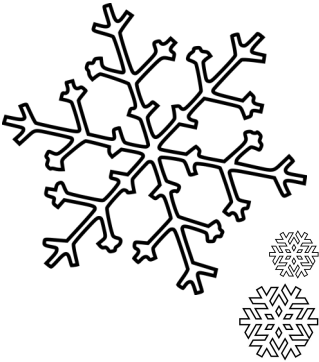
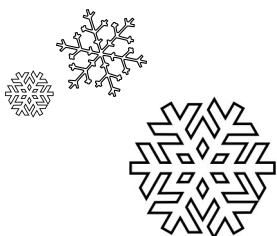


CORPS NEWS



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VANCOUVER'S OLD CITY CEMETERY CLEANUP: A WCC AMERICORPS MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY VOLUNTEER PROJECT

By: Vancouver Spike AmeriCorps Crew



Josh Steele helps to clean a headstone at the Old City Cemetery.

On Martin Luther King Day our WCC AmeriCorps Vancouver Spike crew, consisting of Stephen Langdon, Dominic Martinez, Ian Navarrette, Jomi Rios, Josh Steele and supervised by Anthony Foote, helped to organize and lead a volunteer clean-up project at the Old City Cemetery in Vancouver. Sixty one volunteers performed various tasks around the cemetery in the morning and afternoon. We had beautiful weather, and everyone was prepared to help and had positive attitudes. Our crew was proud to have an opportunity to lead the community in revitalizing the second oldest cemetery in the city, and to connect with officials from the City of Vancouver.

There were plenty of projects for volunteers of all ages. The most predominant one was cleaning headstones. Volunteers used buckets of water, brushes, and shovels to remove the moss and dirt on and around the headstones. It was a delicate process; rubbing too much in a particular area or pushing too hard could severely damage the aging sandstone headstones, but it was also very satisfying to see the end result. Digging to re-expose old "flat" headstones had its own challenges; steel shovels easily scratch and damage the stones, so we took great care when completing these particular tasks. We also had smaller tasks including cleaning litter and woody debris. Volunteers filled wheel barrows with branches and other debris for disposal. There was plenty to do and everyone stayed busy throughout the event.

Some of Vancouver's most well-known individuals are laid to rest in the cemetery, including Esther Short. She and her husband actively resisted British control, and it's documented that Esther once came out to meet an expedition of British men who came to evict them. She slapped the leader of the crew so hard that he fell to the ground and later proclaimed that the woman was too stubborn and brave to be evicted. Later in life, they helped to create what is now Vancouver.

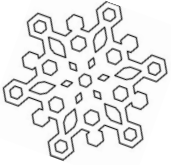
The end result of this project was a sense of accomplishment and camaraderie that comes only from selfless service and passion towards the greater good. MLK Day is always a great way to see communities at their best. We couldn't be happier that we got the chance to lead our community in an often overlooked way, looking after those long deceased individuals who built this city and making sure future generations can do the same. The weather was great, the volunteers were great, and our city is now even greater thanks to everyone that participated. Special thanks to Carrie Vogelzang from the City of Vancouver, all of our sponsors, volunteers, WCC, AmeriCorps, and the City of Vancouver! Projects like these wouldn't be possible without all of your help.



The Vancouver Spike Crew thanks various sponsors and supporters of their MLK day project.

WHAT EXACTLY DOES A TRANSITION ASSISTANT DO?

By Jennifer Storvick – WCC Transition Assistant and 2013-2015 WCC AmeriCorps Alum



I can't tell you how many times I've been asked this question over the past few months. Honestly, it has taken me most of that time to figure it out myself, but I think I have finally narrowed it down. Recently we unofficially changed the title of my position to Logistics Assistant which I think is a much better reflection of what the position entails. Most of what I do is help Ted Dewees, the WCC logistics lead, and Peter Nevin, the WCC fleet manager, do their jobs. It has been a great experience- I love getting to see how the office side of the program works.

