

CORPS NEWS

Snow Flurries and Sunshine Fill March Training

By: Laura Schlabach, WCC Outreach Coordinator

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March 2016 Elective Training started off with snow flurries on Monday morning and ended with sunshine on Thursday! The WCC had a terrific week gathering together for a variety of environmental training courses March 14-17 at Cispus Learning Center in Randle. AmeriCorps members gained experience and certifications in courses such as Wilderness First Responder, Swiftwater Rescue, Search and Rescue, Wilderness Survival, Ethnobotany and many more. After-hours activities included our 4th annual Beard and Moustache Competition and a spirited 2nd annual Open Mic Night featuring many creative acts. Thanks to everyone for contributing to a fantastic week!



1. Maia Gurol practices belay techniques during the Tree Climbing course.
 2. Nicole Marcotte (left) and Anna Jackson (right) wrap a fish in a native sword fern to cook in a steam pit.
 3. Justin Vendettuoli with his completed trap during the Wilderness Survival course.
 4. Michelle Gostic (left) and Kyron Johnson (right) practice a zipline simulation in the Cispus River during the Swiftwater Rescue course.
- Photos by Laura Schlabach and Jennifer Storvick.

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NEWSLETTER

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

Sadie.Normoyle@ecy.wa.gov

WCC Crews Catch a Stink as They Restore Padden Creek

By Riley Thorpe and Jade Jarvis, WCC City of Bellingham Crew AmeriCorps members

Our Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crews restore and enhance stream habitats throughout Washington State, having completed projects for 54 sponsors statewide since the beginning of the year. The City of Bellingham sponsors two WCC crews that improve habitat along stream corridors supporting local salmon runs that have suffered from increasing urbanization. One of these crews' recent projects involved restoring habitat along Padden Creek.



WCC City of Bellingham AmeriCorps members install native species along Padden Creek. Photo submitted by Supervisor Lyle Skaar.

Daylighting Padden Creek

The Padden Creek Daylighting Project re-routed a large section of Padden Creek which had flowed through a concrete tunnel since the 1890s. In October, the city constructed a new creek channel to replace the tunnel stretching over one half mile.

Our two WCC crews planted and maintained the new riparian zones created by re-routing the creek. Our crews planted over 15,000 plants along the new reach over the past four months. We also recently installed nearly a dozen photo-points to document riparian zone progress over the next few years.

The City of Bellingham's WCC crews also conduct surveys for spawning salmon and their nests, called "redds." Riley Thorpe and Jade

Jarvis serve as the crews' surveyors. Each week, they walk about two miles of Padden Creek, searching for salmon and redds along the way.

A routine survey leads to an awful smell

During a routine survey in late February, Jade and Riley noticed a strange smell starting at the mouth of the creek that continued for about a mile upstream. They also saw a general cloudiness in the water that grew more intense as they moved upstream. Before long they began spotting bits of paper-like material floating downstream, hanging off plants and building up on rocks in the area.

When they saw some unusual moss coloration beneath the water, it became clear what they were wading through. Jade and Riley immediately exited the creek and notified the city's monitoring coordinator, Sarah-Brooke Benjamin, of a possible sewage leak in Padden Creek.

Reporting a leak to help clean up the creek

Upon further investigation, the Bellingham Natural Resources Department confirmed that the two surveyors had indeed stumbled upon a raw sewage leak. The leak had started two days prior to the discovery on Feb. 25, and was caused by a construction company accidentally using a mislabeled manhole to direct sewage into the old creek tunnel which eventually empties into the creek itself.

The communities of Fairhaven and Happy Valley were notified of contamination in the creek and the city closed public access to the water, which allowed the system to flush itself of anything harmful. According to the [City of Bellingham](#), Padden Creek was reopened March 4, 2016.

Thank you to WCC members Riley and Jade for trusting their gut during their spawning surveys, and doing the right thing by reporting the spill right away!

For background on the Padden Creek spill investigation check out our [EcoConnect](#) blog update or check out updates from City of Bellingham.

Beach Grass Restoration Along Ediz Hook

By: Sadie Normoyle, Outreach and Sustainability Individual Placement AmeriCorps Member



A member of Phill VanKessel's crew prepares sites for planting of native beach grass along the Ediz Hook in Port Angeles. Photo by Sadie Normoyle.

