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Executive Summary

The Washington Conservation Corps provides opportunities for 145 full-time and 10 part-time AmeriCorps members. These members build the capacity of organizations in Washington State and produce outcomes in these key areas: 1) Instilling values of hard work, volunteerism, and group achievement within members and volunteers 2) protecting and restoring the environment, 3) responding to emergencies, and 4) increasing energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.

Rationale and Approach

A. Program Design

1. Rationale and Approach

Funding provided by this request will help support the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC), a 27-year-old program that has played an important role within AmeriCorps since 1994. Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) support will enable us to continue providing opportunities for 170 full-time and 30 part-time members to address the following: (1) Instilling values of hard work, volunteerism, and group achievement within members and volunteers (2) protecting and restoring the environment, (3) responding to emergencies, and (4) increasing energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.

a. Compelling Community Needs

Need: Instilling values of hard work, volunteerism, and group achievement within members and volunteers

The Washington Legislature included the mission to instill values of hard work, volunteerism, and group

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achievement within members and volunteers when creating the WCC, after our state unemployment rate reached a historic high of 12.2 percent (www.bls.gov). Now, with state unemployment once again on the rise, the need for the WCC is irrefutable, as evidenced by the nearly four-fold increase in applications received this year and the likelihood that this number will continue to increase.

Need: Protecting and Restoring the Environment

According to the Washington Parks Department, more than 40 million visitors utilize our State Parks each year, making our parks system among the most popular in the nation. However, this demand for our parks has outpaced available resources, leaving parks in need of assistance (www.parks.wa.gov).

Sadly, this lack of resources is also an issue for the National Parks of our state. These inadequate resources certainly do not match the consistent community support demonstrated for these parks, with year-to-date total for visitors, specifically backcountry campers, placing Washington second only to California in the use of our backcountry areas (www.nps.gov).

The health of our natural areas directly affects the health and safety of our citizens. Seafood and fish consumption, drinking water supply, and flood prevention are all dependent on wetland areas. It is for these reasons that habitat restoration is a top priority for the WCC. The trees and shrubs planted by our members shade streams to cool water temperature, filter toxins and bacteria, and provide habitat for wildlife. Another important role of these native plants is to trap soil that would otherwise become silt, destroying salmon eggs and aquatic wildlife. This silt also makes rivers and streams shallower, causing more frequent and severe flooding, a major threat to Washington residents.

Washington's economy also depends on healthy, productive natural areas. Washingtonians depend on clean water, productive and diverse forests and the natural beauty found throughout the state. These natural areas sustain numerous businesses, including fishing, timber harvesting, agriculture, and

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recreational sports. Fishing alone is a billion-dollar-a-year industry in our State. Unfortunately, more than a century of rapid population growth and other factors have destroyed a large portion of fish habitat. Restoring this habitat is vital to the rural jobs and small businesses that the fishing industry supports (www.governor.wa.gov). This potential impact on long-term environmental sustainability, human health, and economic stability makes environmental restoration our most critical service activity.

Need: Responding to local and national emergencies

In Washington State, floods occur annually, posing a huge threat to our communities. For this reason, members trained in flood response are essential, especially in King County where the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has predicted a high probability of flooding that may affect upwards of 30,000 residents in four cities (www.kingcounty.gov). Wildfires are another common occurrence in Washington and throughout the West. This potential for local and national response is so high that the WCC expects a deployment to at least one major disaster each year, which has proven true for our program over the past decade.

Need: Improving energy efficiency and environmental sustainability

According to the Washington Department of Commerce, low-income families spend nearly 15 percent of their income on home energy bills, compared to 3.4 percent for all other households. Although some state assistance is available to low-income households, only 19 percent of people in need of energy assistance receive help (www.cted.wa.gov). The WCC's new Washington Energy Corps (WEC) initiative seeks to shrink this gap by weatherizing homes and improving energy efficiency for low-income residents.

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b. Description of Activities and Member Roles:

Activities: Instilling values of hard work, volunteerism, and group achievement within members and volunteers

We instill values of hard work, volunteerism, and group achievement in our members from day one, ensuring they know that theirs is truly a year of service. All of our 170 full-time and 30 half-time members work on clean energy and environmental sustainability projects within their local communities. The difficult nature of this year-round restoration work builds character and working outdoors 40 hours a week, every week, with a crew of five other people is an example of teambuilding at its best. By collaborating with organizations in distressed communities, we provide at-risk youth opportunities for both paid and unpaid service. These disadvantaged youth, and all of our members, benefit from the high quality training, mentorship, and service opportunities available in the WCC. In addition to on-the-job skills, each member attends 100 hours of high quality training to ensure a strong résumé upon completing their year of AmeriCorps service.

Activities: Protecting and Restoring the Environment

With CNCS support, the WCC will continue conserving and protecting Washington's natural areas. We will meet this need by maintaining a presence within our State and National Parks, as well as at wildlife refuges and conservation areas. In areas where conservation and protection efforts were overlooked in the past, the WCC will work to restore important habitat. We accomplish this work through over 50 service site partners that include local non-profit groups, as well as local, state, and federal agencies. At these service sites, WCC members will plant 1.5 million native trees and shrubs during this next grant cycle. These members will ensure these plants survive through ongoing site monitoring and upkeep,

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which includes project site surveys, irrigation, and invasive species suppression.

Activities: Responding to local and national emergencies

The WCC is part of a state agency tasked with flood and spill response, and our members play an important role in these response activities. With 34 crews and 10 Individual Placements dispersed throughout the state, we are well positioned geographically to respond to emergencies; often arriving as first responders. We will continue to provide disaster response to communities throughout the country by preparing 170 full-time and 30 half-time members in flood response and triage, each year. We will offer Red Card Certification to all members who elect to take part in wildfire response, which has previously resulted in over 40 members certified. Our Emergency Response Coordinator will reach out to organizations to ensure the WCC continues to grow as a disaster response resource.

