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

Sadie.Normoyle@ecy.wa.gov

Navigating the Waters of Steelhead and Salmon Restoration

By Hayden Lucia, WCC Spokane Spike AmeriCorps Member

This spring our Spokane Spike crew, led by Adam Hein, began a fish restoration project in Asotin, near the Snake River in southeast Washington. The goal was to create wooden structures for three different creeks that help establish better shade cover and generate more slow-moving pools of water for fish habitat.



Sam Richardson admiring the ALS-Mid Channel structure. Photo submitted by Hayden Lucia.

Altogether, the project will take our crew a series of six eight-day spikes until we reach the end of summer. Patience, teamwork, and a lot of effort are needed on a project of this magnitude, in one of the hottest, driest parts of the state.

In the 1970's, major projects for fish restoration were implemented in order to remove wood and debris from creeks so that fish could swim freely up or down stream. Today, the science now points to fish needing more pools and shelter created by natural debris in streams. As a result, many of our projects today involve putting the wood back in the water. The goal is to build dam-like structures by pounding six-foot wooden stakes into the creek bed. The stakes will hold as many as 20 six to 10-foot long logs in place. Long-term plans involve building over 500 structures. Collecting and transporting the heavy logs has been one of the hardest parts of this project. Most of the wood collected has been from the Umatilla National Forest from already fallen trees; bucking up logs and loading trailers for transportation has taken the majority of our time. Building the structures also proved to be no easy task, and we learned it is more of an art than a science.

The project sponsor is Stephen Bennett, head of Eco Logical Research Inc., who works for Utah State University in the Watershed Science Department. Mr. Bennett provided great guidance on construction and the overall purposes of the structures. In the picture above, you can see a PALS- Mid Channel structure, constructed to recreate what a massive fallen tree would accomplish in the middle of the creek. The structure blocks water flow in the middle of the creek, creating convergent streams that cause erosion on the creek banks. This erosion helps sediment accumulate, which adds more gravel beyond the structure. Gravel beds are prime real estate for steelhead spawning.

Continued on pg 6.



2015-2016 WCC Member Service Awards

Congratulations to the recipients of the first annual Washington Conservation Corps Member Service Awards!

WCC Leslie Schiesswohl Community Service Award: Samantha Black.

Achieved the most community service hours during a WCC AmeriCorps term.

Samantha volunteered over 150 hours at Jefferson Land Trust.

WCC Exemplary Environmental Stewardship Award: Ashley Shattuck.

Demonstrated dedication to improving the natural world through consistent volunteerism, a sustained commitment to environmental service, and positive leadership in inspiring others.

According to Ashley's supervisor, Lisa Potter, "Ashley is a rock star volunteer- spending most weekends at some sort of conservation event or another." Among other things, she is a board member and project manager with Friends of North Creek Forest, volunteers with Earth Corps and Green Seattle Partnership, helped revive the plant collection and display program at the UW Bothell Herbarium, and is a farm technician on a sustainable agriculture farm.

WCC Disaster Response Award: Evan Nally.

Embodied AmeriCorps' spirit of service, embraces excellence, and exceeds expectations while providing disaster response assistance.

According to Evan's supervisor, Greg Dunbar, "Evan truly wants to help people in disaster situations, as well as provide support for team members and be a leader when he is called upon to do so." Evan completed three month-long disaster deployments (two months in Saipan and one month in Missouri) since the start of his term. In his six-month crew position in 2015 he also served on multiple wildfire deployments.

For more information on these awards, view the 2015-2016 award nomination form on the forms page on the WCC [website](#).



1. Evan Nally receiving the Disaster Response WCC Service Award. Photo by Laura Schlabach.
2. Ashley Shattuck was awarded the Environmental Stewardship WCC Service Award. Photo by Laura Schlabach.
3. Samantha Black with members of Leslie Schiesswohl's family after receiving the WCC Leslie Schiesswohl Community Service Award. Photo by Laura Schlabach.



