

In This Issue:

<i>IP Spotlight</i>	1,5
<i>Florida Disaster Response Reflection</i>	2-3
<i>Earn College Credits Through the WCC</i>	4
<i>The Second Annual WCC AmeriCorps Annual Member Recognition Awards</i>	6
<i>WCC wants to feature your photos!</i>	7
<i>WCC Snapshots</i>	8

Starting off with a Survey

By Hannah Drummond, WCC AmeriCorps Coastal Monitoring IP

It has always been challenging for me to start a new position—I'm terrified of messing things up, admittedly socially awkward, and unsure of how to use my time. The fact that I had never set foot in Washington prior to the weekend before starting my WCC term only added to the nerves. I grew up in coastal Maine, where I developed a love for the ocean and an interest in nearshore erosion processes. After obtaining my B.S. in Geology from St. Lawrence University in up-state New York, I worked for an environmental non-profit in Tahoe, Calif. Soon, I recognized my desire to get back to the ocean and redirect my career path towards studying coastal hazards. A few hours of internet perusing brought me to the IP position with the Coastal Monitoring and Analysis Program (CMAP), essentially a dream come true. A month later, I found myself in Olympia serving at the Washington Department of Ecology.



Hannah collecting elevation data on foot with GPS backpack on and GPS controller in hand. Photo submitted by Hannah Drummond.

Luckily for me, I was able to bypass those uncomfortable first weeks in the office: I was told our group would be going out on a ten day survey of the Okanogan River in Eastern Washington to be used for a flood model. What better way is there to get to know a new service environment than to spend ten days in the field mucking through knee deep mud, troubleshooting a variety of equipment problems, and embarking on a series of firsts, not only for me, but for my team as well?

The Okanogan River Survey is the only time CMAP has worked in an area without tides, which made for an exciting learning experience for everyone. Watching the group intelligently and creatively tackle every obstacle that came at us in our new environment dissolved any uncertainties I'd previously had about my position.

Usually, the team of five collects high resolution topography and bathymetry data from beaches along the outer coast and in the Puget Sound to assess nearshore processes, specifically erosion. Our boat, aptly named "George Davidson" after one of the earliest surveyors of the west coast, is equipped with sonar and LIDAR capabilities. At high tide, the boat's dual-head multi-beam system can collect seafloor elevations in water as shallow as two meters. Then, the laser scanner collects data from upland areas such as bluffs, the beach, and floodplains. At low tide, "topo team" straps on GPS backpacks that record an elevation point with each step.

Continued on pg 5.

SEND US MATERIAL TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

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

Brendan.Dwyer@ecy.wa.gov



Sometimes Angels Have Boots

By Mason Showalter, WCC AmeriCorps Crew Member, Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge

On Oct. 16, 24 Washington Conservation Corps staff and AmeriCorps members departed for Florida to assist communities after Hurricane Matthew hit earlier that month. Below, returning member Mason Showalter shares about his experience serving on WCC's deployment to Florida.

Now entering the final days of our Florida deployment, the WCC AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team (A-DRT) serving in Florida after Hurricane Matthew has cycled through and adopted new crew roles, responsibilities, skills, and insights into disaster management. We've handled missions ranging from personal item salvage, debris removal, roof tarping, tree felling and limbing, tree restoration, rigging and climbing, canvassing and grounds maintenance to crisis cleanup, soliciting food donations and volunteer recruitment. The heat has been hard on our bodies, but the reminder of our purpose couldn't be clearer than in the stories of survivors from Hurricane Matthew.

"Sometimes angels have boots" was the appraisal given to our response efforts at the Volusia County council meeting on Nov. 3. Each WCC AmeriCorps member was granted a moment at the microphone during the meeting to state our name, age and the place we call home. Few things have been as satisfying as serving with these 23 other exceedingly capable people, all individually inspiring in their own way. We've pushed dozens of projects to completion, helping scores of homeowners along the way. Everyone has been an irreplaceable asset to the success of this deployment and it has truly become a team-building experience.

The hospitality and gratitude from Volusia County residents has been immeasurably reassuring. Local resources such as the Ocean Center, Halifax Ministries, Chair of the Community Organizations Active in Disaster Frank Bruno, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and an ever-expanding list of food donors have contributed immensely to our morale.