Activities: Improving energy efficiency and environmental sustainability

We will increase energy efficiency within our parks by improving existing facilities, reviewing sustainability practices, and preserving historic and cultural resources. The WCC will protect natural areas for the enjoyment and education of future generations, which includes trail and boardwalk construction and repair, educational sign installation, and disaster recovery from floods that devastated our parks in November 2006. We will increase awareness around environmental sustainability by expanding AmeriCorps service at the University of Washington. This new partnership will engage 15 undergraduates who will serve part-time on service-learning projects around sustainability.

In low-income homes, 15 Washington Energy Corps (WEC) members will complete Tier 1 weatherization projects, which consists of installing efficient lighting, carbon monoxide detectors,

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smoke detectors and programmable thermostats, insulating water heaters and pipes, replacing showerheads and faucets with low flow models, and upgrading old refrigerators, windows, air conditioners and water heaters. These members will also perform energy audits and surveys to map out energy consumption and identify the most cost effective energy saving upgrades.

c. Measurable Outputs and Outcomes:

Outputs/Outcomes: Instilling values of hard work, volunteerism, and group achievement within members and volunteers

WCC member development is a key part of our program, resulting in the following performance measure: All full-time WCC members will participate in 100 hours of high quality training, and at least 90 percent will successfully pass certification tests. Upon completing their service, these members will complete surveys to determine the effectiveness of this training and their post-AmeriCorps employability.

The WCC has a positive effect on our AmeriCorps members and, in turn, our members have this same effect on community volunteers with which they work. The WCC consistently improves our volunteer recruitment rates and we will increase the number of volunteers recruited and managed by our program by 15 percent this grant cycle. WCC members will mobilize 6,800 volunteers annually, providing 27,200 hours of service to local communities.

Outputs/Outcomes: Protecting and Restoring the Environment

The WCC has set an aligned performance measure, which address the CNCS priority area around clean

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energy/environment and will use the standard performance measure of improving 4,500 acres of public lands or tribal communities over the course of this grant. We will also use the standard performance measure of improving or creating 500 miles of trail in this next grant cycle.

Outputs/Outcomes: Responding to local and national emergencies

The WCC will continue to provide necessary service to communities throughout the country by preparing 170 WCC Members in flood response and first aid triage, each year. We will offer Red Card Certification to all members who elect to take part in wildfire response, which in the past, resulted in over 40 members prepared for responding to wildfires, each year.

Outputs/Outcomes: Improving energy efficiency and environmental sustainability

The WEC initiative will address the CNCS priority area around clean energy/environment and will be using the standard performance measure of weatherizing or retrofitting to significantly improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions of 500 low-income housing units, each year. In addition to helping low-income families, WEC will provide at-risk young adults the opportunity to serve in their communities while gaining hands-on experience and formal education around clean energy and sustainability, which will allow them a seamless transition into formal labor apprenticeship programs, post-secondary education programs, or directly into emerging clean energy and sustainability fields. The UW-IP Program will result in fifteen UW undergraduates serving part-time on service-learning projects around sustainability.

d. Plan for Self-Assessment and Improvement

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We have several tools to ensure we continuously improve the WCC program, identify strengths and weaknesses, and receive and provide ample feedback. The WCC does not place site sponsors in a supervisory role. Our supervisors manage WCC members, providing for interaction and oversight on a daily basis. Overseeing these supervisors are project coordinators who act as a liaison between crews and service sites. These coordinators meet with our members and site sponsors frequently to ensure strong communication. We also survey our various partners at the completion of each year to determine satisfaction and to gather feedback on improving our service to local communities.

To continue improving member retention and determine our level of success at meeting needs around member development, the WCC is continuing to participate in the Corporation-sponsored National Evaluation of Service and Conservation Corps, the largest-ever random assignment study of national service programs aimed at assessing how service changes young people. With financial assistance from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the WCC will perform a series of evaluations aimed at measuring the impact we are providing through specialized training and education to disadvantaged youth participating in our Washington Energy Corps initiative.

Located within the Department of Ecology, the WCC is part of the Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) program. GMAP helps state agencies measure and improve performance, and achieve results that matter to citizens. As a part of this program, agencies prepare performance-based reports to the Governor, which are used to support focused management discussions, in open public forums, between agency leaders, the Governor and her leadership team.

e. Community Involvement

We develop our program's activities based on the priorities of our community partners. In selecting

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these sites, we focus our outreach on communities with high unemployment rates, communities designated as empowerment zones or redevelopment areas, rural areas, environmentally distressed areas, and communities adversely affected by Federal actions related to the management of Federal lands (e.g. fishing and timber industries). Organizations in need of assistance apply through a competitive process, where the WCC scores applicants based on these criteria. As a result, the WCC currently serves in the following counties affected by high unemployment: Clallam, Gray's Harbor, Mason, and Pacific County. In addition, our members are located in five of the six areas designated as Community Empowerment Zones by the Washington Department of Commerce: Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, King County (White Center neighborhood), and Yakima.

f. Relationship to other National and Community Service Programs

Our AmeriCorps funding has helped us grow to be the largest environmentally focused youth corps in Washington State. Our program fills an important role in an arena where the demands are high and financial resources are low. Many of the organizations we serve have stated that this work would go undone if it were not for the WCC. In an effort to expand this reach, the WCC collaborates with other AmeriCorps programs. For example, the WCC and the Washington Service Corps allow members to attend trainings within both programs. The WCC also works with the Earth Corps and Student Conservation Association on restoration and trail-building activities. For National Service Days, AmeriCorps members from a multitude of programs join our WCC members to accomplish projects. Each year, the WCC sends a select group of members to the Northwest Leader Corps who demonstrate leadership. This intensive leadership course brings together AmeriCorps members from programs throughout the Northwest.

