

VOLUNTEERS ASSIST SQUALICUM CREEK REROUTE PROJECT

By: Juliet Lewis and City of Bellingham
AmeriCorps Members



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WCC Members participating in Make a Difference Day.
Photo Credit to Lyle Skaar and Mike Parelskin.

The Squalicum Creek reroute is one of the largest salmon habitat enhancement projects undertaken by the City of Bellingham. Squalicum Creek is one of the main creeks flowing through the city. Two artificial lakes were created during the construction of I-5, altering the original route of the creek and allowing for the introduction of invasive fish species. This project involves restoring the creek to its original path in order to increase

viable salmon habitat. The introduction of native plants and large woody debris will improve the water quality, while the reroute itself excludes non-native fish from competing with resources used by salmon.

For our first project as WCC members, we were lucky to be able to play a role in this monumental project. We prepared the site for volunteers by transporting mulch and over 1,300 native plants to the site. Native species include Pacific ninebark, Nootka rose, Oregon ash, Black cottonwood and Salmonberry. We spent weeks creating a mulch pathway and placing plants where they would later be planted by volunteers.

After our lengthy preparations, we were finally ready for Make a Difference Day. Almost 300 volunteers gave their time to help restore their community. WCC members and the City of Bellingham Parks and Recreation employees instructed the process of proper planting and after three hours of planting and mulching, we had completed our goal. Over 1,300 native plants can now call the new Squalicum Creek riparian zone home! We are looking forward to seeing how this project affects the salmon population.



SEND US MATERIAL TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

Please send your stories (800 words or less), photos, and updates for publishing to Sadie at

Sadie.Normoyle@ecy.wa.gov

EARN COLLEGE CREDITS THROUGH THE WCC

By: Sadie Normoyle, WCC Outreach Assistant and Food Bank Garden Coordinator: Individual Placement AmeriCorps Member

Last Spring WCC and Walla Walla Community College (WWCC) started a partnership to offer corps members the opportunity to earn WWCC-Required Co-op credits for their service with WCC. This year the partnership has expanded to offer additional credits through WWCC courses at elective trainings. This spring WWCC will instruct AGPR 113: Plant Anatomy and Morphology during elective training for 5 transferable credits. The WWCC course AGPR 100: Introduction to Agriculture & Natural Resource Careers (3 transferable credits) will be offered as an online course to be completed outside of elective training, but corps members will meet one hour each evening during training for introductory material.

We interviewed Dave Stockdale, Director of the Water & Environmental Center at WWCC to learn more about the classes offered for college credit during elective trainings.

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-Can you give a brief overview of these opportunities?

We have several degree programs that require hands-on experience (what we call Cooperative Work Experience, or Co-op). We recognized that the projects crew members are performing is not only the type of real hands-on experience that employers are looking for, but also satisfies our Co-op requirements. So it was an easy first step in our partnership to award college credit for WCC work experience.

We also recognized that WCC's intensive week-long trainings featured college type instruction. So why not offer actual credit-earning college classes? The next step in our partnership is to now offer WWCC courses during the WCC training weeks. Although we would then like crew members to come to WWCC complete their degrees, we know that won't work for everyone. So, we wanted to make sure if we offered a WWCC course for credit it could also possibly be transferrable to schools such as Washington State University, University of Idaho, Oregon State, University of Washington, or other community colleges. If members take advantage of this opportunity they may be able to apply the resulting credits to a number of institutions.

Because these are college courses they will take longer than the WCC training week. We wanted to offer courses with a significant online component so corps members can complete them on their own time. We recognize their hard schedules and the fact that they might be on spike, so we are willing to be more flexible than normal and give students until the end of their term with WCC to complete a course. Also, instructors will be available the entire time over email for support.

-What makes the programs at WWCC unique?

There are currently seven degrees at WWCC that these courses we are offering will count towards. Three of these degrees are in our water technologies and management program, and four of these degrees are in our agricultural program.



Field work through the WWCC. Photo sent by Dave Stockdale.



Our watershed ecology program is one of the few programs of its type at a community college in this region. We have students from all over the country that come to be in the watershed ecology program because it has a strong reputation. Our natural resources program combines ecology studies with technology and management skills, and makes a great platform for many career directions. We are also the only community college in the country offering an irrigation technology degree. Our agriculture degrees include options in precision ag, animal science, plant science, and ag business. All of these programs are very hands-on, which is something that crew members can relate to. It's about both learning and doing things.

These programs (from WWCC) are designed so that with a two year degree you would be eligible for a lot of great jobs. Or you can transfer to a university for a four year degree and further increase your job prospects.



