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AMERICORPS/USDA



Second Quarter Report

December 1, 1994 - March 31, 1995



AmeriCorps Members (from left) Ruthie Davis and Harold Harbert, serving on the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Public Lands and Environment Team, are counting the bugs and other small organisms in a water sample taken from the Big Creek stream channel in Fulton County in the metro Atlanta area. (Photo by USDA Photographer Ken Hammond.)

"AmeriCorps has not had the public attention or understanding that it needs. . . This is a very, very underrated activity of the government that has really a great potential, particularly in rural America."

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman, April 24, 1995



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

AmeriCorps*USA

*National Direct, Federal Agency,
Tribal, and Territorial
Grantee Quarterly Report*

Grantee Name : United States Department of Agriculture

Grant ID #: 94ADFDC047

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Part I—Aggregate Data from Operating Site Quarterly Reports

1. Mark the reporting quarter to which this form applies:

Second Quarter

(12/01/94 — 3/31/95)

2. Aggregate Members and Service Hours:

	F/T	P/T
# of Members allotted to program	1187	17
# of Members enrolled on last day of quarter	1063	17
Hours served in second quarter	602,904	4,170
Total hours served to date FULL TIME AND PART TIME = 905,381		

3. To the best of your knowledge, are the service hours reported in the operating site quarterly reports accurate? Yes

4. To the best of your knowledge, do the service hours reported in the operating site quarterly reports reflect adequate progress toward completion of required service hours? Yes

5. Please provide estimates of the following:

(a). Total number of non-AmeriCorps Member volunteers involved in AmeriCorps service activities this quarter: 1,858

estimated volunteers

(b). Total hours spent on AmeriCorps service activities by non-AmeriCorps Member volunteers this quarter: 28,057

AmeriCorps/USDA Second Quarter Summary:

The United States Department of Agriculture is sponsoring approximately 1,200 AmeriCorps Members serving in 38 states in urban and rural projects fighting hunger, protecting the environment, and re-building rural America. During their second quarter of service --- from December 1, 1994 - March 30, 1995 --- the Members provided 607,047 hours of service to their communities, bringing the total number of hours of service performed since the launch in September to 905,381. AmeriCorps Members also recruited at least 1,858 unpaid volunteers who served at least 28,057 hours.

Members of the Anti-Hunger, Nutrition, and Empowerment Team cooked and prepared meals at soup kitchens, created community gardens, conducted nutrition and food safety workshops for the elderly, sorted goods at food banks, developed nutrition education programs for schools, provided outreach for the Women's, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program, began efforts to improve participation in the summer feeding program, assisted earthquake victims with emergency food information, and informed pantries about how their clients who are working but are still poor can boost their incomes by utilizing the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Members of the Public Lands and Environment Team working on Forest Service lands performed rehabilitation and watershed protection work, reforested fire-damaged lands, constructed and maintained trails for hiking and horseback riding, planted cuttings for riparian and wildlife restorations, maintained and rehabilitated campgrounds and made campgrounds accessible for the disabled, completed timber stand improvements, restored historic sites, conducted threatened and endangered species habitat surveys, removed and installed fences, improved wildlife habitats, and hung erosion control netting on roads.

Members of the Public Lands and Environment Team working on private and local municipal lands repaired and restored flood-damaged areas, re-created fish habitats, conducted water quality monitoring, built community greenhouses, constructed urban, suburban, and rural nature trails, built playgrounds, restored windbreaks originally created by the Civilian Conservation Corps, revegetated coastal marshes, restored collections at the National Arboretum, created a safe-haven lot at a public housing development, cleaned up an urban wetland, revitalized historical sites, improved camping sites, and protected stream banks.

Members of the Rural Development Team provided service on projects related to areas such as running water and indoor plumbing, sustainable agriculture, emergency response and prevention, fisheries restoration, alternative uses of natural resources, environmental education facilities, community improvement and personal responsibility, tourism promotion, water quality protection, recycling promotion, American Indian empowerment, water quality protection, rural housing improvement, and cultural resource preservation.