WCC BY THE NUMBERS
2015-2016
 AMERICORPS YEAR*

*AS OF JULY 2016



564,292 FEET
 of erosion control completed.

6186 VOLUNTEERS

recruited or managed for a total of 19,976 hours served by volunteers.

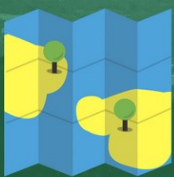


14,148 STUDENTS

instructed by WCC crew members and Individual Placements.

185,305 FEET

of fencing installed or improved.
 481 miles of trail/boardwalk created or improved.



4,611 ACRES

of area cleared of invasive species, litter, etc.

821,757 NATIVE TREES

or shrubs installed/planted.



Graduating members... check out our Alumni Facebook Page!

The WCC alumni Facebook group is for members who have completed the WCC program. This page provides resources for careers and/or continuing education and provides a way for alumni to stay in touch. Find us online by searching for "Washington Conservations Corps Alumni" on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/WCCAlums/>



The Fight Against Spartina

By Natalie White, WCC Snohomish County DNR Crew AmeriCorps Member



Nelson Lee's crew showing off a particularly large patch of Spartina found on a tidal flat in Island County. Photo submitted by Natalie White.

From hiking trails to Spartina eradication – quite the transition for WCC Supervisor Nelson Lee's six-month crew, albeit an exciting one! After a three-month stretch constructing a 3.5-mile hiking trail outside of Gold Bar, we exchanged our Pulaskis for backpack herbicide sprayers, and started helping DNR aquatics. Spartina, an invasive salt-marsh grass, is the main target. Originally introduced to Willapa Bay in 1894 as a packing material for oyster shipments and transplants, Spartina quickly spread throughout the bay and beyond, crowding tidal flats throughout Washington. The invasive plant is highly problematic for fish and shellfish habitat as it increases marsh coverage and decreases the extent of mudflats. This negatively impacts rearing habitat for a variety of species. Spartina also affects bird habitat and enhances the risk of flooding as estuaries become clogged with the invasive grass.

In 1995, Washington Department of Agriculture began implementing a widespread eradication effort to reduce the extent of the invasive to a more manageable level. With the help of key organizations including Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Snohomish County Noxious Weeds, and tribal governments, the 9,000 solid acres of Spartina recorded in 2003 has now been reduced to a mere nine acres. While the massive patches that extend for acres on end are no more, individual plants hidden amongst look-a-like grasses are still at large. That's where we come in!

Armed with a Glyphosate and Imazapyr solution that inhibits the growth of a key amino acid in the plant, our crew and others from various organizations, head into tidal flats and marshes throughout Skagit and Island County to track down remaining Spartina. Using the Collector app, we are able to track where we've surveyed and determine our next destination. We then form a line, with one person on the outside marking our outer perimeter, and begin our hunt for Spartina. This grass was initially very hard to distinguish from others, but now is about as easy to spot as a familiar flower! It is so ingrained in our heads that many of us see it in a dream or simply by closing our eyes! Upon finding a plant, we first record its GPS location and then spray it with herbicide solution using either a backpack or a hand sprayer.

Given that no one on the crew had prior experience applying herbicide, learning this process was an adjustment. However, with a little time and some help from our sponsors, we quickly settled in and became comfortable with spraying. While finding the plant and spraying it is definitely a big part of this experience, another prominent component is navigating through the marsh. Definitely not an easy task! Unforeseen holes pop up, deceptive mud suction boots into the depths of the marsh, seemingly impassable ditches appear frequently, and large channels arise more often than one would think.



One of the airboats that the crew used to travel to and from the Spartina sites. Photo submitted by Nelson Lee.

