

Narratives

Executive Summary

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Keepers of the Land AmeriCorps program leads Iowans in conserving and enhancing natural resources throughout the state. The program's goals and objectives focus on caring for and engaging in environmental stewardship and awareness in Iowa's state parks, forests, fisheries, and wildlife areas. AmeriCorps members work to meet the program goals which include: linking urban populations to nearby fishing opportunities, working with state park visitors to participate in healthy activities, engaging school children in activities designed to connect them to their environment, improving water quality, restoring wildlife habitat, and constructing new outdoor recreation trails. All of these efforts will assist in improving the quality of life for Iowans and ensure a legacy for future generations.

Rationale and Approach

Choices of past generations to alter Iowa's landscape continue to adversely impact today's citizens and will continue to negatively impact future Iowan generations. Due to these choices Iowa is known as the most biologically altered state in the nation; 64 percent of Iowa's 36 million acres are covered in only two species (corn and beans); 93 percent of the land is used for agriculture; less than one tenth of one percent of Iowa's original prairie remains, and none of the original forests have survived. Iowa is ranked 49th in public land for recreation and wildlife habitat, and 47th for spending on natural resources; 80 animal species, from barn owls to snails are now threatened or endangered and more than 80 percent of the state's 19,000 known archaeological sites have been damaged or destroyed by erosion, farming, construction or carelessness.

The dramatic change in Iowa's ecosystem does not come without consequences. Over the last eight years DNR data shows water quality is continuing to decline. In 2008, more than 40 percent of the assessed water bodies in Iowa were on the EPA's Impaired Waters listings. Iowa's levels of fecal bacteria, nitrogen and phosphorus pollution are generally 2 to 10 times higher than levels that are considered appropriate

Narratives

for the waters in the Midwest. The city of Des Moines now owns the world's largest water filtration system to compensate for the run off of those fertilizers and herbicides, which are also blamed for the Gulf of Mexico's Dead Zone. In fact, in September 2009 Iowa experienced an unprecedented outbreak of a toxic algae bloom in a river that provides drinking water for a large metropolitan area that was attributed to high amount of nutrients. Moreover, DNR has recently been required to begin issuing advisories for mercury levels for fish caught in Iowa lakes and rivers, and yet the number one pollutant to water is topsoil from erosion. Erosion comes from loss of habitat that stabilizes land and systems that filtrate out the sediments and pollutants such as wetlands, prairies and woodland cover. In just over 100 years, Iowa has lost or destroyed 95 percent of the wetlands that purified the waters, reduced flooding and provided habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. What, to our ancestors, seemed like relatively small and positive changes to the land and to our environment continually have repercussions on Iowa and our citizens as well as other communities downstream.

Iowa has changed considerably since its development as a "family farm state." Today, only nine percent of the population lives on the farm and more people live in the Des Moines metropolitan area than on all the farms in Iowa. As people move away from the land, their connection to the land and to their environment becomes less tangible -- and the value of natural resources diminishes. The importance of Iowa's natural resources needs to be brought to the forefront of people's minds as they continue to transition from rural to city life; but the DNR cannot do it alone. As the government agency charged with protecting and enhancing Iowa's natural resources, it is necessary to enlist volunteers, non-governmental organizations, community groups, other governmental agencies, private entities, schools, and anyone else we can!

Beyond the data collection, research and annual monitoring that staff conduct on an ongoing basis, a variety of entities provide ongoing input that help provide direction for the Keepers of the Land AmeriCorps program. Each area within the DNR reaches out to representatives from governmental (i.e.

Narratives

NRSC, County Conservation Boards, and US Fish and Wildlife Service) and non-governmental conservation entities (Pheasants Forever, Farm Bureau and Nature Conservancy for example), educational institutions (i.e. ISU and University of Upper Iowa) the private sector (hunters, anglers, tree farmers and general Iowans). These groups help the Department develop broad visions for long-term conservation. Due to the collaborative nature of these processes, goal setting is not a DNR driven process, rather, the requests in this grant have been determined as needs by the natural resources conservation community of the State of Iowa.