The Cost-Effectiveness of AmeriCorps/USDA Projects

The limited cost/benefit analyses prepared by or for AmeriCorps/USDA provide that the Department's program is extremely cost-effective.

The USDA Forest Service has just calculated that its 236 AmeriCorps Members serving on Public Lands Teams perform at least \$1.51 worth of service for each \$1.00 that the American taxpayer spends to support such service. Although it is difficult to blend cost benefits from different Forest Service regions around the country, the cost-benefit figures are based on an average of the combined cost savings of all recreation projects completed. These costs included all Federal spending, including the Member stipends and educational awards.

The Forest Service AmeriCorps Public Lands crews completed recreation projects for 51% less than similar projects completed by force account (if completed by Federal employees), and 68% less than similar services completed by contracted services. For example, in one area it cost AmeriCorps \$64,185 to complete 53 miles of heavy trail maintenance. The same projects would have cost \$126,000 by force account, and \$212,000 if the services were contracted.

The Clinch-Powell Resource Conservation & Development Council in Tennessee calculated that, in the first four months of the program, the four USDA AmeriCorps Rural Development Team Members, who are managed by the Council, performed approximately \$2.73 worth of service for each \$1.00 that the American taxpayer spent to support such service.

As evidenced by the chart on the next page, the Council calculated that, if purchased on the "Open market," one service project performed by one Member would have cost an estimated \$23,975 while another service project performed by three Members would have cost an estimated, \$50,400, bringing the total value of the service performed to \$74,375. The cost of the AmeriCorps Members, pro-rated to the four months period in which they performed the projects, was \$27,272.

AMERICORPS SOLID WASTE SPECIALIST (One member sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service)

Accomplishments (4 months)	Cost to Community if Service Purchased on Open Market*	Cost as Provided Through AmeriCorps	Savings to Community Through AmeriCorps
Assist Hancock County with Convenience Center Design, Permitting and Funding Grant	\$3,400		
Assist Hancock County with completion of 10 year Solid Waste Management Plan as required by state law.	\$8,500		
Preparation of Bid Specs and package for Recycling Equipment for the City of Harrogate.	\$1,700		
Preparation of Bid Specs and Package for Transfer Station for Claiborne County.	\$2,550		
Preparation of Bid Specs and Package for Grainger County Recycling Center	\$2,125		
Design and Layout of Solid Waste Education Brochure	\$1,400		
Preparation, development and writing of four grant proposals for outside funding of important solid waste projects.	\$4,000		
TOTAL	\$23,975 (estimate)	approx. \$7,272	\$16,703

* Estimated costs based on the known 'going price' in the RC&D region.

SPECIALTY RECREATION AND TOURISM INITIATIVE (three members sponsored by the Natural Resources Conservation Service)

Accomplishments (4 months)	Cost to Community if Service Purchased on Open Market*	Cost as Provided Through AmeriCorps	Savings to Community Through AmeriCorps
Inventory, Development of Regional Committee, Setup of Tourism Network, Preliminary Funding Search, Eco-Tourism Feasibility Study, Wilderness Road Draft and Design of Regional Tourism Database	\$50,400 (estimate)	approx. \$20,000	\$30,400

* Estimated costs based on the known 'going price' in the RC&D region.

"We're not trying to tell anybody what to do with these (AmeriCorps) folks in their communities. We let the communities decide what needs to be done, and we just try to foster the kind of cooperative conduct that is the key to our future ... We're building America by doing this."

- President Bill Clinton
at USDA National Rural Conference
Ames, Iowa, April 25, 1995

"The Peace Corps, as great as it is, was focused on other countries and that's good and fine, but this program is focused on our country and our communities, enabling AmeriCorps Members to go on and get their education, and even more importantly, unleashing this volunteer energy and enthusiasm."

- Vice President Al Gore
at USDA National Rural Conference
Ames, Iowa, April 25, 1995

"I'm a budget-cutting Republican rancher who doesn't support these types of programs generally, but this (AmeriCorps/USDA) is a program with winners for all."

