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AmeriCorps Members: Getting Things Done

The WCC is proud to announce that Kenji Toelken's Spokane crew and Melody Abel's Olympia Spike Crew are the year's first Crews of the Quarter. Nicole Aragon is the Individual Placement (IP) of the Quarter. Read on to find out why these members have earned this recognition.

Spokane Crew

The Spokane crew spends the fall and winter working through adversity such as sub-zero temperatures in remote eastern Washington while constructing fence-line in rocky terrain, the crew perseveres with great enthusiasm and dedication. They are also working hard to coordinate a film festival in Spokane for their MLK Service Project to raise funds in support of Doctors Without Borders efforts in Darfur. When asked to travel to western Washington to support flood relief efforts, the crew went above and beyond expectations, and received heartfelt thanks from homeowners digging out from mud and debris.



(L-R):Kenji Toelken (sup), Dustin Bise, Melissa Kent, John McDermott, & Josephine Davis

Olympia Spike Crew

The Olympia Spike Crew has been short-handed much of the year, but they have consistently completed high quality work at an extraordinary pace. Not only did they put in an outstanding effort during the flood response in southwestern Washington, they have impressed King Conservation District with their hard work and enthusiasm--and

the crew enjoyed the work! In their first month on the job, the crew worked trails at Mt. Rainier National Park. Chris Humann ran the crew because Melody was still recovering from knee surgery. This was quite the indoctrination into WCC work. They hiked more than 150 miles that month while completing fall drainage work. When Melody returned, they moved seamlessly into their next project.



Kenton Hotsko
(Olympia Spike Crew)



(L-R): Tom Nececkas, Melody Abel (sup), Grant Mincy, Calob Louwaert.

Individual Placement

Nicole Aragon is the IP at Stilly-Snohomish Fisheries Enhancement Task Force. Staff at the WCC, as well as her sponsor, have been impressed with Nicole's cheerful, can-do attitude and strong work ethic. She came to the October orientation training with a plan for a rooftop garden project. After speaking with local crews, Nicole signed on to help them with their projects too. Her sponsor, Ann Boyce, tells stories of staff thinking of projects only to turn around to find Nicole already getting started.



Nicole Aragon
(Stilly-Snohomish IP)

Flood Response Update

Article by Bridget Mason

When the weather reports speak of severe winter storms and seasonal flooding, I usually shrug it off because typically, here in this tranquil state of Washington, "severe" means some power outages and the occasional salmon swimming across the road down there in Hoodspout. Monday came and yes, some WCC Crews went out to fill and stack sandbags, but still, it did not seem too out of the ordinary. That night, I arrived home to an overflowing ditch, but I made easy work of clearing the storm drain and life went on, as usual.

Tuesday morning, I walked into a hectic scene here at WCC headquarters! There were now four crews on flood response, and the count would expand to 15 within the week. The telephones were alive! Newspapers, Ecology management, the Governor's office, it seemed everybody wanted kept in the loop. This was reminiscent of some of our national responses, but on an even larger scale because it was local. Nearly 100 people were pulled from their "regular" WCC duties to come down to Lewis and Grays Harbor Counties. The tasks varied from bucking up fallen trees to canvassing neighborhoods, ensuring people were safe and knew help was available.

On Wednesday, I took a break from my regular duties, as well, to assist in Rochester with water distribution there. My short time in Rochester finally made it real. For the first time, I saw homes covered in 3-5 feet of mud. I met people who considered themselves spared because they "only" had one foot of water come into their house. A woman had picked up some water earlier that day and returned to give us some hot apple cider. She wanted to make sure that the two of us WCC-ers were comfortable sitting in the cold. Meeting people who have suffered a loss, but still take time to help others has an inexplicable effect.



WCC Crew Members muddy from flood response.

On Friday, I arrived at work to find an email message from a Mrs. Carpenter of Pass Christian, Mississippi. Mrs. Carpenter met WCC Members in September of 2005 after her house was nearly demolished by Hurricane Katrina and they were the first volunteers at her door. She was writing to wish us well now that Washington State was in the National headlines and to let us know that she had finally returned to her home with her husband and was hoping to return a shirt to us that had been left there by a WCC member. The second time in a week that I was truly touched by the thoughtfulness of others.

Over the weekend, I visited family in Kitsap County where, depending on which report you listen to, 10 - 15 inches of rain fell in one day. I saw big sinkholes that had swallowed cars, mudslides that cleared entire forests, and huge scars in the earth left behind by the river. Through all this destruction, I saw something that snapped me out of the bleakness. In the fast-moving current, a chum salmon was struggling upstream. Seeing this gave me hope that life would soon return to normal. Furthermore, it reminded me of the WCC's everyday efforts that will help to lessen the damage of these storms in the future.

My First Month as a WCC Member

By Kristin Santler, Bellingham Crew Member

Before my first day with the WCC, I had what I believe now to be true, a vague idea of what the WCC is like. My thoughts were more like daydreams of what working outdoors with other team members would be like. I pictured things like team building, heavy equipment use, and outdoor work, but my daydreaming was nothing in comparison to what I have actually experienced.



Kristin Santler

On my first day, I found my way to the shop on the other side of town. I sat down next to the one person I recognized (Vanessa Lott). Soon, several people showed up. I slowly

began to wake up and introduce myself to the other members. When everyone had arrived, the group split in two and headed out for the day's adventure. I did not know where we were going, all I knew was something smelled a little fishy.

For the next couple of weeks, each day was brand new. We went to all the sites that WCC has or will be working on and got a run down of the work we will be doing. Our sponsor, Sue, took us on a tour and I was excited to learn about the habitat and restoration of salmon. We had some hands-on with the fish and learned about their spawning process from a Western student working on her thesis. I realized the salmon smell no longer bothered me much. We toured our nursery and were taught about the trees that we would be working with. This was good information for me because I knew very little about trees. (Continued on next page)

My First Month *(Continued from previous page)*

We went to the AmeriCorps Kick-off where I met people from other crews, as well as other programs. I really liked what City Year had to say about their program. City Year seems like a great opportunity to get to know the community in big cities (something that is intimidating to me). While I was wandering around waiting for the Kick-off to start, I introduced myself to a man in a nice military suit. We soon realized we were from the same area. We talked a little, shared some jokes, and I was on my way. When the Kick-off began, the man in the military suit walked up on stage to host the day's event. It was cool to have met someone of that importance. He gave us the opportunity to hear stories from former AmeriCorps members.

We heard from someone who joked non-stop and it became clear to me that AmeriCorps had driven him crazy. Not in a bad way, he was just a little weird, funny but weird. The host introduced Krystal Handy, who I absolutely adored. She was humble, hard working and a humanitarian with qualities I admire. I felt that if she ran for President of the USA, which I fully believe she should, I would vote for her in a heartbeat. At the end of her speech, the host returned and announced, "I would vote for her to be President." My heart skipped a beat; I doubt that we were the only ones in the room thinking that. I would love to meet Krystal and shake her hand or even give her a huge hug and thank her for all the work she does.

Later that day, we had an emergency response meeting. I left feeling excited to share what I learned. I decided I would hold an informational safety meeting at my home. I live with 8 other people in an intentional communal living home and thought that it would be beneficial. Some safety precautions, an escape route, and first aid to keep on file in our home would be perfect.

The following week, we went to Padilla Bay for Orientation. We learned more about AmeriCorps, salmon, first aid, and other important topics. We had the opportunity to meet some of the other crews and WCC staff. We presented our plans for Service Projects and learned about all the incentives for volunteering which got me really pumped up. I enjoy helping my community but the extra recognition for it makes volunteering even more appealing. It is pretty much all I do now...

The work within the WCC makes me feel great about what we do to better our environment. Everyone I work with is awesome, spirited and energetically enthusiastic individuals. I am very fortunate to have people that I work so well with. I am excited that I have the opportunity to be part of AmeriCorps and I know that, by taking advantage of every aspect of the program, I will become more and more of my own free agent in life. With the level of optimism me and my fellow corps members work with, I know that we will get things done!!! Thank you so much AmeriCorps for helping me to make my future brighter and better!!!

Farewell

By Bridget Mason

A new year, a new job...Farewell to the WCC. I have worked with this program for just over 6 years now and have concluded that there is no better job for a young person starting out in the environmental field. I remember when my best friend told me about the WCC and I almost did not apply because the small pay seemed so impossible to live on. I am thankful that I saw past that and even signed up for a second year. The 2 education awards allowed me to continue college, which I finished while in the Corps. The Education Awards and matching scholarships I received were enough to pay for all of my schooling. More importantly, my time in the WCC allowed me great opportunities to network, resulting in a full-time position as a Lab Technician with Ecology. Just as I began to feel idle, a staff position opened here at the WCC and I jumped at the opportunity to re-join this great program.



Bridget Mason

I became the Outreach Coordinator in October 2004 though this position quickly grew to encompass much more than "outreach". Within my first week, I was asked to take on the IP program and, shortly after that, grant writing and heading up community service was added to my To Do list. I remember my first call to supervisors to ask about these service projects, feeling just slightly intimidated. Here I was, the newbie in the program, contacting supervisors (some that have been here 20 years) to ensure progress was being made on their projects. I soon got to know the supervisors and realized there was no need to fear. Today, I laugh at the thought of ever being afraid to call the likes of Mr. Dave Coffey, a living legend in the WCC. I will miss you Dave!

There have been some major accomplishments during my time here, but more importantly, I have met amazing people that inspire me. I have seen members forever impacted by the experience of helping strangers. I have watched timid people grow to become incredible leaders. I have become a stronger person myself. This job is so fulfilling and fun; it will be difficult to find an experience that compares. I will miss the WCC Softball team coached by Dale Rahier, with the all-star WCC Supervisors (Shawn Zaniewski, Troy Warnick and Melody Abel) leading the pack. Also, our volleyball team led

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Farewell (continued from previous page)

by Jason Ouellette that had three amazing years coming in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in the play-offs. I know you will all miss my intimidating presence at the net! Really though, thanks for letting me play.

I am headed to the world of higher education. I will be working at the University of Washington Tacoma, which is much closer to my home. My new position is similar to my current position--continuing to assist people in meeting their goals. As I leave, I hope that the things I have helped create do not leave with me. This newsletter is one of them. WCC Corps News has grown from 4 pages written solely by me in October 2004 to an 8-10 page publication with regular column features, submissions from the field, and even a puzzle or two. So, please continue to submit to and enjoy this publication

(hopefully, Dave comes through with his promise of a gossip column).

The MLK Projects were a big part of my life over the past few years. These projects are so thoughtful and creative and I know there is still room to grow. I am disappointed that I will be leaving just before the polar bear swims, film festivals, and garden projects begin, but from all I have seen so far this year; the WCC will make a big showing. I intend to show up to at least one of these events for a Day On, so I hope to see you out there!

To the members, keep setting and achieving incredible goals. To the supervisors, keep doing the work you love. To the staff, keep striving for the best AmeriCorps program around. Thanks for the memories and I will miss you all.

Puget Sound Salmon Farming: The Challenge to Meet Market Demands While Maintaining Ecological Sustainability

*Article by Jason Ouellette,
Training/Logistics Coordinator*

There is much debate regarding the farming of salmon in net pens throughout the waters of Puget Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca, and British Columbia. Particularly controversial are the raising of Atlantic salmon, as they are not native to the area and put pressure on local ecosystems and resources. For this reason and other ecological concerns, scientists, environmentalists, and commercial and recreational anglers are opposed to the rearing of salmon in net pens. Yet salmon farmers continue these highly industrialized operations, with support from consumers and through permission granted by the government, which sets specific requirements.

Salmon farming in net pens involves the construction of near-shore, anchored and permanent structures to contain and raise salmon from a small juvenile state to a commercially harvestable size of about ten pounds. Salmon farming has grown dramatically in the last several decades. In the Puget Sound alone, 8 - 10 commercial net pens are in operation. According to the World Wildlife Fund, the industry grew from 2 percent of the global salmon market in 1980, to 65 percent in 2004. Perhaps this is evidence of a new attitude towards the practice, which proponents see as a way to relieve pressure from declining and often over-fished stocks of wild, hatchery or ocean-reared salmon. Similarly, fish farming is regarded as a means of increasing the supply of salmon above ocean production as well as a way to provide a steady supply of fresh fish over the course of the year as traditional fisheries are seasonal in nature.



Jason Ouellette

The opposition to salmon farming in the Pacific Northwest is great and suggests many problems with the industry. Foremost of the concerns is the impact of the farms on ocean-reared salmon. Disease is introduced by heavy concentrations of farmed fish into migration routes of vulnerable juvenile ocean-reared fish. The farmed fish eat meal pellets derived from forage fish species, supplemented with various antibiotics. The uneaten food and excrement from the rearing fish is dispersed, untreated, through the nets and settles to the bottom or is carried away by the prevailing tidal currents. This untreated waste can potentially provide nutrients for algal blooms and reductions of dissolved oxygen. Farmed salmon have also been shown to have high levels of carcinogenic compounds in their flesh.

New research has shown that disease poses a real harm to native fish from net pens. There have been several reports recently that salmon farming has been proven to kill wild salmon smolts in huge numbers. These reports show that sea lice from net pen fish are attacking and killing up to 95% of the migrating wild juvenile fish that must pass the pens. Though there are reports from farms stating that sea lice are not currently a problem in Washington, there are several lawsuits arguing to the contrary and groups are calling for a moratorium on all net pen fish farming that do not employ a pathogen barrier.

There are other potential problems associated with net pens, beyond immediate ecological degradation. When non-native Atlantic salmon escape, they pose significant threats to the native stocks, both by competing for resources and possibly infiltrating the gene pool. There have been large releases of Atlantic salmon in the Pacific Northwest with an average of 60,000 fish per year escaping in the 1990s. In spite of these escape numbers, there have been few reports of the fish naturalizing to Pacific waters. There is no evidence of spawning in Washington and in the few isolated cases in British Columbia where adult fish have spawned, none of the offspring of those fish have been documented to have

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Puget Sound Salmon Farming

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returned as adults. Though the reproductive rates of farmed salmon are significantly less than native stocks, the presence of these farmed fish is enough to cause considerable influence on the spawning behavior of native salmon. This includes the number of redds constructed and covered, and eggs fertilized by native salmon. Given this evidence, it is surprising that many attempts were made in recent decades to intentionally introduce Atlantic salmon to streams of the Pacific Northwest. The last such attempt by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife was in 1981 and all attempts have proven unsuccessful. Many scientists believe the potential for invasion of native habitats by Atlantic salmon is still an important threat.

Another major concern is the economic effect of farming on the commercial fishing industry as the market is flooded with cheap, farmed fish. The capitalist gains provided by this practice have become so attractive that extreme actions have been taken to ensure that farmed fish are still sold. One example is the addition of coloring agents to the meat to make it look like that of ocean-reared fish. Without coloring, the farmed fish have gray instead of red meat because of their fish meal diet.

The impacts of farming salmon on the commercial fishing industry are of notable concern. The massive increase of salmon farming in the 1990s reduced the value of the Alaskan salmon catch substantially. The reliance on farmed salmon continues to grow, and, as of 2001, Washington was producing 10 million pounds of Atlantic salmon per year, valued at over \$40 million dollars, and British Columbia was producing about 100 million pounds.

The commercial benefits of Atlantic salmon farming are far-reaching. However, the environmental risks posed are even more powerful. For this reason, alternatives to farming should be sought that negotiate the need for industry and ecological health. One potential solution is relocating the fish to tanks or ponds on land adjacent to marine water sources. Water could be pumped into and out of rearing ponds with treatment of discharge waters to remove wastes and especially marine salmon pathogens. Another alternative is to place salmon farms in areas where they will not affect out-migrating smolts of ocean-reared stocks. Both of these measures would allow for safe migration to ocean rearing areas for natural and hatchery stocks. Costs associated with both of these options may be quite high and are not be seriously considered due to a business-friendly regulatory environment. As consumers, we can choose to support wild fish populations instead by steering clear of "farm-raised" at the local supermarket.

Considering College

Article by Bridget Mason, WCC Outreach Coordinator

The AmeriCorps Education Award is often a major motivation for members to join the WCC. The \$4,725 Education Award can make college affordable to many who were not fortunate enough to have the security of a trust fund. While many members have their education award spent the day they join AmeriCorps (applied to student loans), approximately 25% of our members will use their Education Award to get started in college for the first time.

I think the most difficult thing about college is the process involved. If you don't have anybody guiding you through the process, the idea of placement tests, financial aid, deadlines, due dates, majors, minors, and everything else is overwhelming to say the least. This is unfortunate because I think all the convolution convinces some to give up on the whole idea.

I hope that this article helps get people started in the process. Here is some clarification on some major hurdles people encounter along the way:

- **Financial Aid:** Applying for Financial Aid is free and relatively painless. It is a good idea to start this early in the planning process because it might help you get scholarships (free money) and low-cost student loans. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. It is a straightforward online form with plenty of help along the way. DON'T FORGET:

AmeriCorps wages are excluded when determining financial aid, so post-AmeriCorps is a great time to fill out the FAFSA.

- **Placement tests:** While most colleges require a placement test, they vary from short placement tests (community colleges) to lengthy weeks of cramming for tests like the SAT. Often times, placement tests will determine which level of math and English you start out at, so it is worth some focused studying since doing well will save you a few lower level courses.
- **Costs:** Debt is hard to enter into lightly, so it is no surprise that people sometime delay college because of the cost. The good news is that the Education Award can go a long way in cutting down the amount of money you will pay out-of-pocket for college. You can make your Education Award go further by attending a Community College for the first 2 years of school, then transferring to a University to complete the final 2 years of a Bachelors Degree. The cost of a University can be double the cost of a 2-year college. For example, full-time at South Puget Sound Community College cost around \$925 per quarter while the same course load at Western Washington University costs \$1,763. At a Community College, the Education Award will pay for 5 quarters worth of schooling. This will almost take care of your first 2 years of school. Once you get a quarter or two in, begin looking for other scholarships available to current students and, with any luck, your schooling will be paid in full!

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Considering College

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- **Declaring a Major:** Many people put off college until figuring out exactly what they want to be when they grow up. The truth is, going to college might help you figure this out. English and Math will fill up your first few quarters, so you might as well get started with that. Later, you can decide a major with plenty of time to take the required courses.

There are people ready to help you along the way. An Advisor will help you figure out which courses to take, making sure you take the right assortment of classes. Every degree has a set number of required, core elective and elective courses and you want to avoid taking too many courses in one area. Financial Aid Advisors are also available to help answer your questions around funding your education. There is typically a scholarship board in the financial aid office that lists available scholarships for students. Colleges also provide a lot of this information online-from scholarships available to degree planning worksheets. Best of luck and remember, the Education Award expires 7 years after you complete the WCC.

The Leaflet

Featuring: Herbal Preparations

Article by Duffy Trails

With the cold weather making it difficult to get out there and forage many edibles, I thought this article might help give ya'll some ideas for making some herbal treats with the bountiful harvest ready to bloom come spring. Generally, in any preparation, double the amount of herbs if you are using fresh instead of dried herbs. Below are general descriptions of herbal concoctions with suggestions of plants to use for each. Though this is far from all-inclusive, it should at least get you started.

An infusion is prepared by pouring a cup of boiling water over 1 to 2 teaspoons of dried plants. Let stand for 5-10 minutes. If the herb is left too long, the infusion may become bitter. Strain with a fine strainer or cheesecloth. A decoction is similar, but the plant is added to 1 pint of water and left to boil for 10-20 minutes (liquid should reduce by a third). Infusions are typically used with flowers and leaves, decoctions are made with bark and roots. To create an aromatherapy compress, soak a cloth in a bowl full of the infusion or decoction, squeeze out most of the liquid and apply cloth to affected area. You may also drink both as a tea-honey works well if you like it sweet. Seeds, bark, and leaves can all be used with this method. Recommended wild plants to use for infusions/decoctions: yarrow, bitter cherry bark, wild ginger root, mint, comfrey, clover, nettle leaves, burdock, and licorice fern rhizomes.



Essential Oils are prepared by placing the plant in an edible oil (I prefer olive oil) for an extended period (you can do either cold or hot infusions). I recommend you refer back to last winter's Leaflet article about black cottonwood for a great recipe of an herbal oil extract using cottonwood buds. A good ratio is 1 cup dried herb to every 2 cups of oil. Recommended wild plants to use for essential oils: rose hips, cottonwood buds, and plantain leaves.

A tincture is an alcoholic extract of an herb. The typical ratio is 1 part plant to 4 parts alcohol (100 proof vodka is a good choice). Alcohol acts as a preservative and most tinctures can last for up to 2 years. Any part of the plant may be used, but it is best to cut the plant into small pieces. Place 4 ounces of dried herb in a glass jar with a tight-fitting lid and add 2 cups vodka. Leave for two weeks, shaking occasionally, and then strain through a cloth into a brown glass bottle. Keep tightly closed. The tincture is ready in 6 weeks, but gets stronger the longer it sits. Make a therapeutic steam or inhalant using 2 teaspoons of tincture in a cup of boiling water. Recommended wild plants to use for tinctures: chickweed, dandelion root, yarrow flower, elder flower and willow bark.

Salves, balms and creams are a blend of oil and beeswax and sometimes water. You can make your own, or purchase an unscented, water based cream. After adding herb to purchased cream, simmer in the top of a double boiler for 30 minutes. Strain before it cools. To make your own heat one cup olive oil, keeping below 120 degrees. Add two ounces beeswax until melted and blended. Add two ounces herb. For lighter cream, add a little water, heavier salves and balms add more beeswax. Simmer 20 minutes, mixing well. Strain through a cloth into sterilized jars. Recommended wild plants: Arnica flower, Calendula, Cottonwood bud, Plantain leaf, valerian root, and wild ginger leaves.

Healing Tinctures:

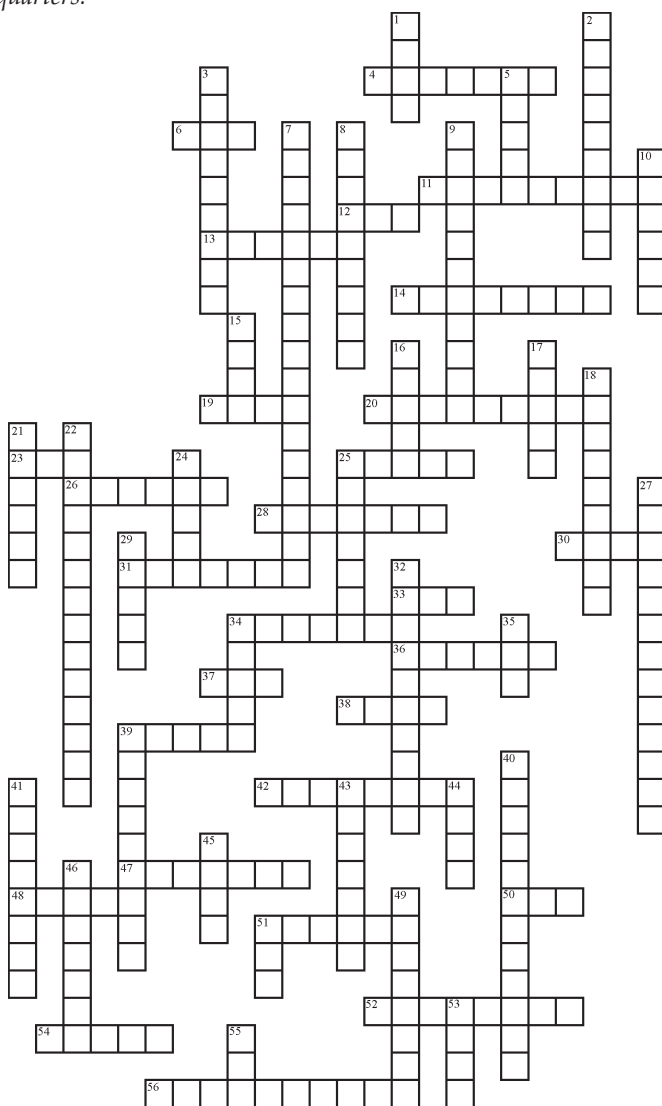
- Acid indigestion: 5-10 drops of Dandelion root every ten minutes until relieved. Take some before meals to prevent heartburn.
- Colds: Yarrow taken daily prevents colds, but for treatment, take 1 dropper every few hours.
- Fatigue: 10 drops of Dandelion tincture in the morning.
- Fever: 1 dropper of Yarrow tincture every few hours.
- Insect bites: Yarrow sprayed on your skin may prevent bites from black flies, mosquitoes, and ticks. Yarrow tincture may also be used to treat bites to prevent infection.
- Muscle cramps: 20 drops St John's twice hourly for as long as needed.
- Sore throat: Gargle with yarrow.
- Wounds: use Yarrow to rinse wound and treat the dressing.

Sponsor Recognition

The WCC Strives to collaborate with sponsors that support all that the WCC stands for. Sometimes, our sponsors go above and beyond. Desiree Pooley with the City of Tacoma is one such sponsor. Desiree has shown a strong interest in each WCC member's individual interests and exceeds her obligation as an AmeriCorps/WCC supporter. According to Crew Supervisor, Courtney Irby, Desiree has made countless resources available for the crew to get all they can out of the WCC program and take full advantage of her as a sponsor. She not only is interested in getting to know the corps members, but also keeps them in mind when she is diversifying projects. Tacoma has the potential, as with any of our crew locations, to be a less-than-glamorous place filled with mundane and tedious job activities, but Desiree's enthusiasm and concern for the people on the crew makes the City of Tacoma an exciting, progressive and truly beneficial place to work.

WCC Puzzle

Prizes for the 1st WCC Crew/IP to return this page, completed correctly, to WCC Headquarters.



Across

4. # 44 down, in other words
6. Overalls
11. Dwarf, Africanized, Giant (pl)
12. Main root
13. Nettle genus
14. Study of fungi
19. Look-alike Berry
20. WCC Newsletter frequency
23. An _____ to grind
25. Cools H2O
26. Shows salmon's age (pl)
28. leaves
30. Grand, Noble, Douglas (pl)
31. Return to original state
33. 1930s work relief program (acronym)
34. Red Salmon
36. Often compared to oranges (pl)
37. As clear as _____
38. A rolling stone gathers none
39. _____ Thing
42. Whale or Salmon
47. Natural or belonging to a place
48. Wear and Tear
50. Rock bottom
51. Dormant Season
52. Prohibited activity
54. Gravel Nests
56. To tease fruit (2 words)

Down

1. AKA Silver
2. Water-storing plant
3. 3 of each: petals, sepals, leaves (pl)
5. UV filter
7. AmeriCorps Motto
8. Cornus _____
9. low-lying (2 words)
10. Greek meaning false
15. Icy incident
16. Animals of an area
17. < 20 ' Tall
18. Carcinogen found in many mushrooms
21. Upper-most story
22. Common Conifer (2 words)
24. Spray victim
25. Save from dozing
27. In-state original
29. Reed Canary
32. Holidiscus discolor
34. Tree Remnant
35. Rare Conifer
39. Wax berry (2 words)
40. Sambucus species (pl)
41. As opposed to alternating
43. Feather-like
44. Salmon on state coin
45. Type of #38 across
46. To contaminate
49. Governor
51. Sought after certification

Taylor Creek

Article by Peter Nevin, King County Crew Supervisor

March 2007 saw three years of dedicated hard work by the King County-sponsored WCC crews draw to a close. And yet, with the end of any era, so another one begins.