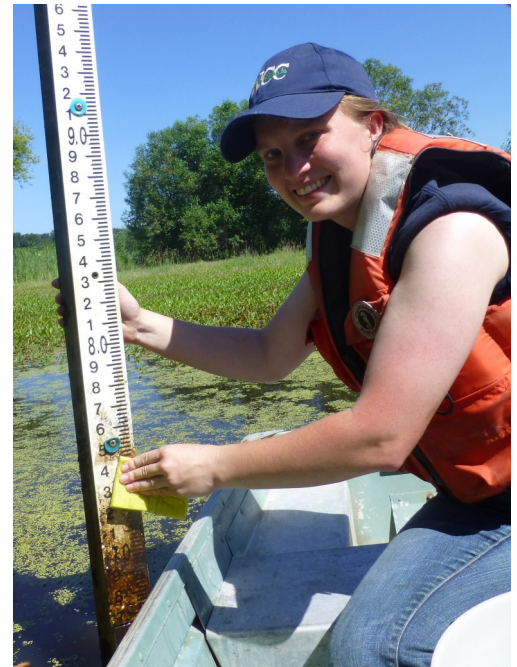
For those of you who are still wondering, here is a brief summary of some of the things I have done and learned in my term as transition/logistics assistant:

- *Helped Ted distribute rain and safety gear at the all-staff meeting in September 2015.*
- *Completed program-wide inventory of power tools (P.S. To all you supervisors who have asked me how to get on Ted's good side, the best advice I have is to take good care of and keep track of your power tools!)*
- *Bought lots and lots of coffee. Collected, prepared and distributed uniform orders.*
- *Inventoried leftover uniforms and raingear.*
- *Checked tools in and out.*
- *Updated vehicle information on SharePoint.*
- *Cleaned and organized logistics lockups. Entered monthly vehicle mileage data.*
- *Assisted with preparing old trucks for surplus, truck maintenance, and getting new trucks out to the field. Built some shelves.*
- *Assisted with monitoring the driving course at the WCC Assistant Training.*

Here are some of my favorite lessons I've learned:

- *How to correctly pronounce Padilla (It's actually a Spanish word so the ll is pronounced with an "y" sound like in the word tortilla).*
- *The German word for chain saw is Motorsäge and Freischneider for brush cutter. Hence the Stihl designations: MS for chain saw and FS for brush cutters! The same German to English pattern holds true for their other tools as well.*
- *How to tell my garden squashes apart.*
- *Way too many things about tire sizes.*
- *How to drive a trailer, and what a muck boot is.*
- *The difference between a sedan, a car, and everything else.*
- *Correct usage of an emergency brake.*

In closing I want to say a big thank you to everyone for making my time in the WCC such a great experience! I have learned things and grown in ways that I never imagined I would during my time here and I will be forever grateful for the positive impact you all have been!



Jennifer cleaning up water control structures at the Nisqually Wildlife refuge.

WCC HELPS WITH FLOOD RESPONSE IN ST. LOUIS

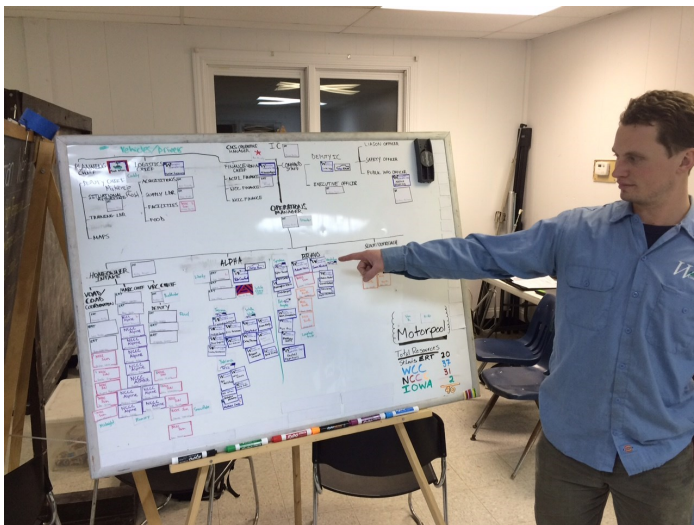
Introduction by: Sadie Normoyle– WCC Outreach Assistant Individual Placement