(Above) Working in a lab and (below) taking hands on classes. Photos sent by Dave Stockdale.

-Can you briefly explain the benefits of taking a WWCC course at elective training?

In addition to getting a head start on completing a degree at WWCC, these course credits are transferable to Washington State University and may be transferable to other colleges and universities, although the programs and requirements vary by institution. Members must contact colleges or universities individually to determine transferability. They have been adapted to fit busy work schedules and can be completed online.

So if you have an interest with starting college early this is a great opportunity to do so. Take four courses over two years and you could potentially have one quarter of college completed before you leave WCC. It is also worth noting that the Department of Ecology is willing to pay for one of the first two classes we are offering. Almost like an additional scholarship for WCC members!



-What types of jobs do WWCC courses and degrees prepare students for?

The graduates of our water technologies and management degree programs and agriculture degree programs have been able to find work with a variety of employers, including: conservation and irrigation districts, Tribes, private businesses like water and soil quality testing companies, agri-business including irrigation management, USGS, Environmental nonprofits, colleges, and State agencies such as Washington's Department of Ecology and the Department of Fish & Wildlife and the Oregon Water Resources Department, and Federal agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management. There have also been alumni who now run their own residential landscaping/irrigation businesses.

One past WCC crew member enrolled in our watershed ecology program now works part-time with Ecology while finishing up his degree, and will be able to expand into a fulltime job with Ecology after graduation. Our degree program plus his WCC work experience made him a desirable candidate.

-If corps members have questions about enrolling at WWCC or courses offered at elective training, who should they contact?

Contact me (Dave Stockdale) at 509-524-5193 or contact faculty advisor Melissa Holecek at 509-524-5208.

IP SPOTLIGHT

By: Kyla Caddey, Sound Salmon Solutions : Individual Placement AmeriCorps Member



Kyla holding a female pink salmon on the Skykomish River in Sultan. "This fish was nearing the end of its life so I was able to walk up to the edge of the river and grab it straight out of the water with my hands!"

I grew up in Lynnwood, Washington, and graduated in the spring of 2014 from the University of Washington with a degree in Environmental Science and Resource Management with a focus in Wildlife Conservation and a minor in Quantitative Science. One of my friends obtained an AmeriCorps position after graduating, and in doing some research I came across the WCC. I thought it would be a perfect opportunity to use my knowledge in natural resource management while gaining real world experience to further my career in the environmental field.

This past year I served on a WCC crew in Lake Stevens assisting in salmon habitat restoration projects throughout Snohomish County. I am excited to continue for a second year as an Individual Placement for Sound Salmon Solutions in Lake Stevens.

Sound Salmon Solutions (previously known as the Stilly-Snohomish Fisheries Enhancement Task Force) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to ensure the future of salmon in the Snohomish, Stillaguamish, and Island County watersheds. We are one of seven Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEs) that serve the Puget Sound region through collaboration and partnership with other federal, state and local groups.

As the Habitat Restoration and Education Assistant here at SSS, I support staff with development, implementation, and management of various environmental education and habitat restoration programs/projects. Fall and spring seasons focus primarily on engaging students with classroom lessons and hands-on field trips on the importance of salmon and good habitat, water quality and macroinvertebrates, and erosion.

Winter season is a lot more time spent in the office focusing on project evaluations, reports, and grant submissions for new education and habitat restoration projects. Once summer rolls around I will be outdoors aiding the SSS restoration crew with site maintenance and monitoring.

Continued...



REMINDER FOR MLK DAY OF SERVICE



Martin Luther King Junior Day is coming up on January 18, 2016 and we want you to send us stories and photos about the great projects you and other WCC members will be participating in! Last year projects ranged from helping build a compost bin, to aiding with building maintenance to planting native species for a restoration project. Let us know what you do this year! Email all photos and stories to sadie.normoyle@ecy.wa.gov.



IP Spotlight Continued...

Current projects involve uploading the monitoring data for all SSS project sites (some of which I collected during the beginning of this term), analyzing and quantifying the data, and completing reports for each site. Reports include data such as survival of deciduous plants, conifers, and shrubs, a vigor assessment for each plant type as well as species, a summary of overall site health and comparison to previous years, and suggested management actions. I will also be updating GIS maps for each of the sites, making sure to include GPS locations of the monitoring transects for ease.

I am also starting to learn about grant writing and will be helping SSS with some of their new grant proposals. Lastly, over the last couple of weeks I have been assisting the Stillaguamish Tribe with their annual hatchery tours at the Harvey Creek Hatchery in Arlington. I manage the "Habitat" station using the SAW (Super Awesome Watershed) model to have the 4th/5th graders actively participate in cleaning up the watershed while taking into account the "5 C's" of good salmon habitat (Cool, Clean, Clear, Connected, and Complex).

