

Washington Conservation Corps

CORPS NEWS

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Crew successfully finishing last assignment of deployment. Photos courtesy of Rob Crawford and James van der Voort

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GREETINGS FROM DETROIT

BY: ASHLEY MATELSKI AND LANDON SHAFFER

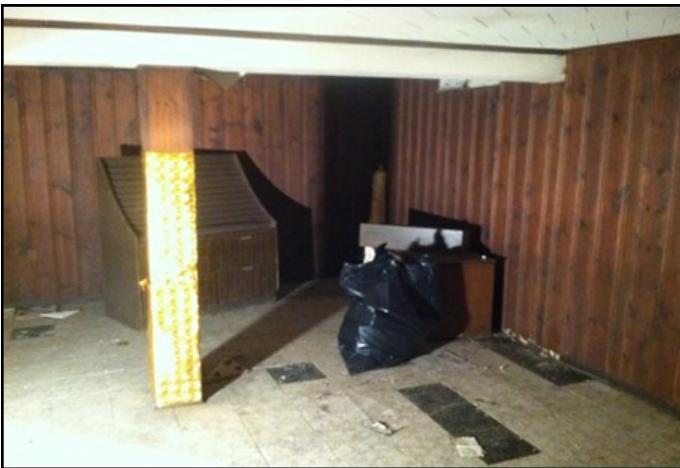
It's been cold and sunny here, which is probably better than Washington can say, but it has definitely taken some time to adjust to the sub-freezing temperatures. Haven't had a good cup of coffee in about three weeks, which doesn't bode well for our common Washingtonian addiction. Luckily, Oreos are available in Detroit so Rob's grumpiness is minimal.

The deployment has been a life-changing experience to say the least. There's nothing like starting it off with a three and a half day, 2400 mile drive, to get the ball rolling. Games were played, poems were written and way too much fast food was consumed, but the bonding experience was invaluable. We arrived in Detroit on Saturday, November 22 in the late afternoon to find St. Andrews Monastery, our home away from home for the 30 days, bustling with AmeriCorps members. A number of AmeriCorps affiliated groups have been involved in the relief effort including: AmeriCorps St. Louis ERT, California Conservation Corps, Tribal Civilian Conservation Corps, Minnesota/Iowa Conservation Corps, St. Bernard Project, Na-



Jackson Owens, Rachel Nyenhuis, and Ashley Matelski en route to Detroit

tional Civilian Conservation Corps, Arizona Conservation Corps and Montana Conservation Corps. The accommodations have been amazing, each team getting their own set of private rooms and a communal kitchen fully stocked with cookware and industrial stove-top. The only real point of contention around the base camp is getting in line for the "good" shower, but everyone has adapted



Damaged home before mitigation and gut work

well to the wait.

Working around the suburbs of Detroit has been an awe-inspiring aspect of the deployment. The teams have experienced many different demographic areas of the city, from the least fortunate to the ritziest, revealing an astonishing disparity. Regardless of the home, the work process remains consistent. Each

house begins with an assessment team contacting the homeowners and completing a walkthrough of the premises, locating potential risks and estimating the duration for each work order. After completing the assessment, the team schedules the homeowner to have work done to mitigate the mold damage and gut the basement – typically the following day. The work crew starts by completing a pre-work assessment to ensure that the prior day's assessment did not miss anything and to establish a good relationship with the flood victim. Next, the work crew sets up lighting in the basement and applies all personal protective equipment. This typically consists of Tyvek® suits, hard hats, p100 respirators, goggles, nitrile gloves and muck boots. The AmeriCorps workers are well protected. The physical work requires the removal of all damaged drywall, lathe and plaster, wood paneling and any furniture or personal belongings that have been affected by the flood. Once the house is stripped of all its damaged components, the crew decontaminates the site with a heavy duty sanitizer and seals off the compromised area for 24 hours.



