



California Conservation Corps
Watershed Stewards Program
in partnership with AmeriCorps



WSP Partnership Opportunity

During their AmeriCorps term of service, WSP Corpsmembers gain experience in five areas: Watershed Recovery and Resiliency, Watershed Education, Community Outreach, Volunteer Recruitment, and Corpsmember Development. They spend approximately 72-percent of their time engaged in work with their Placement Site, while the remaining time is spent working on WSP requirements.

WSP Corpsmember Activities

The majority of projects that Corpsmembers do at their Placement Sites must be hands-on restoration work, and align with the following guidelines:

- **Native Revegetation:** Corpsmembers assist in making CA's watersheds (including riparian, upslope, and instream habitats) more resilient to anthropogenic climate change by installing native and endemic plants in high need watersheds. Native plants evolved to tolerate local environmental conditions and temperature regimes and support a much greater number of species compared to non-native plants. More native biodiversity in an ecosystem serves to increase the resiliency of that ecosystem to the effects of climate change. Native plant species provide bank stability with their deep root systems, are adapted to local environmental conditions, require less water for growth, help to slow and sink stormwater and provide vital shade which helps to reduce water temperatures. Lower water temperatures improve outcomes for salmonid. Planting native vegetation provides a direct benefit to salmonid populations by providing habitat for many macroinvertebrate species that salmonids depend on for nourishment, preventing fine sediment runoff from settling into salmonid's critical breeding areas and improving water quality. Wetland plant species filter out excess nitrogen from agricultural runoff, further improving water quality and preventing harmful algal blooms.
- **Invasive/ Noxious Species Removals:** Corpsmembers assist in rebuilding and expanding riparian/upslope buffers and instream ecosystems through invasive/ noxious species removals (plants and crayfish/ Sacramento Pikeminnow) which out-compete native species. Removal of invasive/noxious species combats fast spreading monocultures and promotes biodiversity. Invasive plants often out



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compete native species for resources such as space, light, water, and nutrients and can lead to localized native plant extinction. California's most invasive species include, but are not limited to, various types of ivy, fennel, mustard, Himalayan blackberry, Spartina, pampas grass, various thistle species, hogweed, Arundo, and night shade. Corpsmembers reinforce riparian corridors by planting willow cuttings streamside to provide shade, reduce bank erosion, and slow stormwater. Willow also serves as a foundational species, encouraging later, long-lived successional species. Corpsmembers also broadcast native seeds (native grasses or forbs) onto hill slopes to stabilize soils and reduce erosion.

- **In-Channel/ Instream Restoration:** Corpsmembers assist with installing large woody debris (LWD) structures and creating off-channel ponds to recharge ground water levels and restore/increase available rearing habitat for salmonids. They remove/ improve fish passage barriers and monitor culverts during storm events to ensure they are clear of debris and allow salmonids access to their natal streams. CMs also monitor water quality and quantity to assist WSP's partners in ensuring community agriculture and industry does not exceed their total maximum daily loads (TMDL) of pollutants. Other in-channel or instream activities include riparian fence installation, litter removal, and culvert improvements. Removal of trash reduces point source pollution, improves salmonid access to spawning grounds, and increases water quality conditions overall.
- **Stormwater Management:** Corpsmembers implement projects designed to increase water efficiency and decrease water consumption by installing stormwater catchment systems, sheet mulch, and bioswales around agricultural and urban landscapes. These installations help direct the flow of stormwater and enrich soil which aids in flood mitigation, groundwater recharge, and soil permeability. The structures are designed to slow and sink stormwater, thus helping to filter out pollutants before it enters creeks and rivers. These systems help to reduce the need for irrigation and improve overall water quantity for salmonids. Corpsmembers also monitor instream flows and develop water models that are used to develop effective water-use policy.
- **Field Survey Data Collection:** Corpsmembers conduct various types of field surveys to establish restoration project needs and salmonid presence. The types of surveys include – Spawner/Redd, Snorkel, Lamprey, Vegetation, CRAM, RIPRAM,



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Sediment, Amphibian, Water Quality, Habitat Typing, E-Fishing, Trawling, Seining, etc. Monitoring salmonid populations is critical to determining what restoration actions must be taken and where. Field surveys are the only way to verify the causality and long-term efficacy of any restoration efforts.