On Friday, January 8, six WCC AmeriCorps crews deployed for 30 days to assist with flood response in St. Louis. In late December, widespread flooding of the Mississippi and Meramec Rivers affected thousands of people in the region. After the worst of the flooding subsided, residents of several impacted communities started the process of assessing damage, cleaning up and rebuilding when necessary. The team of 37 WCC AmeriCorps members and staff arrived on Monday, January 11 to assist, and they hit the ground running. Many of our crew members and supervisors hold lead roles in the Incident Command System structure for the duration of their deployment. Thank you for your service!

Below, Adeline Wisernig shares about the team's experience in St. Louis. To read Adeline's full blog post and for additional updates, visit the [WCC Facebook Page](#).

The mission of our response here in the greater St. Louis metro area is direct response. Our 37 members and supervisors, including Disaster Response Specialists Luke Wigle and Rob Crawford, are joined by 20 members of the AmeriCorps St. Louis ERT team, 31 members of NCCC and two specialists from Minnesota/Iowa Conservation Corps. As support for the National Guard and the Army Corps of Engineers, AmeriCorps will be aiding on all fronts of this disaster. From staffing call centers that direct homeowners to resources, to mucking and gutting homes and debris removal, all AmeriCorps groups are coming together under the standard Incident Command System (ICS) to maximize our impact of this 30-day deployment. Our focus is still, as in our Saipan deployment, on those who are largely underserved in the community: the elderly, the disabled and the uninsured.

One highlight of the response already was a visit from the CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), Wendy Spencer, which took place on our first day. Wendy, along with other members of CNCS including Senior Advisor of Disaster Services Kelly DeGraff, toured all aspects of our operations from our Incident Command Post (ICP), to the multi-agency resource center (MARC), to the teams in the field mucking and gutting homes. Seeing the extent of the organization of the ICS and all the facets in which AmeriCorps members are part of the relief effort, I believe Wendy left truly impressed. After a small luncheon, Wendy spoke to a group of representatives from AmeriCorps across the area. I must say, I finally began to grasp how expansive and impactful all the different AmeriCorps programs across the nation truly are. Within all the bureaucracy and budget related red-tape that most of us, like myself, cannot even begin to grasp, there is the fundamental principle that AmeriCorps is a program that truly works. Truly gets things done.



Left: Reviewing the job board used for sorting and assigning resources. Right: WCC AmeriCorps members on their first home muck and gut clean up. Photos submitted by Rob Crawford.

IP SPOTLIGHT

By *Mattie Michalek*– Ecology Marine Monitoring Individual Placement WCC AmeriCorps Member



Analyzing seawater samples collected on a sea plane flight in Puget Sound for dissolved oxygen using the Winkler Method.

I was born and raised in Washington and I have always lived in the greater Puget Sound area. I first heard about the Washington Conservation Corps while I was an intern for the Natural Resources Division at Skagit County. My biggest role throughout my internship was to help with salmon habitat restoration projects. Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) was a large supplier of plants to Skagit County, and this is where I met a WCC Individual Placement who was serving for the SFEG. She told me about the program and recommended I look into it since I wanted to continue to study the environment and its conservation.