So far this season I have reached 627 students and their chaperones through our experiential science lessons in 21 different lessons/days! More education will continue next year in late winter and spring; there is expected to be at least another 1300 youth and 200 adults engaged.

Other upcoming projects I'm looking forward to include participating in the annual Arlington Eagle Festival the beginning of February.

My advice for other IPs or corps members is to have fun and take advantage of as many trainings and unique opportunities as you can throughout the year. Also, don't be afraid to try new things. Before this IP position I had never taught before; I jumped in right away and have faced my fears of public speaking and it has all been super successful. I have learned so much already, and there is still nine more months to go!

WCC WELCOMES BOBBY WOELZ TO HQ STAFF

Bobby Woelz joined WCC HQ Staff as Individual Placement and Compliance Coordinator Dec. 1. Below he shares about his past experience and current position. Welcome, Bobby!

I received my start in environmental conservation volunteering for four months in an ecological park in the Mayan Biosphere Reserve of Northern Guatemala with the non-profit organization Volunteer Petén. After receiving my bachelor's degree in anthropology from Metropolitan State University of Denver, I joined AmeriCorps as an Individual Placement (IP) with the Student Conservation Association (SCA). As an IP I served with the Bureau of Indian Affairs as a Fire Effects Monitor. Deeply inspired by my IP experience, I continued working in the field for six seasons as a Crew Supervisor for both the SCA and the Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC). I then worked with the U.S. Forest Service as a Forestry Technician, spending a season aboard a type 6 fire engine. Most recently I have been working for the SCA as Program Manager for their Veterans Fire AmeriCorps Program.



I am now very excited to be working with the Washington Conservation Corps. My highest priority is supporting our Individual Placements serving in the field, ensuring they have a productive, safe, and enjoyable season. Some of my other responsibilities include managing relationships with agency sponsors, overseeing grant administration, managing compliance with regulatory requirements for state and federal funding, developing civic engagement projects and coordinating National days-of-service (such as the upcoming MLK Service Day). On my days off you can find me out in the woods hiking, rock-climbing, canyoneering, or attempting to ride just about anything with two wheels.

ENTER OUR SANDWICH BOARD PHOTO CONTEST!



New sandwich boards have been sent to our 54 crews across the state! Email us photos of you and your crew with your board. Pose with local officials or project sponsors that visit your site, pose with various native species you are planting or tools you are using, or set up a photo at the grand finale of a project! You can also tag your sandwich board photos on Instagram or Facebook with #wccswag - we'll vote for the most creative photo at our March Elective Training!

Happy photo taking!

Supervisor Matthew Evinger and new sandwich board oversee King Conservation District AmeriCorps members removing English Ivy.
Photo contributed by Madeline deMahy

WCC SNAPSHOTS



(Above) An Artist Conk from a downed tree. Submitted by Venice Wong: Josh Boswell's Crew



(Above) Kyla Caddey teaching a macroinvertebrate lesson to 5th graders at Sound Salmon Solutions Jones Creek site in Marysville.



(Above) Some holiday spirit for Lyle Skaar's and Mike Parelskin's crews serving the City of Bellingham. Photo credit to Coordinator Nick Saling



(Above) Nancy Toenyan's crew volunteered their time with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund from 8:00-midnight on December 9. Photo credit to Nancy Toenyan.



" Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better"

-Albert Einstein





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December 2015
Volume 12, Issue 3
Ecology Publication No.
15-06-025



WASHINGTON CONSERVATION CORPS "TRUCK TALKS"

Looking for some inspiration for getting to know your co-workers? Try using these discussion questions to get to know your new co-workers better!

1. If you could transform into any animal, what would it be?
2. What is the difference between sympathy and empathy?
3. What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?
4. How do you feel about zoos?
5. What does it mean to have good manners? Are manners important? Why or why not?
6. What's the best gift you've ever given or received?
7. What's something you've learned from experience that you wish you had been taught?
8. What makes you happy?
9. What would you do if you weren't afraid?
10. What assumptions do people make about you?

Submit your suggested truck talk topics for next month's newsletter to supervisor Alicia Kellogg at: alicia.kellogg@ecy.wa.gov.

Feel free to suggest anything fun, creative, philosophical, deep – just remember to keep it professional!

Bonus question: First person to send in the answer wins a WCC sticker!

Which of these NW plants is not edible?

Answer to last week: Western Hemlock

- A. Mariposa-Lily
- B. Thistle
- C. Knotweed
- D. Stinging Nettle
- E. Rhododendron
- F. Pigweed

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.