- Joan Frey, Klickitat County Commissioner (R)
Klickitat County, Washington

6. Summary of Progress this Quarter Toward Accomplishing Annual Objectives:

(a) Direct Service Objectives

AmeriCorps/USDA is "Getting Things Done" on Forest Service Lands

The following is a brief summary of second quarter and cumulative accomplishments from the eight Public Lands and Environment Teams operating on National Forest land through the USDA direct grant, in which total of 236 AmeriCorps Members have performed over 141,702 hours of service since the beginning of the program. This summary also includes accomplishments of one camp operating through the Northwest Service Academy, which receives significant technical support from the Forest Service. It should be noted, the below-listed tasks were accomplished during the worst period of weather to be encountered by most of the sites. USDA AmeriCorps Members:

- * Maintained 180 miles of trail this quarter, bringing the cumulative total to 241 miles this program year.
- * Maintained and prepared 16 campgrounds for forest visitors this quarter, bringing the cumulative total to 24 campgrounds maintained and prepared this program year.
- * Completely restored 45 individual campsites this quarter, bringing the cumulative total to 55 campgrounds maintained and prepared this program year.
- * Reconstructed 20 campsites to make them accessible to people with disabilities this quarter, bringing the cumulative total to 26 campsites made accessible for this program year.
- * Completed 354 acres of timber stand improvement projects this quarter, bringing the cumulative total to 551 acres improved this program year.
- * Constructed 20 miles of new fence and removed 15 miles of ineffective fence this quarter, bringing the cumulative total to 21 miles of fence constructed and 18 miles of fence removed this program year.
- * Rehabilitated 12,000 acres of land damaged by wildfire this quarter, bringing the cumulative total to 24,000 acres of land rehabilitated this program year.

- * Rehabilitated 60 acres of wildlife habitat including the construction of 2 water tanks and 3 water lots, bringing the cumulative total to 425 acres of habitat improved and 4 range waterlots installed this program year.
- * Improved watersheds damaged by wildfire by cutting and planting 18,000 willows and cottonwoods in riparian areas to prevent further erosion, bringing the cumulative total to 63,000 cuttings gathered and planted this program year.
- * Constructed 7 bridges in campground areas this quarter.
- * Removed hazard trees from 24 campgrounds this quarter.
- * Constructed 59 new picnic tables and 3 complete playground areas this quarter.
- * Painted and refurbished several CCC historic structures this quarter.
- * Constructed 153 visitor information signs this quarter.
- * Rehabilitated 4500 acres of wilderness areas.
- * Enhanced Threatened and Endangered Species habitat by constructing and installing 238 bird boxes.
- * Completed disaster relief projects including the construction of 11 fences and 20 retaining structures to prevent further flood damage.
- * Surveyed 3000 trees and planted over 70 acres.
- * Pruned two acres of fruit trees.
- * In addition, in the previous quarter, Members constructed 25 stream structures for anadromous fisheries on .75 miles of stream, constructed 6 new miles of new hiking trails, restored two historic sites, completed threatened and endangered species habitat surveys on 900 acres, protect 82 acres of huckleberry field sacred to the Warm Springs Takima Tribal Nations, hung erosion netting on 300 feet of steep Forest service road cut-backs, and helped clear 15 miles of road that provide access to water monitoring sites.

AmeriCorps/USDA is "Getting Things Done" Fighting Against Hunger

The following is a summary of the second quarter accomplishments of the five USDA Anti-Hunger, Nutrition, and Empowerment Team projects managed by the USDA Food and Consumer Services through local partnerships with anti-hunger groups and youth service corps. USDA/AmeriCorps Members:

- * Provided nutrition and food safety education to 11,196 senior citizens this quarter, bringing the cumulative total to 11,432 adults educated this program year.
- * Helped over 100 families obtain over \$61,000 in tax refunds --- through the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) --- for "working poor" families in Vermont, allowing the families to continue to supporting themselves through work instead of welfare.
- * Cooked, prepared, and/or served meals for 6,000 people at local soup kitchens this quarter, bringing the cumulative total to 16,200 meals for the program year.
- * Distributed informational flyers explaining how to access food assistance programs to 2,530 citizens this quarter, bring the cumulative total to **3,030 citizens reached this year.**
- * Restored the infrastructure of four food pantries this quarter.
- * Provided nutrition and food safety education to 5,000 elementary children this quarter.
- * Referred 186 citizens to food assistance this quarter, bringing the cumulative total to 415 citizens helped this program year.
- * Contacted 250 schools this quarter about hosting school breakfast and summer feeding programs, bringing the cumulative total to 500 schools contacted during the program year.
- * Distributed 500 flyers to parents this quarter about how to utilize the school breakfast program for their children.
- * Established five new sites this quarter for the Summer Feeding Program.
- * Established one community/school orchard and revitalized five community gardens this quarter.