Upon graduation from Western Washington University with a B.S. in Environmental Science, I applied for a position as a crew member on one of the Tacoma Veteran Spike Crews. I was eager to gain experience in my field and pick up technical skills while spending time in the outdoors. I had an awesome experience during my six-month term; I met a fantastic group of people from my own lock-up as well as other crews, I had the opportunity to travel and stay in places in Washington I had never been to, and in the summer I learned a great deal about disaster management while serving at fire camps. After such a positive experience, I knew I wanted to continue my WCC journey so I applied for an individual placement position for the next term.

Currently, I serve as a Marine Monitoring Technician for Ecology's Marine Monitoring Unit. This unit assesses environmental health by monitoring water and sediment quality within Puget Sound and Washington's coastline. For the waters team, I assist with field sampling and laboratory analyses. Alongside my supervisors, I travel by float plane or boat to sample water quality at various depths. At each station I help measure physical and chemical water properties and take samples for further analyses. At the laboratory, I analyze these samples for dissolved oxygen and chlorophyll to learn more about the water quality.

To assist the sediments team, my time is focused on the benthic invertebrates of Puget Sound. I create "snapshots" called voucher sheets, which include detailed descriptions of a particular species of invertebrate. The challenge in this project is to learn and understand the intense jargon used to describe and classify these organisms. I sift through loads of scientific literature to find and pool together accurate descriptions of these critters. In April and June, I will assist in collecting sediment within the Sound which is home to these benthic invertebrates. We will then sort, photograph, and preserve the invertebrates found so that they can be properly identified. The data we generate can be used to understand the health of the benthic communities.

While maintaining my waters and sediments duties, I am also developing my own project. This project explores the measurement of jellyfish patches in Budd Inlet using aerial photography and image analyses.



Leaving Swantown Marina in Olympia to sample the northern Puget Sound in sea plane. Ecology has been sampling the Puget Sound since the 1970s.

IP Spotlight Continued from page 4

Since jellyfish patches are often times hard to count, I will be analyzing photographs of the patches taken from a sea plane and measuring the quantity of jellyfish using an image processing program. By looking at my results and seasonal weather patterns, I hope to shed light on why there has been a huge increase in jellyfish in the south Puget Sound in the last few years. I will be presenting my findings at the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference in Vancouver, B.C. in April 2016.

I am really excited to experience the full spectrum of this position for the rest of my term. Once my time with the WCC comes to an end, I want to move forward in this scientific career path that I am passionate about and continue to study the environment.

My advice to current WCC AmeriCorps members: treat every day in the WCC like a day of training; be eager to learn and make sure to document what you have experienced in your resume! You never know what will move you to the top in an interview. And lastly, be confident. Your time as a WCC member is full of valuable, professional and personal achievements that you should be proud of.

VOLUNTEERING WITH PUGET SOUND RESTORATION FUND

By Hayley McGinnis - Mossyrock/Lewis County Spike WCC AmeriCorps Member

Habitat restoration in Washington doesn't just exist throughout the state's extensive forests, wetlands and prairie shrub steppe, it also extends all the way to the rocky coasts, sounds and inlets along the western half of the state. For centuries, agriculture along the coast has been a staple in the Puget Sound area, producing some of the nation's most delicious and sought-after oysters, shellfish and geoducks. Although the production of the Pacific oyster is by far the leading oyster variety that comes out of the sound, the small and discrete Olympia oyster is the only native oyster species to the Pacific Northwest. However, populations of Olympia oysters have plummeted since the turn of the century and today the Olympia oyster is listed as an endangered species.

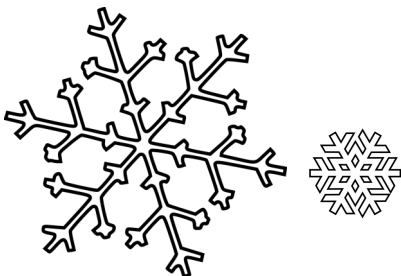
The Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) is a local non-profit group that works with a number of local agencies and government entities to rebuild native Olympia oyster populations that have been lost due to over-harvesting and non-point source pollution. One of PSRF's biggest goals is to raise awareness so the public and our communities think about where their food comes from, and to connect people with the land on which so many farmers, communities and intertidal species rely. As a result of these core values, PSRF developed a community shellfish garden where community members can participate in the production, harvesting and distribution of locally grown Pacific oysters. As Washington Conservation Corps AmeriCorps members, we are moved by the dedication of local non-profit agencies and their staff who work hard to provide educational opportunities for our community here in the Puget Sound.

