Conservation in Action Multimedia Contest in 2008. Students between the ages of 15 and 25 were encouraged to submit multimedia ideas, program ideas and dynamic concepts for conservation, which were judged based on their innovativeness and potential effectiveness.

Amestoy suggests that "ideas for conserving environmental resources have never been needed as desperately as they are now." He and his colleagues intend to continue soliciting solutions for current global environmental issues and putting the best ideas to practical use in order to ensure that the next generation is able to inherit our environmental resources. "We will continue to forge ahead with forward-looking activities, hand-in-hand with the SCA."