- * Informed 130 social service offices and non-profit organizations about how to help clients obtain the EITC this quarter.
- * Distributed flyers --- in both Spanish and English --- to 45,000 individuals about how to obtain the EITC.
- * Contacted high school students in 25 schools about beginning Youth Against Hunger Clubs.
- * Provided post-earthquake assistance for 800 victims a week in the Los Angeles area.

AmeriCorps/USDA is "Getting Things Done" Helping the Environment

The following are highlights from the first quarter accomplishments of the 14 Environmental Team projects sponsored by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service on private lands in urban and rural areas and the one project sponsored by the USDA Agricultural Research Service at the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. USDA AmeriCorps Members:

- * AmeriCorps Members in Atlanta, Georgia monitored water quality within the Big Creek Watershed at thirty locations each month. One member has received certification to instruct and is helping to organize an Adopt-A-Stream program in Cobb County. Within the Atlanta Metro area, Members helped improve six parks for the 210,000 people who visit annually. Forty acres have been cleaned of litter and debris; 2950 linear feet of trails were installed; and installed three water bars. Nearly 9,000 trees were planted in parks and local schools. Christmas tree recycling coordinated by Members resulted in 40,000 trees recycled into mulch in one county; and five dump trucks of mulch were delivered to area parks. Members completed the construction of a greenhouse and prepared 5,000 square feet of nursery space; cleaned and mulched a nature trail; and mapped all plant materials on campus; and went to south Georgia to retrieve 8,000 seedlings from the Georgia Forestry Commission.
- * In Chicago, the Members installed plantings at two youth centers, a community center and a church. At three conservatories and a nursery, Members helped with plant production in return for plant materials training. One-hundred twenty volunteers were recruited to help with creating urban green safety sites. Members helped helped to rehabilitate 30 apartments at Lathrop Homes..
- * In East St. Louis, Members prepared 10 community garden sites for planting. Fifty-seven trees have been planted in the National Tree Trust on the SCC campus. Compacted soils were treated with Bio Mulch as a demonstration site on the SCC campus. Hundreds of plants have been started in a greenhouse for use by community groups and Members completed 50% of the renovations on the East St. Louis High School greenhouse. Six miles of trails were developed on the McCully Heritage Project by AmeriCorps Members. They also cleared brush and helped stabilize roads along 5 miles of highway in Calhoun County. Members graded and reseeded a playground that was used for trailers during the flood and are currently installing fencing at the site. A two city block area in Quincy was cleared of brush and weeds. Members completed plans to develop 5 acres of wetlands into an environmental education center.

* In Boston, Members cleaned up 8 community sites and planted trees and shrubs. A paved path was constructed and a community church and sites for summer school and daycare were improved. At a shelter for unwed mothers, members assisted in the installation of a playground and landscaped the site. This site was also prepared for a greenhouse to be built.

* Members in New Jersey are developing forest stewardship plans on 250 acres in Beemersville. They have designed and laid out 2 miles of nature trails, planted riparian buffers, cleaned up a woodland dump at Snyder Farm including 11 tons of steel that was recycled, and made artificial nest cavities for wildlife and erected fencing at Wharton State Forest. In the Musconetcong Watershed, Members planted 1,500 feet of wildlife and wind screens, prepared 2,000 feet of trails, designed and installed 325 signs for the trails, and established gardens and a compost site.

* In Oklahoma, Members have restored 28 windbreaks and have planted 20,000 trees. Their work spans 14 miles of windbreaks in 8 counties. Of the 23 western counties, 40% have received requests for increased windbreak restoration from approximately 300 requests by landowners.

