

REFLECTIONS FROM THE 2015 INTERNATIONAL TRAILS SYMPOSIUM

BY: EMILY BARRY, PORT HADLOCK/NORTH OLYMPIC SALMON COALITION ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

“Why should I care so much about trails?” I thought to myself as I rummaged through my closet full of Carhartts and t-shirts, looking for any clothes that could pass as business casual. I was headed to the 2015 International Trails Symposium in Portland, Oregon, on the Hulet Hornbeck Emerging Leaders Scholarship. As I prepared for a week of conferences, networking, trail building and exploring, I was feeling out of my league. I enjoy trail work and am passionate about conservation work, but I had not had any miraculous “Trails are the Holy Grail!” moments. I hoped this week would help me see trails as a bigger picture and gain some ideas how it could fit into my career.

The Hulet Hornbeck Emerging Leaders Scholarship is for 18-25 year olds who are interested in building a career in the natural resource or conservation fields. The scholarship covers the cost of transportation to the International Trails Symposium and room and board. This year 16 recipients attended

IN THIS ISSUE:

<i>Trails Symposium</i>	1-2
<i>Garden Talk</i>	3
<i>Alumni: Where Are They Now?</i>	4-5
<i>Water Saving Tips</i>	6
<i>Fire Response Update</i>	7
<i>Plant Quiz</i>	8

from around the country and world, including California, New Mexico, New York, Canada, Ghana, Nicaragua and Alaska. Each scholar is paired up with a mentor from the career field they are interested in. American Trails hosts the International Trails Symposium every two years.

The symposium opened my eyes to the plethora of trail types, and builders and planners that make up the visionary community of trails professionals. We went to Hood River to bike the Historic Columbia River Highway Trail, an old scenic highway now restored into a popular biking and walking route. We visited Multnomah Falls and learned



2015 Emerging Leaders and some of the mentors on an old railroad bridge converted to a bike trail. L.L. Stub Steward State Park



Trails, p.1

about managing trails in high use areas. One way to deter rebellious switchback cutters is to plant poison oak off the trail—nothing like a little rash to teach somebody to stay on the path! We had the opportunity to do trail work with contractors from the Professional Trail Builders Association (PTBA). As it turns out, WCC members and Forest and Park Service employees are not the only ones paid to build trails. We also visited L.L. Stub Stewart State Park to work on a trail with Twin Oaks Construction, a member of PTBA. I enjoyed spending the day with the rugged folks who have made a life as self-employed trail builders.

When not on trails, we were in seminars about various trail topics. I enjoyed learning about the Big Marsh in Chicago. The presenter spoke about how to turn seriously polluted areas into safe places for recreation and spaces that will benefit the neighborhood. I appreciated the intentionality of making [Big Marsh](#) an area that would work for the people of the community, not just tourists.

One [trail](#) project in Portland questioned how to build a trail to optimize wildlife habitat. The trail planners utilized a power line corridor to build a trail for walking and biking. Meanwhile, they want the trail to be suitable habitat for wildlife and serve as a migration corridor to connect with other green spaces. They plan to restore the power line strip into a meadow by planting plots of native wildflowers. Most power lines I have seen are scotch broom monocultures, so I was really excited about the plan to add a layer of productivity to these spaces. Trails, when properly planned and executed, can be huge assets for a community's transportation, economy, wildlife, health, and well being.

Trails matter. Big time. Trails professionals, from the trail dogs to the city planners, are activists who push for healthy lifestyles, alternative transportation and accessible open spaces. I went into the week wondering how trails fit into the grand scheme of saving the world, and I came out recognizing trails as hugely progressive ways to enhance our communities, open spaces, and wildlife habitats. Check out the symposium and scholarship opportunity in 2017!



WCC and EarthCorps Alum representing Washington at L.L. Stub Stewart State Park in Oregon. The Emerging Leaders worked with Twin Oaks Construction on this new trail.

FOOD BANK CROPS GROWING FAST!