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe Crew, supervised by Phill VanKessel, recently completed a restoration project along the Ediz Hook in Port Angeles.

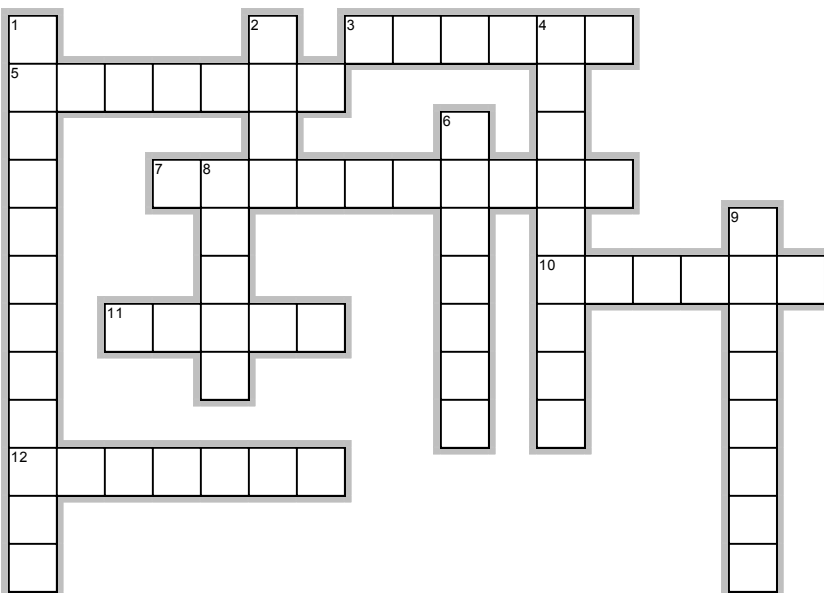
The project included planting native grasses and plants in order to support restoration efforts and reintroduce coastal habitat. Kim Williams, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe's Revegetation Field Supervisor, also visited the project to help with Phase Three of the planting project and provide additional background.

"Phase Three means [that] this is the third section of land that is undergoing restoration efforts. It's an effort to help cleanup the harbor and restore the native habitat," said Williams. Williams noted that restoration efforts have included "beach cleanup [and] huge replanting efforts with native grasses, strawberry, beach pea, gum weed and Sea thrift. Huge logs were strategically placed to create stability and covered with sand from The Elwha... that was collected from the state water treatment plant."

During Elwha Dam removal in 2011, a massive amount of sediment came through the river which clogged up the water treatment plant. As the treatment plant was cleaned, the sediment was set aside and the tribe now uses it to help with restoration efforts and for reintroduction of coastal habitat along the Ediz Hook. The sand is well suited to be used in this area because, as Williams said, "This Elwha sand historically fed this natural sand spit."

What is the goal for this restoration project? "The hope of the Lower Elwha Tribe is to help restore the once fertile harbor and create habitat to bring back the smelt, crab, clam and fish populations," said Williams.

Crossword puzzle



EclipseCrossword.com

First person/crew to send in answers gets a prize!

ACROSS

- 3. What Washington produces more of than any other state
- 5. An important part of safety gear
- 7. A type of berry that while delicious, is difficult to try and remove
- 10. Cispus is near this town
- 11. A small Washington town now associated with the undead
- 12. The largest active volcano in Washington State

DOWN

- 1. Washington State flower
- 2. An acronym for one of the courses at elective training
- 4. Nickname for our state (also the name of a college)
- 6. Last name of famous musician from Seattle
- 8. The first name of the WCC Outreach Coordinator (permanent staff member, not an IP)
- 9. Besides Alaska, Washington has the most of these out of any other state.

IP Spotlight: Emily Carlson

Education Program Coordinator Individual Placement AmeriCorps Member



Emily volunteering with the Puget Sound Keeper Alliance.

My first year with the Washington Conservation Corps started in 2014 when I served on a King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks crew – nicknamed “Humpy Crew.” The year was a whirlwind of new experiences and rewarding service! We tackled ivy, blackberry, garlic mustard, and the dreaded knotweed; I went on three spikes and explored parts of this state that I never dreamed I would see. When the year ended, I knew that I wanted to continue serving with WCC and I was given the opportunity to start my second year as an IP for the King Conservation District (CD).

