

## PART I - FACE SHEET

<b>APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE</b>		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction														
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)																
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):	3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:  24-JAN-11	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:  38-2502172														
2b. APPLICATION ID:  11AC124749	4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER:  09ACHMI0010004														
<b>5. APPLICATION INFORMATION</b>																
LEGAL NAME: Huron Pines  DUNS NUMBER: 617075619	NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes):  NAME: Casey Ressler  TELEPHONE NUMBER: (989) 344-0753 30  FAX NUMBER:  INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: casey@huronpines.org															
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 501 Norway Grayling MI 49738 - 1719 County: Crawford																
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):  382502172	7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit  7b.															
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box).  <input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>  A. AUGMENTATION        B. BUDGET REVISION  C. NO COST EXTENSION    D. OTHER (specify below):	9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: <b>Corporation for National and Community Service</b>															
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER:94.006 10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps State	11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT:  Huron Pines AmeriCorps															
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc):  Northeastern Lower Michigan: Alpena, Cheboygan, Crawford, Iosco, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle and Roscommon counties.	11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):															
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 10/01/11      END DATE: 09/30/12	14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="MI 001"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="MI 001"/>															
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: <input type="text" value="2"/>	16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?  <input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON:  DATE:  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372															
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; font-size: small;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">a. FEDERAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 134,192.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. APPLICANT</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 79,764.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. STATE</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d. LOCAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e. OTHER</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f. PROGRAM INCOME</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g. TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 213,956.00</td> </tr> </table>	a. FEDERAL	\$ 134,192.00	b. APPLICANT	\$ 79,764.00	c. STATE	\$ 0.00	d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00	e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00	g. TOTAL	\$ 213,956.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT?  <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
a. FEDERAL	\$ 134,192.00															
b. APPLICANT	\$ 79,764.00															
c. STATE	\$ 0.00															
d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00															
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00															
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00															
g. TOTAL	\$ 213,956.00															
18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.																
a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:  Brad Jensen	b. TITLE:  Director	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER:  (989) 348-9319 18														
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:		e. DATE SIGNED:  05/03/11														

## Narratives

### Executive Summary

N/A

### Rationale and Approach

#### 1. Compelling Community Need

Throughout America's development, we have greatly depended on natural resources to create and sustain the strong industrialized nation we have today. With the timber of Michigan's forests, we built our cities and with the force of Michigan's rivers, we powered our homes. In the course however, we have cut down forests, drained wetlands, dammed rivers and forever changed many delicate ecosystems.

Yet, important steps are being taken to protect Michigan's forests, lakes and streams. Huron Pines (HP), a 501(c)(3) conservation nonprofit, protects the natural resources we all need for healthy living and a sustained economy. HP programs include on-the-ground restoration projects such as improving water quality, stewardship projects like visiting with private landowners to discuss forest management, and the Huron Pines AmeriCorps (HPA) program, which brings natural resource professionals into Northeast Michigan (NE MI) to strengthen our nonprofit partners. HP focuses on the conservation of NE MI's natural resources because we depend on them for our livelihood.

Established in 1973, HP serves the 11 counties of NE MI which cover 6,700 square miles of land and host a population of approximately 216,000 persons. The area is in the heart of the Great Lakes and is predominately rural with extensive natural resources: over 5,000 river miles, 172,800 lake acres and 467 miles of Lake Huron shoreline. High-quality river systems are fundamental to the healthy functioning of the Great Lakes ecosystem. That being said, it is critical to reduce the negative impacts on these systems and implement proactive measures to prevent future negative impacts.

HP works very closely with numerous conservation organizations, federal and state agencies, nonprofits,

## Narratives

local governments and private individuals in order to identify resource concerns and meet community needs. Over the years, however, we found there is an urgent need for more conservation.

The need for habitat restoration is apparent in several ways. Manmade changes including the damming of rivers, fragmentation of forestland and introductions of invasive species, have compromised ecosystem function. This means the natural ability of many ecosystems to maintain a healthy balance is at risk. When this balance is thrown off, water quality drops off, wildlife populations plummet and native species go extinct. This is exactly what was happening in our nation in the 1960s when air and water pollution went unchecked and created toxic environments. We don't want that to happen again so HP is taking steps to conserve ecosystems before they ruin communities.

A key issue in restoring habitat is reducing sedimentation. Erosion and resulting sand input into river systems is the number one pollutant in our rivers and streams. Excessive amounts of sediment entering tributary streams can result in a wider and shallower channel, destruction of fish and aquatic insect habitat and elevated water temperatures. This means crucial habitat for various trout species, prey fish and insect communities is put at risk. Not only does this do bad for aquatic ecosystems, communities who depend on the water for their tourism dollars are also put at risk.

Habitat restoration is also needed for healthy wildlife populations. Wildlife habitat is not confined to man-made boundaries. Although a preserve ends at a particular point, wildlife such as elk, deer, bobcat, and bear often cross over these boundaries and face uncertain futures. Thus, conserving lands surrounding protected areas is a must for wildlife to thrive. Many people depend on wildlife for their sustenance. In addition, hunters, anglers and naturalists are key contributors to the tourism industry.

HP feels promoting environmental stewardship is a critical piece of conservation. Research shows there

## Narratives

is a tremendous environmental literacy gap that appears to be increasing rather than decreasing. For example, 2/3 of the public fail even a basic environmental quiz (The National Report Card on Environmental Attitudes, Knowledge, and Behavior, Roper Starch, 2001). The environment is becoming one of the dominant issues and challenges of the 21st century, as the needs of a growing global population increasingly press up against the limits of the earth's resources and ecosystems. The National Science Foundation's Advisory Committee for Environmental Research and Education confirmed this, noting that "in the coming decades, the public will more frequently be called upon to understand complex environmental issues, assess risk, evaluate proposed environmental plans and understand how individual decisions affect the environment at local and global scales (Complex Environmental Systems: Synthesis for Earth, Life, and Society in the 21st Century, 2003)."

At the same time, HP serves a state with a difficult and deep downturn-Michigan has been struggling through a recession for years and has some of the highest unemployed rates in the nation. Most Michigan communities also suffer from "brain drain" or the loss of skilled professionals to other more promising regions. This is especially apparent in NE MI. According to information provided by the US Census and the MI Department of Labor & Economics (March 2006), not only do the people in the 11-counties of NE MI experience higher poverty rates (11.96% compared to 10.5%) and unemployment rates (15.9% compared to 13.9%, as of May 2009) than the rest of the state but the region also suffers from a noticeably lower percentage of people with bachelor degree or higher when compared to the state average (11.62% compared to 21.8% in Michigan).

In addition, federal funding for conservation in NE MI is frequently overlooked. Compared to other regions of similar size in Michigan, our 11-county area has the lowest amount of federal dollars per square mile (\$198 per square mile compared to the state average of \$984 per square mile). The HPA program benefits an underserved part of the nation. NE MI is a very rural area which is often left

## Narratives

behind. The communities HP serves have an average household income (as of 2002) of approximately \$32,264, compared to a statewide average of \$44,315 and a national average of \$44,667. The population density is only 34 people per square mile, compared to a statewide average of 175 people per square mile.