* AmeriCorps Members in the Galveston Bay area transplanted 40,000 seedlings of *Spartina alterniflora* to be used for coastal shoreline protection. They designed, built, and installed 10 aquariums to cultivate seagrass and collected 80 sprigs for cultivation. Two-hundred mangrove trees transplanted on Bird Island; 2,500 cypress trees were planted in Wallesville Reservoir and 2,000 trees were planted at a national wildlife refuge. Members also built a waterfowl viewing platform at the refuge.

* In Goldendale, Washington, AmeriCorps Members have completed one riparian fencing project and another is underway. With the fencing work slowed by poor weather conditions, Members provided service in the firewood assistance program. Members converted dead and dying trees into firewood which was used for winter heat by 25 families referred to us through the Klickitat County Senior Services and InterFaith Volunteer Services. Thirty-five children in housing with low income families now have a playground constructed by AmeriCorps Members.

* Members at the National Arboretum completed the first two stages of preparing Fern Valley, cut to the ground and removed herbaceous portions of perennial in the Boxwood collection, cleared 150 yards of vines and weed trees, pruned and removed entangled weeds and restored the large Crabapple trees, and removed weed trees and vines from the canopy of existing trees on the mall.

AmeriCorps/USDA is "Getting Things Done" Rebuilding Rural America

USDA has fully embraced the vision --- held by both the President and the Corporation for National and Community Service --- that AmeriCorps be community-based, community-designed, and community-run. The USDA Rural Development Team has different community service objectives for each and every individual site, based on the needs of each local community. Consequently, the Rural Development Team Members are providing such a wide variety of services that they are nearly impossible to aggregate.

The best illustration of how the Rural Development Team is "getting things done," is a list of success stories in each of the following areas: running water and indoor plumbing, rural economic development, emergency response and prevention, fisheries restoration, alternative uses of natural resources, environmental education facilities, community facilities improvement, personal responsibility development, tree planting, windbreak restoration, and riparian improvement, tourism to boost local economies, land use planning, recycling promotion, American Indian tribal empowerment, woodland management, water quality protection, rural housing improvement, and cultural resource preservation. Many of the Rural Development Team Members are working in rural Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities, and Champion Communities.

Running Water and Indoor Plumbing

- * In Las Cruces, New Mexico, two members informed approximately 500 residents about the Section 306 Water and Waste Disposal grants and assisted them in applying, which resulted in 14 applications.
- * In Beaufort, South Carolina, a member is working with the community on their solid waste treatment plan.
- * In El Paso, Texas, a member has gone out into the local colonias to promote RECD programs, particularly for water and sewer hook-up, bathroom and kitchen repair, and home repair.
- * In El Paso, Texas, another member has organized an effort to inform local residents about how to obtain Section 306C water quality improvement grants.
- * Member in New Mexico worked with the Carson National Forest and the village of Vallecitos to write a successful grant to carry out a preliminary study to find locate fresh water and develop a fresh water delivery system that will provide 98 people with safe drinking water.

Rural Economic Development

- * In New Mexico, Member provided technical assistance and wrote a successful grant that will allow the Sangre De Cristo Woodworkers, a small business enterprise to continue and provide 8 jobs in 1995
- * Members in Kentucky assisted in the updating of the Resources for Economic Development catalog for McCreary County, assisted in writing a grant proposal for a parking lot for the Downtown Stearns Area, and developed a grant proposal for "Welcome to McCreary County" signs to be placed at the 5 highways leading into the county.
- * Members in Oregon successfully redesigned the Downtown Revitalization Loan funding program which involved a carry-over of the unused existing funds into the new program, initiated the compilation of a local business directory, assisted the development of a Business Revitalization Committee which developed an action plan, and developed a Flexible Manufacturing Facility Grant which, if funded, will be used to acquire land and fund operating costs at the facility.
- * In Douglas, Arizona, a member has instituted a customer-relations/public relations training program for business and border-station employees, has coordinated business development activities in the area and secured a \$4,000 grant from a local source for this purpose, has met with local banks and lending sources to support business development activities, had developed advertising and marketing materials, including a strategy to improve the image of the area.
- * In Middlesboro, Kentucky, a member set up an office to assist cooperation among the local Chamber of Commerce, the city council, and a local museum develop strategies for encouraging tourism and downtown development, to help the Chamber of Commerce and a local industrial foundation to obtain permits and arrange for wetland mitigation.
- * In London, Kentucky, another member is representing an EZ/EC community organization to community leaders and citizens and helping to determine the parameters for benefits associated with the EZ/EC, working with a local farm cooperative and bank to define loan conditions for local farmers, organizing the local extension service to help farmers learn about, obtain funding for, and implement alternative crops.
- * In Hazard, Kentucky, an RECD member has worked with the local EZ/EC Team, conducted training, helped 3 local businesses with writing grant proposals and other support activities, conducted a series of workshops on grant writing, helped obtain entrepreneurial training for the county, and helped obtain \$8,000 in Land and Water Conservation funds for a city park.