The King CD is a small but mighty force within the boundaries of King County. We sponsor two WCC crews who do amazing projects, a modest-sized group of permanent staff, and a sense of duty that just won’t quit. It’s been inspiring to serve alongside King CD staff and see how they can turn a small tax fee that landowners pay each year into meaningful restoration that helps our whole community.

My title at the King CD is “Education Program Coordinator,” but what does that actually look like day to day? One of the most remarkable things about being the King CD IP is that I have an incredible amount of freedom to build on what I am interested in doing. Over the past few weeks, I have designed environmental science curricula for high schoolers, edited and tracked the budget for King CD education department, selected venues for an upcoming series of classes on best management practices for livestock owners, and attended a workshop on new uses for GIS in the environmental science field.

One of my favorite parts of my position is coordinating the farm tours hosted by the King CD each year. I interact with staff, independent contractors, and landowners to build an exceptional educational experience. King CD selects landowners who have worked with their program to implement restoration or other green management techniques to be farm tour hosts. Those hosts invite other farmers and landowners to walk their property with King CD staff and learn about the innovative ways they are serving both the needs of the property and the environment. Farm tours are a

powerful tool for environmental education because they encourage peers to learn from each other and inspire more people towards environmental improvement. So far, we’ve collaborated with organic dairy farmers, a therapeutic horse riding center for people with disabilities, and the Seattle mounted police just to name a few! Each landowner that we encounter has a different management technique; it is truly inspiring to see how so many different types of people can modify their properties to serve their environmental goals along with all of their other commitments and needs.

Another upcoming project that I’m really excited about is our spotlight on beneficial insect conservation. King CD will be bringing in the Xerces Society, an invertebrate conservation organization, to discuss the plight of native pollinators here in King County! We will be organizing classes on pollinator conservation, beneficial insect biological control methods, and attracting native pollinators in urban and rural environments.



Emily leads planting demonstrations at the King CD Native Plant Sale.



Emily holding a lamb at the King Conservation District Office.

Photos submitted by Emily Carlson.

Supervisor's Corner: Rachael West

In early April Rachael will be moving on to work as the Riparian Restoration Coordinator with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. WCC is sad to see her leave, but excited for her new opportunity and wishes her all the best!

What is a favorite moment or memory of being a WCC supervisor?

This isn't specific to being a supervisor, but my favorite moments are the quiet ones when we are on lunch or break where we get a moment to appreciate our surroundings. For example, after spraying knotweed along the Snoqualmie we can take our break on the banks under a beautiful mountainscape. Also, once I watched a gold finch picking flowers from a thistle head and it didn't even notice that I was lying right underneath it eating lunch. Another time we watched an immature bald eagle taking a bath in a puddle 10 feet from us. I really appreciate being able to spend so many years of the life along the rivers and not stuck in an office, - it fits into my crunchy, granola lifestyle.



Photo submitted by Rachael West.

Which hand tool is your favorite, and why?

This changes pretty regularly but right now my favorite is the hack-n-slash or hand tiller. It is the only tool that is suitable for digging out blackberry when you are crawling on hands and knees under a thicket of snowberry and osoberry.

Could you briefly describe your path to WCC?

I graduated college in Dubuque, IA in 2006, then immediately started working on a production crew clearing invasive plants from remnant goat prairies on the limestone bluffs along the Mississippi River via prescribed fire, herbicide, and lots of chainsaw work. In 2009, I applied for a position with the KCDNRP and served as corps member for two years (circa former supervisors and current WCC staff Peter Nevin and Liz Esikoff). After my corps member days I started as a supervisor for Pierce County Storm Water Management for 1.5 years and now I have been with KCDNRP for 2.5 years.

Where is your hometown?

Chicago, IL, specifically the south side in the Brighton Park neighborhood

If you could have a superpower what would it be?

I am stealing this from a past corps member, it would definitely be magic pants. I could pull anything I wanted out of the pockets.

Number of years as a WCC Supervisor:

4 years.

IP Spotlight Continued from page 2

This year has already been so interesting and challenging. As a kid from suburbia, it can be intimidating to walk into a room full of third generation dairy farmers and feel like you have something valuable to contribute. However, it has been an incredible experience to learn more about farming in an urban area like King County and hear about the innovations that are continuously building in the agricultural community. The more I learn, the more I want to know. Collaborating so closely with the people of King County is really inspiring because the impact we are making is that much more tangible.

My advice to current crew members and IPs? As the year moves forward, take advantage of any opportunity you can find to learn more about what you're doing! Ask tons of questions, ask for more projects that you're passionate about, and explore ideas on your own. As long as you stay motivated, you never have to stop learning!

The Stories Behind the Numbers— Why We Need Both

By Shelby Vander Molen, King Conservation District Crew AmeriCorps Member

Note: On January 8, 2016 37 WCC AmeriCorps members and staff drove to Missouri to assist with flood response efforts. The initial response was extended, and an additional team of 24 WCC AmeriCorps members and staff arrived on February 6 to continue assisting communities affected by the December flooding. The team initially deployed arrived back in Washington on February 6; the team deployed on the extension returned home March 5, 2016. They served alongside Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa, AmeriCorps St. Louis, NCCC, and many other volunteers.

It gets in your blood

Jen Murphy usually joins the AmeriCorps Disaster Response Teams (A-DRT) via a conference call. Today, Murphy is returning to her roots. Once a National Civilian Community Corps member (NCCC), she now serves as Program Officer for the Disaster Services Unit of AmeriCorps' parent organization, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).

After a day in the thick of the Missouri flood response, Murphy joins A-DRT for a debriefing over a lasagna dinner. When put on the spot to say a few words to the group, Murphy reiterates that she “can’t be more pleased with how things are going— both on site and with all our [CNCS] national partners.”

Members from conservation corps of Washington, Texas, Minnesota and Iowa munch on garlic bread as they listen to Murphy. “You guys are the ones who are really getting out there and interfacing with homeowners and building something,” Murphy tells them.

That something is the 242 homes that A-DRT has completed mold sanitation, debris removal, and mucking and gutting in since the beginning of deployment. That’s about five homes per day. Between staff and members, Washington Conservation Corps alone have served almost 14,000 hours in Missouri.

It is these accomplishments and the chance to aid distressed communities which they represent that make disaster response so addictive. Murphy jokes that careers in disaster can “sneak up on you.” She would know.

Post-college, Murphy saw herself in event planning. But then she decided to serve two years with National Civilian Community Corps. Her first year was “textbook.” During her second, Hurricane Katrina hit, and Murphy served as a responder. “It gets in your blood, and here I am— ten years later,” she says, smiling.



WCC members Jazz English (left) and Chris Carter (right) gifted flood survivor Joyce Hahn (middle) with some Valentine's Day chocolates after the time they spent helping her sort damaged belongings in her home. Photo submitted by Shelby Vander Molen.

Sifting through waterlogged memories

Joyce Hahn—an elderly woman who cares for a Vietnam veteran in her home— represents one of the 242 homeowners AmeriCorps teams have served. After threats of tornados a few years back, Hahn moved most of her keepsakes into her basement for safekeeping. Instead, a flood hit this past December destroying much of it.

Continued on pg 7.

Supervisor's Corner: Paul Argites

What is your favorite memory or moment of being a WCC Supervisor?

A really fun interaction with a park-goer stands out to me. In January we were finishing up a day of tree pruning at Washington Park in Anacortes. We were heading back to our truck and heard music coming from the parking lot by the beach. The music was coming from a gentleman who was playing his full size piano which he had rigged up to the bed of his truck. Turns out this guy and his dog "Mo" travel all over the country with the piano in the back of his truck, stopping and playing music for people just for the sake of making them happy.

Which is your favorite hand tool and why?

I like the pole saw. We use it mostly for street tree pruning while completing urban forestry projects for DNR. It extends up to 12 feet in length so we can remove tree limbs that would normally be out of reach with a hand saw.

Could you briefly describe your path to WCC?

Right after graduating from college I was a crew member on the WCC Skagit Spike crew for a year and served at the Padilla Bay Research Reserve as the WCC Research IP for my second term. After serving as a corps member I worked for Ecology organizing marine debris cleanup projects in Puget Sound for WCC crews. This is my first year as a WCC supervisor.

If you could have a superpower what would it be?

Superhuman strength.

Number of years as a WCC Supervisor:

1 year.

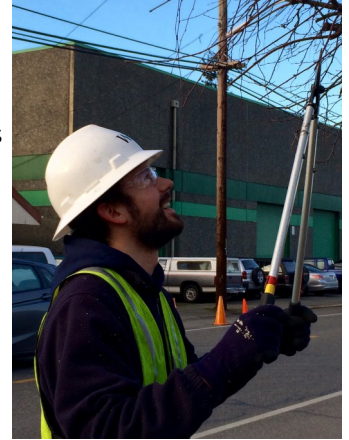


Photo submitted by Paul Argites.

Jazz English, a second-year WCC member out of Tacoma, served as the Safety Officer on Strike Team Alpha 2—the A-DRT group assigned to muck and gut Hahn's basement. But what is notated as "debris" on a work order is someone's belongings and associated memories once you arrive at their home.

As English recalls, "Half of everything she had down there was covered in mold, making the work we had to do much more difficult. If it had been a total loss, we could have hauled it all out indiscriminately. Instead, every item required Joyce's consideration: Salvage or trash?"

Tears were shed over the three days of sorting as a crew of AmeriCorps volunteers helped Hahn "sift through waterlogged memories," as English aptly put it. Hahn called the crew her "helper angels."

The forms, the faces

To get to people like Joyce, though, money needs to funnel from Congress to CNCS and out to AmeriCorps initiatives. Murphy's office needs quantifiable information like "200 completed homes" to show what money allocated to national service can accomplish.

On paper, AmeriCorps teams complete the phase of disaster response which includes "interfacing with homeowners." In practice, that means WCC members arrive in Bridgeton, MO, to sort through belongings with Hahn— hugs, tears, and Valentine's gifts included. It's the kind of thing people don't forget from their year as an AmeriCorps member.

Leaving from his deployment in Missouri, Conservation Corps of Minnesota & Iowa member Adam Garza reminisced, "The flood became real with Joyce— it became personal. Never have I taken more pride in the work that I do."

To most of the people giving 14,000 hours of their time, the thing to remember is Joyce Hahn. But to make sure there will be more instances like this, the colossal paper trail leading up to her doorstep is important— a bridge allowing national service members to respond to disaster.



Learn more on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/washingtonconservationcorps

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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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March 2016
Volume 12, Issue 6
Ecology Publication No.
16-06-010



DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
 State of Washington

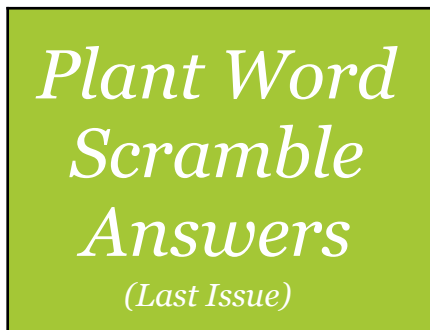
Washington Conservation Corps “Truck Talks”

Looking for some inspiration for getting to know your fellow WCC AmeriCorps Members and colleagues? Try using these discussion questions!

1. How do you discover new music?
2. What do you think of cosmetic surgery?
3. Should we care about events in other parts of the world? Why or why not?
4. How do you like to resolve conflict?
5. When you were little what did you want to be when you grew up?
6. If you could live in any fantasy world from books, TV, movies, or video games, where would you choose?
7. How did you make the friends you currently have? How do your friends reflect (or don't reflect) who you are?
8. What are your favorite and least favorite words?
9. What are the best things you've acquired secondhand?
10. What does success look like to 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!



1. EODSWFNRR is SWORD FERN.
2. ASUGRIOFD is DOUGLAS FIR.
3. KRLHBUYREEC is HUCKELBERRY.
4. AREDC is CEDAR.
5. SCMOOROTHBC is SCOTCH BROOM.
6. YRBRACKLEB is BLACKBERRY.
7. TLENTE is NETTLE.
8. ICAATTL is CATTAIL.
9. NEGOERAPORG is OREGON GRAPE.
10. WDROEOD is REDWOOD.
11. LSLAA is SALAL.

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.