Keepers of the Land AmeriCorps (KOLAC) is requesting a total of 29 FT, 9 HT, 41 QT members, and an additional 8 MT education award only (EAO) slots to serve across the state of Iowa, serving approximately 52 separate locations. The majority of the members will serve in DNR offices; however, some members will be co-located in Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) offices as part of a partnership between the agencies. All KOLAC members will be addressing issues related to water quality, improvements to human and environmental health. Wildlife members (14 FT, 20 QT) will engage in various activities related to permanently protecting, restoring, reconstructing and enhancing large areas of wildlife habitat - systems that include large tracts, watershed and greenbelt corridors, and other associated travel ways for wildlife and migratory birds that can be managed for biodiversity. These activities will affect water quality by converting crop land to permanent habitat that will reduce the sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorous flowing in Iowa's streams, rivers, and lakes. These activities will also affect water quality in a positive way by working to remove cattle from having direct access from waterways therefore reducing the amount of bacteria entering the water. Parks members (4 FT, 4 HT) will engage in activities related to native prairie restoration. Increasing the amount of native prairie, thus decreasing the amount of park area that requires mowing and ongoing maintenance, will reduce the cost related to park upkeep. It will also increase the amount of rainfall being absorbed, which decreases the use of pesticides and herbicides and effectively reduces the amount of contaminants

Narratives

entering lakes and streams. Trail crew members (5 FT, 12 QT) will address needs in state parks and forests, specifically restoration of original CCC structures and trails. The work of the trail crew positively impacts water quality by curtailing erosion, which reduces sediment and associated nutrients from being delivered directly to lakes and streams. Forestry members (1 FT, 5 HT, 1 QT) will concentrate on activities related to conservation, education, soil protection, water quality and improving wildlife habitat. Fisheries members (2 FT) will engage in collecting and assimilating creel survey information from anglers, sampling fish in lakes, basic watershed restoration work, and collecting monthly water quality samples. The environmental education (2 FT) members will work directly with more than 7500 students, grades 4-6, on a wide variety of stewardship and conservation issues with a focus on environmental stewardship through a variety of exercises. Members will demonstrate different land use practices, erosion, agriculture, as well as environmental impacts that humans have on our surroundings. Eight QT members will serve as park interpreters. Interpretive efforts connect the visitor/community to the meaning of Iowa's natural resources through programming efforts. These efforts focus on a variety of activities including increasing knowledge about water quality issues, habitat development, prairie restoration, recycling and waste reduction efforts, native wildlife, and encouraging visitors to become more active and healthy. In 2009, members planned and presented educational programs to nearly 5000 state park visitors. One FT and eight MT EAO members will engage in a variety of public outreach and communication initiatives. The type of member slots are chosen to maximize resources, align with the needs of the program design and best support successful goal achievement.

The DNR strives to ensure that members are addressing urgent needs that are distinct from that of volunteers and staff, and that our program does not violate non-duplication, non-displacement and non-supplementation requirements. This begins by educating DNR staff. Each participating program area has a point of contact, or bureau representative (bureau reps). These people assist program staff with daily management of the AmeriCorps program, ensuring that rules and regulations, including those above are followed. In this economic climate program staff and bureau reps have held strong in an effort

Narratives

to guarantee that members are used appropriately. As a result, we have some innovative initiatives and new partnerships. Additionally, program staff ensures that members understand their roles and how they differ from staff and volunteers. Finally, vigilance on the part of all involved make certain that members and member activities are appropriate at all times.

DNR is fortunate to have the benefit of both the neighboring NCCC program and an in-house VISTA program. These programs mutually benefit each other while not duplicating one another in any way. In the two years the NCCC has been in Iowa, DNR and the Iowa campus of the NCCC have worked together a couple of times. When NCCC was just getting started KOL was instrumental in helping to establish some initial projects for them. NCCC's first crew helped the 2007 Trail Crew construct a trail at a new state park in southern Iowa. More recently, NCCC participated in a volunteer event in northern Iowa to benefit Iowan's impacted by the floods of 2008. The event was organized by another DNR AmeriCorps group, the Green Iowa Energy Corps. The DNR's VISTA member is working to develop relationships with the minority communities throughout Iowa. She will assist KOLAC in helping us reach our at-risk youth goals mentioned in this grant. This VISTA member also assists KOLAC members by organizing events such as the Martin Luther King Day of Service event (MLK Day). The MLK Day event that we organize is open to other VISTA and AmeriCorps groups throughout the state. In the past this has afforded our members the opportunity to meet other members and spend the day learning about their service.