BY: MAGGIE COUNIHAN, SUSTAINABILITY AND OUTREACH IP

Many plants are starting to peek out of the ground at the Department of Ecology Headquarters food bank garden in Lacey. Squash plants have taken off, and there are eight rows of corn sprouting. Ten pounds of radish and 21 pounds of lettuce have already been harvested and delivered to the food bank.

The aroma of garlic filled the air when volunteers spent a day harvesting. They tied together bunches of garlic and hung them on the fence to dry. Once the stalks dry out, the garlic will be cleaned and delivered.

Ecology's Food Bank Garden is one of many local community gardens that grow food for the Thurston County Food Bank. If you are interested in starting your own garden and donating to the food bank, their [web-site](#) has information on how to get started. Looking for ways to help in Ecology's garden? Contact [Maggie Counihan](#) for more information.



A field of corn, gently swaying in the breeze.



Romaine lettuce, ready for delivery.

“Trails, when properly planned and executed, can be huge assets for a community’s transportation, economy, wildlife, health, and well being.”
- Emily Barry

ALUMNI: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

BY: ZACK GIFFORD, CITY OF BELLINGHAM CREW MEMBER 2011-2013



Zack Gifford (center) with fellow Oak Harbor Firefighters.

“In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous”
- Aristotle

Experience with the WCC:

I spent two years with the City of Bellingham crews, the first year as a crew member and the second year as the assistant supervisor. I started my first year with a clean slate, knowing very little about the restoration work I would be doing for the next two years. I applied for the job primarily for the training opportunities and the scholarship award; little did I know how much I would enjoy spending every day outside along the creeks of Whatcom County. Completing two years with the program provided me with a taste of several different career paths to choose from. With a history and some interest in the medical field, I took the Wilderness First Responder training during my first year. That year I also spent a day, job shadowing an EMS crew in my home town. Thinking this was something I wanted to pursue further, I got my Red Card and took Swift Water Rescue the following year. These trainings and certifications led me to my current job.

What He’s Doing Now:

I’m currently employed with the City of Oak Harbor Fire Department as a Paid-on-Call Firefighter/EMT, obtaining my Firefighter 1 qualification and national EMT certification. We respond to just about anything— from house fires to CPR in progress calls. Our work also involves annual building inspections of all businesses in Oak Harbor, public education about fire safety for elementary schools, and daily, monthly, and annual testing of

firefighting equipment. It's funny to think just a few years prior I was working with the WCC shadowing an ambulance crew and now I am working alongside them on calls. I have to credit the WCC for the successes I have had after leaving the program. Without the previous training, obtaining my EMT certification would have been much more difficult; I may not have even applied with the fire department to begin with.

Advice for Members:

With the year drawing to a close and both weeks of training completed, now is the time to take every single opportunity put in front of you. If none present themselves, create your own. Find a career you would like to shadow or set

up a crew swap with a crew that does something totally different than your own. Treat every day as though it is an opportunity to say yes to something new and don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. It's easy to find your rhythm and mindlessly go through the day's work, once the year is almost over. My advice would be to stay curious and ask questions; there is always something new to learn. Most of all: enjoy the company of your crew. There are few experiences out there quite like the WCC. Take time to appreciate the people around you and the bonds you have created.



Gifford, after graduation from Fire Academy.

“Treat everyday as though it is an opportunity to say yes to something new and don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone.”
- Zack Gifford



Smokey Bear teaches kids about fire safety.

Photos courtesy of Zack Gifford

SURVIVE THE DROUGHT WITH THESE WATER CONSERVATION TIPS:

On May 15, 2015, Governor Inslee declared a statewide drought. The effects of low snowpack and limited rain continue to be felt across the state. Supervisor Alicia Kellogg compiled some tips to reduce water use:

- **Don't wash your car!** It might pain you to drive your dirty car around, but waiting until the fall rains help replenish our water sources, will ease the strain on our current limited supply.
- **If it's yellow, let it mellow (don't flush your pee).** According to the EPA¹, older toilets can use up to 7 gallons of water per flush. Imagine how many gallons of water you could save if you only flushed solids!
- **Cut back on your beef consumption.** While changes in your diet for the short term will be unlikely to yield any short term benefits, we should all remember that it takes 106 gallons of water to make just one ounce of beef². According to Grist, some research has suggested that if every American ate meat one less day a week, it could save as much water as flows through the Colorado River in an entire year³!
- **Buy a low-flow shower head.** Pro-tip: find a showerhead endorsed by WaterSense, an EPA partnership program designed to help conserve water.
- **Make sure your washer or dishwasher are full before running them.** Just like with your toilet flushes, reducing the frequency with which you use water-dependent appliances can help you save water.
- **Ask corps members for other ways we can ALL help out.** Remember, not everyone lives in a domicile where they can check all the plumbing for leaks or incorporate greywater⁴ into their system, but everyone can contribute in small ways that add up to help us all!

For more information, check out the [EPA's](#) site dedicated to educating people about conserving water.

Members, do you have any more tips? Share them on our FB page!

¹<http://www.epa.gov/WaterSense/pubs/indoor.html>

²<http://www.businessinsider.com/real-villain-in-the-california-drought-isnt-almonds--its-red-meat-2015-4>

³<http://grist.org/climate-energy/heres-the-only-explainer-on-california-drought-you-need/>

⁴<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greywater>

*"Of all the paths
you take in life,
make sure some
of them are
dirt."*

-John Muir

DISASTER RESPONSE UPDATE: 2015 FIRE SEASON

Washington Conservation Corps crews are busy responding to fires across the state, from Olympic National Park to Tonasket near the Canadian border. Here is a brief round-up:

Paradise: Ten AmeriCorps members, led by Supervisors Luke Wigle and Chelsea Krimme, cleared brush and debris along the Queets River Trail. This ensures fire crews access while they contain the fire.

Sleepy Hollow: A 20-member camp crew returned home from a 14-day deployment on July 11. This fire is now out!

Newby Lake: Located near Tonasket, this fire has burned 5,065 acres in Washington and extended to Canada. According to [Incident Information System](#), it is 30% contained. The 19 AmeriCorps members and supervisors supporting this camp (assisting with logistics, ordering supplies, handing out food and more) recently relocated to the **Wild Horse Fire** near Tonasket.

Lake Spokane: A 20-person camp crew returned from deployment July 13.

Stewart Mountain: A 20-member line crew, led by Supervisors Jay McMillen and Ernie Farmer, deployed to this fire burning in Whatcom County on July 6. They dug containment lines around the fire and completed burn out



Stewart Mountain line crew geared up. Photos courtesy of Ernie Farmer and Josh Bruner (top).

operations, returning July 14.



Justin Beebe serves at Sleepy Hollow Fire camp.

Falls: A 17-member line crew responded to this fire near Granite Falls on July 19, all but six returning July 20.

Colvin Creek: An 11-member camp crew also deployed July 19 to support this fire near Woodland.

Blue Creek: A 9-member

camp crew deployed July 19 to this fire east of Walla Walla.

Thanks to all Supervisors and AmeriCorps members for their hard work on these deployments!

*“Trees love to toss
and sway; they
make such
happy noises.”
-Emily Carr*



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Accommodation Requests:

To request ADA accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology, 360-407-7248. Persons with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. Persons with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.

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PLANT ID QUIZ: OFFICE EDITION



All of these plants are in the WCC office. First crew or IP to correctly name (common or scientific) them will win WCC swag!

Email answers to mcou461@ecy.wa.gov



ABOUT THE WCC

The Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) was established in 1983 as a service program for young adults between the ages of 18-25. The WCC is offered through the Washington Department of Ecology and continues the legacy started by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The WCC has been an AmeriCorps program since 1994. Today, the WCC has around 300 members working on projects in every part of the state. Our partners include Federal, State, Local, and Tribal organizations. For more information please visit our website: www.ecy.wa.gov/wcc.