In 2007, as part of a strategic planning process, HP conducted interviews with key partners. A top comment from partners revealed they look to HP to provide the resources necessary to implement conservation projects. With such a vast service area, HP takes a watershed approach and works to bring regional partners together to take a hands-on solution to conservation problems. The organization assesses an entire watershed, an area of land that drains through a system of lakes and rivers to a common point, inventories all of the problem sites and documents resources issues in that particular watershed. Projects are selected through this watershed inventory and those brought forth by community partners. Then, the HP Resource Advisory Group comprised of technical experts in the fields of forestry, wildlife management, water quality, and fish biology, review each project to determine the conservation and community value. They recommend whether or not the project should be adopted. HP is thus well equipped to identify and address conservation needs in NE MI.

Now, more than ever, nonprofit partners need to have more tools available to address conservation concerns. Many communities lack the funding, people, and expertise necessary to coordinate high-impact watershed projects. Many nonprofit partners do not have the proper tools necessary to implement conservation projects. Many landowners do not have the necessary information to make informed land use decisions. And, many schools do not have adequate programs to teach environmental education. The skilled AmeriCorps (AC) members HP places with nonprofit conservation partners address a critical issue: Michigan continues to depend on natural resources; if they were to run out we would have no light, heat, buildings and indeed our nation would come to stand still. We need to bring

## Narratives

people into NE MI to better manage our natural resources.

### 2. Description of Activities & Member Roles

The HPA program is designed to meet the changing needs of NE MI. All members focus on the conservation of natural resources by engaging volunteers and programs in habitat restoration, environmental stewardship and new conservation services. Member activities are adjusted slightly from position to position and year to year depending on a community's most critical needs. Depending on the position, the member may focus on one or more of these program areas.

A critical piece of each member's service is volunteer engagement. In the first two years of the HPA program, members engaged 1,257 volunteers in community service who served 5,750 hours and the value of donated volunteer time was over \$110,000. Currently, HP has a volunteer program that engages citizens in conservation projects during the field season. However, HP would like to develop more interactive volunteer events and expand volunteer recognition. In addition, many of our partners would like to develop more intensive volunteer programs that engage a core group of highly skilled and trained volunteers. Thus, all HPA members will participate in engaging volunteers through their service. Some of these projects will be recruiting and training key volunteers in repeat projects, such as water quality monitoring programs. By engaging volunteers, members will not only be completing important projects but also educating and expanding the network of conservation champions.

Due to the need for habitat restoration, highlighted by community partners and watershed management plans, the program is designed to engage members in a variety of hands-on conservation improvement projects. HP and partners currently address a number of on-the-ground conservation projects but often lack the time, funding and resources to tackle the abundant critical projects in the region. Therefore, members focus on high-impact, hands-on projects to conserve NE MI's natural resources. These

## Narratives

activities may include wildlife habitat improvement, installation of erosion control practices, water quality monitoring, invasive species removal, preservation of undeveloped lands and/or conducting resource inventories. These activities help to protect the function of our ecosystems and keep our air, water and forests healthy. Communities need this for economic viability and indeed, continued existence.

Another key program area members focus on is promoting environmental stewardship. The term "nature-deficit disorder" was coined by author Richard Louv in his book "Last Child in the Woods" to describe what happens to young people who become disconnected from their natural world. Louv links this lack of nature to some of the most disturbing childhood trends, such as the rises in obesity, attention disorders, and depression. Both students and citizens need to be more aware of conservation issues and how they can make a difference. Therefore, members will provide environmental education services in classrooms. Currently, HP works with the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative to provide input on developing "place based" education models. To help meet the need for increased environmental education, members will assist educators in developing environmental curriculum and connecting them local natural resource professionals.

Additionally, members will meet with private landowners to discuss conservation options. A previous member at HP developed a new volunteer service called the Conservation First Responder program which linked landowners to resource professionals. This program provided one-on-one help to landowners and tapped into the resource of retired resource professionals. The program would like to continue this type of program. Furthermore, members will develop resource oriented information such as technical guides, press releases, website updates, brochures and newsletter articles.

Lastly, members will be assisting with the development and improvement of conservation services.

## Narratives

Many times, new programs and projects require significant time, research and development prior to implementation and therefore do not receive the necessary attention. Members are a great solution to develop and improve new conservation services for their host sites because of their technical skills, enthusiasm and willingness to try something new.

An example of new project development is the Invasive Species Program where a member conducted a coastal inventory of invasive species and then coordinated with partners to develop an action plan. This resulted in the adoption and implementation of a region wide invasive species plan. Funding for remediation efforts on priority sites was also secured. An example of a member improving an existing program is the youth camp program for the Otsego Conservation District. A member secured funding and implemented a three day conservation day camp. Over 50 area youth participated to learn about native plants, water quality and wildlife habitat. These programs would not have been developed and implemented without the service of HPA members. Members take ideas all the way from conception to completion, creating new services for their communities.

HP chose these key areas because they encompass the greatest needs of our service area and add value to HP programs and those of partner organizations. The program areas are flexible enough to allow host sites target the specific needs of their communities while they are pointed enough to produce quality conservation projects. Members are also encouraged to collaborate on projects, adding value to host site programs. This also helps members and host sites pool resources and skills while better connecting the conservation community.

The program structure is based on a competitive host site selection process by HP staff and board members. The most important factor is how the member's service will impact conservation in NE MI. The competitive selection process for host sites requires them to annually examine the conservation



## Narratives

needs of the communities they serve and determine the best way to utilize an AC member to address those needs. They then apply to the program with a specific targeted position for the member. Host sites must also consider how to provide members with real world experiences, networking and training opportunities, and professional responsibilities so that members develop as leaders in conservation.

Once selected, HP works closely with host sites to develop position descriptions. In doing so, the program ensures the host sites are utilizing members for approved activities, not displacing staff and following program goals. As mentioned, all members' service must focus on at least one program area but within that area, they are able to develop site specific tasks that will touch on a particular community need.

Host sites have included Gahagan Nature Preserve, HeadWaters Land Conservancy, HP, Michigan Association of Conservation Districts, Michigan Council of Trout Unlimited, Michigan Sea Grant, Otsego Conservation District, Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy and Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. There have been more host sites applying to the program than available member slots, thus documenting a strong need for highly-skilled members. A host site may request more than one member and depending on the need, HP may assign 1-2 members per site. The sites are located in northern Michigan.

The HPA program is effective with 8 full-time members and four half-time members. The program utilizes both position types to fill two needs. Full-time members are effective because they have the necessary time to become familiar with community partners, develop programs and provide consistent support. Additionally, the busiest time for natural resource professionals is May-October. Thus, four half-time members will be utilized during the demanding field session. These members will take a specific resource concern and focus on the hands-on component, such as invasive species control,

## Narratives

resource inventories and monitoring programs.

The AC program ensures the program does not violate non-duplication, non-displacement and non-supplementation requirements through several checks and balances. First, as host sites articulate the needs of their communities and how a member could fill those needs, HP closely examines the proposed description of activities and makes sure the activities are not violating AC requirements. If a member is developing a new program, it is primarily because no one is addressing that need. Therefore, the program is assured that displacement of current staff is not occurring. In addition, site supervisors and members are trained in appropriate member activities during orientation and this is reinforced at trainings, conference calls and reviews. Lastly, the full-time AC Coordinator oversees member activities to be sure employees are not being displaced.

All prohibited member activities are listed in the member contracts and host site MOUs. Prohibited activities are clarified during member and site supervisor orientations. The AC Coordinator and site supervisors continuously monitor member activities to ensure no prohibited member activities are taking place. A tool to facilitate this is the 2-week schedules that members are required to submit. The AC Coordinator reviews these to be sure members service is only on approved activities.

Member development, training and supervision are based around improving member performance in the HPA program areas (habitat restoration, environmental stewardship, new conservation services) and engaging volunteers. All members participate in program trainings. In addition, host sites provide additional site specific training. Members furthermore participate in job shadowing to better understand the professional natural resource field. Close supervision by both the site supervisor and AC Coordinator also ensures members are prepared to meet the demands of their position.

## Narratives

If HP receives an AC grant, existing services can be expanded to meet the increasing need for conservation services in NE MI. In the last two years of the program, members have far exceeded deliverables in each program area. Members restored 35,700 feet, nearly seven miles of riverbank and recruited 1,257 volunteers in two years alone. They also developed 13 new projects, 12 of which were adopted and implemented by their host sites and reached over 10,000 people through their outreach efforts.

As the only environmental program in Michigan, HPA is building a model for new programs across the state. Several other organizations have received copies of past HPA grant applications and program materials. Receiving a renewal on the AC grant empowers HP to expand conservation services and build a sustainable program model to share with other organizations.

### 3. Measurable Outputs & Outcomes

HP outputs and outcomes center on the conservation of natural resources. The program is addressing the 2010 national priority area in Clean Energy and the Environment and is using three national performance measures (EN3, EN4, EN5).

One of the PMs for the program is EN3. This measure addresses the need to reduce the environmental literacy gap. The goal is to help students better understand environmental issues, evaluate proposed environmental plans and understand how individual decisions affect the environment at local and global scales. Members will provide environmental education services to at least 100 students to reduce the environmental literacy gap. The intermediate outcome will be a 50% improvement of environmental knowledge. This will be determined by pre and post tests of the student's environmental knowledge. This is critical in not only improving student's knowledge but also in making member's environmental education services effective.

## Narratives

The end outcome under environmental stewardship will be improved student achievement and increased engagement with the natural world. Studies have shown that environmental education increases student engagement in science and achievement in core subjects (Closing the Achievement Gap: Using the Environment as an Integrating Context for Learning, State Education and Environment Roundtable, Lieberman, G.A. and Hoody, L.L., 1998) (Place-Based Education, Sobel, David, 2004). If communities are to have good stewards of the environment who care for issues like resource depletion, environmental pollution, land degradation, and accelerating species extinctions, then conservation efforts need to educate children on their connection to and dependency upon nature.

The program is also using EN4 and EN5. In order to improve water quality and wildlife habitat, restoration activities must take place which may include planting trees and native plants, river cleanups, water monitoring, invasive species removal, preservation of undeveloped lands, conducting resource inventories, carrying out erosion control practices, creation of fish habitat and/or waste material collected and recycled, and providing trail enhancements, rehabilitation, and repairs, in coordination with volunteer assistance.

The output of these projects will be 100 acres of land cleaned or improved (EN4) and 5 miles of trails or rivers (EN5) cleaned, improved and/or created. The national PMs focus only on national parks, state parks, city parks, county parks, or other public lands and tribal communities. Members will also be restoring private lands and will track those results separately. This will help link fragmented forestland, remove invasive species, reduce sedimentation, and help restore the overall health of ecosystems in NE MI.

Although not stated in our PMs, another focus area for the program is developing new conservation

## Narratives

services. HPA is designed to help locally-led grassroots organizations in NE MI further their goals of protecting and improving natural resources. The focus of the project is to help existing nonprofit organizations increase their ability to implement resource protection and land stewardship projects. Funding cutbacks from government agencies that protect resources has occurred at the same time development and recreational use of natural resources has increased, leading to degradation of NE MI's environment. At this time, it is clear that the number one priority is to support conservation groups by providing help with increasing their program offerings for their communities. These services may include but are not limited to invasive species program, river monitoring program, landowner assistance program and/or youth conservation camp program. This is different from projects under habitat restoration because they are focusing on developing a long-term program.

Another focus area not stated in our PMs is promoting environmental stewardship by meeting with private landowners. Because forests cover one third of the United States and 49% of these forests are in private hands (Arbor Day Foundation, 2009), assisting private landowners in effectively managing this forestland is a priority for creating habitat corridors. Currently, HP has a land stewardship program where staff and volunteers meet with landowners to answer natural resource management questions. However, HP receives more and more requests for assistance and as government agencies are downsized, HP expects this number to increase even more in the coming years. As part of member's service in promoting environmental stewardship, members will meet with and facilitate at least 25 meetings with landowners to discuss land management options.

Lastly, although it is not a stated PM, volunteer recruitment will be a key focus area for all members. Each member will be required to engage at least 30 volunteers. As a program, HPA will engage 500 volunteers in at least 2,500 hours of service. In order to become self-sufficient and expand community support, local conservation nonprofits must rely upon volunteers to develop project ideas, prioritize

## Narratives

projects, and seek necessary funding and technical support to implement projects. Members will serve with conservation nonprofits to recruit, train and match volunteers to serve at projects such as river clean-ups, conducting resource inventories, assisting with habitat improvement projects, workshops and volunteer water quality monitoring.

#### 4. Plan for Self-Assessment

From the creation of position descriptions to the end of service, a continuous dialogue happens between the AC Coordinator, members, host site supervisors and Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC) staff to be sure member activities are appropriate and fulfilling program goals. First and foremost, all members and site supervisors receive training regarding program goals to help guide member activities. As mentioned, members complete monthly reports to the AC Coordinator. These reports carefully track the program's progress toward meeting and achieving PMs. These are compiled in OnCorps (an on-line program management and reporting system) and submitted for review by MCSC to ensure the program is on track to achieving stated PMs.

HP has used this model since our program began in 2007 and is always looking for ways to improve. Every year, the program receives feedback from reflection surveys by members, quarterly reports by host site supervisors, reporting comments by MCSC staff and feedback from community partners on how to make improvements. This feedback is shared with members and host site supervisors and when needed, adjustments are made to training and supervision levels. The program also has a grievance procedure in place for serious problem resolution. In addition, staff is learning how to make a stronger program through additional professional trainings and networking. Program materials, goals, and communication are continually updated and adapted to make the program the most effective one it can be. Evidence for this is in our improved member retention from our first year to our second. In addition, the HPA program exceeded program PMs in both the first and second program years.