Damaged home after completed work

Although every work order is a unique and exciting experience, not all homeowners convey the same level of zazz. We have learned a lot from a few notable experiences. Our initial taste for the flavor of the "D" (Detroit) was at our first house with a wonderfully blunt woman, Monica. Not only were we excited to start some meaningful work, but we also had



Landon Shaffer looking towards Downtown Detroit from abandoned Packard Plant

some anxiety about our constructs revolving around what the "D" was really like. Monica greeted us with open arms, immediately inviting us into her home. It was not long before we received our first lesson on twerking and an invitation to the best soul food barbeque in town. To express our appreciation, we presented her with a non-permanent salmon tattoo. We left that evening with our first nicknames, the best of which was "Supa-Viza Rob," and a memory of Monica, that, unlike our salmon tattoo, will never fade.

Despite our mission assignment,



Dot house by the Heidelberg Project

we have been required to take one day off per week. These days have allowed us a little time to experience what Motown is like. Our days off have consisted of



Shoe art by the Heidelberg Project

some exciting mini adventures. There was the trip to the Palace of Auburn Hills where we had the pleasure of watching the Golden State Warriors smash the Detroit Pistons. Another was a jaunt around downtown in which we explored the General Motors world headquarters, analyzed the art of Heidelberg Street and investigated the abandoned Packard Automotive plant. These trips

"Detroit has been a unique and astounding experience...provoking conversations regarding cultural diversity and demographic inequalities"

allow us some sweet relief from base camp and are a true necessity for upkeep of crew morale. Detroit has been a unique and astounding experience that has inspired many thought-provoking conversations regarding cultural diversity and demographic inequalities. It has arguably been one of the most influential experiences of our lives.



Jackson Owens, Landon Shaffer, James van der Voort, Rob Crawford and the Hulk

“It wasn't long before we received our first lesson in twerking and an invitation to the best soul food barbeque in town”



Graffiti covers old Packard Automotive Plant

Volunteer Opportunity: West Bay Woods Tree Planting and Ivy Pull on MLK Day of Service!

Mon. January 19 10am-1pm

Come plant native trees and shrubs, spread mulch, and remove ivy with Stream Team as they join the Olympia Coalition for Ecosystems Preservation (www.olyecosystems.org) and Washington Conservation Corps to restore the forest where local herons have chosen to build their nests. This is our last chance to do restoration work before the nesting season. Herons need 7 months of undisturbed quiet to nest and raise their young. Please dress for the weather. Gloves, tools, and hot beverages will be provided.

To register for this event, visit www.streamteam.info and click on “Register”. For more information, contact City of Olympia intern Tamara Lindner at tlindner@ci.olympia.wa.us or 360-753-8159.

SNAPSHOTS OF SAW CLASS

PHOTOS BY TYLER HARRIS



Bonnie Reed assessing a tree



Magnus Borsini cutting up a fallen tree



Nicole Masurat refining her technique



Class is in session: Supervisor Davis Harsh, Supervisor Jay McMillen, Bonnie Reed, Supervisor Zach Shirk, and James Van der Voort

“Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.”
- Aldo Leopold

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF TREVOR SMITH

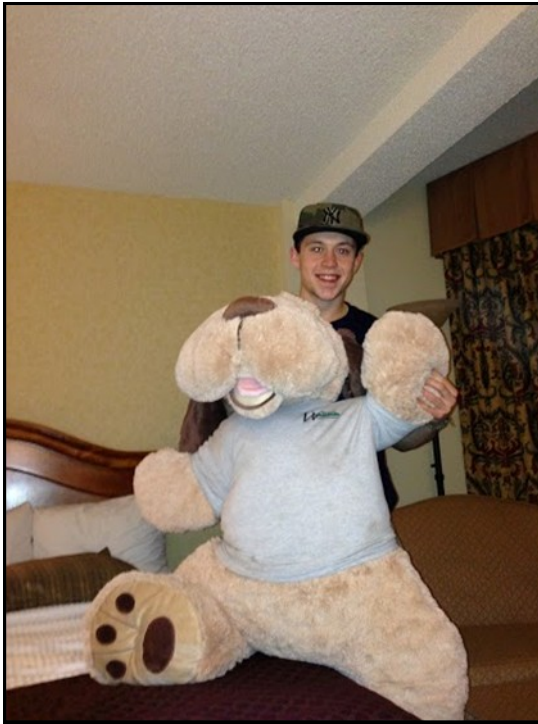
BY: KAREN FRANKENFELD AND THE 2012-2013 CITY OF BELLINGHAM CREWS



“He lived his life full volume with joy, enthusiasm, curiosity, love, passion, and perpetual laughter”

