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State of Wisconsin

WISCONSIN SERVICE CONSERVATION CHALLENGE CORPS PRIDE

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Topf Wells

WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CORPS FACT SHEET

Contact: Topf Wells, Executive Director (608) 266-7730

1. **PURPOSE:** The Wisconsin Conservation Corps (WCC) hires unemployed youth aged 18-25 on conservation and community development projects throughout the state. Corps members are enabled to develop a stable work record and good work habits.
2. **GOVERNANCE:** The Corps is a state agency. Its governing body is a seven person, volunteer Board, appointed by the Governor. Members serve six-year, staggered terms; they are selected to provide regional, environmental, and agricultural representation. The Board establishes policy for the WCC, selects WCC projects, and employs the agency's Executive Director.
3. **SERVICES:** Participants work 40 hours per week, and can be employed for one year. Corps members are paid the higher of the state or federal minimum wage. Those who remain in the Corps for the year are eligible to receive a bonus of either a \$1,950 tuition scholarship or \$500 cash.

The primary emphasis is on work experience: developing good work habits, learning job responsibilities, working with others, and establishing a stable work record. Although not a primary goal, crew members receive some direct training on the job. If a project involves welding, for example, the members will be trained in the required welding skills. All members learn first aid and job-seeking skills.
4. **SERVICE DELIVERY:** The work is performed at approximately 55 locations throughout the state. The Corps is made up of crews which have from six to nine members and are supervised daily by a crew leader. Crew members commute to their WCC project headquarters.
5. **ELIGIBILITY:** The program is available to unemployed Wisconsin residents age 18 to 25. There is no age restriction for crew leaders. Crew leader wages are set by the Board; currently, they range from \$7.97 to \$11.33 per hour, depending on length of service with the WCC.
6. **PROJECTS:** The WCC works on a wide variety of conservation and community development projects. WCC work must be labor intensive and of significant value to the public. By statute, WCC labor cannot displace any worker. Examples of WCC projects include but are not limited to: trail construction, park development, energy conservation, fish and wildlife habitat improvement, timber stand improvement, and housing rehabilitation.
7. **SPONSORS:** A WCC project is planned by a sponsor or a group of co-sponsors. Federal agencies, state agencies, local governments, Native American tribes, and nonprofit organizations are eligible to sponsor WCC projects.
8. **FUNDING:** The Corps has a \$4.64 million annual budget. Breakdown of sources of funding is as follows:

General Purpose Revenue	\$ 3,200,000
Transportation Fund	\$ 280,000
Conservation Fund	\$ 510,000
Program Revenue	\$ 40,000
Energy Team Grant	\$ 610,000
9. **RESULTS:** Since WCC's inception in 1983 approximately 3,800 youth were served at over 350 project work sites in the state. Most Corps graduates took a more permanent or higher paying position. Twenty-five percent of recent graduates chose the tuition scholarship. Members are comprised of both men and women with more than one-fourth minorities. The Corps operates statewide in both rural and urban areas.



State of Wisconsin

**WISCONSIN SERVICE
CONSERVATION CHALLENGE
CORPS PRIDE**

2/24/93

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Topf Wells

Dear Gina,

I hope our conversation was useful to you. I have enclosed the Fact Sheet and the Biennial Report we discussed along with several issues of On Corps!, the WCC's monthly newsletter. On Corps! gives you the best sense of what WCC corps members accomplish & learn.

Call if you need any more information.
And thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,
Topf Wells

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Wisconsin Conservation Corps

1989 - 1991 Biennial Report

State of Wisconsin

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On Corps!

January 1993

Issue 10-1

NEWSLETTER OF THE WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CORPS



Mazomanie Crew renovating historic depot

By David Towsley
Mazomanie Historical Society
Crew Member

The depot we are working on was built in 1857. It was used by the town of Mazomanie as a train depot for the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad. It was sold to the Mazomanie Historical Society in 1974. After that, it was used as a warehouse, an office, and even a residence. The depot is listed on the National Register and is also recognized by the National Historical Society as a historic landmark.

Our crew is responsible for the renovation of the depot. Renovating is different from remodeling because we have to preserve whatever we can for historical accuracy. In the beginning of the project we gutted the depot, being as careful as we could not to break even the smallest piece of



During the restoration process great care was taken not to damage any of the materials that would be reused to maintain historical accuracy.

wainscoting. Everything inside is to be redone to look as original as possible. We are also building a 36 foot by 50 foot addition on the rear of the depot to bring the structure back to its original dimensions. This

is all new construction which will look like the original building.

When we're finished with our project in April of 1993, it will be a public library for the Town of Mazomanie. It will quadruple the library space they have now.

I'd like to thank all my fellow crew members for sticking with the project. They deserve a lot of credit and should be recognized. Here's to Darin Gudgeon, Philip Ekleberry, Jim Horner, Curtis Decker, Assistant Crew Leader Nikki Kaiser and Crew Leader Cricket Korsower.



Mazomanie Historical Society Crew Member Jim Horner works to remove sections of the old roof. Members of the Sauk County Crew assisted with the reroofing.

Inside this issue:

- ✓ Pride in a cabin, p. 3
- ✓ NASCC Conference, p. 4 - 5
- ✓ Survival of the fittest, p. 6

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On Corps!

December 1992



Issue 9-11

NEWSLETTER OF THE WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CORPS

Three WCC crews move a bit of history

By Carrie Kappes

Douglas County Crew Leader

On October 15, three WCC crews from the Northwest Region helped bring a piece of history to Fairlawn Museum of Superior. The crews of Lake Nebagamon, Douglas, and Bayfield Counties removed a 1,500 pound log from the banks of Balsam Creek in Douglas County. The log is of historical value due to the old logging company stamps on both ends of the log. It is estimated the log may have been nearly 100 years old at the time of its cutting.

The log was found by local fisherman Tom King. He in turn passed on information concerning the log to Wes Thompson, long-time



Wes Thompson from the DNR joins Mobile Crew Leader Wayne Seeger, and crews from Lake Nebagamon, Bayfield, and Douglas Counties as they move the 100+ year old log to the Fairlawn Museum.

resident of the Summit area. Thompson notified Fairlawn Museum and they were thrilled to receive this log to display. The museum is housed in a 42 room mansion that was the home of Superior's second mayor, lumber baron Martin Pattison.

The museum curator contacted David Epperly, the Douglas County Forest Administrator, to determine the best method for removing the log from the creek. Epperly enlisted the aid of the WCC.

The crews met that October morning accompanied by Mobile Crew Leader Wayne Seeger. We made our way down the hillside to figure out how to get this 16-foot water soaked log out of the creek. Whenever you are working with

veteran crew leaders like Jim Dawson, Warren Hissa, and Wayne Seeger, along with the rest of the corps members, great ideas are bound to happen. They made cant hooks out of maple poles and trucking straps. With eight WCC crew members to a side, they were able to move the log about 230 yards to a snowmobile trail groomer which trailered the log up the steep hill to an awaiting truck.

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It took eight crew members on each side to move the 1,500 pound log while a local TV station film crew captures the moment on video tape.

Inside this issue:

- ✓ Ashland Courthouse gets new sidewalk, p. 3
- ✓ Crew Leader workshop at Pigeon Lake, p. 4 - 5
- ✓ Outdoor challenges, p. 5

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On Corps!

November 1992



Issue 9-10

NEWSLETTER OF THE WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CORPS

"A Place in the Sun" at regional workshop

By Bob Nelson

Northwest Regional Crew Leader

The game of basketball, as WCC corps members know today, suddenly took on a new look and educational twist at the WCC "A Place in the Sun" workshop held on September 3. Ninety corps members from the WCC Northwest region responded with enthusiasm to a three part, "hands-on," physical impairment sensitivity session, which included full court wheelchair basketball.

North Country Independent Living Center (NCILC) representatives, a group of professional women and men dedicated to enhancing the lives of persons with physical impairments, headed the seminar. NCILC staff offered insight to challenges they must face on a daily basis and inspired corps members to recognize a person with a disability as a person first and foremost. NCILC has played a significant role in WCC human service projects including installation of access ramps, decks, and trail and home improvements.

Representatives of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) let corps members know that

Wisconsin is concerned about and involved with citizens with mental and physical disabilities. DVR is available to help clients find jobs, provided they meet three criteria: the clients must have a physical or mental disability, the disability must create a barrier to employment, and lastly, there must be a reasonable expectation that vocational rehabilitation services will enhance employment power. DVR also stressed client recruitment to WCC crew leaders.

Multitudes of human disabilities exist. Time constraints allowed for three major categories of disabilities to be studied in single sessions: working with adaptive equipment, hidden disabilities, and hearing/vision impairment. Corps members assembled into groups of 30 and underwent a simulated impairment guided by NCILC staff. For instance, full court basketball was played in wheelchairs, obstacle courses were walked with blindfolds, and weights were strapped to legs, simulating multiple sclerosis.

John Nousaine, NCILC Director, wrapped up the day with a sincere talk about establishing positive attitudes at work, home, and in daily interaction. In addition, many questions involving the new bill signed into law by Congress, the Americans with Disabilities Act, were fielded. "This legislation is a positive step forward for workers with disabilities and will ultimately benefit employers," said Nousaine.

In closing, corps members left the seminar knowing that men and women with disabilities can lead quality lives, can work extremely hard for a living, and are indeed an equal opportunity player, if they are allowed to secure their inherited "Place in the Sun."



Jessica Wiegert, crew leader for USFS Hayward prepares to pass while Assistant Crew Leader Lynette Phillips looks on.

Inside this issue:

- ✓ Crews busy with construction projects, p. 4 - 5
- ✓ Something fishy going on, p. 6
- ✓ Crews called to flood control duty, p. 7

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On Corps!

October 1992



Issue 9-9

NEWSLETTER OF THE WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CORPS

WCC crews respond to Wautoma tornado

By George Riffin
WCC Projects Coordinator

On Saturday, August 29, a tornado touched down near Wautoma in Waushara County, cutting a 21-mile long path between 1/4 and 1/2 mile wide. Leaving 2 dead and 30 injured, the tornado damaged or destroyed over 300 dwellings and resulted in an estimated \$10 million in damages.

Within 36 hours, the first of 9 WCC crews were responding to the disaster. Working 10 to 12 hour days for a week, over 50 WCC corps members began by helping to re-open area highways, roads, and powerline right-of-ways. Once these priority areas were cleared, the crews focused their attention on the removal of downed trees from roadsides, the clearing of trees and debris from the yards of a number of needy elderly people, and the cleanup of rubble and debris from several of the hardest hit areas.

"It was as though we were picking up pieces of these people's lives. Every person we saw was thankful for the help we were giving."

Wood County Crew Leader Armando Ramon noted that on Monday there was a lot of emotion all the



Encircled by fallen trees, a WCC crew leader works to clear an area heavily hit by the August 29 tornado near Wautoma. More pictures on pages 2, 5, and 6.

time that his crew was working. "It was as though we were picking up the pieces of these people's lives. Every person we saw was thankful for the help we were giving. The crews were working so long and hard, but the emotions fired them up and kept them going."

While many different groups and individuals were involved in the cleanup effort, Waushara County Parks Superintendent Scott Schuman commented that "WCC was the most organized group there." A truck driver hauling debris-filled dumpsters asked a crew leader, "Where will your WCC crews be?

You're the only ones who can fill up the dumpsters as fast as we can take them out."

Although there were too many crew leaders and corps members involved to mention them all individually, **continued on page 6**

Inside this issue:

- ✓ Round 5 starts October 5, p. 3
- ✓ MRCC III was hard work and fun, p. 4 - 5
- ✓ More tornado photos, 2, 5, and 6

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On Corps!

August/September 1992



Issue 9-8

NEWSLETTER OF THE WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CORPS

Mauston Water Wagon To Roll Again!

By Frank Fernandez
Juneau County Crew Member

The Juneau County Crew (Round 3) has quite the challenge ahead of them — restoration of the original water wagon of Mauston. The wagon was built in 1912 and was used as a water sprinkler to keep the Mauston streets hard and dust free.

Hugh Madden, the crew leader for the Juneau County Crew, researched the different types of skills and tools that would be learned and used to restore the antique wagon. He contacted the staff at Circus World in Baraboo and found they send their wheels to Indiana for repair. But Hugh found an Amish wheelwright who was willing to loan them tools and serve as an advisor. Hugh felt confident that his new crew was capable and very interested.

At first the crew thought they were in over their head. However, once they started restoration work on the wheels they found it relatively easy and fun. Working on the wheels, they took many measurements of the wooden spokes so new ones could be made. Also new hubs will be made for a couple of the wheels, seeing how the weather has taken its toll. The running gear which the wagon rides on will be completely rebuilt. This will make the wagon look as authentic now as it did back in 1912.



Restoring this antique water wagon will provide an opportunity for the Juneau County Crew to learn some unique skills. Pictured are Frank Fernandez (top of wagon), Scott Burke and Randy Gates.

Restoration of the wagon wheels consists of one person taking a 10 inch square piece of wood and shaving it down to an almost round piece of wood 9 inches in diameter. Another person will take that piece of wood and put it on a wood lathe and smooth and round it to near originality, hoping it would meet the approval of the original blacksmith that first built the wagon.

The wooden spokes are also a major part of the wheel restoration. The front spokes start out as a piece of wood 24 inches long by 1 3/4 inches wide. The back spokes are made out of a piece of wood 27 inches long by 2 inches wide. The

crew members will then take the rough cuts of wood and cut them out to look like a spoke. Then other crew

page 2

Inside this issue:

- ✓ Bikes restored for kids, p. 3
 - ✓ Come 'n walk Grand Chute's nature trail, p. 3
 - ✓ Restoring prairie builds pride, p. 6
 - ✓ New *On Corps!* editor, p. 8
- and more!*