In an effort to bolster awareness of this project, our Mossyrock Spike crew participated in a late night harvesting event at the community shellfish garden located along Henderson Inlet in Lacey. Derek King is responsible for organizing all of the community events that occur on this special stretch of beach and was kind enough to host us during low tide on December 9, 2015 for a night of harvesting. Together we were able to harvest over 400 dozen oysters!

We are grateful to have had the opportunity to participate and will continue to attend community-run events with PSRF in the future. Until then, happy volunteering from the Mossyrock Spike crew!

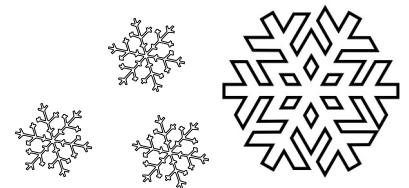


Hayley harvesting Pacific Oysters on Henderson Inlet.

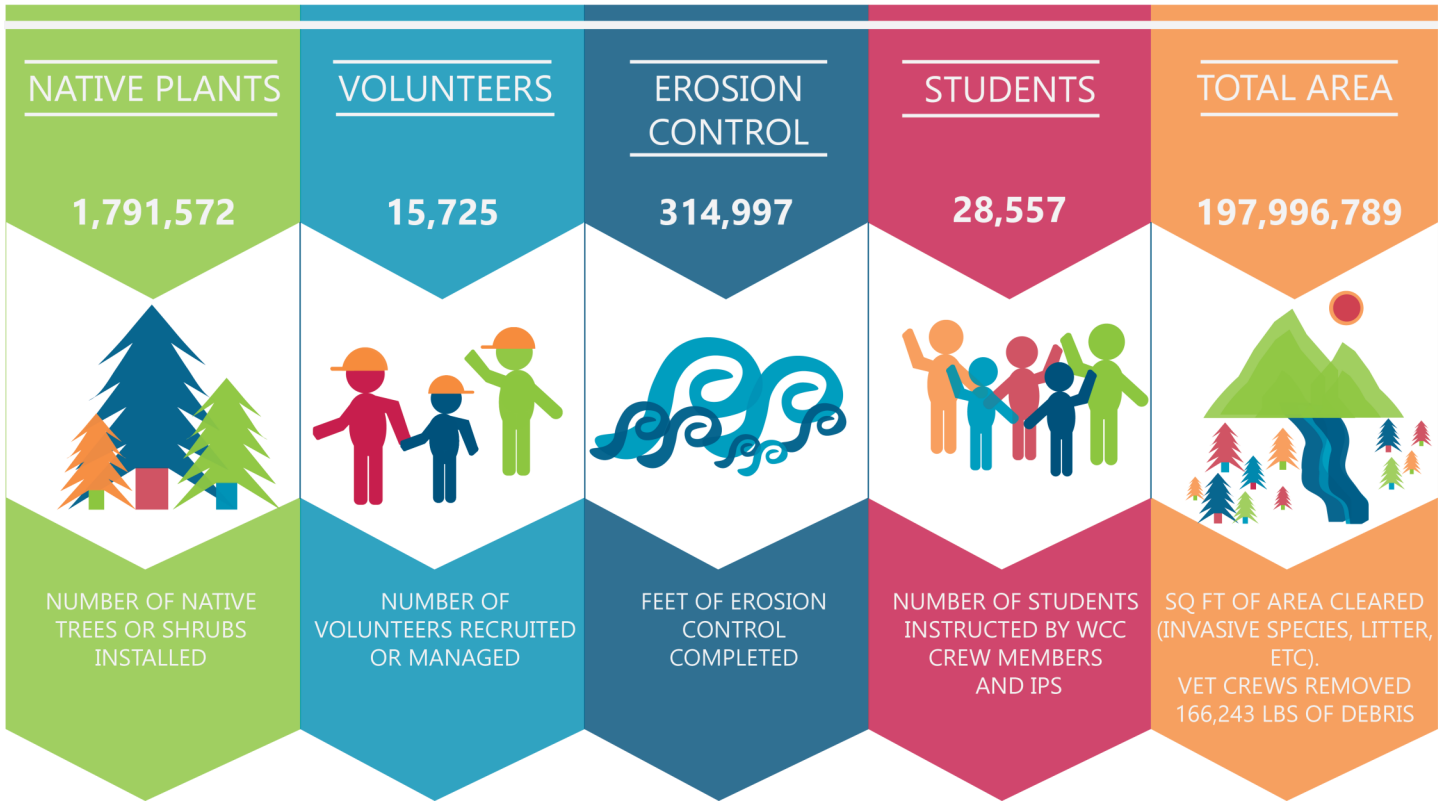


"In the depth of winter I finally learned that there was in me an invincible summer"

-Albert Camus



WCC BY THE NUMBERS 2014-2015 AMERICORPS YEAR



ASSISTANT TRAINING KICKS OFF 2016

By Laura Schlabach – WCC Outreach and Training Coordinator

Assistant supervisors from our 54 state-wide crews kicked off 2016 by gathering together January 4-7 for Assistant Training at Cispus Learning Center. During the first two days of training, assistants engaged in a leadership workshop to learn more about their leadership styles, share advice and best practices with each other, and discuss facilitation and creating inclusive teams. The second half of the week included truck maintenance sessions, a defensive driving course, driving simulations and team-building opportunities on the low and high ropes courses. Thanks for a great week, assistants!



Left: Assistant Supervisors had the opportunity to challenge themselves on the high ropes course. Right: Isaac O'Conner (front) gets ready to practice backing up a trailer while Selene Convy (back) helps spot. Photos by Laura Schlabach.

WCC SNAPSHOTS



1- Assistant supervisors try to lower a tent pole to the ground during a leadership workshop at assistant training. Photo by Laura Schlabach.