In addition, we are now offering disaster response training to various organizations, including members

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of the Washington Citizen Corps, and Citizen Corps Councils. This training will increase the cadre of flood response trainers throughout the state, resulting in a higher level of flood preparedness.

g. Potential for Replication

Our program continues the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s and 1940s. Our program model has been in place since 1983 and though unique in our own ways, other state conservation corps, from California to Maine, replicate this model. Plans for replication within our own program include our two new initiatives, the Washington Energy Corps (WEC) and our University of Washington IP program (UW-IP).

Organizational Capability

B. Organizational Capability

1. Sound Organizational Structure

a. Ability to Provide Sound Programmatic and Fiscal Oversight

Four agencies were delegated the task of administering a WCC program in 1983. Our program, managed by staff within the Department of Ecology, has operated as the largest environmental youth corps program in Washington for over twenty-seven years. This year, we have taken on a new initiative around energy efficiency and environmental sustainability, which has resulted in an expansion of our program to 170 full-time members, 30 part-time members, 34 crew supervisors, and 9 administrative staff. Each member of our team plays an important role in the coordination of our program, ensuring a strong capacity to serve.

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Since 1994, our AmeriCorps members have installed over 7 million native trees and shrubs and created 700 acres of new habitat for fish and wildlife. Our members have constructed or repaired nearly 2,600 miles of trails and boardwalks in our State and National Parks, enough trails to hike the distance between New York City and Seattle, Washington. This new and improved infrastructure has greatly expanded opportunities for public enjoyment, education, and investment in these natural areas. Our emergency response efforts have provided nearly 112,000 hours of service to communities in need, an average of nearly 7,500 hours each year since becoming an AmeriCorps program.

We accomplish this work through collaboration with over 50 service sites. The WCC uses a competitive proposal process to ensure our partner objectives are in line with WCC and AmeriCorps priorities. In these proposals, service sites must provide detailed descriptions of their need, intended timelines for projects, measurable goals, and a non-federal matching source. Project coordinators visit these sites frequently, at a minimum of once per quarter, in order to ensure compliance and a high level of support for our service sites.

b. Board of Directors, Administrators, and Staff

Rob Spath, Program Director, has worked with the WCC since 1990. Rob is responsible for the oversight of our statewide program activities. He earned his BS from Central Washington University and has a thorough knowledge and appreciation of youth programs as well as a strong financial background, gained through employment with the Washington Auditor's Office.

Nick Mott, Project Coordinator, is responsible for negotiation and monitoring of contracts and the development of partnerships with community agencies and organizations. Nick has worked with youth corps programs for more than 30 years. He previously held positions ranging from program participant

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to director of the San Mateo County Youth Corps operations in the San Francisco Bay area.

Roland McGill, Project Coordinator, is responsible for contract compliance of federal partners as well as monitoring host sites for compliance with rules and regulations. In addition, Roland coordinates all emergency response and recovery operations for our program. Roland has worked in the natural resource field for 29 years. Along with his longstanding commitment to the WCC, Roland has coached youth baseball and soccer for over a decade and has served as Vice President of the Thurston County Youth Soccer Association.

Jason Ouellette, Training and Logistics Coordinator, has worked in the WCC for 14 years. Jason began his service as a WCC member, serving in that capacity for 2 years. He earned the promotion to crew supervisor, a position he held for several years until becoming a part of the administrative team. Jason's primary duties include crew logistical support and member development.

Bridget Mason, Outreach Coordinator, has been working with AmeriCorps programs for 8 years. Bridget served as a WCC member for 2 years and then joined the WCC administrative team in 2003. She left briefly, working with Students in Service at the University of Washington for 2 years, and then returned to the WCC in 2009. Bridget oversees outreach activities, coordinates volunteers and service projects, and helps to facilitate member development. Bridget is proud to be a Big Sister through the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, a volunteer position she has held for three years.

Kevin Farrell, Project Coordinator, is responsible for coordination and sponsor development activities throughout King, Thurston, and Mason Counties. His primary responsibility is the development of the Washington Energy Corps. Kevin holds a Bachelor of Science Degree and has worked within natural resource programs for 15 years, including 6 years with the WCC. Kevin contributes to his local

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community through his long-time volunteerism with the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity, where he has led teams of volunteers in the construction of numerous "Habitat Homes".

Lauren Cowley, Vista AmeriCorps Member, is on board this year to help with further development of the WEC program. Lauren has a BA in Environmental Studies, and her interest in sustainability and environmental education brought her to work with the WCC this year. Her role is to assist and facilitate new relationships with community colleges, housing authorities, local utilities, and corporate industries.

Peta Crites, Marcee Peterson and Karen VanLeeuwen are the WCC program secretaries. As a team, they provide a seamless support structure for our members, supervisors and administrative staff.

c. Plan for Self-Assessment or Improvement

Similar to WCC members, our staff receives a high level of development and feedback. Each fall, WCC supervisors attend a weeklong training, where they gain tools necessary for crew management. Topics covered include ensuring WCC members do not participate in prohibited service activities, motivating members, meeting WCC performance measures, and addressing technical assistance needs.

Additionally, crew supervisors receive an in-depth Supervisor Manual that outlines all WCC and AmeriCorps policies. New crew supervisors and administrative staff undergo an evaluation after 6 months of employment. After this initial evaluation, they are evaluated annually. This evaluation includes feedback on performance and provides an opportunity for establishing goals around development. This development is on topics specific to them, which includes anything from introductory Excel to Supervision Essentials. The Washington Department of Personnel provides staff development for little cost to our program.

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The organization itself is also evaluated on a regular basis. Part of a larger state agency, the WCC has taken part in several audits, including an in-depth review by the Inspector General's Office. The WCC uses sound technology to track and record payroll, revenue and receivables, disbursements, service requirements, and achievements. The program has stringent internal controls to identify and correct errors and eliminate waste. The WCC is also a part of the Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) program. GMAP helps state agencies measure and improve performance, and achieve results that matter to citizens. As a part of this program, agencies prepare performance-based reports to the Governor, which are used to support focused management discussions, in open public forums, between agency leaders, the Governor and her leadership team.