The weekly beach day also provided rejuvenation. WCC uniforms are traded in for swimwear as members hit the Daytona strip for a day off—tanning in the sun or enveloping themselves in the salty, pummeling waves of the ocean. Other adventures on our days off include a visit to Blue Springs State Park featuring a kayaking and canoeing tour complete with alligators, manatees and a menagerie of aquatic critters. We've also been gifted a kitchen trailer—affectionately known as "Jane & Josh's Cantina" after two dedicated corps members who have devoted time and energy into providing sustenance for us. With our kitchen staff - including the newly-christened Food Coordinator Paris Jackson—we can rest assured that our dietary needs will be accommodated with care and consideration.

Assistant Supervisors Kaitlyn Meldahl and Kat Nickel have taken on Team Leader positions in both our North and South Divisions, and we are expanding the capacity of our relief efforts daily. Operations now stretch south to Oak Hill, west to Astor and north to Ormond Beach. Sawing, bucking, swamping and hauling have become the mainstays in the work orders. We also have a solitary Liaison Officer stationed at the EOC, whose job entails an ever-shifting list of office-related tasks.



WCC members Kaitlyn Meldahl, Cheyenne Tomlinson, Sebastian Barragan and Jane Landis pose with a heart-shaped tree cross-section. Photo submitted by Luke Wigle.



Continued on pg 3



WCC AmeriCorps member Shelby Defeo was the first appointed to this position, and left an indelible impression on the EOC staff with her vast knowledge, practicality and tech-savvy ingenuity. She was instrumental in organizing the data in a cohesive, coherent manner for those who followed. I was her successor, but merely a

maintenance man for her impressive creation, whereas WCC AmeriCorps member Kayla Seaforth is already adding to my routine in her first day as my replacement.

In the field we are all accountable for each other, but few understand that more than the supervisors and safety officers. WCC AmeriCorps members Kaitlyn Meldahl, Jessica Dorian and Eric Guzman have all provided tactful and wise safety advice to keep our sights clear and our minds sharp, even on the most tiring of projects. It's difficult to complete a work order without the proper equipment, but WCC AmeriCorps members Kat Nickel, Shayla Nelson and Cheyenne Tomlinson have been an incredibly resourceful trio of tool and supply managers. For every request for items that did or did not exist, these three were outfitting us with what we needed to get things done.

All roles play their part, but none hit as close to home as ensuring that base camp remains comfortable to the 24 wayward Washingtonians immersed in the strange land of Florida. We can thank base camp managers Ethan Sperry, Stephen Fuller and Eleanor Harris, along with Logistics Chief Junior Fuimaono, for doing the dirty work—presenting a sanitized sanctuary to rest our heads after a hard day of stressful labor.

This has been a worthwhile and invigorating experience, due largely to my wonderful fellow AmeriCorps members and those we've helped, but none of this could have been coordinated as smoothly without the leadership and example of our Incident Commander Luke Wigle and Operations Chief Rob Crawford. First-year members Kyle Brooks and Joe McCord have proven themselves invaluable on the roof and with a chainsaw. Returning members Kelsey Accetta and Sebastian Barragan have been steadfast and skillfully diverse. Caitlyn Jones writes informative and detailed intake forms, which makes life for us liaisons a total breeze. Supervisor Junior Fuimaono is beyond brave and hilarious, and supervisor Emily Landrus is one of my personal role models.

Back at base camp, the Florida sunrise is an incandescent smear of pink and orange in the sky. In the early morning one is just as likely to encounter their crewmates anxiously preparing for the next mission as they are to find others enraptured by soft, chattering voices and a melodious guitar. I don't sense any undercurrent of regret from anyone. There's still more progress to be made, more lessons to learn, and more goals to accomplish before we can head back to the Pacific Northwest. As a first-timer on disaster response deployments, I could not have asked for a better experience.

Continued from pg. 2



WCC members gather after a long day of service clearing debris from areas affected by Hurricane Matthew. Photo submitted by WCC.



WCC members perform tarping on a residential roof. Photo submitted by WCC.

Earn college credits through the WCC

By Laura Schlabach, WCC AmeriCorps Outreach Coordinator

Each year, WCC AmeriCorps members get to sign up for two formal environmental training courses of their choice. And how's this for another perk - how about earning some college credits through your training course this spring?

WCC is excited to offer the Walla Walla Community College (WWCC) course Cultivated Plants as part of our elective training catalog this year (formerly 'Plant Anatomy and Morphology'). The course will provide a practical understanding of plant anatomy, morphology and growth through plenty of hands-on experience and some lectures. And the best part? You'll earn five college credits! Members that enroll in Cultivated Plants during our June training conference will take part in plant identification and lab activities throughout the week, then complete a series of follow-up online lectures and assignments on their own. Our new partnership with WWCC began last year and is designed for members to earn up to 15 college credits while serving in the WCC. If you're interested in this great opportunity but still not quite sure how it works, you're in luck! Here are some more details.

How do I enroll in the Cultivated Plants course?

The first step is selecting 'Cultivated Plants' as your first or second choice in your elective training survey poll. After training rosters are sent out in early January, WCC training coordinator Laura Schlabach will contact all 'Cultivated Plants' course participants with step-by-step application and enrollment instructions. After WCC's June elective training week, a few online lectures and quizzes will be due by Sept. 4, 2017.

How can I earn all 15 credits? Are some credits transferable?

You can earn college credits in two ways:

Sign up for the Cultivated Plants course during WCC's June elective training to earn five **transferable** credits (see training catalog for additional details on where these credits can transfer).

Apply your service terms in the WCC as up to 10 **nontransferable** Cooperative Work Experience (similar to internship) credits at WWCC.

Do I pay for the credits?

Just like the other elective training courses, WCC will pay for AmeriCorps members' tuition for Cultivated Plants. Crew supervisors interested in taking Cultivated Plants will pay the tuition fee of \$599.05 upon course enrollment and may apply for reimbursement through WCC upon successful completion of the course.

What are some of the programs offered at Walla Walla Community College?

Cultivated Plants is part of Walla Walla Community College's Water Technology and Management and Agriculture degree programs. But let's ask the program director himself!

"Our watershed ecology program is one of the few programs of its type at a community college in this region," said Dave Stockdale, director of the Water and Environmental Center at WCC. "Our natural resources program combines ecology studies with technology and management skills, and makes a great platform for many career directions... 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."



Supervisor Dyami Quilici and 2015-2016 year WCC AmeriCorps member Thomas Christensen use microscopes to identify plant parts in Plant Anatomy and Morphology during June elective training 2016. Photo by Alicia Kellogg.



Microscopic view of the reproductive parts of a flower, taken during WWCC's Plant Anatomy and Morphology course during June training conference 2016. Photo by Alicia Kellogg.

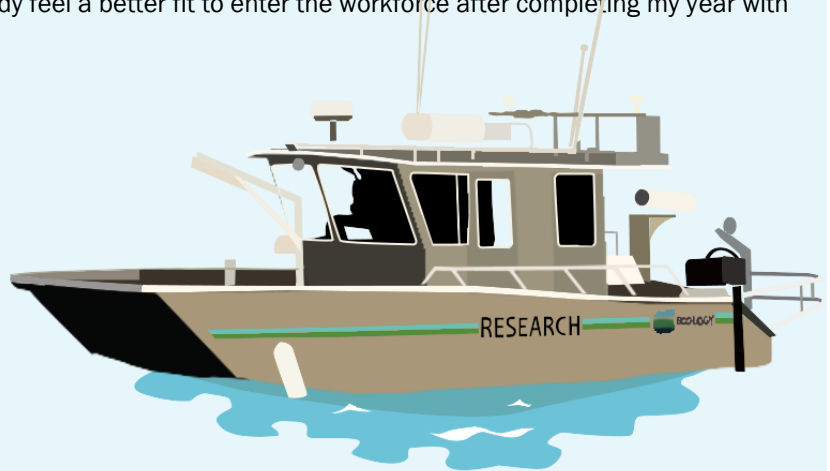
Starting off with a Survey

Continued from pg. 1.

As the IP, I spend most of my time with this GPS crew. Our purpose is to collect data in areas that are too shallow for the boat to get to, or too vegetated for the laser scanner to pick up. Occasionally we supplement these efforts with jet skis equipped with sonar for higher density nearshore data, or an ATV to create a full map of the beach topography. The result is a seamless elevation surface that can be used to analyze changes and assess hazards to human development. Ultimately, this information is used by city planners to determine the best way to protect homes and infrastructure that is threatened by bluff erosion.

I am also responsible for setting up our GPS base station each day in the field. The base constantly receives satellite corrections that are sent to our instruments and is necessary for collecting the high definition data that we need for analysis. When I take the base down in the evening, I make sure all equipment is charging, organized, and clean to prepare us for the next day. My position has a good balance of office and field activities. When I'm not helping collect data, I take part in processing and analysis. I have already learned a handful of new programs and concepts that help us refine our results. I will also be starting an independent project that will focus on challenges and suggestions for surveying shallow, freshwater areas as a follow-up to the Okanogan River Survey. With such a supportive group of people to collaborate with, endless training opportunities and the flexibility to pursue topics of particular interest, I already feel a better fit to enter the workforce after completing my year with the WCC.

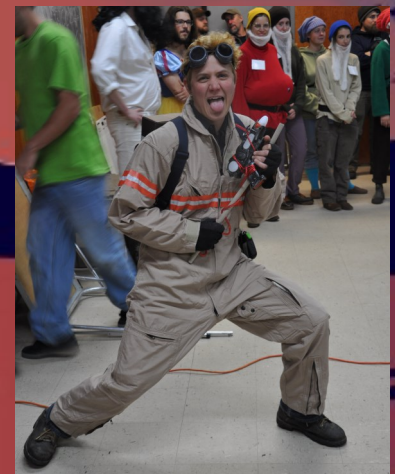
My advice to other WCC members is to remember to take moments to appreciate where you are. As a brand new Washingtonian, I am constantly in awe of the natural beauty here. I strongly encourage other members from out of state to see and do as much as they can to keep the "honeymoon phase" going all year. To those who have been in Washington for a while, I challenge you to remind yourself why you love it here. Revisit some of your old favorites, and find brand new adventures too. We are all serving to conserve our natural environment, and we owe it to ourselves to take time to enjoy it!



An artist's rendition of the research vessel the "George Davidson".

For more information on Walla Walla Community College's degree programs, visit <http://watereducationcenter.org/technical-education/>. For questions about WCC's elective training program, contact Laura Schlabach at Laura.Schlabach@ecy.wa.gov.

Check out more photos from the WCC's 2016 Halloween costume contest on the Washington Conservation Corps Facebook page! Photos by Laura Schlabach.



Heads Up! The Second Annual WCC AmeriCorps Annual Member Recognition Awards

By Brendan Dwyer, WCC AmeriCorps Outreach Assistant & Food Bank Garden Coordinator IP



Former WCC member Samantha Black is presented with the 2015-2016 Leslie Schiesswohl Community Service Award by WCC staff member Peter Nevin, who is joined by WCC Supervisor Luke Wigle and members of Leslie's family, from left: Cindy Schlegel, Scott Schiesswohl and Kristen Schiesswohl Noble. Photo by WCC.

Last month, we spent a little time getting to know the Presidential Volunteer Service Award. But, what about those special individuals that really crank the WCC spirit up to 11?

The WCC AmeriCorps Member Recognition Awards recognize the outstanding achievements of those WCC members that not only rise to meet the daily challenges that accompany service, but go above and beyond the call of duty to redefine what it means to be a WCC member. These unique awards are a chance for you, sponsors, supervisors and peers to nominate someone who you see excelling.

Your prospects for glory and honor are threefold:

The Leslie Schiesswohl Community Service Award is presented annually to a WCC AmeriCorps member who exemplifies civic engagement through external service. This award celebrates the spirit of service of Leslie Schiesswohl, a WCC AmeriCorps member that served from October 2010 until she passed

away suddenly in December 2011. The award will be imparted on a member that best represents the Leslie's personal commitment to community, demonstrated through the member's breadth of volunteer engagement and leads in overall external service hours.

The WCC Environmental Stewardship Award is bestowed each year to a WCC AmeriCorps member who demonstrates a commitment to environmental stewardship throughout their service term. The ideal award recipient will have proven their dedication to improving the natural world through consistent volunteerism, a sustained commitment to environmental service (within WCC and in their daily lives), and positive leadership in inspiring others to adopt improved environmental practices.

The WCC Disaster Response Award recognizes an individual who has completed service on a disaster response deployment within Washington or nationwide during their term. The recipient of this award will demonstrate the resilience, dedication, perseverance and patience required to successfully serve on a disaster response mission assignment. They will embody the AmeriCorps spirit, embrace WCC excellence, and exceed expectations in the role of leader, community builder, or unsung hero.

Does this sound like you or someone that you serve with? Let us know! Nominations will be reviewed towards the end of the summer, though they can be submitted throughout the year. The WCC AmeriCorps Member Recognition form is available on the WCC [website](#). One form per nominee, per category, please!

On the nomination form, be sure to elaborate on why you think that member embodies the WCC AmeriCorps spirit. Awards will be presented in person at WCC regional end-of-year presentations. In addition to a framed certificate, those lucky few will find themselves enshrined in the WCC annals with their name engraved on a handcrafted plaque among past award winners.

Our WCC AmeriCorps year is still young—so get out there and get serving!

WCC wants to feature your photos!

By Laura Schlabach, WCC AmeriCorps Outreach Coordinator

With so many incredible WCC AmeriCorps members serving in our program, chances are we have some talented photographers out there. One of the WCC outreach team's goals is to share the exciting projects you accomplish through a variety of communication channels. One of the ways we do this is through sharing your photography!

We love to feature your photos from the field on our social media channels, in our monthly newsletter or in blog posts. Photo possibilities are endless: snapshots of your fellow WCC AmeriCorps members in action, native trees or shrubs you are planting that day, wildlife you encounter onsite (be safe!), posing with a new tool you learned to use that day and so much more. Check with your supervisor to see when the best time is to take photos on a project site.

Here are some tips for getting your photos featured on WCC's outreach channels:

- WCC and AmeriCorps logos are visible: we want everyone to be able to tell what programs you represent.
- Faces are showing (and better yet, smiling!)
- Safety, safety, safety! This is a priority for our program, and we want to make sure the photos we promote reflect this. Make sure members featured in your photos are wearing proper personal protective equipment, such as gloves and hard hat.

If you are using your personal phone or camera to capture WCC projects or your fellow WCC AmeriCorps members, make sure you're taking those photos only during break time or lunch. Your supervisor might be willing to let you use their phone to photograph your projects during the day – ask them to be sure. Including a couple sentences of context about the photo you are sending in helps us get your photos posted even more quickly. Feel free to email photos directly to the WCC outreach team: WCC Outreach Assistant Brendan Dwyer, Brendan.Dwyer@ecy.wa.gov, or WCC Outreach Coordinator Laura Schlabach, Laura.Schlabach@ecy.wa.gov. You can also share photos with us on any of our social media channels below.

Feel free to contact WCC Outreach Coordinator Laura Schlabach with any outreach-related questions. We can't wait to share your projects and accomplishments through this service year!



Twitter: @EcologyWCC



Instagram: EcologyWCC



Flickr: EcologyWA



Facebook: Washington Conservation Corps



WCC AmeriCorps members serve in beautiful places! Show us your most scenic lunch spot—just like this photo shared by Josh Boswell's 2015-2016 year WCC AmeriCorps members. Photo submitted by Josh Boswell.



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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WCC Snapshots



1. WCC Staff and AmeriCorps members stand ready to deploy to Louisiana to continue response efforts after record flooding hit in August. Photo by Roland McGill. 2. WCC AmeriCorps members dismantle a tree into more maneuverable chunks while serving in Florida on disaster response. Photo by WCC. 3. WCC AmeriCorps members support the Green Kirkland Partnership (GKP) by planting conifer trees at Carillon Woods. Photo by GKP. 4. WCC AmeriCorps member Erik Eyestone assists the Yakama Nation Fisheries by participating in a fish salvage. Photo by Ernest Farmer. 5. WCC AmeriCorps member Camila Matamala-Ost plants Sitka Spruce in Enumclaw. Photo by Rebekah Graham. 6. A WCC AmeriCorps crew helps the Washington Department of Ecology's Sustainability Team perform a waste sort. Photo by Brendan Dwyer.



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.