Organizational Capability

The DNR is a complex state agency, established in its earliest form in 1917, which successfully manages over 900 employees. The agency has a long history of mentoring opportunities and programs that benefit the state of Iowa as well as the participants of those programs. Its vision is to lead Iowans in caring for our natural resources. With this mission and vision directing DNR work, KOLAC is a key component to address pressing environmental needs. For 12 years, DNR has provided AmeriCorps

Narratives

members with a variety of options to serve Iowa communities and develop professional skills in habitat and prairie restoration, wildlife biology, natural history interpretation, environmental education, fisheries, and other natural resource areas. The department also has a long history of offering internships whenever possible. Members are placed in accordance with extensive data indicating the specific needs for specific regions of Iowa. Based on the data and the community need, members are placed accordingly to the areas where they can make the biggest impact on wildlife management, water quality, etc.

It is no secret that the DNR is facing extreme economic crisis and volunteers are more important now than ever before. As noted in Community Outputs and Outcomes the DNR is anticipating further constraints. The AmeriCorps members afford the DNR with the unique ability to continue to broaden educational programming and stewardship efforts to enhance Iowa's natural resources.

The DNR has the management capability and structure to handle a diverse and varied workforce. The management philosophy is based on participative team management with the agency organized into three divisions: Environmental Services, Conservation and Recreation, and Management Services. The AmeriCorps program falls within the Management Services Division (MSD), which delivers services to all bureaus in the agency. DNR is capable of ensuring adequate staffing for recruitment, program oversight and member supervision. Key program and fiscal positions include an Office of Volunteer Services supervisor, one AmeriCorps program director, one program assistant, two part time assistants, and one budget analyst all dedicated to ensuring adequate program oversight and member supervision occurs. Further, program staff is working to build capacity within the Department; for example, bureau reps are becoming skilled so that they each have the knowledge necessary to train site supervisors, DNR personnel staff now have enough knowledge about AmeriCorps paperwork that they are able to enroll members should the need arise, and a supervisor in the accounting area now has basic AmeriCorps knowledge. This cross-training will greatly strengthen the entire program and will lead to better overall

Narratives

support for the members. All of the staff, from the supervisor to the administrative assistant, have multiple years experience in managing past AmeriCorps grants. The supervisor and budget analyst have more than 20 years of experience in successful grant, fiscal and program management. These talents, skills and experiences will combine to ensure continued success for this grant.

DNR has the capacity to track AmeriCorps funds and meet the additional reporting requirements. It has the capability and structure to manage a diverse and varied workforce. All divisions using AmeriCorps members have worked extensively and successfully with grants, volunteers, and interns, and have vast experience with grant administration. DNR conducts ongoing internal assessments of its management capabilities. All financial transactions, related to members and specific projects, are pre-approved by site supervisors or program staff, and monitored by department financial system to ensure that every financial transaction meets standards. Annually, the Iowa State Auditor completes an in-depth audit of the DNR and to date has found no notable infractions. Independent audits of existing KOLAC program led by the Corporation for National and Community Service were completed in 2004 and 2005. Results indicated appropriate adherence to program requirements. The DNR has more than 300 funding sources, including grants, federal funds, and private donations, totaling more than \$34 million. The grants analyst assigned to the program has over 25 years of experience in accounting and grant management, and is an integral part of the AmeriCorps team. All financial transactions, related to members and their specific projects, are approved beforehand by their site supervisor and further monitored by the department's financial system to ensure every financial transaction meets necessary standards. As noted in Members Outputs and Outcomes, bureau reps are dedicated program area staffs, who meet with AmeriCorps program staff to review the quarterly review of the budget. The DNR is audited continually and in-depth yearly without incident. We have also successfully completed a federal, independent audit performed for the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Narratives

Program site supervisors are experienced personnel managers and renowned experts in their specialty fields. They each receive specific training related to the AmeriCorps program and supporting AmeriCorps members to work closely with the program director to ensure the success of their members and the best service to Iowans. The introduction of bureau reps have made significant improvements in the consistency of member supervision. They are involved in all areas of communication to ensure a consistent message is conveyed. With having members located at approximately 52 separate locations across the state, communication is key for ensuring a successful partnership between the member and the DNR. It is important that the message communicated is consistent throughout all areas. It is this partnership and communication that allows the DNR to truly "Lead Iowans in caring for our natural resources."