AmeriCorps Disaster Response in Louisiana

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



Operations Chief Rob Crawford in the operations room in Louisiana. Photo by J.T. Blatty/FEMA

On Aug. 20, 69 WCC AmeriCorps members and staff made their way to Louisiana to support communities affected by catastrophic flooding that took place earlier in the month. Tens of thousands of southern Louisiana residents were affected by the flood. 12 WCC trucks departed from Ellensburg, while Supervisors Ernie Farmer (Incident Commander for the AmeriCorps deployment), Rob Crawford (Operations Chief), and Phill VanKessel (Logistics Chief) departed by plane to start setting up operations for over 400 responding AmeriCorps members. When WCC members and staff arrived on Monday, Aug. 22, many of them took on additional leadership roles such as Public Information Officer, Strike Team Leader or Safety Officer.

The need for assistance is vast, and WCC members have been diving right in to help with recovery efforts. WCC AmeriCorps member Samuel Sanchez shared his experience helping with flood recovery in an article by the [Yakima Herald](#).

“The first thing I always see is front lawn covered with garbage and debris. You can actually see the water lines around the houses and know how deep it got,” said Samuel Sanchez. “When you get inside, it’s either (cleaned out) or there is lots of mold everywhere.”

The crews so far are collecting work orders from residents, coordinating food, lodging, and supplies for other volunteer groups, and helping to clean out flood-damaged homes.

The crews and supervisors are set to return September 20.

Thanks for your dedicated service, WCC members and staff!

The Fight Against Spartina Continued

While we have had our fair share of mishaps in the mud, we don’t have to do everything on foot. Airboats, powered by a large propeller, transport us to our sites. These boats, while very loud, are a lot of fun and a great way to start and end the day! We also use Marsh Masters to navigate some of the muddier areas in the marsh. These tank-like machines are designed to cruise through wet, muddy conditions and play an invaluable part in this project. With very high clearance, the Marsh Master also serves as an observation deck for our Spartina search. While seemingly a simple task, Spartina eradication definitely has many components!

Not only do we now find navigating through the mud in search of these plants rather enjoyable, but we also realize how rewarding it is to find this plant and help eliminate invasive species. Our sponsors emphasize how extensive Spartina was a few years back and now we are a part of the effort to keep its numbers down to help preserve key fish, shellfish, and bird habitat. Although helping DNR Aquatics has been a big transition for the crew, it’s exciting to be a part of such a successful environmental project.



WCC members searching for Spartina. Photo submitted by Nelson Lee.

Alumni: Where Are They Now?

By: Sarah Doyle: NOSC Crew AmeriCorps Member 2009.

When did you join the WCC?

I joined the WCC in the fall of 2009.

How long did you serve?

I served with the WCC for a full 12-months of service with AmeriCorps.

What was your favorite part of WCC/favorite memory?

My fondest memory is hiking up Chimacum Creek conducting spawning surveys for the endangered summer chum salmon as they make their annual journey up the creek. It smelled horrible, but I knew this was special because 30 years ago there were no fish returning. The community came together to successfully restore this run.

What did you take away from your experience?

AmeriCorps and WCC taught me a lot about self-confidence. I had to communicate with a lot of landowners for riparian plantings, and they respected me a lot more when I was confident in my approach about the projects we were doing. I also had to give a lot of public presentations. I am a nervous public speaker, but when I portrayed confidence about the topic I realized how much that reflected onto my audience.

What are you doing now?

I am the Stewardship Coordinator for the North Olympic Salmon Coalition. They hired me on as a full time staff after my year of service. My specific tasks for the Salmon Coalition include grant writing, riparian restoration planning, monitoring, and project management. However, my favorite task is to supervise the WCC IP and coordinate the WCC crew. The WCC members are so professional and have amazing energy and passion for conservation that it keeps me motivated.

Advice for current members:

If you see a task that needs leadership, grab the reins and go for it! When I was a WCC IP, I noticed we hadn't kept records of past projects, so I created a binder illustrating all of our projects. I included metrics for each project on how much was restored or protected. We still use it to this day to showcase our successes in restoration.