The relocation and revegetation of Taylor Creek, a critical tributary to the Cedar River, has been a project long in the making; planning began nearly a decade ago for this significant undertaking. The idea was to create and restore important salmonid and wildlife habitat while also reducing the flows that forced the creek to overtop its restricted channel during flood events.

The site is located just outside the town of Maple Valley, near where Highways 169 and 18 intersect in a rural part of the county that is developing very rapidly. The original floodplain and adjacent wetlands of Taylor Creek were destroyed when the area was dredged, ditched, and filled for agricultural purposes. In 2001, King County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks purchased 3 parcels of land from private property owners at fair market value to move the creek from its location in a blackberry-filled, roadside ditch into a newly constructed stream channel resembling its traditional form seen in historical aerial photos of the area. In addition to reconnecting the creek with its floodplain, King County partnered with Williams Pipeline and Washington State Department of Transportation to restore and enhance wetlands on the site. The 2 latter organizations had to meet mitigation requirements for disturbing wetlands (in upgrades to a natural gas pipeline and the widening of highway 18 respectively), and therefore funded a major portion of the project.

Over the course of 3 plus years, over 10 different WCC crews worked on the Taylor Creek project logging more than thirty crew weeks of time on site. From the initial mucking of a wet field, infested with invasives like reed canary grass and yellow flag iris to find the former creek location back in 2004 to ripping out giant butterfly bush with the crew rig and tow chain the final week in March 2007 as a closing ceremony. From the tens of thousands of willow stakes angled out over the newly created channel and wetland ponds to the hundreds of 10 ft cottonwood poles augered deep into the ground throughout the site, the WCC has been an integral part of the project from beginning to end. Volunteer events that the crews organized and supervised in the winters of 2006 and 2007 brought over 150 people, representing numerous community groups, out to the site to help plant 4000+ native trees and shrubs in 2 days. WCC crews built over 500ft of cattle fencing, laid out more than a mile of weed suppressant fabric, distributed 20+ cubic yards of soil and mulch, collected 2 cubic yards of debris and trash, and put over 20,000 plants in the ground. In the process, 1900 linear ft of new stream channel and nearly 5 acres of wetlands and uplands were enhanced and restored.

I have a lot of stories from my 3 years at Taylor Creek. Some not-so-happy tales: too many frost covered, super cold mornings to count on frozen fingers, a stolen wheelbarrow, the impacts vandalism and off-road vehicles, pounding rock bars into soil that could be mistaken for concrete, moving and carrying bundles of huge willow stakes for days till the shoulders and legs yearn to give way.

However, the positives far out weigh the negatives: From the gorgeous snow falls, sun rises, and sun sets to the pair of bald eagles and group of red-tail hawks that have kept close watch from above. From the donkey in the neighboring field who seemed to bray at the exact same time every day to signal our breaks and lunches to the "wild" peacock that refused to be captured and taken away when its former home was turned into a future salmon home. From the adult sockeye salmon spawning in the new stream channel to the fingerling coho overwintering in the immature wetland ponds. From the sense of accomplishment in successfully tackling a monumental project one week at a time to the personal and professional growth that I have seen in myself and my corps members. From the cutting-edge restoration techniques and experiments we implemented on this project to the lasting legacy imprinted upon this ecosystem in the form of tiny trees that I look forward to visiting as they, like myself, mature and grow older with time. Taylor Creek, you have been good to me, and I only hope you can say the same.



Peter Nevin



WCC members install emergents at Tayler Creek in Spring 2007

Washington Conservation Corps

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- April 10: Spring
- July 10: Summer
- October 10: Fall
- January 10: Winter

About Our Organization

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 a program offered through the Washington State 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.

The WCC provides work experience and skills to members through 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. Our partners include Federal, State, Local, and Tribal organizations. For more information, please visit our website.

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