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PRESS RELEASE

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Siskiyou Mountain Club hiring college students, others for summer of digital detox: "A lot of the world went soft in the last decade. We didn't."

27 JANUARY 2026 | GOLD HILL, OR. -- The Club is hiring for Wilderness Corps Crew Members to backpack into the wilderness and spend up to two weeks at a time working from spike camps to restore trails disappearing from America's great national forests.

"First year crew members get a \$1,800 monthly training allowance," says executive director Gabriel Howe, as well as accommodations on off-trail days. He mentions the program hasn't changed much in the last 12 seasons. "A lot of the world went soft in the last decade," Howe remarks. "We didn't."

To learn more and apply, go to siskiyoumountainclub.org/pages/wcc2026.

After waking up before sunrise, crews spend long hours digging out forgotten trails, clipping brush, and cutting downed logs, often in the footprint of recent wildfires. 2025 intern Samantha Zimmerman of Kansas speaks to the challenge. At first, she struggled to hoist a 60 pound pack on and keep up with the crew. "But I pushed through, looked back, and was like, 'yeah I can do this.'"

The most unusual thing about the program, though, is perhaps the "digital detox," Howe says. Interns don't bring their phones or digital devices into the backcountry. "Most of them grew up with *parents* addicted to iPhones, so it's a departure." Interns consistently report that the experience forms strong bonds. "They make more eye contact in a summer than they have in years."

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That's part of why Samantha is returning in 2026. Part of her duties will be supporting those first year crew members. "Now I'll be able to help them figure it out. If I can do it, they can do it."

Crew members onboard remotely in the spring and travel from near and far for one of two start dates in June. In between each work hitch, interns participate in a program that includes a whitewater rafting trip and visits to places like Redwood and Crater Lake national parks, and the coast. They attend workshops, including one on financial literacy and job seeking. Interns receive 1st Aid/CPR and have the option to pursue nationally-recognized field certifications.

Siskiyou Mountain Club is also on the search for a backcountry crew leader. More about that and other positions at siskiyoumountainclub.org/jobs/.

The program is funded by community support and partnerships with the Rogue River-Siskiyou, Fremont-Winema, Six Rivers, Klamath, and Mt. Hood national forests, as well as the Mid-Klamath Watershed Council and with support from the REI Cooperative Fund.

Resources and links

- Learn more and apply: www.siskiyoumountainclub.org/wcc2026
- "Grimes Goes Wild," a 10-minute film following 2024 intern and third-year crew member Chloe Grimes: https://youtu.be/81Qs76t9304?si=vOU5V6RTU_-SLbGI
- A Long Way to Nowhere, 30 minute film follows 2023 intern across the Kalmiopsis Wilderness: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGOytUjh7e8>
- Siskiyou Mountain Club Youtube channel, a great place to watch short films from the wilderness: <https://www.youtube.com/@SiskMtnClub>

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