 2- Ernie Farmer's Ellensburg AmeriCorps crew treks through the snow near Oak Creek. Photo sent by Ernie Farmer.
 3- Tate Regan climbs the play pen as part of the high ropes course challenge activity. Photo by Laura Schlabach.
 4- The Yakima Spike AmeriCorps Crew takes some time to build a WCC snowman. Photo sent by Matthew Cone.
 5- WCC members who deployed to Saipan for disaster response sat down with Director of AmeriCorps Bill Basl. Photo sent by Nick Saling.
 6- Rob Crawford's crew cutting wood for the Community Action Agency. The wood was split last summer and delivered over the holidays.



Learn more on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/washingtonconservationcorps

Accommodation Requests:

To request ADA accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology, 360-407-7248. Persons with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. Persons with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.

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NSEA AMERICORPS MEMBERS COMPLETE TERRELL CREEK BRIDGE

By: Zach Shirk— Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association Crew Supervisor



The Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association/ Whatcom County Public Works WCC AmeriCorps Crew poses for a picture after completing this 45 ft. bridge. The bridge is replacing a failing culvert that had become a fish barrier. The bridge, located on Terrell Creek between Ferndale and Birch Bay will open additional habitat for Chum and Coho Salmon. The crew also added large woody debris to increase habitat for salmon. The crew will plant around this site in the spring to create a riparian buffer and complete the project. The crew enjoyed getting our carpentry skills out and putting down the shovel for a little bit.

Answer to last week's question: E. Rhododendron

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.