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

Program budget is based on past years' costs and the forecasted supply needs of members to complete deeper impact and broader reaching projects. This proposal is based on the environmental needs brought forth by DNR staff. The corporation cost per MSY for KOLAC is \$10,920, based on 46.04 MSYs (29 FT, 9 HT, 41 QT, members and 8 MT EAO). This amount is less than it was in our 09-10 and our Recovery cost per MSY. The reduction is primarily due to the Department's overall lack of match, and this is directly related to the economic crisis; however, DNR and its partners value the program and the benefit to Iowa's natural resources. Therefore, even with limited matching funds, DNR and its partners have demonstrated their commitment to KOLAC. DNR has demonstrated commitment to the AmeriCorps program for 12 years and has obtained diverse, non-federal resources to continue, expand, and improve its program. Sources of funding, which are outlined in the budget, include state general fund, legislatively allocated line items (Environment First Funding, State Infrastructure, e.g.), Wildlife Trust Fund, Groundwater Protection funds, state recreation trail grant, REAP, funds generated from the sale of special license plates, hunting and fishing licenses, trees from the state forest nursery, and timber sales from state land. Match for the AmeriCorps grant is also generated from agricultural leases, and

Narratives

soil and water conservation districts.

Those sources previously mentioned are indicative of the increasing support and wide range of resources, cash and in-kind, assembled to solidly support the program as it continues to grow and move toward the goal of non-federally funded sustainability. DNR is successful and effective in leveraging federal and state funding by working as a facilitator, much like the role of the ICVS, to empower local groups and provide trained personnel focused on specific projects. DNR responds to local community requests for assistance, provides a statewide model, and serves as an umbrella agency bringing resources to groups and supporting statewide initiatives through building awareness, providing educational opportunities, developing partnerships, and generating volunteers. Numerous sources of money and support provided by DNR are named in the budget narrative. Funds are used to empower and develop local community projects as they relate to KOLAC objectives and member activities. This translates into reducing local community expenses and, in turn, reducing federal support. Using federal dollars to support our AmeriCorps grant, coupled with our ability to use other state funding sources to support local communities, equates to coordinated and effective uses of both federal and state dollars.

Expanding the sources of funding have also enabled the DNR to broaden the scope of the program. As mentioned previously, until this year the KOLAC program had begun partnering with County Conservation Boards, but unfortunately that has temporarily ended. In the 09-10 grant, however, AmeriCorps did expand into the fisheries program within DNR. This will give us an opportunity to reach new communities that have not previously been addressed. KOLAC is also partnering with new partners, like the Department of Public Health. While the opportunity to impact obesity did not directly tie to our overall water quality goal, it is a worthwhile goal and the community education is greatly needed and teaching community members healthy ways to interact with their environment should positively impact the community for years to come.

Narratives

Evaluation Summary or Plan

KOLAC has a diverse and committed evaluation process in place. Evaluation takes place internally and externally. Internally, KOLAC ensures ongoing evaluation through both formal and informal methods. Formal methods include: member monthly evaluations, formal mid-term and end-of-service site supervisor evaluations. Informal methods include program director site visits, orientation and service project evaluations. Through this feedback, KOLAC is quickly able to collect, analyze, and address questions and needs. The results are used continuously to improve the program specifically through: streamlined administrative procedures; enhanced member training and development opportunities; along with personal assistance to individual members. Informal methods include unprompted emails, responses to random emails, word of mouth through the ranks, messages from the bureau reps, extra site visits by AmeriCorps program staff or phone calls from program staff.

Externally, KOLAC ensures evaluation through partnership with independent evaluators such as Iowa State University. Its existing evaluation plan has provided KOLAC with relevant and useful feedback from members and supervisors about program experiences, professional development goals, and service support needs. In FY11 we plan to hire an outside consultant to conduct a formal evaluation of the Keepers of the Land AmeriCorps program. The last such evaluation was conducted in 2006. We will be looking for ways to improve the overall program, but focusing on better connecting to the community, enhancing recruiting, particularly of at-risk youth, and improving member retention.

Rich in a history of commitment to national service-based conservation efforts, enhanced by a Governor's initiative for government to lead by example, KOLAC outlined in this grant proposal will add substantial value to the activities and goals of the DNR sustaining and enhancing Iowans quality of life. As illustrated, funding of this proposal secures KOLAC's ability to manage public lands; provide environmental conservation educational opportunities to a variety of generations; assist in the statewide

Narratives

effort to improve water quality; and provide a strong foundation from which to draw volunteer management leaders in times of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. Funding also ensures that Iowa continues to benefit from a national service corps, dedicated to serving and engaging communities in natural resource conservation every day of service and in times of disaster and leaving a post-service legacy that will benefit generations of Iowans who follow.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

2010-11 Budget Clarification Item Response:

Section I - B. Personnel Fringe Benefits: Please break out fringe benefits

FICA - 7.65%

Retirement - 8.5%

Unemployment

Workers Comp

Health Insurance

Sick Leave

Dental

Vacation Total - 13.75%

Grand total - 29.9%

Section I - C. Travel: Please provide justification for meals at orientation.

Narratives

The spring and fall orientations, which are 4 days each in length, are held at DNR's Springbrook Education Center outside of Guthrie Center, Iowa. We hold it at this facility because we are able provide overnight accomodates at no cost to the program because it is a DNR facility. Members come from across the state to participate; however, this location is remote and is located in a county whose total population is 11,000, and has no stop lights or fast food in the entire county. Orientation begins at 8:00 AM and is typically scheduled until 9:30 PM at least 3 evenings during each orientation. It would be difficult at best for members to be responsible for their own meals. Cooking facilities are not available on site. Orientations are critical to the team and skill building of our members, primarily because they are the only opportunities that our members have to come together as one group.

Section I- E. Supplies: Please budget for or provide explanation for staff criminal history checks.

Any new staff to the AmeriCorps program will be subject to required background checks. The cost for the background checks will be paid for by the DNR. Existing staff have background checks on file.

Section I - E. Supplies: Please provide justification for netbooks @ \$450 each.

Trail crew members are located around the state in remote park locations. Netbooks will be purchased to provide trail crew members access to submit required monthly reports, online time reporting, and receive important AmeriCorps communication in a timely manner. Members would use Netbooks to connect via wireless access in the state parks to meet reporting deadlines. Members often work in two separate locations around the state and two Netbooks would provide the necessary support to each group. Currently members must travel to local libraries costing work time and program mileage expenses to support member access for required reporting. This purchase will address recent concerns

Narratives

by ICVS from a site visit regarding communication and the trail crew members.

Section II - B. Member Support Costs: Please provide assurance that members will be covered by workers compensation if required by state law or Accidental Death or Dismemberment Insurance.

Members serving in the DNR Keeper of the Land program are covered by the DNR's Workers' Compensation insurance. The DNR, as a state agency, provides this coverage to all members.

Section III B. Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate: Please provide a copy of the latest approved IDR.

We have provided the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Services the FY10 Federally approved IDR. We are awaiting the FY11 IDR.

Sources of Funds: Please update source of funds with the amounts of each source.

All monies are derived from state or local sources. The amounts indicated are estimates, and may vary due to ongoing budget revisions. Economic issues are an ongoing concern for staff. We just received an additional 9% budget reduction, bringing the total general fund reduction to 30% over the last 18 months. These cuts make these other sources of funding more critical.

Sales of hunting and fishing licenses - \$129,240

REAP license plate sales - \$13,607

Environmental First Funds - \$89,537

Narratives

State General Funds - \$82,371

Groundwater Protection Funds - \$13,701

Timber sale receipts - \$12,471

Agricultural lease revenue - \$12,470

REAP program - \$24,665

Land Management Account - \$24,665

Polk County General Fund - \$24,665

Recreational Trails Grant - \$24,665

Total Grantee Share - \$452,057

2011 - 2012 CLARIFICATION ITEMS

BUDGET CLARIFICATION ITEMS:

1. Please revise your budget to equal the funding and MSY amount listed above.

The budget has been modified to reflect a CNCS total amount of \$506,727.

I.A. Please explain the role of Administrative Support. Also, please ensure that listed staff member meets required criminal history check required of all grant funded staff positions.

The Administrative Support staff position duties include: assisting with member enrollments, handbook preparation, auditing member files, member communication, and overall support for the AmeriCorps program. This position is 100% dedicated to the Department of Natural Resources Keepers of the Land AmeriCorps program. All staff members meet the required criminal history check requirements.

I.B. Please remove leave and vacation from personnel fringe benefits calculation. These costs are

Narratives

absorbed in salary expenses.

This has been modified in the budget.

I.C. Please provide cost-basis (calculation to include itemized costs) for travel to CNCS sponsored meetings.

Itemized costs details have been added to the budget.

I.C. Meals are listed @ \$90 each per member. The number of days of orientation and meals should be included to clarify that the meals are not \$90 each.

\$90 per member per orientation. Each orientation is scheduled for four days.

I.E. Please move criminal history check costs to section I.I. Other Program Operating Costs

The budget has been modified to reflect these changes.

I.E. Please provide justification for the purchase of chainsaw supplies every year.

Chainsaw supplies are used to purchase chaps, helmets, and gloves. Whenever possible, the program re-uses these items from year to year. However, chaps and gloves wear out from continual use requiring the items to be replaced. Size of the items is also an issue as these items need to properly fit the AmeriCorps members to ensure necessary safety protection.

