

Coastal Restoration Corps

Background

The United States has a long history of innovation and job training through national service programs. In response to the Great Depression, President Roosevelt created the 1930s Civilian Conservation Corps. In the 1960s, President Kennedy created the Peace Corps. In the 1990s, President Clinton created AmeriCorps. We will build upon this history of innovation in the US corps movement with the creation of a Coastal Restoration Corps. Restore America's Estuaries, in concert with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), convened a workshop in February 2011 to explore the idea of a corps dedicated to restoring coastal and estuarine habitats that would also result in "green" jobs. At that workshop, 45 leaders and experts worked through a number of key issues regarding the establishment of a Coastal Restoration Corps.



This group of leaders and partners are now determining how to implement the collective vision that resulted from the workshop. The workshop participants agreed that tremendous untapped potential exists within established groups currently undertaking restoration throughout the country via community-based volunteer and conservation corps efforts. As a result, the goal is to network these groups, support and unify them with a national brand, and harness their expertise and ability in order to grow the size and effectiveness within the coastal restoration movement. In addition to supporting critical on-the-ground restoration, the Coastal Restoration Corps will offer training and work experience to people wanting to enter the coastal restoration field. Doing so will help develop the next generation of restoration professionals and provide a stepping stone into the public, private, and non-profit job markets.

Mission

To serve as a national voice and catalyst to:

- Restore and protect America's coastal communities and natural resources;
- Engage and mobilize citizens to be good stewards at the local level; and
- Instill a strong conservation and service ethic in people of all ages.

Vision

- Achieve results on the ground through the efforts of diverse, local communities and organizations;
- Catalyze a change in culture such that coastal conservation and stewardship, along with a commitment to service, are respected and valued across the Nation; and
- Develop an organization with a widely recognized and respected identity known for its cost-effective, flexible approach to community engagement and workforce development.



For more information, please contact:
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Implementation

Workshop participants identified key actions that are necessary to making the Coastal Restoration Corps a reality:

- Funding – secure initial seed money with goal of being self-sufficient with a diversity of fiscal sources maximized on the community level;
- Structure and governance – nonprofit “umbrella” group on the national level that networks and supports existing local organizations;
- Branding – develop a logo and marketing strategy that resonates with a wide audience and captures the elements of environment, community, and economies;
- Program development – craft administrative structure and create a process that matches volunteers and corps in communities and with projects that need them; and
- Launch strategy – get up and running quickly to take advantage of momentum generated by initiatives such as America’s Great Outdoors, National Ocean Policy, the Gulf Coast Task Force, and the existing efforts of corps around the country.

Our coasts are in desperate need of our assistance now more than ever before. A myriad of threats continue to batter coastal ecosystems that are already stressed. Tremendous enthusiasm and capacity exist within volunteer and corps groups already making strides restoring and conserving habitat. The key is to unify and support that energy and ability, increase these efforts, and ensure they are coordinated and cost-effective. In establishing this Corps, the country will benefit from healthier ecosystems and from a trained workforce with professional skills that will carry them through their lives and careers.



Get Involved!

As we move forward with this initiative, we invite wide and diverse involvement, so please let us know if you would like to be contacted with future updates and information on how to be a part of this exciting undertaking.



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