



Washington Conservation Corps Corps News



July 2006
Volume 2, Issue 4

Important Dates:

- July 4th: Independence Day
- September 4th: Labor Day
- September 5th-7th: Supervisor Training

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WCC Crews and Corpsmember of the Quarter



Henneck

The WCC Individual Placement (IP) of the Quarter for Spring 2006 is Rory Henneck. This is Rory's 2nd year in the WCC. Rory is currently serving at the Karcher Creek Sewer District. Rory has served many roles within the WCC, from planting trees and building trails to analyzing samples and writing environmental education curriculum. His dedication to community service really shone through this year as he attempted to design an after school youth fitness program. After numerous road blocks, Rory decided to focus his energy on a second project, improving an off leash dog park. Joining forces with another IP, Melonie Denny, and Kitsap County Parks and Recreation, Rory was able to recruit enough volunteers to install a fence for preventing dogs from entering Salmonberry Creek and degrading water quality.

Corpsmembers, the crew seamlessly adjusted to the change with the caliber of work remaining at a consistently high level. Additionally, this Crew has shown amazing enthusiasm for service to their community, both on and off the clock. For the past several months, this crew has been building a community giving garden. The garden is expected to generate 4,000 pounds of produce each year for donating to the Thurston County Food Bank. The members of the crew have committed to continuing to volunteer at the garden well beyond their time with the WCC. This volunteerism has been expanded by recruiting additional volunteers for fence building and sod removal. The crew appreciates the assistance provided by Garden Raised Bounty (GRuB), from the initial advising to supplying 20 young, enthusiastic GRuB volunteers to help place poles for a fence tall enough to keep deer and other garden-eating animals out of the garden.



City of Olympia Crew (L to R): Chris Clinton (sup), Ana Hansa-Ogren, Jason Smith, Ben Amidon, & Wade Arnold. More crew pics on page 8

The Washington Conservation Corps congratulates the City of Olympia Crew for being selected as "WCC Crew of the Quarter", with a special mention to the crew's former supervisor, Troy Warnick. Chris Clinton replaced Troy as supervisor in April and, with the wonderful assistance of the

Congratulations to Jesse Smith, Melinda Marsolek and Amy Shimanek, the city of Kent crew for their selection as crew of the quarter for Spring 2006. The crew overcame many tough obstacles yet still maintained a professional and motivated attitude. The crew was without an official crew supervisor for the last few months but with Jesse in the lead they continued to work efficiently and with a high level of integrity despite numerous distractions. Thanks for persevering and even excelling through some tough situations.



Smith



Marsolek



Shimanek

Zen and the Science of Water Cycle Maintenance

by Rory Henneck, WCC Individual Placement at Karcher Creek

If you've been in the WCC for nearly a year or two now, chances are you have become intimately familiar with the riparian zone through the construction or maintenance of riparian buffers. The projects we do mainly seek to improve streams for salmon. But what are the results we can expect from planting a bunch of trees?

I got to a point where I thought whatever filtration a riparian buffer accomplishes was good for salmon, so I should keep making buffers. There were some flaws, but at that point, my mind was already on weed whacking or mulching or break. Some of you can relate, I bet. As an IP monitoring water quality as well as potential salmon habitat, I collect water quality samples to see what impact water pollution may have on people, not just what was necessary to support salmon. Often what's good for people is also good for salmon, but not always.

Discovering what is known or unknown about the site, what the objectives are for the project, and what some expected side benefits are--instead of planting what looks good and probably will thrive onsite--is what separates the ecologist from the landscaper. I'm not knocking landscapers, but I focused on the landscaping aspect and found myself asking a lot of questions later that I could have asked sooner.

We, as ecologists, can understand from experience how the shade and cover moderate temperature swings and the lower temperatures help water hold oxygen. The vegetation provides the basis for a food web strong enough to hold salmon. You've probably thought before about this stuff.

Most of us won't have the opportunity as Corpsmembers to revisit our sites year after year and evaluate the meaningful results that came from slogging through wetlands with trees, tools, and tubes. Many of us are primarily spending quality time with weed whacking equipment. Between the non-stop vibrating, droning noise, and flecks of anything within the mow zone hitting you, the purpose of the work can get lost in the details. It can be hard to bring meaning back into your work when it's hot, you're tired, and the head of your machine seems bound up or out of string every half hour. At best, we get frustrated and lose focus on the big picture. At worst, we suffer pangs of doubt about the significance of our work.

The following is just a sampling of the findings about the work we do and its positive effects for salmon and water

quality based on a few parameters. I wasn't born with a background in water quality testing so I threw in some basic explanations for those of you who are in the same boat.

Suspended Solids

We are all familiar with the fact that suspended solids (sediment) reach levels that fill the open spaces between gravel, depriving spawning salmon of habitat and suffocating eggs that have already been laid. High suspended solids concentrations may damage a salmon's gills, especially in summer when mucous secretions aren't as thick. High suspended solids may also displace salmonids to side channels and other slower current areas increasing energy expenditure of the fish and limiting forage locations. The impact of various materials on water clarity influence the distance a fish can see, altering its feeding, hiding, and territorial behavior. According to the UW Center for Streamside Studies, suspended particles even impact salmonids' ability to undergo the physiological changes needed to enter marine waters.

The good news is riparian buffers remove large quantities of suspended solids, provided there aren't surface channels conveying solids through the buffer during significant rain events. Fortunately, it's easy to see where this occurs; after a heavy rain, a channel and an accompanying plume of dirt, leaves, and trash will show where the buffer was compromised. Buffers provide sediment removal, which is probably the most important and best-documented benefit to salmon. Score one for the WCC.

Fecal Coliform

More misunderstood than malicious, fecal coliform sets off alarm bells in most people's minds. Public health agencies, regulators like Ecology, and even the Navy are investing their resources in tracking and eliminating sources of fecal coliform in Puget Sound. After all, fecal coliform comes from poop and we all know where that's been. You may have seen a headline like 'High levels of fecal coliform force closure of area lake' and, like me, assumed that fecal coliform bacteria themselves were detrimental.

In reality, fecal coliform bacteria are not very harmful. They are monitored because they are nearly always present in humans and other warm-blooded animals in large, testable quantities. Because of this, when fecal coliform is present, regulators can reason there's potentially a manmade source

Zen (continued from page 2)

of bacterial pollution and a chance for the spread of diseases. A fecal coliform advisory should tell you that one could contract hepatitis, typhoid fever, or some kind of parasite or virus that originated in a human. It should not be equated with poor odds for salmon or other wildlife. Whew! We can all breathe a sigh of relief: salmon cannot catch the human diseases found in fecal material. They have enough issues as it is.

How does this relate to the work we do? Fecal coliform does not behave as predictably in riparian buffers as suspended solids. Sunlight (UV radiation), saltwater, turbidity, precipitation, and temperature can all influence the survival of fecal coliform. Stormwater presents a problem because the high suspended solids concentration can prevent UV radiation from penetrating into the water and destroying the bacteria.

Because of this unpredictability, studies on buffer used to reduce fecal coliform show mixed results. Results from a study on stormwater diversion into a natural riparian buffer averaging 46 meters wide reduced total coliform up to 99.9 percent in the adjacent lake than in the stormwater during moderate rainfall. Unfortunately, this did not hold true in heavy rains. Another study demonstrated that various crop and grass strips in simulated conditions were capable of providing over 80 percent reduction of fecal coliform from cow manure at widths as little as two feet. Yet another study indicates riparian buffers are ineffective at reducing fecal coliform bacteria from settling lagoons used to treat livestock waste.

Wastewater percolating through the ground from failed septic systems or sewer lines has a similar effect if it leaches out near a stream. If there are high fecal concentrations on a site with a wide buffer, a good dog waste pick-up program, and no geese or seagulls, the culprit may be a failed sewer system of some kind. The good news: buffers can reduce bacteria under most conditions. The bad news: heavy rains will often carry bacteria through. You can't win 'em all and that's why wastewater plants stay in business.

Nutrients

Bacteria also require nutrients to survive and no watershed could survive without some nutrients. Pacific Northwest rivers historically received additional nutrients from the ocean in the carcasses of spawned-out salmon, as well as from the metabolism and decay of other living things. Nowadays, excessive or sloppy use of fertilizers near streams can result in drastic upswings in nutrient levels, particularly nitrogen and phosphorus which can foster



Rory Henneck collects a water sample for analysis.

algal blooms and deplete oxygen in streams, resulting in fish-kills, bad odors, and decreased recreational opportunities. Because of this, water quality monitoring often includes testing for nitrogen and phosphorus or compounds like nitrate, nitrite and orthophosphorus. While most aren't drinking untreated water, high nitrate levels in water can prevent blood from gathering oxygen, which is especially dangerous to infants. Chronically high nitrate levels in water also cause sickness in cattle.

A well-designed riparian planting project can remove nitrogen where roots are exposed to groundwater. If roots can't reach the water, all bets are off. Phosphorus is more difficult to capture using a buffer, but because it tends to bond with clay particles, buffers can capture a significant amount. This is good for salmon: if excess nutrients aren't there to feed algae, algae can't use up all the oxygen, so salmon can breathe. This is also good for people and livestock as well. If salmon can survive to return and spawn, then that reestablishes the historical nutrient cycle of the riparian zone. This is an instance where buffers also benefit both public health and salmon recovery. You should be high-fiving each other right now – your work is destroying some friggin' nitrates!

Most of us can think of a variety of advantages to doing what we do besides what I have mentioned; increased civic pride, beautification of neglected areas, and wicked farmer tans, to name a few. This is just a sliver of the issues and studies that concern water quality, salmon, and what we do. Although it's not a jarring, life-changing experience like hurricane relief, habitat enhancement is a response to problems that affect the quality of life before the consequences become disastrous. And if that's not zen-like, I don't know what is.

Crupina

Article by Bob Milner (sup), with help from Wenatchee Crew members Ben Valdez, Stephanie Brown, Gina Carani, & Joe Clardy

Another great season of Crupina has come and gone once again. For those who may not know, Crupina is a Class A noxious weed. Which means it needs to be eradicated or severely controlled. The Lake Chelan Valley is the only place where this weed grows in Washington. Idaho, Oregon, and California have Crupina growing in much larger patches. While only 600 acres have been identified in the Lake Chelan area, the other states have thousands of infested acres. The affected area in the Lake Chelan Valley is on about 99% federal land. Crupina was first discovered in the early 1980s and research shows that it originated in the Mediterranean. It is thought that Basque sheep herders may have brought it over in the 1920s when sheep herding and grazing took place in the valley. We've had crews from the WCC hand-pulling and spraying the highly infested areas since 2002. Here is a sample of how the day goes while on an 8-day spike:



Corpsmembers Ben Amidon & Apollo Stone play music during down time on a crupina spike.

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|------------------|---|
| 5:30 am | Alarm goes off | 12:00 pm | Finally lunch |
| 5:37 am | Hit snooze button | 12:30 pm | Back to picking |
| 5:44 am | Hit snooze again while listening to the pitter patter of rain drops hitting the tent | 12:45 pm | Begin asking yourself: Why didn't I pack my rain gear? |
| 5:51 am | Finally decide to get up and brave the cool mountain air | 1:30 pm | Soaked from head to toe and hoping somehow you can dry your boots for tomorrow |
| 5:55 am | Start mad dash out of tent, heading down to the outhouse... just to realize someone has beat you there | 1:45 pm | Listen to Dave's story he told earlier...that makes the 101st time we've heard it |
| 6:10 am | Strain coffee grounds between teeth from "cowboy coffee" cooking over the open fire | 2:00 pm | Still picking |
| 6:15 am | Finish straining coffee grounds and enjoy a nice, hot breakfast | 2:30 pm | Still picking |
| 6:30 am | Drop off breakfast dishes and pick up a sack lunch and fill water bottles | 3:00 pm | Break |
| 6:40 am | Gaze into the morning sky while asking yourself...rain gear or no rain gear...I know it's going to quit soon... | 3:15 pm | Back to picking |
| 6:45 am | Here we stand waiting for the Forest Service boat, hoping to get a ride to the work site | 4:00 pm | Find ending point for the day and begin the trek back to camp |
| 7:00 am | YES, it's here! | 4:30 pm | Stop hiking for a quick splash of creek water to cool down |
| 7:15 am | Get off the boat and start to climb the hill towards yesterdays ending point | 4:45 pm | Start thinking camp must have moved further away, because hiking in wet boots isn't fun anymore |
| 7:30 am | Safety meeting | 5:00 pm | Stop to make sure Dave is still with us! |
| 7:45 am | Commence picking! | 5:30 pm | Back at camp |
| 7:45-10 am | Listen to random conversation and stories, wondering which ones to believe | 5:45 pm | Try to soak up puddles of water in the tent while changing into casual evening wear |
| 10:00 am | Break time! | 6:00 pm | Realize there's not much you can do about wet boots |
| 10:15 am | Commence picking again | 6:15 pm | Dinner!! |
| 10:45 am | Start to wonder if lunch is close or not | 6:45 pm | Finish dinner and gather around campfire for hot drinks while others play cards in the dining tent |
| 10:50 am | Listen to a Dave Coffey story for the 100th time | 8-9:30 pm | Off to bed, in hopes that you've fixed your leaky tent problems, all the while convincing yourself this is a great project. |

This is just your typical day while working the hillsides of the Beautiful Lake Chelan valley. While the project may seem like it drags on and on, for those of us who have spent a substantial amount of time pulling Crupina, it really is fun. Great scenery, catered food, and the company of so many great individuals...what more could you ask for?

My experiences doing this project over the years are what make me want to continue returning each opportunity I get. Plus, you can really see the difference we are making in the Crupina battle. This is a great project and I hope to see more crews out there in the years to come.

Crew Commutes for Conservation

Article by Rose Woofenden, NSEA Crew Member

Sometimes ten hours a day just isn't enough. Every day, the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA) crew puts in some overtime. Not overtime for the Conservation Corps—overtime for conservation. We do this by riding our bikes to work. Since the beginning of their terms with the crew, Isaiah Webb (crew supervisor), Justin Lamb, Rose Woofenden, Jennifer Gossett, and Kyle Parker ride almost daily. The ride is different for each person, but it takes an average of about half-an-hour from doorstep to shop door. Most places it's possible to ride trails, small roads, or find a bike lane.

Some days the ride is easy. These are the days when it's bright, sunny and clear. It's hard to wish you were driving your car. In the mornings the air is chilly, but after you ride up the first big hill you're grateful for the chill. The town is quiet and empty, not like it will be on the way home. It's a chance to relax and get ready for the day ahead.



WCC Member, Justin Lamb, greets students arriving at school.

On other days, when it's raining, cold, and dark, you wish you were somewhere else. Those are the days that the water finds every possible dry spot to penetrate, the mud begins to creep up your legs, and huge trucks that can't see you in spite of your five flashing lights seem like they are going to run you down. Even in the winter, when it felt like your fingers would fall off before you made it to work, we were still riding. Not everybody rode every day, but we were still riding.

Although we'd been biking all year, when May rolled around, there was a greater incentive to ride. May is National Bike to Work Month, and May 19th was Bellingham's Bike to Work and School day. A local bicycle club organized the city-wide event. There were "Celebration Stations" staffed city-wide, ready to cheer people on, pass out baked goods, stickers and prizes, and to support the cause. Our crew chose to staff a station at a local elementary school. Friday morning we arrived bright and early ready to greet the students. The celebration had already begun, as others greeted us on our way across town. People were cheering as they passed each other on their bikes.

I rode past an entire middle school class out for a ride. The teacher explained that it was part of their class, and the ride was required. As I rode off I encouraged the students saying "Thanks for biking!" One student yelled back "Thank you! Ride your bikes and save the environment!" It was wonderful to see so many young people so excited about biking.

After setting out cookies and prizes we waited for the students to arrive. As they rode up we rang bells, sounded horns and cheered. The kids were excited. It wasn't every day that they had such a group of greeters. We handed out cookies and stickers, so they could proclaim "I Rode My Bike Today!" Some kids got a chance to answer a bicycle safety question to win a prize. The celebration was un-expected for many kids; they ride their bikes every day. Others were riding just because of the event, and were expecting us.

We had forty riders stop at our station, and saw many more riding past on the street. By the time school started our cookie supply was exhausted, the prizes were gone, and we were stoked. But the party wasn't done for us yet. As the posse (by this time we'd gained a few friends and past crew members) rode home together, we stopped at more stations along the way to continue the celebration. We were too excited about riding to stop.

As the year continues, we're still riding. Occasionally someone drives for one reason or another, and when they walk into the shop without their bike, someone is sure to ask "What happened?" At that point, you try to come up with the best excuse you can for not riding, and promise yourself you'll ride tomorrow.

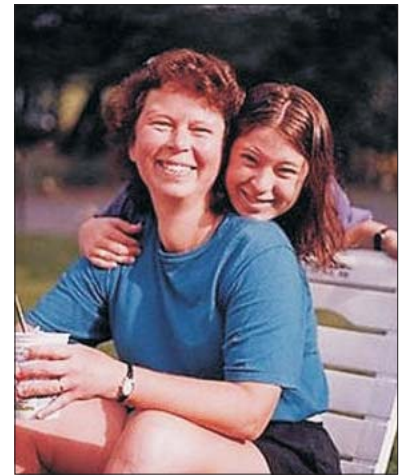
WCC Mourns the Loss of Former Member

The Washington Conservation Corps wishes to express our condolences to the friends and family of Mary Cooper and Susanna Stodden. Mother and daughter, Mary and Susanna, were shot July 11th while hiking the Pinnacle Lake Trail. By all accounts, these were two extraordinary women who were passionate about the environment.

Susanna Stodden served with the Washington Conservation Corps during the 2001-2002 service year as an Individual Placement with the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA). During her time with the WCC, Susanna organized several events and developed curricula around environmental education. She continued this work long after her time with the WCC at organizations such as the Pacific Science Center in Seattle and the Seattle Audubon Society.

Staff at the Washington Conservation Corps and the Department of Ecology Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program will be making a donation in Susanna's name to the Washington Trails Association, as requested by her family:

In memory of Susanna Stodden
 Washington Trails Association
 2019 3rd Ave. Suite 100, Seattle, WA 98121
 Telephone: (206) 625-1367
 Website: www.wta.org



Volunteerism Spanning the Ages

Article by Brock Milliern, Bellingham Crew Supervisor

Often times, when I think of volunteering, I give credit to younger generations for being the most likely to volunteer. Taking that a step further, I often think of generation “X” and later as the ones who invented volunteering—as if you could have looked in your dictionary pre-1980 and the word volunteer would not exist. This, of course, is not the case.

The truth became evident, as I attended the 2006 National Conference on Volunteerism this June, and they started hitting us with some facts about the older generations volunteering habits. 2300 AmeriCorps members served in the Gulf Coast Region—an astounding accomplishment for programs across the country. More astounding—6900 Senior Corps members served in the disaster zones. While the efforts in the Gulf Coast Region are relatively new, we were given examples of volunteerism dating back over 35 years.



Milliern

Barb O’neil of Olympia, Washington was recognized at this ceremony. She has been preparing and serving Thanksgiving dinner for those in need since 1970. What was once a sixty meal operation has grown to serve over 2000 folks on Christmas and Thanksgiving. Plus, she started a non-profit that deals with many other misfortunes of the poor in the Olympia area.

While these are just a couple of stories, there are of course many more which all point to one conclusion—we youngsters didn’t invent volunteerism, it was a legacy handed to us from many generations before, and quite frankly we could do a better job with it. Currently, less than 25% of young people (age 16-24) volunteer, compared with 33% of the baby-boomers (age 42-60). So, the question you need to

ask yourself is, are you going to continue this legacy beyond WCC? Were you inspired to volunteer before and maybe that is why you joined, or did your time here inspire you more? We, as AmeriCorps Alums, need to step up and be the role models for the 75 percent of our peers not doing their part. Let’s take this legacy and show that the spirit of volunteerism does indeed span the ages.

Source: www.nationalservice.org

| U.S. VOLUNTEERING RATES AND ANNUAL HOURS PER TYPICAL VOLUNTEER, 2005 | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------|--------------------|-------|-------|
| BY GENDER | | | BY RACE/ETHNICITY | | | BY AGE | | |
| | Hours | Rate | | Hours | Rate | | Hours | Rate |
| Male: | 52 | 25.0% | White: | 50 | 30.4% | 16 to 24 years: | 36 | 24.4% |
| Female: | 50 | 32.4% | Non-White: | 50 | 22.0% | 25 to 34 years: | 36 | 25.3% |
| BY MARITAL STATUS | | | Black: | 52 | 22.1% | 35 to 44 years: | 48 | 34.5% |
| Married: | 52 | 34.1% | Asian: | 40 | 20.7% | 45 to 54 years: | 50 | 32.7% |
| Other: | 44 | 23.1% | Other: | 50 | 23.7% | 55 to 64 years: | 56 | 30.2% |
| NATION | | | Hispanic: | 40 | 15.4% | 65 years and over: | 96 | 24.8% |

WCC Sports Report

Article by Bridget Mason, WCC Outreach Coordinator

The Washington Conservation Corps works hard and plays hard too. This past training, the WCC's top athletes stormed the field at Pilgrim Firs in Port Orchard to play wiffle ball, Frisbee, football, ping pong, volleyball, basketball, soccer, and hackey sack. Other after hour's fun included canoeing, chess, dominos, and playing music.

I visited camp on Tuesday night to catch some of the action. My first stop was the ping pong room, where Brock "the rock" Milliern was dominating the table. After being schooled in the proper way to hold a paddle, I decided that I was not up to snuff to play alongside ping pong masters of such high caliber. Moving outside, a group of WFR attendees were taking advantage of their limited down time to toss around a hackey sack. The acrobatics were impressive as the group kept the precious sack from falling.

Heading out to the field, a group was forming for a game of wiffle ball baseball. The pressure was on as Supervisors, Assistants, and a few Individual Placements joined forces to take on a group of feisty Corpsmembers. Though the final score has been withheld in the name of good sportsmanship, the competition was fierce.

Across the field, another group was tossing around a disc. With all the amazing trick throws, I thought surely the WCC should form an Ultimate team. Anyone with me?

The volleyball net sat unused until a certain logistics coordinator was able to locate a ball. The sand was cool and the air was warm—perfect conditions for a friendly game of volleyball. As the teams grew to require rotations, I knew it was time for me to leave. The sun was setting as I left the field, but I knew the dedicated players would continue recreating well into the night.

Outside of trainings, WCC members, Supervisors, and Staff have formed two summer league softball teams. One team is located in Bellingham and one in Olympia.



After Hours

This new feature focuses on the interests and hobbies of WCC Members and Staff. We want to know what you are up to beyond the typical work day.

Ryan Swindler, Port Angeles Crew Supervisor, has his eye on the sky. Each weekend, Ryan makes the trek from Port Angeles to the Olympia Regional Airport, in order to train to become a certified flight instructor through Glacier Aviation. This certification requires 200 hours of flight time onboard Robinson R-22 helicopters, but with goals of leading tours in places like Alaska and Aruba, it is time well spent. Best of luck, Ryan!

For more information on flight instruction through Glacier Aviation, please visit: www.glacieraviation.com



Swindler

Crew Pictures from Page 1



Troy Warnick, former Crew Supervisor



Courtney Irby

The City of Olympia crew wishes to thank the following donors: Lew Rents, GRuB, Black Lake Organics, Komachin Middle School, Anne Mills - South Sound Green, and City of Olympia.

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.



Attention current and soon-to-be Alums!

AmeriCorps Alums is the official organization for AmeriCorps Alums created by Alums, for Alums.

AmeriCorps Alums provides an organizational structure that can serve as a catalyst for alumni to organize their efforts into productive community action. The AmeriCorps Alums website includes:

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Photos, Suggestions, and Stories Wanted!

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