- * In Boyce, Louisiana, a member has been assisting in local business development, working on opening a home for senior citizen veterans, and tutoring children in reading and math.
- * In Cave Junction, Oregon, a member is coordinating the use of a \$3 million Social Services Block Grant for an EZ/EC designated community and the activities of another community development agency in the area, and is working on a site plan for a local park and a tourism project in conjunction with the State office of tourism, including designing brochures, billboards, etc.
- * In Lincoln County, West Virginia, an RECD member was awarded a \$4,500 grant to purchase equipment and advertising for a local bartering program, has organized 4 communities to form local community project groups so as to be able to receive as much as \$2,000 in private grant money for each project.

Sustainable Agriculture

- * In Machias, Maine, Member implemented a series of four workshops on Best Management Practices for Velpar use for blueberry growers, sponsored by the Maine Blueberry Commission. Ninety-eight growers attended the workshops.
- * In McDowell County, West Virginia, 2 RECD members are working with a county gardening program to explain, provide the tools, and equipment for, and encourage sustainable agriculture for approximately 1,300 county residents.

Emergency Response and Prevention

- * In North Dakota, Members assisted in the surveying of houses and buildings around Devils Lake. The water levels are high and this work will assist with managing if a flood occurs. Members participated in a similar hazard survey in response to a request from the Ramsey County Emergency Management Coordinator.
- * In Missouri, Members performed 27 dam safety reports and maintained over 99 flood retarding dams. Twenty-one landowners were assisted in surveying sand deposited during the 1993 flood.
- * Members in California provided assistance during the January floods. They conducted damage surveys and follow-up assistance in planning repairs to damaged farm lands and rural homes. Members helped with sandbagging on a levee along San Pablo Bay. Members have also implemented three demonstration projects on controlling vegetation for fire prevention.

- * In Louisiana, 52 parishes have been contacted by AmeriCorps members to participate in the statewide dry fire hydrant project. At least 175 dry hydrant sites have been identified.
- * In Mississippi, Member assisted in the development of a nine county master fire plan for rural fire protection.
- * Members in South Carolina have participated in improving the efficiency of emergency response. They have completed four county side road inventories on over 2,500 miles and inventoried 2 counties on 225 dams.
- * Member in Virginia wrote, and obtained approval for, five dry fire hydrant proposals.
- * Members in Arkansas are working to instal 1,100 dry hydrants in three counties.
- * Members in South Carolina worked with the county fire chief and other community leaders in identifying potential ponds and lakes where dry fire hydrants could be installed; collected information for grant proposal to purchase materials to install 70 dry fire hydrants in Williamsburg and Florence counties.
- * In Helena, Arkansas, a member provided technical assistance in the reorganization of the local volunteer fire department, helped in the process of starting a 911-emergency line, explored grant opportunities for 2 local towns, and developed an action plan for a mayor as to how to access \$4,000 in insurance premium turnback funds for that community.
- * In Johnson County, Tennessee, a member is working with the Enterprise Community to see that projects are carried out whether or not Federal funding is received and assisting in obtaining new fire equipment, working to install and operate a 911 emergency system.