It started out like any other day in the WCC—we laced up our work boots and chatted around hot cups of coffee, watching as the hazy morning fog lifted to reveal crystal clear views of Mt. Baker’s green foothills. We were prepared for a morning of planting trees at Zobrist, a restoration site off Lake Whatcom that is surrounded by powerful energy and beauty. Once ready, we collected our shovels and hauled our native trees over acres of land to the spot where we decided we should plant our hemlock, dogwood, vine maples, and firs.

The reason for our tree planting, however, was not for work or even for the sake of restoration. The purpose of our gathering was to celebrate and remember our beloved crewmate Trevor Smith, a sparkling light that has tragically been taken from the world we know. Trevor, “Trey-Trey”, or “Baby Trev” as we lovingly called him, was a boy who had a shining way of being with the world. He was the youngest member of our crews in 2012-2013, and though we tried to guide him and shape his future we were constantly reminded that he was the wisest of all of us in the way he lived his life full-volume with joy, enthusiasm, curiosity, love, passion, and perpetual laughter. There is no way to describe how luminous he was. Anyone who met Trevor knew his unique way of coexisting with this world. For our crew, he showed us how to live with boundless curiosity and enthusiasm tempered with humility. His charisma, smile, and laugh were a blessing to us in the time we were with him, and though we smile and remember him with joy we now know the sadness of our world without him.



During his time on the 2012-2013 City of Bellingham Crew, Trevor participated in many projects, donning his suspenders and doing yoga stretches to prepare for the workdays planting trees and chain sawing. An especially important part of Trevor's term in WCC included a month on disaster response for Hurricane Sandy in New Jersey, where one of our favorite stories of Trevor occurred: while picking up his luggage at the Newark airport, everyone realized Trevor had packed two obscenely large suitcases. A little confused, it was brushed off until he opened one of the bags at the hotel the first night and pulled out the biggest stuffed puppy ever made. It was the only thing in the suitcase. Through the tears of laughter of his crew, Trevor hugged the puppy and exclaimed "it's for crew morale guys!" and that was the essence of Trevor, wonderfully innocent and hi-

*"We can go to
Trevor's Grove to
celebrate him and
watch his spirit
grow through the
trees"*



Cont'd p. 10

PRESERVING THE CCC LEGACY

BY: EMERSON HAISLEY, SPOKANE SPIKE CREWMEMBER



Timeless CCC Cabin. Photos courtesy of Rob Miller

*“Society speaks
and all men listen,
mountains speak
and wise men
listen.”*

-John Muir

I can remember being a kid, riding with my grandfather, as he pointed out his windshield saying, “that’s Mt. Spokane”. That was the closest I had been until now. Our project was to preserve an old cabin that had been standing for close to 100 years through one more winter. Over four days, we took turns with the buffer, sanding out the discoloration of the logs, removing fallen logs, and clearing trails.



Janell Earls court, Saul Bergman, Richard Graham-Bruno, and Jacob Gramstad proud of the work accomplished.

On our final day, we wrapped the cabin in a plastic cover that protected the logs from being weathered and kept the wind out. I was up a ladder, pinning plastic and stapling it down at the same time, while rain was falling off the roof — trickling down my coat. On the way home, it smelled of wet leather from everyone’s boots. In the

end, we had taken care of this cabin that can be used to warm up on windy days this winter on Mt. Spokane.

GARDEN CONTINUES TO THRIVE FOR THURSTON COUNTY FOOD BANK

BY: MAGGIE COUNIHAN, WCC OUTREACH ASSISTANT, GARDEN COORDINATOR IP

The changing seasons concluded another great year in the Food Bank Garden at Ecology HQ. My predecessor, Kate Nagel, did a wonderful job coordinating over 150 volunteers throughout the year. These volunteers—mostly Ecology employees—donated over 200 hours!

They harvested 1,849 pounds of food including squash, tomatoes, and corn that were donated to the Thurston County Food Bank. The WCC constructed a compost bin for an MLK service project, which continues to churn out compost. The annual Earth Day plant sale was very successful and raised funds for the continued operation of the garden.

The garden has been in action since 2011. Since it started, there have been over 500 volunteers from Ecology and local schools. Over 8,500 lbs of produce



Trees available at 2014 Plant Sale

Photos courtesy of Ecology Food Bank Garden

donated to the Thurston County Food Bank, and countless people exposed to gardening, sustainability and community service.

Congratulations to all the volunteers on another successful year! Thank you for all the time and hard work you put into the garden. Without your continued support, the garden would not be what it is today. I am excited to help with such an abundant garden and look forward to another productive season!



Starts ready for spring planting last season

“Plant trees. They give us two of the most crucial elements to our survival: oxygen and books.”

- A. Whitney Brown

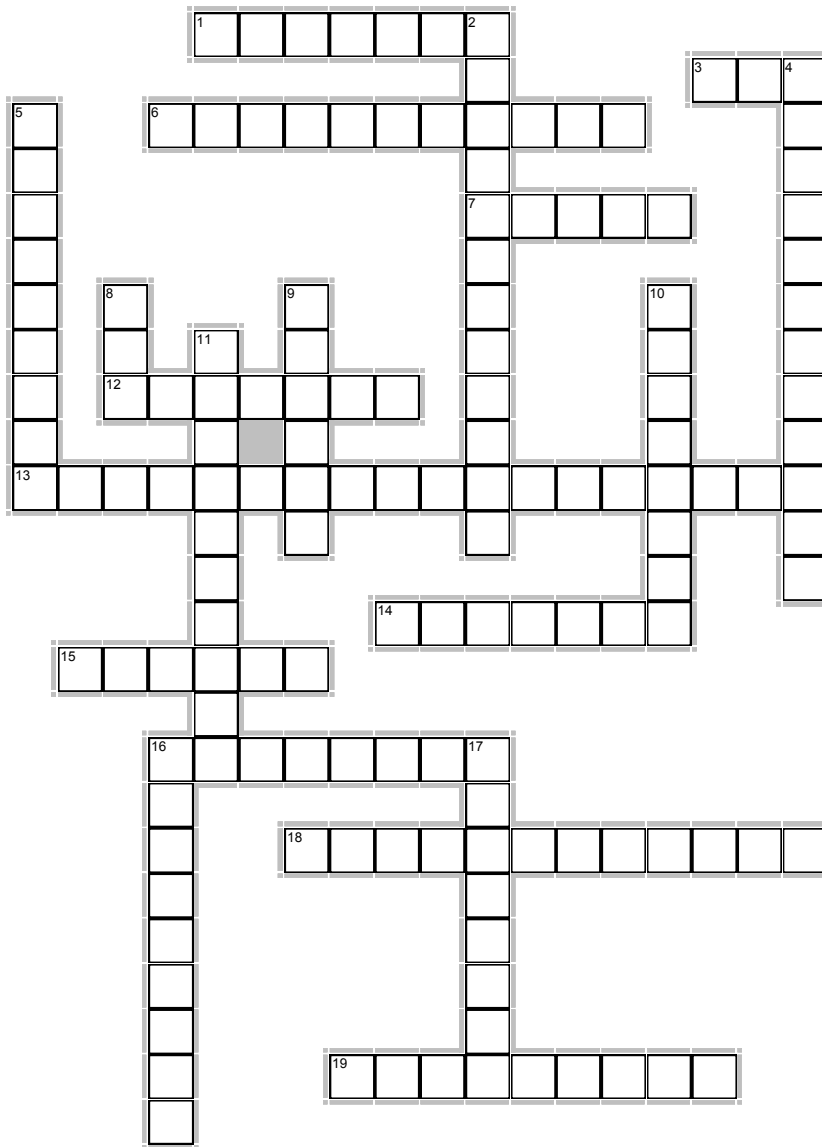
Celebrating Trevor p. 7

larious and always looking to make others happy. He devoured the knowledge of people around him, and in turn those he met were promised to smile and laugh every time they were around him. We have hundreds of similar stories locked in our hearts, and when we lost Trevor our family came together again to empathize and share over the loss of our littler brother. We went to the land we had all cared for together, and upon returning to Zobrist and enduring this tragedy it made sense to plant trees in a place that Trevor loved and on a land we were all intimately connected to. Anyone in WCC knows that being on a crew means sharing unbreakable bonds with people and landscape in a way that will remain with you for the rest of your life. When we lost Trevor, we reached out for each other and went to the land we cared for together. With the trees we planted we can always return to the land that Trevor was attached to, and we can go to Trevor's Grove to celebrate him and watch his spirit grow through the trees. We love you Trevor.

*"He showed us how
to live with
boundless curiosity
and enthusiasm
tempered with
humility"*



CROSSWORD PUZZLE



EclipseCrossword.com

Across

1. Native squirrel to Western WA
3. The ___ is 2,663 miles long.
6. Bavarian village
7. Mt. that holds world record for most amount of snow in a year
12. Brooms are helpful for this sport
13. Link between the Great Lakes and Atlantic Ocean
14. Birds that feed by diving under water
15. Place with lowest temperature ever recorded in WA
16. Bird that lives in Antarctica
18. Western Redcedar
19. Largest lake in WA

1st crew or IP to send in answers will receive a prize!

Down

2. Debuted at the 1998 Winter Olympics
4. Seattle hockey team
5. Areas affected by lake-effect snow are called
8. ___ started by FDR
9. Deepest lake in the world
10. Roughly 186 of these in WA state
11. Deepest lake in the US
16. The snow chicken
17. Won the last Superbowl

*"Somewhere,
something
incredible is waiting
to be known."*

-Carl Sagan

Answers for November puzzle: 1.WCC 2.FOUR 3.GRANDCOULEEDAM 7.YAKIMA 9.WESTERNHEMLOCK 11.PETERPUGET 14.PALOUSE 3.GOLDFINCH 4.APPLES 5.GREEN 6.DENDROLOGY 8.COLUMBIA 10.ELLENSBURG 12.MTSTHELENS 13.MARINERS 15.FIVE 16.JUANDEFUCA 17.CARLTONCOMPLEXFIRE (Apologies, there was no 14)



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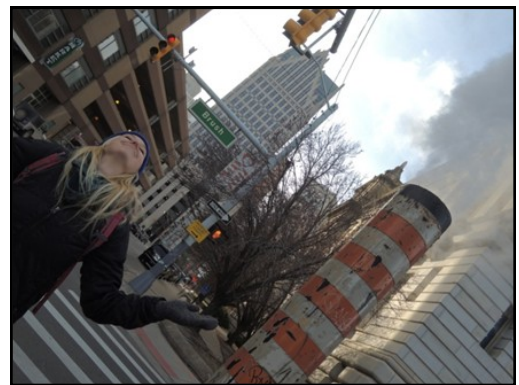
MONTH IN PHOTOS



Members of the Tacoma Veteran Crew working on a fencing project in Pateros.
Photo courtesy of Aurelio Elliott



Recognize what they spelled?



Rachel Nyenhuis experiencing Detroit on a day off.

SEND US MATERIAL TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER!

Please send your stories, photos, and updates for publishing to Maggie Counihan at

maggie.counihan@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