Narratives

I.E. Please provide justification for the purchase of trail restoration supplies that includes how these supplies are different from DNR trail restoration expectations.

DNR AmeriCorps trails restoration supplies are used to support small scale statewide projects that target light infrastructure trail work with an emphasis on ADA accessibility and sustainability. Examples of these projects include: preventing siltation and erosion around compromised water bodies, providing safe trail access to people with and without disabilities, building sustainable trails, and restoring Civilian Conservation Corp structures. DNR trail restoration focuses on large-scale projects around the state which are contracted out. Examples of these projects include bike trails, concrete bridges, and asphalt paths.

I.E. Please explain recruiting fair registration costs.

Department of Natural Resource (DNR) AmeriCorps program staff attends job and volunteer recruiting events around the state throughout the year recruiting for DNR AmeriCorps members. Some of the events require registration fees to participate.

I.E. Please indicate what items are included in the line item for Education Supplies.

Education supplies are purchased for interpretive sessions at the state parks. Each interpreter is responsible for creating new presentations and these funds will be used to purchase supplies such as: arts and craft supplies (plaster, glue, and construction paper), field guides, and rubber tracks to support the new presentations with the visitors at the park.

III.B. Federally approved IDC rate is applied against Section II totals (member costs) although

Narratives

description indicates approved IDC rate is to be applied against salaries and benefits. Please re-verify IDC rate calculations.

IDC calculations have been re-verified.

III.B. Please provide the most current indirect cost rate agreement.

We have provided the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Services the FY11 Federally approved IDR. We are awaiting the FY12 IDR

-Source of Funds-Please describe the Federal Trails grant used for match.

- 1) National trails grant through the Department of Transportation Recreational Trails Grant Program
- 2) Department of Natural Resources Acquisition and Development funding received through Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) funding appropriated annually
- 3) State Land Management Trust funding received through Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) funding appropriated annually

PROGRAMMATIC CLARIFICATION ITEMS:

1. Please complete the Executive Summary of the application. The 2011 AmeriCorps State and National application instructions contain guidance on how to complete the Executive Summary. Please include the objectives and goals of the proposed program.

Executive Summary has been modified.

1. In the Clarification narrative field, please confirm your desired grant award start date and member

Narratives

enrollment period start date.

The desired grant award start date is September 1, 2011. Enrollment dates for our members will begin on September 2, 2011. Depending on the type of member slots, enrollments will occur between September 2011 and May 2012.

2. Please provide additional information on disaster response activities of program to include how members are deployed and how member service hours are maintained while on disaster deployment. Also include a description of the types of disaster services activities members are typically requested to complete.

Deployment for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Keepers of the Land AmeriCorps members are at the request of the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Services, the Governor's Office, or the DNR. While members are deployed for disaster response activities, hours are credited as service hours. DNR staff or DNR AmeriCorps program staff are on site at the disaster locations with the members and determine the appropriate hours for members to count while deployed. Disaster response activities have included: flood assistance (sandbagging, preparation, recovery, and clean-up), tornado clean-up, response to other natural disasters (wind storms, ice storms, etc.) requiring chainsaw skills, and disaster volunteer coordination throughout the state.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE CLARIFICATION ITEMS:

PM# 1 -- Job Preparedness for At-Risk Youth and Persons with Disabilities

This performance measure has been removed.

Narratives

PM# 2 -- Number of economically disadvantaged AmeriCorps members who are unemployed prior to their term of service

This performance measure has been removed.

PM# 3 -- Number of clients participating in health education programs

This performance measure has been removed.

PM# 4 -- Civic Engagement

This performance measure has been removed.

PM# 5 -- Volunteer Recruitment

This performance measure has been removed.

PM# 6 -- Environmental Stewardship EN4

1. Please revise intermediate outcome to 3500 acres of wildlife habitat cleaned or improved by AmeriCorps members will be assessed by natural resource managers as likely to reduce the sediment, fertilizers, and herbicides from flowing in Iowa's streams, rivers, and lakes as a result of AmeriCorps members' restoration efforts.

The intermediate outcome section has been updated to reflect the changes.

Narratives

2. The applicant is strongly encouraged to set a more ambitious intermediate target. 3500 acres of 7500 acres represents only 46% of work is done to address the primary need outlined in application.

Intermediate target has been modified.

3. The instruments identified in the intermediate outcome need to reflect the outcome identified. Member reports and GPS data seem inappropriate. The instrument should include a professional assessment by a qualified natural resource manager. Please revise the instrument in this part of the measure.

The instrument section has been updated to reflect the changes.

PM# 7 -- Environmental Stewardship EN5

1. Please revise the intermediate outcome to 100 miles of trails improved and/or created by AmeriCorps members will be assessed by natural resource managers as likely to help control erosion and degradation of the habitat surrounding the trails as a result of the improvements made by AmeriCorps members.

The intermediate outcome section has been updated to reflect the changes.

2. The intermediate outcome instrument needs to reflect that the assessment is to be completed by a qualified natural resource manager. Member monthly reports are not appropriate. Please revise the instrument in this part of the measure.

The instrument section has been updated to reflect the changes.

Continuation Changes

Narratives

YEAR 2 CONTINUATION CHANGES

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Currently 100% of fall positions for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Keepers of the Land AmeriCorps program (KOLAC) 2010-2011 grant year have been successfully filled. The current grant year is on target for 100% enrollment with the remaining positions to be filled between February and May 2011. Excellent program management ensures members are enrolled and exited within 30 days of start and end dates.

The first orientation for the grant year was completed with a record number of KOLAC members attending. Forty-two members gathered at Springbrook Conservation Education Center for three days of training on natural resource skills, civic engagement, citizenship, volunteer generating projects, disaster recovery, and media relations in addition to completing a service project at Whiterock Conservancy.

EXPLANATION OF BUDGET CHANGES

Several budget changes were made for the Keepers of the Land AmeriCorps (KOLAC) 2011-2012 grant year primarily due to state and national requirements. State member timekeeping system costs were added in to the "other program operating costs" section of the budget as required by our state commission. Effective member management is critical for the success of the KOLAC AmeriCorps program and this timekeeping system allows us to achieve these needed results.

In the current 2010-2011 KOLAC grant year, two net books were budgeted and purchased to support the mobile trails unit. Since they have been purchased in the current grant year, they have been removed from the budget for the 2011-2012 grant year. To continue with the trails crew connectivity, wireless modem access, cell phones, and weather radios have been added into the budget. The trails crew

Narratives

regularly serves in remote rural areas of the state. Connectivity in these areas has been an issue identified by members. These new budgeted items will allow them to complete required member reporting including time reports as well as provide a way for members to be reached in case of emergency or allow them to reach safety in case of inclement weather.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) supports the increase in the minimum living allowance as set forth by the Corporation for National and Community Service. As a result of the minimum living allowance changes, DNR increased the living allowances to meet the new minimums. DNR Personnel expenses and fringe benefits were adjusted to account for cost of living increases scheduled for the upcoming grant year for our program staff.

The last budget change for the 2011-2012 grant year was a result of the adjustment of the DNR indirect cost rate. The indirect cost rate for the DNR increased from 14.03% to 14.91%

JUSTIFICATION FOR REQUESTED INCREASE IN COST PER MSY

The cost per MSY increased for the 2011-2012 grant year as detailed in the budget narrative. The cost per MSY increase for the corporation is \$266 per member which is less than then the increase for the grantee of \$691 per member. The increase was a result of required state and national budget line items, new minimum living allowances, cost of living increases for program staff, and supply modifications. Even though the cost per MSY increased, the overall CNCS percentage dropped from 53% to 52% increasing the percentage for the grantee from 47% to 48%.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) continues to strive for program sustainability of federal dollars for the Keepers of the Land AmeriCorps program. During the 2010 elections Iowans approved the Water and Land Legacy Amendment, which will assist the DNR in continuing that goal; however,

Narratives

this Constitutional Amendment will not begin benefiting Iowa's natural resources until the legislature approves an increase in the sales tax. At this time, we have no timeline for when this increase in money may be available to the DNR.

DISASTER RESPONSE

Keepers of the Land AmeriCorps (KOLAC) members continued to play an integral part in disaster response throughout the state during the summer of 2010. Iowa Governor Chet Culver activated KOLAC members four times in 2010 to assist with flood preparations and recovery assistance in several communities. Members participated in sandbagging efforts and disaster recovery assisting citizens and their communities during time of stress. Due to the "new normal" of increased amounts of heavy precipitation in the upper Midwest, the amount of disaster response requests continues to increase from year to year. KOLAC members are more than willing to accept the call of duty to assist with these requests.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES CHANGES

Performance measures for the 2011-2012 grant year will remain the same with the exception of civic engagement. The target has been adjusted to account for the number of returning AmeriCorps members our program is enrolling. The new target is 90% of first time members will increase their civic engagement knowledge by more than 20% during their term of service.

ENROLLMENT UPDATE

In the 2009-2010 Keepers of the Land AmeriCorps grant year, 100% of slots were filled.

RETENTION UPDATE

Member retention has continued to improve; this speaks of staff and site supervisor's work to ensure

Narratives

ongoing training and support of members. In grant year 2009-2010, Keepers of the Land AmeriCorps had an overall retention rate of 99.9% percent. Program staff continues to develop and provide new and innovative training to assist site supervisors to achieve the retention numbers we strive for with our program.

RECRUITMENT UPDATE

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) continues the progressive approach toward recruiting AmeriCorps members and is a leader in the area of disability inclusion. Our program is able to attract and recruit a diverse group of members. Not only are the standardized forms of media and websites used to recruit, the program continues to expand into other forms of social media and partnerships for recruitment. The DNR is proud of its relationship with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) which led to an increase in persons with disabilities serving in AmeriCorps positions. In the 2009-2010 grant year our program had 10 persons with disabilities serving in AmeriCorps positions (15% of members) with the DNR.

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"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Services
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 46.04

Service Categories

Environmental Awareness-building and Education

At-risk Ecosystems Improvement

National Performance Measures

Priority Area: Environmental Stewardship

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Members will engage in various activities related to permanently protecting, restoring, reconstructing and enhancing large areas of wildlife habitat - systems that include large tracts, watershed and greenbelt corridors, and other associated travel ways for wildlife and migratory birds that can be managed for biodiversity. These activities will affect water quality by converting crop land to permanent habitat that will reduce the sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorous flowing in Iowa's streams, rivers, and lakes. These activities will also affect water quality in a positive way by working to remove cattle from having direct access from waterways therefore reducing the amount of bacteria entering the water. Parks members will engage in activities related to native prairie restoration. Increasing the amount of native prairie, thus decreasing the amount of park area that requires mowing and ongoing maintenance, will reduce the cost related to park upkeep. It will also increase the amount of rainfall being absorbed, which decreases the use of pesticides and herbicides and effectively reduces the amount of contaminants entering lakes and streams.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

5000 acres of wildlife habitat cleaned or improved by AmeriCorps members will be assessed by natural resource managers as likely to reduce the sediment, fertilizers, and herbicides from flowing in Iowa's streams, rivers, and lakes as a result of AmeriCorps members' restoration efforts.

Indicator: Acres of wildlife habitat restored or reconstructed.

Target : Members will reconstruct or restore 5000 acres of wildlife habitat

Target Value: 5000

Instruments: Professional assessment by a qualified natural resource manager.

PM Statement: Wildlife Biologist or District Supervisors will verify that 5000 acres of wildlife habitat was restored or reconstructed in such a way as to reduce the sediment, fertilizers and herbicides from flowing in Iowa's streams, rivers, and lakes.

Result: Output

Result.

To ensure strong program outcomes, members will restore 7,500 acres of wildlife habitat.

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

Target : Members will restore 7,500 acres of wildlife habitat.

Target Value: 7500

Instruments: Member monthly reports, including GPS data.

PM Statement: Members will restore 7,500 acres of wildlife habitat.

Priority Area: Environmental Stewardship

National Performance Measures

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

To ensure strong program outcomes, members will restore 150 miles of multi-use trails. These activities will address needs in state parks and forests, specifically restoration of original CCC structures and trails.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Number of miles of multi-use trails refurbished in such a way that the reconstruction helped control erosion and degradation of the habitat surrounding the trails according to the park manager.

Indicator: Number of miles of multi-use trails refurbished.

Target : 100 miles of trails improved and/or created by AmeriCorps members will be assessed by natural resource managers as likely to help control erosion and degradation of the habitat surrounding the trails as a result of the improvements made by AmeriCorps

Target Value: 100

Instruments: Assessment will be completed by a qualified natural resource manager

PM Statement: Park managers will verify that 100 miles of multi-use trails will be refurbished in such a way that the reconstruction helped control erosion and degradation of the habitat surrounding the trails.

Result: Output

Result.

To ensure strong program outcomes, members will establish or refurbish 150 miles of trails.

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

Target : To ensure strong program outcomes, members will establish or refurbish 150 miles of trails.

Target Value: 150

Instruments: Member monthly reports and GPS data

PM Statement: Members will establish or refurbish 150 miles of multi-use recreational trails.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Not Applicable

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable