



2010 SOUTHWEST CLUSTER CONFERENCE

MARCH 2-4, 2010

DALLAS, TEXAS

The Value of Incorporating Environmental Service into any Program – Ideas from a Conservation Corps

Why Environmental Service?

- Can engage a diverse group of participants including younger kids (middle, high school), at-risk, college bound, veterans, etc.
- Addresses issues of vital national/international importance including climate change
- Works with both a crew-based model (corps) as well as individual placement (e.g. WHWT)
- Meets critical and specifically identified needs (e.g. backlogged maintenance on public lands)
- Often attracts match funding from project sponsors (e.g. fee-for-service) which helps program budgets and further demonstrates the need for the work
- Has potential for many ancillary benefits such as addressing obesity, creating off-line community, 'kids in the woods' issues, camping crews, etc.

Potential Partners:

- Schools – grounds, gardens, open spaces, watersheds
- Community – greenlots, gardens, common areas, empty lots
- County/City Parks
- County/city road and bridge departments
- State Parks and wildlife areas
- Federal Lands – National parks, forests, wildlife refuges

State or foundation funds for outdoor or energy projects

Private/corporate funds for public projects – reclamation, offsets, community investment, etc.

Questions to ask:

- What benefits/objectives are we after?
- Does it fit into our mission?
- What is the best strategy for integration?
- What potential partners are out there?
- What do they want?
- Does that fit our objectives?
- How to make it work programmatically?
 - Leading
 - Safety and risk management
 - Transport
 - Tools and equipment

Resources:

- The Corps Network - www.corpsnetwork.org
- Children and Nature Network - www.childrenandnature.org

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