## Narratives

### 5. Community Involvement

During the creation of the 2008-2012 HP Strategic Plan, joint visioning sessions were held with the board and staff and HP interviewed key stakeholders. The interviews were conducted by individual board members and were used to obtain candid feedback about perceptions, performance, and future direction of the organization. The interviews took place in the summer of 2007 and 18 individuals were interviewed, representing government agencies, nonprofit organizations, foundations and private business. Some of the partners involved include the Paul H. Young Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Michigan Association of Conservation Districts, County Commissioners, local residents, DNR Fisheries, NE MI Council of Governments, and the Community Foundation for NE MI. Many partners stated the need for more assistance for grassroots groups and the need for more collaborative opportunities. This need prompted HP to seek an AC grant. HPA program staff will annually review the program with the HP board of directors and provide biannual reports to funders. In order to continue to engage community partners, HP will share impacts with community members and seek feedback about program offerings.

### 6. Relationship to other Service Programs

HPA is unique in its position as the only environmental program in the State of Michigan. Because of this, the program feels it is important to collaborate with other national and community service programs to help our members see the "big picture" of AC. The program also hopes to teach members of other programs about service in the natural resource field.

HPA members collaborate with other programs and streams of service through several avenues. Firstly, members participate in statewide programs hosted by MCSC such as Member Celebration and the Russ Mawby Signature Service Project. In addition, a member is sent to represent the program at Member

## Narratives

Council. Through Member Council, the HPA representative learns about other programs in the state. As part of their required service, they must update HPA members on other programs and coordinate a service project which includes cross stream collaboration. Finally, members are encouraged to participate in other service programs such as Senior Corps and Learn and Serve.

### 7. Potential for Replication

HP supports the replication of the HPA model. All program systems, including member recruitment, support and supervision practices, program policies, service activities, and data collection systems are documented. This will allow for continuous improvements year-to-year and seamless program implementation in the event of staff turnover. HP has also made these processes available to other organizations that wish to replicate the program. The original grant was shared with other organizations interested in creating an environmental AC program. HP will continue to share program information.

### Organizational Capability

#### A. Sound Organizational Structure

##### 1. Ability to Provide Sound Programmatic & Fiscal Oversight

Huron Pines (HP), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, was established in 1973. The organization was founded to conserve the forests, lakes and streams of Northeast Michigan (NE MI). Programs have centered on the protection of Michigan's natural resources to keep the air, water and land safe. The staff has grown to include 8 staff members in Grayling, 3-5 seasonal Restoration Crew members and 10+ AmeriCorps (AC) members.

HP is very experienced in managing large scale projects involving volunteers, contractors, multiple counties and staff. Many of the grants which HP administers are federal grants and the staff is very familiar with the policies governing this funding. In a typical year, HP administers ~\$400,000 in federal funding and \$1 million in total funding. These funds are for multiple projects (~ 40 major projects per



## Narratives

year) and consist of reimbursable grants from foundations and government sources, temporarily restricted donations from foundations and individuals, and unrestricted contributions.

Recent grants from the Michigan DNR include \$200,000 (2008) and \$287,555 for Au Sable restoration (2009). Funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service include \$34,000 for restoration on the Au Sable (2006-2009) and \$40,000 in funding for the NE MI Watershed Project (2009-2011). The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service granted \$40,000 for wetland boundary marking (2006-2009). Lastly, the US Forest Service reimbursed HP \$25,000 for large woody debris helicopter work on the Au Sable (2007-2008) and \$15,000 for the Lupton ORV Trail restoration (2007-2011).

The HP Executive Director and Accountant work closely to ensure proper financial management for all projects and will provide on-site monitoring and oversight for the AC grant. Detailed financial reports are produced monthly and reviewed by the Executive Board of Directors. The Board Chair is a Certified Public Accountant and is very active in ensuring sound financial management at HP. Lastly, the organization is independently audited by a Certified Public Accounting firm annually.

Additionally, the expertise of HP in project management results in the coordination and administering of projects for other organizations and units of government. These projects, such as the Grayling Stormwater Project where the City of Grayling received \$1 million in funding through 20 different grants, rely on HP to administer. While this form of project assistance is not part of our financial reports, it should demonstrate the ability to administer funding from the AC program. Securing funding through AC will reinforce HP' ability as a regional leader not only in conservation but sound financial management practices.

The Huron Pines AmeriCorps (HPA) program is a multi-site program. The program utilizes program

## Narratives

staff as well as board members during the host site selection process. A matrix including statement of need, benefit to NE MI, compatibility with mission, past administrative performance, innovative programs, and quality of leadership is used to select host sites. To be sure host sites are able to meet program requirements, a memorandum of understanding is signed prior to member placement. This document explicitly explains roles, objectives, program and cash match requirements and prohibited member activities. Host sites are required to provide quarterly payments of their cash match. Fiscal and programmatic compliance is reviewed quarterly in conjunction with host sites visits.

HPA develops connections between host sites and sends a clear programmatic message. To ensure members are viewed as part of a larger program while at each site, members receive AC grays and HPA uniforms including a nametag and business cards. To encourage cross site collaboration, members are encouraged to participate in other members' service projects and key site events. The HPA program also invites all members and site supervisors to the HP Annual Meeting in February and program Member Celebration in August.

### 2. Board of Directors, Administrators & Staff

HP is governed by an 11 member Board of Directors that is representative (geographically and programmatically) of the services HP provides. The HP volunteer board includes representatives from the business sector, County Boards of Commissioners, Conservation Districts, and resource professionals. This governing structure is administered through the use of an Executive Board. The Executive Board employs an Executive Director to manage the day to day work of the organization and to add staff positions as the organization needs to complete its programs. Currently, HP has a Program Director to provide direction to specific projects, along with four project managers, program assistant, accountant and seasonal river crew. The organization also contracts work to landscape and construction contractors, engineers, and others as needed.

## Narratives

HP will draw on its experienced staff to move the program forward. Key positions for this program include: AC Coordinator (850%) and a Program Assistant (5%). Fiscal oversight will be provided by the HP accountant and program director. The staff members all have experience with the AC program and the AC Coordinator served as a member. The HP staff has little turnover, creating a stable and efficient team.

### 3. Plan for Self-Assessment or Improvement

In addition to recent efforts in soliciting stakeholder input for the preparation of a five-year strategic plan, HP is currently preparing to assess the capacity of the organization with an outside consultant (Ameen and Associates). The organizational matrix that the Board is completing as a part of that effort includes measures of program performance, financial management, sustainability, leadership, infrastructure, as well as a visioning session. Completion of this in-depth, multi-month organizational review process will result in a clear plan of improvement tasks for HP to focus on. Following that effort, HP will once again solicit detailed partner input in order to update its five year strategic plan. The HPA program will benefit from this by knowing what functions the organization is serving well and where HP and partners need more development.

### 4. Plan for Effective Technical Assistance

HP uses several avenues to ensure the program is supporting service sites. To keep partners up-to-date and trained, they annually attend host site orientation, member celebration and participate in a program conference call. Because HPA host sites are spread over a large geographic region, the AC Coordinator visits each site quarterly. Web updates, program calendar, phone and email communications are also utilized for immediate reminders and/or urgent program announcements. Training and technical assistance needs are identified by the AC Coordinator, host site supervisors and members through site

## Narratives

visits and evaluation surveys. When a need is identified, it is either addressed at the program level through a program wide training opportunity or individually. The program reaches out to new organizations when recruiting host sites. This is done through the HP eNews (reaching 1,500 recipients), word-of-mouth and presentations.

The program hosts a member celebration annually in August. This is a day to recognize each individual member and their outstanding service accomplishments. Program goals are also highlighted but the focus is really on the members. Participants at member celebration include members, HP staff, host site supervisors, host site staff, program officers, funders, and media.

### B. Sound Record of Accomplishment as an Organization

#### 1. Volunteer Generation & Support

In 2009, HP utilized over 200 volunteers who contributed nearly 1,000 hours in conservation projects. When combined with the volunteers generated by the HPA program, the organization utilized 847 volunteers in over 3,600 hours. The HPA program plays a significant role in the overall HP volunteer program. Recruitment strategies included sending a volunteer opportunity postcard in the spring, maintaining an online volunteer calendar, highlighting opportunities in the Huron Pine eNews and newsletter and collaborating with partners to reach new volunteer networks. To support volunteers, HP maintains a database of all volunteers and sends out information on project updates and newly available resources. The newsletter and website also highlight exceptional volunteer efforts. In addition, HP awards several volunteer awards to individuals, organizations and businesses at the annual meeting in February.

Volunteers further the capacity of HP in several ways. First, they help HP complete hands-on conservation projects. Second, they provide long-term support to projects such as monitoring water

## Narratives

quality or watching for the spread of invasive species. Third, they become a network of conservation champions in their own communities. And lastly, oftentimes volunteers become financial supporters of the organization.

### 2. Organizational & Community Leadership

HP coordinates projects that cross political boundaries and that require the technical support, funding and input from many different stakeholders. Through its connection to the USDA, as well as numerous other federal and state agencies, it is able to serve in a neutral, project coordination role. The niche of the organization is to take a "hands-on" approach to conservation. To that end, HP avoids engaging in the type of political issues and litigation. The neutrality of HP, particularly the ability of its Board and staff to bring together a diverse group of partners, is the organization's greatest strength. HP has thus become the go-to conservation organization for community partners.

The HPA program was recognized in 2010 as one of the top 52 most innovative programs in the nation. HP has received a number of regional awards including the Conservationist of the Year award in 2008 from the Paul H. Young Chapter of Trout Unlimited and Exemplary Efforts in Environmental Protection in 2008 from the Michigan Rural Water Association (MRWA). HP staff members have received a number of awards including the River Stewardship Award for Resource Professional of the Year in 2009 from the Au Sable Big Water Preservation Association and a coldwater restoration appreciation award in 2007 from the Mason-Griffith Founders Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

HP attends a number of community events and local meetings such as wildlife festivals, sportsmen's expos, city and county commission meetings, community watershed meetings, state planning conferences and local heritage events.

## Narratives

### 3. Success in Securing Match Resources

HP had great success in securing match resources for the last two years of the 2007-2010 grant cycle. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation committed \$100,000 for two years (2009, 2010). Additionally, the DTE Energy Foundation committed \$50,000 for two years (2009, 2010). The program was challenged to find cash match the first year due to the newness of the program. This funding highlights how other organizations recognize the need for natural resource conservation in NE MI. Additional funding enabled the program to increase member orientation, member training and support efforts. In addition, more staff time was devoted to developing the program and supporting host sites and members.

### C. Success in Securing Community Support

#### 1. Collaboration

HP receives community support for conservation programs in NE MI and the HPA program in several ways. In the last two years, the organization has seen a significant increase in media coverage of HP projects. This illustrates two significant transformations; citizens are more interested in HP projects and reporters have developed stronger relationships with HP staff and AC members.

As mentioned, HP and the AC program have received a very positive response from the volunteer community. In addition, a number of community partners have asked to collaborate in planning and implementing volunteer projects for HP' upcoming volunteer program. For example, staff from the Michigan State University Extension 4-H program recently contacted HP about collaborating on a project where 4-H participants could volunteer to assist HP with water quality monitoring. HP is really focusing on partner collaboration for the upcoming volunteer program to both strengthen our program, our partners' programs and to make the experience more meaningful for those volunteering.

Another collaborative community effort has been between schools and members. HP has gotten

## Narratives

increasing requests from educators to have members lead natural resources programs. In addition, counselors have contacted the program to have members present information about AC at career expos and professional development days. This has strengthened efforts to promote environmental stewardship and expanded recruitment.

Natural resource professionals have also been very willing to collaborate with members on projects and with member development. Professionals such as District Conservationists with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Fish and Wildlife Biologists with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Park Interpreters have all agreed to provide job shadowing experiences with members.

### 2. Local Financial & In-kind Contributions

The HPA program has secured a significant amount of both cash match and in-kind contributions. Currently, our program is exceeding the program goals for match requirements. AC programs are required to have 24% for Year 1-3. In 2007-08, HPA match equaled 49% and, in 2008-09, the program match was 48%. The 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 budget also projects match well over the required 24%. As mentioned, HP received cash match from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and DTE Energy Foundation. Host sites have also continued support the program through member fees. In-kind match has primarily come from host sites in the form of member training, supervision, office space and supplies.

### 3. Wide Range of Community Stakeholders

Key stakeholders for HP include local elected officials, state resource agencies, grassroots partner organizations, federal agency resource professionals and private landowners. To efficiently communicate, HP sends biweekly email updates, posts weekly web updates, sends quarterly newsletters, creates project updates, and hosts two large organizational meetings. As previously stated, HP also frequently attends stakeholder meetings and receives daily communications. Support from them has

## Narratives

expanded over time and in scope as demonstrated by the increasing role HP plays in project coordination. State and federal agencies increasingly rely on HP to handle both the project management and financial administration of projects. Grassroots partner organizations also greatly support HP in the development of watershed management plans. In addition, stakeholders have gotten more involved in project planning as demonstrated by the Resource Advisory Group. This group meets quarterly and receives project updates from HP. The quality of conservation projects and community collaboration encourages them to continue participation. To grow these stakeholders, the program requires all members to complete two community presentations to groups about the program. Thus, the organization is beginning to pull in new stakeholders such as educators and service clubs. The support of HP stakeholders have made the organization well positioned to be a regional conservation leader and address the most critical natural resource problems in NE MI.

#### 4. Special Circumstances

The HPA program benefits an underserved part of the United States. NE MI is a very rural area which is often left behind. The communities HP serves have an average household income (as of 2002) of approximately \$32,264, compared to a statewide average of \$44,315 and a national average of \$44,667. The population density is only 34 people per square mile, compared to a statewide average of 175 people per square mile.

Rural areas like NE MI are more affected by the decline in government support because they lack the strong partners and funding sources that can help make up the difference. There are fewer nonprofit organizations and no four-year universities in this 11-county area. There is also a scarcity of philanthropic resources and sources of support which can help nonprofit/community improvement groups in the region. Low population density also means poor representation in statewide politics. The unfortunate reality is that this creates a situation in which less community improvement projects are



## Narratives

developed through statewide programs than in other parts of the state.

### Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

#### A. Cost Effectiveness

##### 1. Corporation Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)

The Huron Pines AmeriCorps (HPA) Cost per MSY is \$13,419 (\$134,192/10). Programs in rural areas with 10 MSY positions, particularly across a large geographic service area, are likely to have a slightly higher Corporation Cost per MSY than average due to higher travel expenses and fewer members to spread the program management and administrative costs across. Additional funds to the program are used to support member travel and member training. In developing this proposal, Huron Pines (HP) staff has worked hard to ensure that the funding from the AmeriCorps (AC) program will be stretched to achieve the project goals in a fiscally responsible manner. Funding is leveraged with non-federal support from all of the project partners.

##### 2. Diverse Non-Federal Support

HP has been very effective in securing match for the AC program. The 2009-2010 budget shows match at 47% (24% required). In 2009, the HPA received funding from two major foundations, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the DTE Energy Foundation. Throughout the first two years of the program, HP staff promoted the program to area funders. As the program gained momentum, a number of funders have expressed interest in supporting the program on both a program and project level. Foremost, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation committed \$100,000 for two years (2009, 2010). Additionally, the DTE Energy Foundation committed \$50,000 for two years (2009, 2010).

By familiarizing these foundations with the program and national service, HP has been building a strong relationship bringing more funding to national service. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation participated in the AC Stream Restoration 101 training in June 2009. The foundation sent a film crew and produced a short

## Narratives

video on the program. HP is especially proud of this because the foundation funds over a thousand projects a year but produces only a handful of videos. As these foundations have expressed interest in the HPA program, the program will pursue renewing these grants in 2011.

HP receives match, both in-kind and cash, from our host sites. Host sites must contribute \$6,800 for each FT member and \$3,800 for each HT member placed with their organization. In addition, we receive in-kind supervision and training hours from the host site supervisors and in-kind match in the form of space provided host sites, supplies, additional training, project mileage, and other project expenses. This not only helps supplement the budget but also ensures buy-in from the host sites.

### 3. Decreased Reliance on Federal Support

Currently, the program is exceeding the program goals for match requirements. AC programs are required to have 24% for Year 1-3. In 2007-08, HPA match equaled 49% and in 2008-09, program match was 48%.

### B. Budget Adequacy

The HPA budget is designed to meet the performance goals of this program. HP believes the budget fairly reflects the expenses necessary for the successful completion of the program. It is based on utilizing 8 full-time MSY members and four half-time MSY members at 7-10 locations throughout Northeast Michigan. The budget is based on proposed goals and accounts for training opportunities, reporting requirements, supplies and office space, travel needs, and for adequate supervision and assistance.

Travel expenses are likely higher in this proposal than in other applications. This is due to the very rural nature of HP service area, the rather large watersheds that members will be serving in, and the travel

## Narratives

demands placed on our AC Coordinator working in an 11-county area. The program believes in close member supervision and face-to-face contact and therefore feels travel is a priority.

The budget anticipates the work of a full-time AC Coordinator (85%) and a Program Assistant (5%). In addition, HP will provide the necessary assistance of technical staff, Accountant, and Executive Director. The organization is fortunate to have experienced staff to fill these positions and ensure the success of the program. Payroll expenses and fringe benefits are calculated based on actual costs.

The use of outside contractors and expenses for evaluation are not a part of the year one project budget. HP does not anticipate the need for contractual help this year and will conduct an in-house evaluation with staff and project partners.

While the grant request itself is not large when compared to other AC grants, it is significant funding for an important conservation program which will have a lasting impact far beyond the dollars spent. The amount requested from AC is a great investment for the AC program into an underserved region of the country. The federal dollars and partnership opportunity with AC is necessary to help HP obtain additional financial support.

Now is the time, as the need has never been greater. Northeast Michigan needs the people resources to help restore degraded habitat, teach our children the value of natural resources and develop cutting edge conservation programs. Northeast Michigan needs the funding investment to reduce the impact of losing traditional sources of support. Locally-led, grassroots conservation organizations in Northeast Michigan must evolve to meet the needs of the 21st century. Our economy and indeed our health depends upon it.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

## Narratives

The first two years of the Huron Pines AmeriCorps program was very successful and exceeded all of the performance measures for both years. In addition member retention was increased to 100% for the second year. Every year, Huron Pines strives to improve and strengthen the program resulting in more conservation projects being completed and providing meaningful service activities for members and host sites.

Of the members completing their service with Huron pines, 75% have found career jobs, returned to school or are serving a second AmeriCorps term. Any issues or concerns were addressed immediately and there were no official grievances filled during the first two years of the program.

There is still a demand for the program's services documented by the fact that more host sites apply to the program annually than we have member positions. We will continue to hold a competitive application process annually to ensure the best sites are selected and member positions are aligned with program and AmeriCorps goals. Because members serve at sites across a large region, there has been a disconnect between the members serving at their host sites and the program. Every year, Huron Pines has increased the frequency of communication through email, phone calls and site visits. Additionally, Huron Pines holds more frequent trainings in the beginning of service and facilitates members working together on projects whenever applicable. This has helped to create a better bond among members and resulted in more coordinated projects being completed.

Huron Pines works very closely with the Michigan Community Service Commission to ensure all procedures are being followed and that performance measures are being met. The staff at MCSC has been excellent in helping to develop Huron Pines AmeriCorps into an impactful conservation program. The most recent feedback from MCSC staff has been very encouraging. Michigan Program Office, March Bishop-Gates expressed, "You have done an excellent job of demonstrating the effectiveness of this

## Narratives

program through this progress report. Between the reports submitted by the program, and the consistent supply of media information, the MCSC has a clear picture of what is being accomplished in northern lower Michigan".

Internally, Huron Pines realized that it was important to have one person solely dedicated to the program. Many of the member's comments reflected that they would like to have one person as the point-of-contact to make communication easier. As a result of that input, and additional fundraising efforts, Huron Pines hired a fulltime AmeriCorps Coordinator to administer the program for the third year.

Concerning feedback from host sites, the program is trying a more formal approach to collecting information. Feedback provided by host sites was relayed to the Program Director during the host site application process and during the formal 6-month and end-of-term evaluations for the member. The majority of feedback from host sites was positive and sites indicated having a positive experience with the program and with their members. All of the sites from the 1st year reapplied for a 2nd year. Some frustration stemmed from preparing in-kind match reports and supervisor in-kind hours. Huron Pines continues to work closely with the host sites to streamline the reporting. The program added host site quarterly reports in the 09-10 year to collect feedback on specific practices, such as the recruiting process, and overall programmatic feedback.

Member feedback for the program was overall very positive and very helpful in improving the program for future members. Three of the members from the 2nd year are serving as members in year 3. The program received praise for the high-quality trainings, networking opportunities and fostering leadership in members. The majority of members who participated in the program are looking for career opportunities in natural resource management and are very enthusiastic about their member service.

## Narratives

The following is a list of suggestions from members to help strengthen the program: more interaction between members and coordination of projects, share member activities (reporting and updates) with the whole group, on-site orientation for members, streamline reporting, professional uniforms, consistent business card and print materials available to members, and one point of contact.

Huron Pines AmeriCorps has worked very hard to address the suggestions listed above in order to provide a more meaningful experience for members. There are more scheduled meetings/trainings for members; there is a single person dedicated to the program who shares project updates with members and supervisors; an outline for onsite orientation is now part of site supervisor trainings; reporting requirements had been improved to making it easier for members to share accomplishments; and HPA provides professional uniforms and print materials to be used by member.

The program plans to continue collecting feedback from community partners, members and host sites through both formal and informal means. Members will continue to have mid-service and year-end reviews and host sites will continue to use quarterly reports. In addition, feedback will be collected through training feedback form and member suggestions.

### Amendment Justification

N/A

### Clarification Summary

Clarification Response FY10

How sites are chosen, what positions site supervisors occupy, and how site supervisors' work is connected to that of the AmeriCorps member:

Huron Pines AmeriCorps selects host sites on a competitive basis. The competitive selection process for

## Narratives

host sites requires organizations to annually examine the conservation needs of the communities they serve and determine the best way to utilize an AmeriCorps member to address those needs. Host sites must submit an application to host an AmeriCorps member, a sample service plan for the member and identify a site supervisor. The applications and service plans are then reviewed by Huron Pines staff and decisions are based on several key factors.

The most important factor is how the member's service will impact conservation in Northern Michigan. The impact can be through directly restoring habitat, promoting environmental stewardship and/or developing new conservation services. Another key factor is how the member will engage and utilize volunteers. Considerations on the site's ability to host and supervise a member are also considered. The sites must have the following available for the member: office space, desk, computer, phone, internet access, adequate supplies, ability to supervise a member and opportunities for member development. Member service should both advance the host site's conservation mission and provide members with realworld experiences, networking and training opportunities, and professional responsibilities so that members develop as leaders in conservation.

Huron Pines is very strict regarding close member supervision. Site supervisor are required to closely monitor member activities and provide day-to-day guidance. They must approve 2-week schedules (members submit), timesheets and all monthly reporting as well as submit in-kind match and participate in mid and year end reviews. Site supervisors are either Executive Directors or senior staff. Titles of past site supervisors include: Executive Director, Program Director, Program Manager, Director of Land Protection, Director of Stewardship, Ecologist, Biologist and Land Management Specialist.

The work of the site supervisor and service that AmeriCorps members provide are very closely linked.

## Narratives

For smaller organizations, site supervisors tend to be Executive Directors (ED). For sites with more staff, site supervisors tend to be directors of departments. For example, if a site submits an application to have members further land protection efforts, their site supervisor would be the Director of Land Protection. The site supervisors work alongside the AmeriCorps members to prioritize and accomplish set tasks outlined in the member position descriptions. Members and site supervisors must meet at least every other week to review 2-week schedules. To ensure members are receiving the adequate supervision, the Huron Pines AmeriCorps Coordinator conducts a minimum of four site visits and solicits frequent member feedback including a mid-service evaluation.

Diverse Corps- how will a diverse corps be ensured?

Huron Pines is committed as an equal opportunity employer. During the process of creating member position descriptions, member recruitment, and member placement, Huron Pines is sure to be as inclusive as possible. On our next positing of member position descriptions, we will be adding the following language, "If you need to make a request for a reasonable accommodations, due to a disability, such as to obtain materials in a format that works for you or to fully participate in the interviewing process, please contact the AmeriCorps Coordinator at (989) 344-0753 ext 30 or [info@huronpines.org](mailto:info@huronpines.org)." In addition, we will break the description of tasks to into two groups, essential or marginal functions. For a prospective member, this assists in determining if they will able to perform the tasks with or without reasonable accommodations. For supervisors, this assists in determining, before having a member in a position, what the member must be able to do and what tasks are non-essential to the position. Because several of the Huron Pines AmeriCorps positions have a physical requirement, the program will be very clear what the exact physical requirements are and if it is essential to the position.

During the process of member recruitment, Huron Pines uses various outreach methods to reach a



## Narratives

diverse audience. Huron Pines posts the positions on community college and university websites and emails school staff. The program also posts the positions on environment and natural resources job sites, email lists and on host site and program websites. The program advertises in local papers and requires that each current member gives at least two presentations that includes how people can join AmeriCorps. One of the presentations given by our lead AmeriCorps Council member must be to a disability community. Posted on the program web page with the position descriptions is also a document with FAQs regarding how participation in a national service programs may affect benefits such as supplemental security income, social security disability income, etc.

During the interview process and member placement process, Huron Pines is sure to offer reasonable accommodations and follows a strict non-discrimination policy. As mentioned, the program includes language in the position description that communicates reasonable accommodations are available for the interview. At the interview, applicants are asked if there are any reasonable accommodations that need to be made at the site to make service possible. The program has identified funds available through the Michigan Community Service Commission that are available for carrying out reasonable accommodation requests. Additionally, the AmeriCorps Coordinator and Site Supervisor provide opportunities for disclosure but disclosure of a disability is not required if a member is not comfortable sharing that information.

To date, the applications the program has received have been diverse in age, location/place of birth, education level and experience. The program has had members who have disclosed physical disabilities as well.

Priority area and national performance measure:

## Narratives

The program is addressing the 2010 national priority area in Clean Energy and the Environment. However, the program has developed its own performance measures (PMs) in order to best meet community needs in Northern Michigan.

### FY10 Budget Clarification Response

Section A: Local site supervisors at the host sites are not in Section A of the budget. Their time is counted as in-kind match under Corporation Fixed Percentage, Commission Fixed Amount.

Section B: Due to the character limit in the calculation section, we entered several acronyms to keep the character count within the limit. Health Insurance =HI; FICA=Federal Insurance Contributions Act; Unemployment=UN; Workman's compensation=WC; Prgrm Dir= Program Director; AC Coordinator= AmeriCorps Coordinator; Program Assistant

Section E: Office space for staff and members was moved to Section 1 (Other); supplies were itemized

Section I: Added budget for criminal history checks-budget was \$0 because Huron Pines uses a free criminal history check called ICHAT through the State of Michigan; Travel to CNCS meetings was itemized

Source of funds: Host site are required to provide Huron Pines with cash match to host a member. Host site cash match = \$6,800 per full-time member x 8 members = \$54,400 and \$3,800 per half-time member x 4 members = \$15,200 Total = \$69,600. Host sites will thus contribute \$69,600 in cash match. Host sites raise the cash match from a variety of sources including local/state/federal grants,

## Narratives

community foundations and private funds.

Foundation match = \$10,000 cash. In 2008 and 2009, foundation match was secured from the WK Kellogg Foundation and the DTE Energy Foundation. For the next grant period, Huron Pines will seek funding from similar private foundations.

PM1: Environmental Stewardship (environmental education): Intermediate outcome clarification

The program is not measuring changes in behavior at this time. The program is not currently set up to measure meaningful long-term behavioral changes in students. The program's service year matches the field season, not the school year so tracking behavioral changes that would occur throughout the school year would be difficult. Because the key focus of the program is conservation, the emphasis is on measuring conservation results.

### Continuation Changes

Programmatic changes:

The program is formalizing three programmatic changes. Firstly, Huron Pines is adjusting the start date of full-time members. Previously, the program started full-time members in October and exited them at the end of September. After gathering feedback from members and host sites, the program is moving the start date of full-time members to January and will exit them at the end of October. This change more closely matches with the highs and lows of field work and project planning. Half-time members will continue to serve from May to October.

The program is making two changes to member requirements, one concerning previous education and the other regarding requirements during service. Previously, the program required a Bachelors degree. The program is now requiring a minimum of 2 years college experience and, when necessary for the position, requires a Bachelors degree. The program has not had difficulty finding applicants with a Bachelors degree but felt it excluded well-qualified applicants. This change will help increase diversity

## Narratives

during recruitment, especially for the half-time positions.

Additionally, Huron Pines is increasing the minimum number of volunteers each member must recruit from 20 to 30 and increasing the number of great stories from 3 to 4.

The program is updating the Habitat Restoration performance measure at this time. Members will complete 25 on-the-ground restoration projects (up from 24) resulting in 50 acres of land restored (up from 24) and 5 miles of shoreline restored (no change in shoreline).

Member enrollment and retention:

During the 2009-2010 program year, the program utilized 11/12 MSYs and retained 15/18 members enrolled. The program initially enrolled 9 full-time members. Of those 9 members, 2 left the program without compelling personal circumstances prior to completing 30% of their service. One member enrolled in graduate school and the other member could not fulfill service requirements. Both left the program on good terms. Huron Pines then converted 3 FT slots to half-time slots. The program then had 10 HT slots. Of those 10 slots, 9 HT members were enrolled. One HT remained unfilled due to budget restraints. Of those 9 HT members, 8 successfully completed service requirements. One HT member was unable to finish due to overcommitment.

Overall, Huron Pines felt enrollment and retention were strengths of the program. To avoid future member loss, the program increased emphasis on the scale of commitment during the recruiting process. During interviews, the AmeriCorps Coordinator emphasized the high level of time and energy needed to successfully complete a term.

Budget changes:

The program is changing the percentage of staff time under personnel. The Program Director is no longer listed under Section 1.A. The Program Assistant is reduced from 20% to 5%. Lastly, the

## Narratives

AmeriCorps Coordinator is reduced from 100% to 85%. A total of 90% of a staff position is devoted to the program. Now in its fourth year, the program does not need the level of staff time it did in the previous years. With an experienced Program Assistant and AmeriCorps Coordinator, the program will be able to administer a high-impact AmeriCorps program at 90%.

Huron Pines also decreased the amount of match from \$142,028 to \$79,764. In previous years, the program has shown well over the required match--47% when only 24% is required. The program is currently showing 37% match when only 30% is required.

The program plans to raise approximately \$70,000 from host site fees and an additional \$10,000 in additional catch match. These funds will be raised from foundations (i.e. DTE Energy Foundation) and other Huron Pines AmeriCorps supporters. The remaining match will be sourced from in-kind match from host sites.

## Performance Measures

### SAA Characteristics

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

### Priority Areas

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

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas      5.5

### 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.)

100 students and youth will receive education or training in energy-efficient

and environmentally-conscious practices, including but not limited to sustainable

energy and other natural resources, and sustainable agriculture through partner programs such as the Great

Lakes Stewardship Initiative, summer learning programs, special events and requests from local educators.

### Result: Output

Result.

100 students and youth will receive education or training in energy-efficient

and environmentally-conscious practices, including but not limited to sustainable

energy and other natural resources, and sustainable agriculture through partner programs such as the Great

Lakes Stewardship Initiative, summer learning programs, special events and requests from local educators.

Indicator: EN3: Individuals receiving education in energy-efficiency.

Target : Number of students and youth receiving education or training

Target Value: 100

Instruments: Sign-in and/or attendance sheets

PM Statement: 100 students and youth will receive education or training in energy-efficient and environmentally-conscious practices, including but not limited to sustainable energy and other natural resources, and sustainable agriculture through partner programs such as the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative, summer learning programs, special events and requests from local educators.

### Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Students participating in the program will demonstrate a 50%

improvement in environmental knowledge.

Indicator: improvement of environmental knowledge

Target : 75% of students participating in the program will demonstrate a

50% improvement in environmental knowledge.

Target Value: 75

Instruments: Change in environmental knowledge will be determined by pre and post tests of the student's environmental knowledge

PM Statement: The intermediate outcome of providing students with environmental education services will be a 50% improvement of at least 75 student's environmental knowledge.

**Priority Area: Environmental Stewardship**

### Strategy to Achieve Results

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

5 miles of trails or rivers (owned/maintained by national, state, county, city

## National Performance Measures

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)  
governments or tribal communities) and 30 acres of national parks, State parks, city parks, county parks, or other public lands will be cleaned, improved, and/or created through river clean-ups, public access management, trail-blazing, planting vegetation along lakes and streams, invasive species removal, forest management, water monitoring and shoreline stabilization projects. These habitat improvement projects help to directly improve water quality and wildlife habitat, as well as build support for local organizations by involving people in projects where they can see results.

### Result: Output

Result.

30 acres of national parks, State parks, city parks, county parks, or other public lands, will be cleaned or improved

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

Target : # of acres of national parks, State parks, city parks,  
county parks, or other public lands, that are cleaned or improved

Target Value: 30

Instruments: Tracking document or thank you note from entity that owns the area cleaned/improved.

PM Statement: 30 acres of national parks, State parks, city parks, county parks, or other public lands, will be cleaned or improved.

### Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

90% of project partners will rate the quality of service activities as satisfactory or very satisfactory in written surveys.

Indicator: Each project partner will complete a post-program satisfaction survey.

Target : % of partners who rate the quality of service activities as satisfactory or very satisfactory in  
written surveys

Target Value: 90

Instruments: Written surveys of project partners.

PM Statement: 90% of project partners will rate the quality of service activities as satisfactory or very satisfactory in written surveys.

### Result: Output

Result.

5 miles of trails or rivers, owned or maintained by the Federal Government or a State, will be cleaned or improved.

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

Target : # miles of trails or rivers, owned or maintained by the Federal Government or a State, that are  
cleaned or improved



## National Performance Measures

Result.

Target Value: 5

Instruments: Tracking documents and/or acknowledgement of receipt of services.

PM Statement: 5 miles of trails or rivers, owned or maintained by the Federal Government or a State, will be cleaned or improved improved.

## Required Documents

**Document Name**

**Status**

Evaluation

Not Applicable

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable