

Washington Conservation Corp Hiring 300 Statewide

Local News

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - The Department of Ecology's Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) is looking for applicants to fill nearly 300 AmeriCorps service positions in 16 counties across the state.

The WCC was created in 1983 and has provided opportunities and training for more than 1,700 young adults. In 1994, WCC started received federal AmeriCorps funding, allowing crews to carry out on-the-ground projects across the state. Local communities rely on WCC to complete environmental projects by forming cost-share agreements with Ecology. Typical WCC activities include planting trees and vegetation, repairing stream and streamside habitat, constructing and upgrading trails, building fencing and providing environmental education. ***The upcoming WCC AmeriCorps service year starts Oct. 1, 2012 and ends Sept. 19, 2013. Job seekers can apply at www.ecy.wa.gov/wcc/memberpositions.html.***

The WCC also includes the Puget Sound Corps, formed in 2011, to complete projects on public lands designed to help carry out the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda – the single playbook for focusing efforts to recover and protect the Sound. Last year, WCC members planted 940,000 trees and shrubs, improved or restored 1,100 acres of new fish and wildlife habitat and constructed or improved 400 miles of recreational trails. The WCC also helps communities cope with natural disasters by responding to and removing storm, flood, fire and other debris and recruiting and managing emergency response volunteers. In 2012, members assisted with flood response near Ellensburg, wild land firefighting near Entiat, and marine debris cleanup along coastal beaches in southwest Washington. Most members work in six-member crews, but the WCC also provides opportunities for individuals to serve with natural resource organizations throughout Washington. In

addition, Ecology will be recruiting up to 14 crew supervisor positions to manage new crew members in the field. To apply, go to www.ecy.wa.gov/wcc/supervisor.html. WCC positions for this coming service year are being supported by:· \$277,000 in AmeriCorps Education Awards from the Corps Network, a national service partner.· \$950,000 from Ecology.· \$1.9 million from the Washington State Commission for National and Community Service.· \$4.2 million from the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) through the 2012 Washington Jobs Now Act.

The Jobs Now Act was passed by the 2012 Washington Legislature and authorizes \$500 million in new general obligation bonds to finance public construction and energy efficiency retrofitting projects, improve water quality and clean up the environment. The act expands the Puget Sound Corps. Most Sound Corps crews are made up of young adults from 18 to 25 years old, but several crews will include opportunities for military veterans who will work on DNR urban forestry projects in King and Pierce counties. Age restrictions for military veterans may be waived. The Jobs Now Act also provides opportunities for veterans to serve as part of a new trail crew in Mason County or on urban forestry projects in Clark County. AmeriCorps service affords military veterans the opportunity to continue serving their communities and country while gaining new skills and contacts in the environmental field. Corps members will earn certifications in emergency management and environmental topics and get assistance from the state Department of Veterans Affairs. WCC members earn \$9.04 an hour and receive a \$5,550 AmeriCorps education award upon completing their service year. The award may be used for student loans or future tuition expenses.