We evaluate our service sites quarterly through site visits and at the completion of each year. The WCC uses the RFP process to ensure that our partner objectives are in line with WCC and AmeriCorps priorities. The RFP is a competitive process for service sites, in which they must provide detailed descriptions of their need, intended timelines for projects, measurable goals, and a non-federal matching source. Throughout the process, project coordinators are available to provide assistance, from initiating an application to forming a partnership. The administrative team reviews the applications received through the RFP process and selects sites based on set criteria like innovation, priorities consistent with the WCC and AmeriCorps, and a commitment to member development.

Once we select these sites, the WCC and sponsor sign an agreement that outlines specific expectations. We currently have 50 agreements in place with non-profits, local, state and federal government agencies. The WCC does not place site sponsors in a supervisory role. WCC crew supervisors directly manage our members. The sponsor's role is to place work requests and offer background information about a project site. This direct supervision provided by crew supervisors employed by the WCC rather

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than a third party allows ample oversight. The WCC program model ensures that WCC projects are meeting the requirements outlined by AmeriCorps.

d. Plan for Effective Technical Assistance

Our supervisors have laptops and cell phones to ensure connectedness with our administrative staff and to enable timely reporting of crew activities. Our service sites provide crews with internet access. Our supervisors attend technical training sessions each September at a weeklong conference. Additional training is available through the Department of Personnel for supervisors wishing to expand these skills. Project coordinators manage our crews at a ratio of 12:1 to ensure a high level of support for our supervisors and partner sites. New supervisors receive a one-on-one orientation from their coordinator and then shadow our veteran supervisors in order to learn the program. For new service sites, our coordinators travel to their site to ensure they have the infrastructure to support a WCC crew. At this initial meeting, we provide our partners with an orientation to the WCC and establish a level of comfort. Coordinators are readily available at all times and our program design ensures a high amount of support.

2. Sound Record of Accomplishment as an Organization

Our staff has a unique perspective in managing and supporting AmeriCorps members in our program. Over half of our supervisors and administrative staff have served as members within the WCC or other AmeriCorps programs. This history of Corps service provides insight into the member experience. Our staff's AmeriCorps service is just one example of proven leadership in the community. The WCC believes in leading by example, which is why so many of our staff volunteers on a regular basis for community-based organizations. Our staff volunteers as board members for Community Land Trusts, housing

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service providers (e.g. Habitat for Humanity), youth mentors, and environmental educators for local enhancement groups. A few of our awards include the 2006 Ecology Director's Award for Team Performance for the 2005-2006 Hurricane Katrina Response efforts. Additionally, the Ecology's Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program recognized our emergency response accomplishments in 2006. Our staff members and crew supervisors involved in Katrina Response efforts received these awards and Roland McGill, Project Coordinator, received the Program Achievement Award for his leadership during these response efforts.

In 2008, Bridget Mason, Outreach Coordinator, received the University of Washington Distinguished Service Award for her efforts in working with another AmeriCorps program, Students in Service, in initiating a volunteer lake monitoring program, establishing a volunteer compost program, and installing a community garden. Additionally, Bridget received the 2005 Ecology Director's Award for Environmental Stewardship. This annual award recognizes one of Ecology's 1,500 employees for their efforts around sustainability. The Washington Commission for National and Community Service presented the WCC with a "Partner Appreciation Award" during AmeriCorps Week in 2008 and agencies like the Dungeness Valley Habitat for Humanity, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association and the Whatcom Volunteer Center have all presented awards to our staff for service and leadership. These are only a few examples of WCC management demonstrating strong leadership in the communities where we serve.

a. Success in Gathering Match Resources

The WCC's cost effectiveness and soundness is exemplified by our broad support base. Funding from over 50 federal, state, local, non-profit and private foundations helps to create one of the most effectively funded youth corps in the nation. Over 80 percent of these service sites are local government or non-profit organizations. The WCC provides a match exceeding CNCS expectations with the

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program's financial and overhead costs provided by our host agency at no cost.

b. Special Circumstances

For twenty-seven years, the WCC has made a difference in the lives of those who have served and within the communities we serve. From our early beginnings as a three crew program in 1983, we have grown to a statewide crew-based and Individual Placement (IP) program with thirty-four crews and 10 IPs. We have had far-reaching impacts in the communities in which we operate, and have instilled the ethic of a lifetime of service in thousands of individuals.

In selecting service sites, we emphasize communities with high unemployment rates, communities designated as empowerment zones or redevelopment areas, rural areas, environmentally distressed areas, and communities adversely affected by Federal actions related to the management of Federal lands (e.g. fishing and timber industries). The WCC collaborates with agencies located in communities with exceedingly high unemployment rates like Clallam, Gray's Harbor, Mason, and Pacific County. Additionally, WCC crews are located in 5 of the 6 Community Empowerment Zones: Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, King County (White Center neighborhood), and Yakima.

3. Success in Securing Community Support

a. Collaboration

Perhaps the best example of utilizing successful collaborations to expand the reach of our service is during emergency response. While on response, the WCC collaborates with countless organizations and other AmeriCorps programs. Specifically, the Christian Contractors Association has worked with the

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WCC on several occasions to provide emergency construction services to the widowed, elderly, and severely disabled. Our two new initiatives, the WEC and UW-IP programs, are another example of the WCC constantly striving to broaden our program through community collaborations. These new initiatives will result in 20 new community partners.

b. Local and In-kind Contributions

Because we are located within the Washington Department of Ecology, the agency provides many services to us at no cost. This means that the WCC does not have to use grant funds or project sponsor revenue to pay for any of the following expenses: building/facilities, personnel support, information technology, and many others. At our service sites, our partnering organizations provide our crews with internet access, storage and meeting spaces and specialized equipment. Though we do not report these in-kind costs in meeting our match requirements, this would only bolster the high-level of match we already demonstrate.

c. Wide Range of Community Stakeholders

Although many of our partners have collaborated with the WCC for 10 years or more, we ensure diversity in project sites by ensuring that 15 percent are new each grant cycle. Through our two new initiatives, the WEC and the UW-IP program, we will create 20 new partnerships with local organizations. The WEC initiative strengthens relationships with community colleges and Labor Union apprenticeship programs near our three pilot crews. We are developing a program model that we will replicate at other community colleges and that other Corps programs can replicate, nationwide.

Our second new initiative for this grant cycle is the UW-IP Program. This partnership will engage 15

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members serving in part-time internships during their college experience at the University of Washington. This collaboration will focus on engaging WCC members in the UW-Restoration Ecology Network and the Sound Citizen Science Apprenticeship. In subsequent years, we anticipate a number of additional opportunities within the UW.

The UW-Restoration Ecology Network (UW-REN) is a tri-campus program, serving as a regional center to integrate student, faculty, and community interests in ecological restoration and conservation. WCC members will serve as part of UW-REN senior capstone project teams, providing valuable service to community organizations while advancing our members' understanding and skill in conservation, restoration, sustainability, and project management. Capstone teams bring together students of different academic backgrounds who collaborate to complete a local restoration project, in which they plan, design, install, and monitor a restoration project over the course of 3 quarters. Community organizations, including local governments, utilities, and non-profits submit RFP's to UW-REN concerning needs around environmental restoration.

The UW-IPs will also coordinate the Sound Citizen Science Apprenticeship (SCSA). The SCSA is a partnership which includes the University of Washington and two Seattle-based youth-serving outdoor education groups, Passages Northwest and YMCA's Boys Outdoor Leadership and Development. SCSA serves high school-aged youth from economically disadvantaged homes in Seattle's inner-city and members of cultural/ethnic groups currently underrepresented in the sciences. During the yearlong apprenticeship, youth conduct environmental research, answering questions through scientific analysis. In the initial phase, youth conduct social science to understand the environmental concerns of people who live in their local communities. In the next phase, apprentices design and carry-out research around these issues of concern. Finally, apprentices communicate their findings back to the communities through churches, civic groups, schools, and science fairs. Our members will play an important role in

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each phase of SCSA, serving as mentors for apprentices and fostering ties with community groups.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

C. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

1. Cost Effectiveness

a. Corporation Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)

The WCC will continue to be a cost-effective, valuable resource for communities in need. Our cost per member service year for this grant request stands at \$12,800. This is unchanged from our previous grant cycle and remains under the CNCS allowable rate.

b. Diverse Non-Federal Support

Our funding from over 50 federal, state, local, non-profit and private foundations helps to create one of the most effectively funded youth corps in the nation. The WCC provides a match well above the CNCS expectations and all of the program's financial and overhead costs are provided by our host agency. Furthermore, WCC is currently spending more than 85 percent of its funds on field related costs, providing direct benefit to our members and Washington's local communities.

Our list of community partners includes organizations that we have selected through a competitive process to ensure diversity. In selecting these sites, we emphasize communities with high unemployment rates, communities designated as empowerment zones or redevelopment areas, rural areas, environmentally distressed areas, and communities adversely affected by Federal actions related to the management of Federal lands (e.g. fishing and timber industries). The WCC collaborates with agencies located in communities with exceedingly high unemployment rates like Clallam, Gray's Harbor,

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Mason, and Pacific County. Additionally, WCC crews are located in 5 of the 6 Community Empowerment Zones: Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, King County (White Center neighborhood), and Yakima.

Project sponsors provide a monetary match to the WCC to help pay for all non-member costs. Most agreements are created on a flat fee, yearly basis and payments are spread throughout the service year. The WCC has done an excellent job in diversifying our project sponsors. This diverse community support allows the program to remain strong, especially if there is a sudden decline in a specific revenue base. This strong foundation enables us to reach out and demonstrate how the program may be able to assist new project sponsors and community groups.

Over one-third of our partnering sponsors are non-profit organizations. WCC non-profit partners include a wide range of both large and small organizations like The Nature Conservancy and Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups. Another one-third of WCC's partnering sponsors are county or city government agencies. Because of our strong and diverse funding base, the WCC is able to provide services at a discounted rate, or at no cost, to some community-based organizations operating in economically distressed areas such as Clallam, Yakima, and Chelan Counties.

Another benefit of our strong revenue base is our ability to respond at a moment's notice to natural disasters anywhere in the country. Additionally, we have tremendous support from our host agency, and the backing of our Governor's Office to help provide the necessary cash and other logistical support needed for large-scale deployments. Often times, when federal funds are available, reimbursement may take several months and our strong agency support allows us to provide this vital service immediately, regardless of the waiting time for reimbursement.

Lastly, our solid financial base provides the necessary funds to perform meaningful program evaluation

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and to attract and retain the excellent staff needed to operate the program and provide for continuous improvements. In the upcoming two years, with the financial assistance from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the WCC will perform a series of evaluations aimed at measuring the impact we are providing through specialized training and education to disadvantaged youth participating in our Washington Energy Corps initiative.

c. Decreased Reliance on Federal Support

While the size and reach of our program has greatly expanded in recent years, we continue to decrease the CNCS share requested, and this grant cycle, we are able to demonstrate a 61% match. Over 50 contractual matching agreements and a state appropriation allow the WCC to go well beyond CNCS matching requirements. The WCC estimates that it will be able to match CNCS funding on a 2 to 1 basis in cash. This means that every \$1.00 that CNCS provides, the WCC will generate another \$2.00 in cash to support the operating costs of the program. The funds provided by the CNCS directly benefit our members and the local communities in which they serve.

We do not rely on in-kind services or donations in reporting this match. The WCC also does not use any grant funds or other revenue generated to pay for any overhead or administrative costs. Because we are located within the Washington Department of Ecology, the agency provides these services to us at no cost. This means that the WCC does not have to use grant funds or project sponsor revenue to pay for any of the following expenses: building/facilities, personnel support, information technology, and many others. As already stated, we do not report these in-kind costs. This only bolsters the high-level match already demonstrated.

d. Broader Reach

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Over the years, the cost of the WCC has increased minimally to account for inflation. The reach of the program, however, has broadened significantly. During the 2010 -- 2013 grant cycle the WCC will plant more trees, provide more training and development opportunities to our members, and recruit and manage more volunteers than in previous grant cycles. Additionally, we are starting two new initiatives, the WEC and UW-IP Program and are collaborating with nearly 20 new partners, greatly expanding our program's reach. Furthermore, the WCC has implemented several evaluations to measure the program's outcomes and provide feedback for continuous program improvement.

The WCC understands the importance of volunteers as a cost-effective approach to providing direct service to communities. WCC members will recruit and manage 6,800 volunteers each year. These volunteers will provide their local communities with an additional 27,200 hours of annual service. This volunteer service translates to nearly \$490,000 dollars of direct service to local communities (based on the CNCS accepted wage of \$18/hour for the services provided by a paid employee). Many of the projects completed by the WCC and our volunteers would otherwise be cost prohibitive for small, community-based organizations.

2. Budget Adequacy

The WCC has been operating at our current staffing and funding level for several years. With this experience, we have developed a budget that is adequate for us to operate at the level proposed in this application. Member development is a top priority for the WCC. Funds requested for training will greatly benefit our members. Not only does the training provided through this grant build member's confidence and strengthen their commitment to service, but it also builds résumés and equips WCC members with the skills necessary to succeed in future employment. Staff training and development is

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important to maintain quality and consistency in our program. Additionally, our budget allows us to perform high-level work that results in solid, sustainable outcomes for community-based sponsors.

Member development is often a large expenditure for youth programs; however, the WCC is able to offer high-quality trainings while avoiding huge costs by meeting minimum enrollment criteria of the training providers. Instructors that teach WCC training sessions are from recognized training providers whose courses would cost our members upwards of \$1,000 if they were to attend these trainings outside the program. These training programs are willing to lower the per-participant cost for the WCC because our overall enrollment rates are high. The WCC utilizes the State Government's competitive bidding process, which ensures our purchases are fair and competitive, for everything from member uniforms to training services.

Evaluation is another service that can be cost-prohibitive for AmeriCorps programs. The WCC is fortunate to be participating in the National Evaluation of Service and Conservation Corps at no cost. This is a research study conducted by Atlantic Research and Consulting and Abt Associates, independent research firms. In addition, WCC has applied for, and received, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funding to help offset training and development costs to the program, as well as to evaluate significant outcomes of our new WEC initiative.

Our proposed budget provides competitive wages and benefits for our administrative staff and crew supervisors who are permanent State of Washington employees. They are highly trained individuals with a multitude of skills, experience, and strong leadership traits. The majority of our administrative staff and crew supervisors have remained with the WCC for several years, gaining a vast amount of knowledge and supervisory experience. Our members benefit from the experienced leadership of the WCC, as seen in the strong member support and excellent training we provide to them. Our program

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retains this valuable resource by retaining our experienced staff.

Our budget is sound and sustainable. In fact, our strong revenue base has enabled us to withstand many difficult times, including the interruption of CNCS funding for a full year due to accounting difficulties at the federal level. WCC funding is diversified, leveraged, expertly managed, and provides the foundation for success in all program areas.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

WCC will continue our participation in the National Evaluation of Service and Conservation Corps, the largest-ever random assignment study of national service programs. This evaluation assesses how service changes young people. The study, which includes 22 Corps programs, 2,500 Corps members, and rigorous treatment and control groups, examines whether participation improves educational attainment, employment success, workplace skills, civic engagement and citizenship, and avoidance of risk behaviors. This is a Corporation-sponsored research study conducted by the independent research firms, Atlantic Research and Consulting and Abt Associates. In previous grant cycles, WCC members submitted pre-service surveys upon being hired and a post-service survey 18 months later, after completing their year of service. Preliminary findings from previous grant cycles are expected in the winter of 2010.

The WEC Project Coordinator will work with staff from Work Source Washington and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to collect baseline data of members entering the program. An independent program evaluator will utilize this data in designing a long-term strategy for measuring program success. The goals of this new evaluation is identifying improvement areas, measuring specific goals and outcomes, and recommending specific methods for expanding the WEC pilot program to full operation.

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Staff from the Washington Department of Ecology Wetlands section (Wetlands) evaluated WCC habitat restoration sites from 2005-2008. This evaluation involved an in-depth analysis of 28 WCC restoration projects located throughout the state. Results show that overall, 83.4 percent of plants installed by WCC members survive and 92 percent of our restoration sites rate good or excellent for habitat quality. This evaluation provided the WCC with feedback on existing projects, more importantly; it determined best practices for future projects implemented by the WCC.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

Due to a reduced grant award, the Washington Conservation Corps' program model has been revised to include 27 crews and 10 IPs. The UW Individual Placement Program is currently contingent upon funding from other sources and may not move forward during the 2010-2011 program year. The WCC has also eliminated the national performance measure around energy due to an uncertainty in our ability to accomplish this work, though we will still aim to weatherize and/or improve energy efficiency in 500 low income housing units.

Clarification on the work of 10 Individual Placements:

Individual Placements will serve within local environmental service organizations, including fishery enhancement groups, conservation districts, and city or county government agencies. These placements will build the capacity of the organizations in which they serve. Work includes volunteer recruitment and coordination, environmental education and community outreach, restoration project management, and surveying or monitoring project sites. The WCC will determine the number of Individual Placements and Crew Members in May 2010, after receiving community input through the Request for Proposal process. The result will likely be 27 FT crews (some 4 and 5-member crews) and 10 FT

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Individual Placements.

Clarification on training and how it directly relates to the jobs to which the crews are assigned and a long-term plan for member career development:

The WCC training model is one in which members select their training course after their first month of service. This time allows our members to experience various facets of the WCC and then select a training that suits their current employment and future career goals. WCC Members who opt to be available for wildland fire response sign on for the Wildland Firefighting, or red card, certification. WCC members who attend this training will not only put their Red Cards to use while in the WCC, but well beyond, as they go on to work for our partnering firefighting agencies, post-service.

For those who are interested in hazardous materials or spills response, Hazmat is a 40-hour certification course that enables them to respond to such disasters. This is the same training required of certified Spill Responders. Often times, this certification is a condition of employment for these positions and is a jumpstart for our members looking to enter this field, post-service.

Wilderness First Aid and Wilderness First Responder prove invaluable during the WCC experience as our crews work in backcountry field locations where accidents or injuries may necessitate first aid. Additionally, our members have rescued stranded hikers, cared for wounds in the backcountry, and provided trauma care to non-AmeriCorps members while serving in the backcountry. These certifications will benefit WCC members seeking to work in careers that include outdoor field experience.

Ethnobotany and Wetland/Proper Functioning Conditions and GIS are courses that immediately benefit

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our members in the day-to-day service activities of the WCC. These courses are also important in the careers for WCC members who continue in the environmental field as biologists, ecologists, or foresters, to name a few.

At the end of our member's service, we provide a résumé training workshop and a personalized résumé review by WCC staff that ensures our members have included the professional development received while in the Washington Conservation Corps. This, along with job seeking assistance, is available to our members in the last month of their AmeriCorps service. Every member meets quarterly with their Supervisor and Coordinator to discuss personal and professional goals and encouraged to participate in two job shadows during their service.

Continuation Changes

Year Two:

I. Applicant Information and Application Information sections

The following items were updated in the Applicant Information and Application Information sections:

1. The check boxes next to Individual Placement Program and Team-based programs were removed. The check box for Team-based and Individual Placement program was selected instead.
2. Checked "both" under program location, as the WCC serves both urban and rural communities, however, egrants is preventing this change from taking effect.
3. Added "youth service" as a program focus area.

II. Narratives

Narratives

Rationale and Approach

The Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) is revising our narrative after receiving decreased funding and allotted Member Service Years through the competitive application process. As with year one, the WCC will continue to provide opportunities for 145 full-time and 10 part-time members in the remaining years of our grant cycle. Of these allotted positions, 135 full-time members will serve their term on crews consisting of 5 AmeriCorps members, supervised by a WCC Crew Supervisor and 10 full-time members will serve within a local non-profit or governmental agency as an Individual Placement, building the capacity of these organizations and expanding service opportunities within their community.

Activities: Improving energy efficiency and environmental sustainability

Due to the decreased number of available MSYs, the WCC is unable to create a new partnership with the University of Washington, as was originally proposed during the competitive application process in 2010. This initiative required 15 Halftime positions that the WCC program does not have available. We will continue to explore options within local colleges and universities for expanding service opportunities for college students. A specific example of this is the MLK week of service events that we host statewide, where our members have collaborated with the University of Washington and Edmonds Community College to engage college students in service.

The WCC is evolving our Washington Energy Corps (WEC) initiative after a one-year pilot project revealed some necessary changes to this program model. We will continue to host one WEC Crew, working on energy efficiency projects, rather than three. The WCC is also collaborating with local agencies to place Individual Placements to assist in efforts to reduce carbon emissions. One example is a

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new Individual Placement opportunity within the Washington State Department of Ecology. This position will assist the organization meet important benchmarks around reducing carbon emissions and becoming a model for other organizations in this key area.

In the first year of the WEC pilot, the WCC placed 15 at-risk young adults on specific crews, which resulted in lower retention rates amongst these crews. Instead, in the remaining years of this grant cycle, at-risk young adults will be disbursed onto crews with members of different backgrounds as we have done in the past. This results in a positive mentorship amongst the members themselves. In addition, these at-risk members will experience a variety of projects, including habitat restoration, trail building, and energy efficiency projects rather than focusing strictly on energy projects. This will diversify the member's experience in our program and should result in improved retention.

These 15 at-risk young adults will continue to be a part of our College Readiness Program, as proposed in our initial grant application. The WCC has negotiated with South Seattle Community College to develop curriculum for these members, who have had no previous college experience. Members will obtain up to 3 additional weeks of training by taking part in this new initiative which will include assessments, individual college planning and counseling, campus tours, financial aid information, remedial math and English, and hands-on practicum in several career tracts. These career tracts will be determined based on interviews with members interested in participating in the program.

Organizational Capability

Nick Mott, is acting as Interim Program Director. Rob Spath vacated this position in June 2010. Nick was a Project Coordinator prior to accepting this appointment and has worked with youth corps programs for more than 30 years. He previously held positions ranging from program participant to director of the San Mateo County Youth Corps operations in the San Francisco Bay area.

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Jason Ouellette has filled Nick Mott's position as Project Coordinator, on an interim basis. Jason has worked in the WCC for 14 years. Jason's primary duties were crew logistical support and member development. He will now act as a Crew Coordinator in charge of scheduling the 10 crews in the South Sound and Olympic Peninsula regions.

Ted Dewees has been hired to fill the Crew Tools and Logistics Coordinator position vacated by Jason Ouellette. Ted began his career with the WCC as an AmeriCorps member, becoming a crew supervisor the following year. He held this position for 5 years, leaving temporarily to become the trail crew leader for Mount Rainier National Park. He greatly missed the experience of working with young adults and returned to the WCC in fall 2010.

Explanation of Changes to the Budget

The WCC is revising Member Living Allowance line items for both Full Time and 1-year Half Time members to account for an increase to the Washington State Minimum Wage set for January 2011. By state mandate, the WCC is required to provide our members with minimum wage and our state appropriation was recently increased to reflect this. This amounts to the grantee share increasing by \$29,580 dollars for Full Time members and by \$1,080 dollars for 1-year Half Time members. In addition, the Federal Insurance Contributions Act tax (FICA) is based off a percentage of total living allowance (7.65%) and, as a result, this line item has been increased by \$2,346 dollars for the grantee share.

In total, these changes equate to an increase of \$33,006 dollars for the grantee share of expenses and no increase in the cost per MSY for the Corporation. The WCC continues to be a highly cost-effective

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program with the cost per MSY at \$12,800 dollars. The WCC has continued to diversify our funding sources and our match percentage stands at 62%.

Plan for improving enrollment, retention, or other compliance issues

Our solid record for enrollment and retention demonstrates the quality of the WCC program. Our enrollment rate for the 2009-2010 service year was 100 percent and our retention rate was 80 percent. These percentages have proven consistent over the years and are excellent for an AmeriCorps program and exceptional for an outdoor, year-round, youth corps program located in the rainy state of Washington. The WCC will continue to maintain a high level of member enrollment and retention through clear communication, member recognition, a strong member development program, and ample oversight.

III. Performance Measures

Outputs/Outcomes: Instilling values of hard work, volunteerism, and group achievement within members and volunteers

WCC members will mobilize 5,000 volunteers annually, providing 20,000 hours of service to local communities. Our original performance measures were based on the WCC receiving our full request; which would be a 20 percent increase in the size of our program. Due to our decreased award size, we must right-size our performance measures to be attainable. In addition, the WCC has diversified our service portfolio to include weatherization and energy efficiency projects, which do not lend themselves well to volunteer projects.

Performance Measures

SAA Characteristics

- AmeriCorps Member Population - None
 Geographic Focus - Urban
 Geographic Focus - Rural
 Encore Program

Priority Areas

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Futures
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans and Military Families
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 150

Service Categories

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Energy Use Reduction | Primary <input type="checkbox"/> | Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> |
| At-risk Ecosystems Improvement | Primary <input type="checkbox"/> | Secondary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Community-Based Volunteer Programs | Primary <input type="checkbox"/> | Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Job Development/Placement | Primary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> |

Member Development

Service Category: Job Development/Placement

Measure Category: Participant Development

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

In addition to on-the-job skills, each member will receive 100 hours of high quality training to ensure a strong résumé upon completing their year of AmeriCorps service.

Results

Result: Output

Members will attend high-quality training to ensure a strong resume upon completing their AmeriCorps experience.

Indicator: participants

Target: All of our full-time members will participate in 100 hours of high-quality training.

Target Value: 100%

Instruments: Member training rosters

PM Statement: All of our full-time members will participate in 100 hours of high-quality training to ensure a strong resume upon completing their AmeriCorps experience.

Prev. Yrs. Data

Result: End Outcome

Upon completing their service, we will survey our members to determine the effectiveness of this training and their post-AmeriCorps employability.

Indicator: participants

Target: 80 percent of members will respond that they are well-prepared for employment post service.

Target Value: 80%

Instruments: Member Surveys

PM Statement: Upon completing their service, we will survey our members to determine the effectiveness of this training and their post-AmeriCorps employability. 80 percent of members will respond that they are well-prepared for employment post service.

Prev. Yrs. Data

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Our members will successfully pass certification tests upon completion of training.

Indicator: participants

Target: 90 percent of members will pass certification tests upon completion of training.

Target Value: 90%

Instruments: Certification tests provided by training providers

PM Statement: Our members will successfully pass certification tests upon completion of training. We expect 90 percent of our members will pass these tests.

Prev. Yrs. Data

National Performance Measures

Priority Area: Environmental Stewardship

Performance Measure Title: Acres of Public Lands Cleaned or Improved

Service Category: At-risk Ecosystems Improvement

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

The primary method for cleaning/improving public lands is through habitat restoration in which WCC Members remove invasive species and install native species. WCC members will plant 1.5 million native trees and shrubs during this next grant cycle. These members will ensure these plants survive through ongoing site monitoring and upkeep, which includes project site surveys, irrigation, and invasive species suppression. WCC will survey site sponsors to determine the level of success with these projects. It is expected that 70% of sites surveyed will be successful.

Result: Output

Result.

The primary method for cleaning/improving public lands is through habitat restoration in which WCC Members remove invasive species and install native species. WCC members will conduct reforestation activities on public lands, resulting in acres of public lands cleaned or improved.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) EN4: Acres of parks cleaned or improved.

Target : 1000 acres of environmental habitat cleaned or improved.

Target Value: 1000

Instruments: Field Level Production Report (tally sheet)

PM Statement: The primary method for cleaning/improving public lands is through habitat restoration in which WCC Members remove invasive species and install native species. WCC members will conduct reforestation activities on public lands, resulting in 1,000 acres of public lands cleaned or improved.

Result: Output

Result.

WCC Members will improve or create trails on public lands.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) EN5: Miles of trails or rivers improved and/or created.

Target : 200 miles of trail will be improved or created on public lands

Target Value: 200

Instruments: Field Level Production Report (tally sheet)

PM Statement: WCC Members will improve or create 200 miles of trails on public lands.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

WCC will survey site sponsors to determine level of success with habitat restoration projects (acreage cleaned or improved).

Indicator: Sites surveyed deemed as successful by project site sponsors.

Target : Seventy percent of sites surveyed will be deemed successful by site sponsors.

Target Value: 20

National Performance Measures

Result.

Instruments: Survey/Questionnaire

PM Statement: WCC will survey site sponsors to determine level of success with habitat restoration projects (acreage cleaned or improved) with a target of 70% of sites being deemed successful.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Already on File at CNCS

Labor Union Concurrence

Already on File at CNCS