Sarah planting trees on Chimacum Creek in partnership with Habitat for Humanity. Photo submitted by Sarah Doyle.

Navigating the Waters of Steelhead and Salmon Restoration Continued

To create this structure we first needed a good-size log with a large root wad still attached. After finding a suitable place for it in the middle of the creek, we began the tedious task of locking it into place using wooden stakes. To get the six-foot -long wooden stakes into the rocky creek bed, we used a hydraulic stake pounder powered by a generator, which we floated down creek in a surprisingly sturdy canoe. The hydraulic stake pounder weighed 80 pounds, and operated best with one person guiding the pole and two others using all their weight and strength to help drive the stake down. We could see the effects of the log placement instantly; it changed the directional flow of the creek, creating pools for suitable fish habitat.

The steelhead and salmon restoration project has been the highlight for our crew this summer. Multiple eight-day spikes have allowed our crew to have a tremendous focus and dedication to the project. Usually by day six, everyone's nerves are a little on edge, but we always look forward to getting back to Asotin. We all have been striving to see our structures make it through next year's spring rains and hopefully create sustainable fish habitat for years to come.



Josh Knight and Hayden Lucia hauling construction materials from the forest. Photo submitted by Adam Hein.

WCC Snapshots



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1. Canoes used at the Paddle to Nisqually Canoe Journey. Several WCC members volunteered their time at the event. Photo by Sadie Normoyle.
2. A WCC crew on Lummi Island as part of the Lummi Heritage Trust Quarry reclamation project which will take place in coming years. The cabin was part of the quarry purchase and had to be removed in order to make the area safe for visitors. Photo submitted by Nick Saling.
3. The Pierce Conservation District crew, supervised by Aurelio Elliot, before leaving the Department of Ecology on their way to assist with a boat that washed up at Westport. Photo by Sadie Normoyle.
4. Representative Denny Heck visiting the WCC Forage Fish crews to learn more about restoration projects. Photo by Laura Schlabach.
5. Superintendent of Mount Rainier National Park, Randy King, spoke at the National Park Service Centennial Celebration about the contributions of WCC and other conservation organizations to maintaining the park. Photo by Sadie Normoyle.
6. WCC members responding to wildfires in Cranberry Lake and Birch Bay. Photo submitted by Nick Saling.
7. The WCC was represented at the National Park Service Centennial Celebration at Paradise, Mount Rainier National Park. Photo by Sadie Normoyle.



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.

Washington Department of Ecology
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600
www.ecy.wa.gov/wcc

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Food Bank Garden Updates

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



Sadie and WCC Coordinator Roland McGill helping in the garden. Photo by Laura Schlabach.

Summer is the busiest time for the Food Bank Garden located at the Department of Ecology. Between planting, harvesting, weeding, and other garden maintenance, there is always plenty for me and my fellow volunteers to do.

This growing season we have already donated 100 pounds of garlic, 40 pounds of carrots, 40 pounds of corn, and five pounds of peppers to the food bank. Our corn harvest, though it had a rocky start, is finally starting to take off. Last year the garden donated 399 pounds and while that may be hard to beat, I hope we have a strong yield to donate.

Besides the corn, we currently have beets and winter squash in the garden and more garlic and fava beans will be planted in October. Although my time is coming to an end in this position, I am excited see how the garden continues to flourish in years to come.

For all you Olympia/Lacey locals, the garden always needs volunteers! If you want more information about helping at the garden and staying in the loop with future garden events, email: garden@ecy.wa.gov.



Garden volunteers during a lunch hour work party. Photo by Sadie Normoyle.

Answers to last month's crossword puzzle!

Across

- 1. Black Widow
- 6. Bike
- 7. Theropods
- 8. Fremont
- 9. Four
- 11. Comic Con
- 12. The Simpsons

Down

- 2. Columbia
- 3. Worlds Fair
- 4. Evergreen
- 5. Twenty Nine
- 10. Joanne



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 serving 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.