- **Project Maintenance:** Corpsmembers engage in project maintenance such as effectiveness monitoring, weeding, and watering to ensure the success of their various watershed recovery and resiliency interventions.

Corpsmembers engage in other activities under the guidance of WSP staff, including the following:

- **Education:** All Corpsmembers must teach the Wonders of Watershed (WOW!) Education Program to at least one class of 2nd-5th grade students (goal of 20 students or more). The WOW! curriculum consists of five 50 to 80-minute lessons focusing on human impacts and interactions with watersheds, local problems and solutions for salmon populations, pollution solutions, importance of biodiversity, life of a salmon, and water is a finite resource.
- **Outreach:** All WSP Corpsmembers may attend a community outreach event in their district/region during their term of service. These opportunities are identified each year by the Program Coordinators; past events have included the Klamath-Trinity Fish Fair, Creek Days, and San Luis Obispo Earth Day. These events are generally outdoor education focused. Corpsmembers are encouraged to participate in other promotions of WSP and watershed education while with their Placement Site.
- **Volunteer Recruitment:** All Corpsmembers must organize a Watershed Awareness Volunteer Event (WAVE) a hands-on community restoration project. Corpsmembers are responsible for facilitating the event and aim to recruit 25 community volunteers.
- **Corpsmember Development:** WSP provides many training opportunities for Corpsmembers. The year begins with a week-long Orientation, followed by a weeklong WAVE & WOW! Training in November to introduce Corpsmembers to the education and volunteer recruitment aspects of the program. We offer optional webinars and career development as well as opportunities to learn more about



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fisheries and restoration through conferences and local meetings. Finally, all Corpsmembers come together in the summer to exit the program and celebrate their service term at the Recognition Ceremony in a centralized location in California.

The work that Corpsmembers do at their Placement Sites must align with WSP's mission and goals and coincide with WSP guidelines.

Benefits of Partnering with WSP

As a program of the California Conservation Corps, WSP has created a solid reputation throughout the environmental community. When you partner with WSP, you receive the following:

- **Exclusive Recruitment:** WSP staff conducts initial interviews and provides sites with a minimum of eight well-matched applicants to interview and select from. Complete application packets are provided (WSP Application, Resume, Cover Letter, Letters of Recommendation, and initial interview notes/score).
- **Extensive Background Screening:** WSP conducts an extensive screening process before Corpsmembers arrive to your site, including:
 - DOJ/FBI criminal history check
 - NSOPR (National Sex Offender) check
 - Pre-employment physical and drug test
 - DMV Driving Record pull
- **Covered Employer Costs:** WSP covers employer costs, including:
 - Monthly stipends (around minimum wage)
 - Workers' compensation
 - Program-sponsored medical insurance. The monthly premiums will be fully paid by the program. Corpsmembers will be responsible for any required deductibles and out-of-pocket copayments.
 - Employee Assistance Program
- **Covered Corpsmember Benefit Costs:** WSP provides Corpsmembers with many benefits, including:
 - Scholarship upon completion of the year's commitments
 - Full uniform (pants, shirts, fleece jackets, raingear, hats)



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- First aid kits
 - Field gear (waders, stream boots)
 - **Thorough Corpsmember Training and Certifications:** WSP will train Corpsmembers in the following before they arrive to their host site:
 - State and Federal employee policies (EEO, Health & Safety)
 - First Aid/CPR certification
 - Workplace professionalism and WSP Policies
 - **Public Outreach:** Corpsmembers conduct vital community outreach and provide positive public relations for agencies.
 - **Corpsmember/Mentor Support:** WSP staff are available throughout the year to provide valuable support to both Mentors and Corpsmembers. WSP staff will travel to Placement Sites to conduct Site Visits to ensure all partners and Corpsmembers are supported, when possible and as needed.
 - **Corpsmember Management Support:** WSP provides Placement Sites with on-going support in the areas of Corpsmember management and discipline (if the rare need arises).