



Washington Conservation Corps Corps News



January 2004
Volume 1, Issue 2

Important Dates:

- January 17th: MLK Day of Service
- February 21st: President's Day
- February 7th-10th or 14th-17th: Wilderness Advance First Aid Training

Highlights:

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Kudos for Corpsmembers Getting Things Done



Forks Crew: William Beglinger, Leonard Aplin, Lashana Peterson, Brian Santman (supervisor), Jason Hanson, & Holly Mansfield (not pictured)

Congratulations to Brian Santman's Forks crew for being chosen as one of the "Crews of the Quarter" for fall 2004! Brian's crew not only received several commendations for outstanding performance from the U.S. Forest Service and Olympic National Park but also completed Red Cross certification and participated in a highly successful community service project. The crew organized a project that assembled and distributed hundreds of food and gift baskets for needy families; the local paper recognized their accomplishments. The crew also removed a flat bed and refurbished and installed a heavy duty utility box on their truck. They were motivated, eager to learn and did an outstanding job.

Congratulations to Kenji Toelken's Spokane crew for also receiving "Crew of the Quarter". This crew persevered through Spokane's



Spokane Crew: Ryan Lipp, Lindsey Holloway, Mindy Wolf, James Short, and Jessica Pilgrim

rough autumn weather and still managed to create a community service project. In fact, they were the first crew to implement a project. They began by organizing food boxes with Second Harvest Food Bank. Then, the crew assisted high school students with gift delivery for the Adopt-A-Family Program. This project was quite large, requiring two trucks to deliver all the gifts; one lucky family received a new computer! They also worked with Volunteers of America's Crosswalk program to help make the holidays brighter for homeless and high-risk youth. Additionally, several crew members volunteer time after work at schools, retirement homes, and non-profits in their community.

Individual Placement, Mary Anderson, has been awarded "Corpsmember of the Quarter". In addition to her efforts at the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Mary initiated a warm clothing drive to benefit children in need this winter. Over 100 volunteer hours were generated by her drive; raising approximately 50 items (many of which were handmade by volunteers). Hats, scarves, blankets, gloves and ear muffs were collected and delivered to the Skagit County Community Action Agency. Mary's other accomplishments include: developing a prototype for a barnacle collection system, organizing an Estuary Ecology Seminar (along with co-worker Adam Morris-Cohen), and volunteering for the InterCorps Council.



Mary delivers warm clothes and blankets to children in need.

From the Field

Corpsmember, Steve Whetherhult reports on his experience in Florida:

Not often in life does a job come along that, by the third day, you find yourself on the way to Florida in the middle of the costliest hurricane season in recorded history. It's also pretty rare to see hundreds of people of all ages, ethnicities, and lifestyles coming together from around the country to help complete strangers. I guess they do things a little different at AmeriCorps. I could tell you stories about the piles of rubble that were once houses, the trees lying atop homes, boats once docked now littering the landscape, or even a church's once proud steeple now upside down in it's roof. Those stories are abundant, but I'd rather tell you about the determination and strength of Florida's people. We talked



This steeple was knocked upside-down by a hurricane.

with some who outright refused to be chased away by a storm, and suffered through multiple hurricanes, sitting in the dark. Many residents took it upon themselves to not only clean up the debris in their yard, but go door-to-door helping their neighbors. Some insisted on living in their houses though trees had fallen on them. Never mind Texas, Don't Mess With Florida.

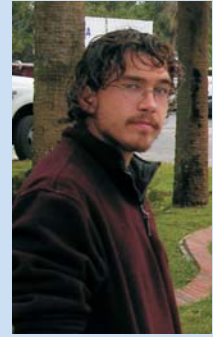
While there, we had the chance to bond with many new people. We met new friends within the Montana Conservation Corps and the National



Sailboats were swept onto shore by hurricanes.

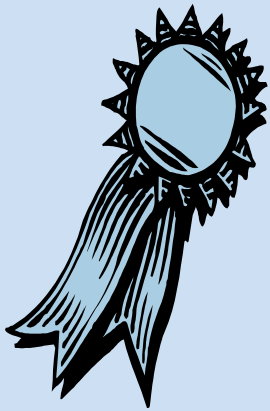
Civilian Conservation Corps. All the volunteers had made some sacrifice to go to Florida and went out of their way to help in any way possible. If help was not needed, friendship was offered. Ask anyone who went and I'm sure they could tell you of a few life stories they heard while there. You might hear how a group of WCC workers played football with local kids after hours in the streets of one of Florida's poorer neighborhoods. About how they gave us nicknames, ran circles around us, and then told us it was the most fun they'd ever had playing. These people, who had been through so much, opened their homes to us as if we were life-long friends, immediately willing to give us anything and everything we needed (food, cold drinks, etc). I have never felt such gratitude from others, nor felt so helpless to do more.

From the beginning of the hurricane response efforts, AmeriCorps sent relief crews to Florida to try and make a difference. Some WCC members spent in excess of two months there, bouncing from city to city. At times, cleaning up debris and cutting fallen trees; at others, tarping roofs to fix leaks and attempting to meet whatever needs they came across. We were sent to help our brethren in a time of need, but in the end, it was they who changed us for the better. I will never forget those I met or the time I spent in Florida. In that one month, I saw more of Florida than I have of Washington in my two years here; and, without a second thought, I would sleep on as many gym floors and eat as many MREs necessary to do it all again.



Steve Whetherhult

"I would sleep on as many gym floors and eat as many MREs necessary to do it all again."



Special Recognition



Melody Abel

The WCC would like to recognize Melody Abel for her outstanding work during the recent hurricane deployment to Florida. Melody spent a total of 9 weeks in Florida (edging out even Crew Supervisor, Bob Milner, for the most hours). Her tireless spirit, motivation and humor helped make the deployment a resounding success. She went above and beyond expectations by taking on the challenges of being a crew leader. Every crew supervisor that worked with her was highly impressed with her leadership, willingness to take charge, and positive attitude. One supervisor remarked “She does everything at such a high and proficient level and she has the ability to raise others to that level too!” Thanks for the great work Melody!

In January, Nick Saling (Bellingham crew supervisor), Elyse Weber, Michael Budds, and Ilsa Wood volunteered to give a presentation on the WCC to the Washington Commission for National and Community Service. Thank you all for doing such an excellent job representing the WCC!

Did You Know?



Poison Ivy

Poison oak and poison ivy are plants to watch for out in the field. Both species are found in Washington; poison oak is common to Western Washington, while poison ivy is usually found on the Eastern side of our state. These plants contain urushiol, an oily substance that causes painful irritation. When smoke from burning poison oak or ivy is inhaled, the throat and lungs swell, making breathing difficult.

Exposure to poison oak or poison ivy results in a red, itchy rash that may form large blisters. This rash usually appears within a couple of days after contact with the plants and may last anywhere from 1 to 3 weeks. If you believe that you have come into contact with these poisonous plants, avoid touching skin or clothing where the contact occurred until after they have been thoroughly washed. Wash with soap and warm water as soon as possible. Stay cool -

body heat and sweat can make the itching worse. Hydrocortisone cream may reduce itching and blistering. It is important to wash clothing and shoes after exposure, separate from other clothing, in hot water.

Immediately call for help if somebody is suffering a severe allergic reaction, has had a severe reaction in the past, or has inhaled smoke from burning poison oak or poison ivy. Poison oak and poison ivy can be distinguished by their groupings of three leaflets and stiff clusters of small, yellowish or white berries that appear during summer and fall. An old adage might help you remember to avoid them: “Leaves of three let it be; berries white, poisonous sight.” If you suspect that your work area may have these poisonous plants present, cover skin with clothing (long sleeves, pants, socks, etc).

Q & A

I've heard of schools matching the Education Award. How can I find out which schools offer this incentive?

There are several schools offering special incentives for AmeriCorps Alumni. This may include waiving application fees, offering credit for terms of service, or matching the AmeriCorps Education Award. You can find this information at: www.lifetimeofservice.org.

If you have questions about your year of service (e.g. health insurance, the education award, or loan forbearance), please submit them to Bridget at: brim461@ecy.wa.gov.

About Our Organization

The Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) was established in 1983 as a job training program for young adults between the ages of 18-25. The WCC is a program offered through the Washington State Department of Ecology and continues the legacy left by the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s.

The program provides work experience and skills for projects that support conservation, rehabilitation, and enhancement of Washington's natural, historic, environmental and recreational resources. Today the WCC has nearly 150 members working on various projects in every part of the state. WCC partners include Federal, State, Local, and Tribal organizations.

Washington Conservation Corps

PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA
98504-7600

PHONE: (360) 407-7248

FAX: (360) 407-6902

E-MAIL:
kdan461@ecy.wa.gov

Photos, Suggestions, and Stories Wanted!

Please call Bridget Mason at (360) 407-6706 or email brim461@ecy.wa.gov

Did you know? We are on the Web!

See us at:
www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/wcc