



Washington Conservation Corps Corps News



October 2005
Volume 2, Issue 1

Important Dates:

- October 21: AmeriCorps Kick-off event
- November 11: Veteran's Day
- November 24 and 25: Thanksgiving
- December 26-January 2: Scheduled WCC Break

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WCC Crews Dispatched to Mississippi



WCC members Vanessa Lott and Will Simpson work along side Scott Jager from the Christian Contractor's Association

The Washington Conservation Corps currently has four emergency response crews stationed in Mississippi and Alabama, assisting with Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. These 24 WCC members and supervisors loaded 4 WCC extended cab trucks full of tools and supplies (chainsaws, pumps, generators, etc) and headed south on September 22nd. Within just a few days, this fully equipped group of responders arrived at the US Forest Service provided base camp in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, ready to help where needed.

The WCC has been tasked by FEMA to assist with "Operation Blue Roof". WCC members are using chainsaws to remove fallen trees from houses, then placing tarps on damaged roofs. In this capacity, the WCC is filling a void; responding to counties where contractors hired by the Army Corps of Engineers can not.

Ten members recently began a new assignment aboard the Carnival cruise ship, M.S. Holiday, assisting with displaced residents from Pascagoula, Mississippi. These WCC members are assisting residents living on board the ship ported in Mobile, Alabama. The children onboard are still attending school in Pascagoula-which requires a bus ride and quite a bit of coordination. WCC members are assisting with this endeavor.

Elderly and special needs residents on the M.S. Holiday are receiving assistance from Corpsmembers with every day errands. The newest WCC project on the cruise ship is providing activities for teens; offering both the teenagers-and parents-a retreat.

These 24 WCC members and crew supervisors will remain deployed through October. The Washington Conservation Corps will continue sending groups of 20 or more at a time for 30 day deployments.

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Dispatched (continued from front page)

This 30 day schedule is long enough to be effective, but short enough to avoid fatigue and burnout. The 4 WCC trucks sent down south in September will remain in Mississippi in order to be utilized throughout these response efforts.

This is not the first time that the WCC has responded to disasters in the southeastern United States. In 2004, the WCC spent over 2 months in the state of Florida. The WCC sent 59 Corpsmembers to Florida to help repair some of the damage left behind by hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne.

Much of the work in Florida was performed alongside volunteers with the Christian Contractors Association (CCA). This partnership with the CCA continues this year, in Mississippi. The CCA is an international network of licensed and experienced contractors from all trades who donate their services to disaster relief efforts.

The Washington Conservation Corps would like to thank the following Corpsmembers who volunteered for this response effort:

<i>Ben Amidon</i>	<i>James Herbert</i>	<i>Brittany Melo</i>	<i>Amber Smith</i>
<i>Wade Arnold</i>	<i>Kim Hernandez</i>	<i>Laila Murfin</i>	<i>Jason Smith</i>
<i>Ben Betz</i>	<i>Ronnie Hoover</i>	<i>Joseph Phelan</i>	<i>Gretchen Sterba</i>
<i>Ana Hansa-Ogren</i>	<i>Chris Humann</i>	<i>David Phinney-Johnson</i>	<i>Apollo Stone</i>
<i>Erin Halbert</i>	<i>Leah Kellogg</i>	<i>Jamy Potts</i>	<i>Kevin Trolley</i>
<i>Mark Hoph</i>	<i>Justin Lamb</i>	<i>Kevin Robbins</i>	<i>Ben Valdez</i>
<i>Courtney Irby</i>	<i>Steven Lindberg</i>	<i>William Sand</i>	<i>Joshua Velazquez</i>
<i>Sean Gaskell</i>	<i>Vanessa Lott</i>	<i>Jake Shattuck</i>	<i>Stephen Whetherhult</i>
<i>Jackie Gauthier</i>	<i>David McArtor</i>	<i>William Simpson</i>	
<i>Dalton Goodwin</i>	<i>Krista Megal</i>		

Thank you to the WCC supervisors leading the charge: Rob Crawford, Ted Dewees, Julie Holder, Michael Koenen, Brock Milliern, Bob Milner, and Troy Warnick.

Wildfire Response

Article by Roland McGill

Despite the least active fire season in 15 years, the WCC was still able to send out a handful of crewmembers with 20 person interagency crews from Olympic and North Cascades National Park. Both crews worked the Burnt River Complex and Mule Peak fire in Northeastern Oregon (Wallowa-Whitman National Forest). WCC members were able to work with the Carson and Sierra Interagency Hotshot Crews-holding line, establishing hose lays, and performing mop-up duties. They were also able to witness some great fire behavior on the Mule Peak Fire. The crew's base camp was established near the Eagle Cap Wilderness.

Congratulations to Bob Milner and Michael Koenen for getting their Firefighter 1/Squad Boss task book completed. Former WCC Supervisor (and always big fire dog) Shelby Majors was the Crew Boss for the North Cascades Crew. Thanks for a great job Michael and Bob, as well as Corpsmembers Nathan Clark, Stephanie Dulac, David Hooker, Sandra Sperry, and Alan Wilcox.



Summary of WCC Emergency Response Activities (04/05)

- 59 WCC members serve 15,500 hours of Florida hurricane relief efforts in Fall 2004
- 1000 hours of Wildland Fire Response in Eastern Washington.
- 100 hours of Oil Spill Response at Dalco Passage
- 55 WCC members Red Card certified.
- 120 WCC members CERT trained.
- 100 WCC members hazmat/oil spill certified.
- 100 WCC members Red Cross Certified
- 125 WCC members Wilderness Advanced First Aid certified.
- 7 WCC members deployed to S.E. Oregon for wildfire response
- 20 WCC members (and 4 supervisors) deployed to Mississippi for Hurricane Katrina relief-20 more members will join this effort in late October.

The Corps Experience

By Ben Valdez, Wenatchee Crew Member

One of the best work trips this year was an eight day back-country spike, repairing trail in the Entiat Wilderness. I remember being stressed out the night before, wondering if I had enough food to last me the whole trip!

Luckily, we had the luxury of pack horses, so we didn't have to carry our gear and tools. This made the hike pretty easy, carrying nothing but a water bottle and a pocket filled with granola bars. The first six miles was a piece of cake, but the last four miles had numerous switch backs. We set up camp that evening; found a good spot for a tent, set up a bear bag, and then built a toilet as comfortable as possible in the thicker part of the woods. During the eight day spike, we learned how to use eight foot long crosscut saws and repaired about eight miles of trail.

I think the best part of each day was after work when I could just sit back around the camp fire and chill. Unfortunately, at night, a few of us literally did chill-two fleece sleeping bags just aren't enough to keep you warm!

It was a lot of fun hiking around the wilderness, digging trail, and occasionally using the crosscuts to remove a fallen tree from the trail. To me, this trip and the WCC in general is a big field trip. We work hard and get things done, but when we take a step back and look at what we're doing and where we are, we realize what a great opportunity this job is and how much it resembles a paid vacation.

A Trip to Bannan Wildlife Refuge

By Will Sand, Wenatchee Crew member

It was about 12 o'clock, the rain felt like needles and the wind was raging. To top it all off it was cold, very cold. Sounds bad huh? Well it wasn't, it was actually one of the most memorable times I had this past year in the WCC. It all started when our sponsor for the Conboy Wildlife Refuge sent us to Oregon to work on a couple of Wildlife refuges. Our crew said yes, of course, it was a chance to go on a free road trip, and work some too.

Our first stop was Basket Slough Wildlife Refuge. Basket Slough is used mainly by Canadian geese but many different animals make their home there. Our main mission was to thin brush and trees, which meant saw work-lots and lots of saw work. For the crew, that was heaven, because dropping trees is a lot of fun. But it wasn't all fun for everyone. After the first day of thinning and stacking, half the crew had poison oak and everything was infected. After a trip to the store for some calamine lotion, we were ready for another day. We finished out the week then moved on to our next destination.

Some of us tired and some suffering from poison oak, we climbed in the truck and headed to the Bannan Wildlife Refuge. After some misdirection, we finally found our way to our bunk house where we all crashed out after dinner. The next day we visited the Refuge. Bannan was, by far, my favorite site to work. We were thinning trees on the beach! It doesn't get any better than that. The beach was directly below us and we had a great view of the ocean. After a day or so of thinning on a beautiful coastline with wonderful weather, the expected stormy weather moved in on us.

Which brings me to where I began my story. The wind blew so hard that, when I would cut a tree, it would just blow away. I guess it was a good thing that the trees were small. It got so bad, we had to stop because we could no longer keep our hard hats on our heads. After the storm moved on, we finished the job and headed home. The trip was long and a little over two thousand miles. We arrived back at home in Wenatchee tired, and happy to be home.



Wenatchee Crew (L-R): Bob Milner (supervisor), Kevin Mayfield, Erik Fish, Will Sand, Brian Daily, & Ben Valdez

WCC: Year in Review

Below is a summary of WCC activities for the 2004-05 service year:

Member Community Service (hrs): . . . 3,600	Campsites Constructed/Maintained: . . . 281
Volunteers Recruited/Managed: 4,872	Fencing Constructed (miles): 16.6
Hours of Emergency Response: 19,582	Trail Constructed (miles): 2.9
Hours of Environmental Education: . . 7,279	Trail Maintained (miles): 126.6
Number of Students: 19,245	Hours of Training: 14,753
Native Plants Planted: 370,290	Total Acres Treated: 501

Community Service projects this year included:

- Hand-made warm clothing drive for children
- Expansion of Kennedy Creek Interpretive Trail
- Stand-Down Veteran's event in Tacoma
- Hanging drywall with Habitat for Humanity
- Recycling programs
- Firewood delivery for needy families
- Food drives (totaled 16,000+ pounds of food)
Furniture salvage programs
- Homeless shelter revitalization
- Set-up for "Paddle to Elwha" event
- Partnership with Spokane High School to "Adopt-a-Family"

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.



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Photos, Suggestions, and Stories Wanted!

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Did you know? We are on the Web!

See us at:
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