Fisheries and Aquatic Wildlife Restoration

- * In South Carolina, 900 wildlife management area boundary signs were posted, 300 acres of prescribed burningin and 24 wood duck boxes were installed.

Alternative Uses of Natural Resources

- * Members in Minnesota prepared and administered a survey to 39 manufacturers to design technical and financial assistance programs that promote sustainable development and value added production

- * Members in Arkansas are placing 30 wood pellet stoves in households.
- * Members in Louisiana helped write a grant proposal submitted by Humphreys County, MS for a timber bridge and completed design specifications and grant proposal writing for wooden pedestrian bridges for recreation area development in Lake Providence.
- * In Virginia, Member developed a Wood-crafters/users directory for the Southwest part of the state.
- * In Tazwell, Virginia, Member developed timber bridge designs which have been approved by professional engineers for the construction of a nail-laminated pedestrian timber bridge.
- * Members in Kentucky developed by-laws for Eastern KY goat producers association, a spin-off organization of the Owsley Co. Action Team, helped organize E. KY Vegetable Producers Association, a regional non-profit cooperative including growers in Lee, Owsley, Wolfe and Breathitt counties, developed a project to establish a dry kiln to provide 5 new jobs in Owsley county.

Environmental Education Facilities

- * Members in South Carolina began restoration of a 1/4 mile nature trail at Greeleyville Elementary School.
- * Members in Mississippi identified local funds necessary to assist in the construction of an outdoor classroom for O'Bannon Elementary School located in Greenville.
- * Members in Virginia built an outdoor lab for the school and community use in conjunction with the Grassroots Conservancy volunteer group.
- * Member in Georgia rehabilitated eight miles of the National Scenic Appalachian Trail, constructed interpretive exhibits and displays, and helped design and install visitor information boards on national forests.
- * In Jonesborough, Tennessee, a member is working with the U.S. Forest Service to write a request for a \$5,500 and \$3,500 grant from local sources to run a conservation day camp for 1,000 children and conduct a conservation workshop for 300 teachers, respectively.

Community Facilities Improvement

- * Members in New Mexico wrote a successful grant to assist in building Las Clinicas Del Norte Medical Clinic's new facility and helped write a proposal that was successful in obtaining funds to be used for creating a safer better equipped facility and equipment for thirty senior citizens at the Coyote Senior Citizens Center
- * Members in South Carolina worked with the Williamsburg County Parks and Recreation to get a grant for repairing and improving the St. Lawrence Community Center.
- * Member in Pagosa Springs developed a neighborhood park.
- * In El Centro, California, another member working with the local EZ/EC where she has participated in the development of a community farmer's market, coordinated initial meetings of a "Healthy Start Center," and assisted in the development of a new youth center.

Community Improvement and Personal Responsibility Development

- * In Barbourville, Kentucky, a member developed a series of lifeskill classes targeted at 15 low-income families for which demand was so great that 2 additional classes have been added to serve a total of 45 low-income families.
- * In Saylersville, Kentucky, an RECD member formed a committee of volunteer members of the community to assist in planning for a summer recreation program which will involve many additional volunteers.
- * In Lake Providence, Louisiana, another member has informed over 400 students about such programs as farm safety, anti-drunk driving, and anti-drug programs.
- * In Natchez, Mississippi, another member has designed and implemented a study on sexuality in order to design and target a teen pregnancy prevention program and has organized a rally to focus attention on the problem, and has also started an organization to bring a YMCA to the area.
- * In Lorman, Mississippi, a member has tutored elementary school children, designed and presented HIV/AIDS awareness and basic study skills workshops, and worked with the local Boys Club.
- * In Jackson, Mississippi, a member has been instrumental in convincing local organizations to apply for funds from a drug-free schools and communities grant, organize a local clean-up day, begun a project to use an abandoned horse arena and stables as a recreation and learning center for at-risk youth.

- * In Madison County, North Carolina, an RECD member organized the opening, attended by over 150 people, of a family resource center to provide information on social assistance and human services in the area, and connect families, schools, churches, government agencies, and businesses, and also organized 15 volunteers to assemble furniture, set up the computer, and clean the facility housing the center. This member also located resources for a mother of 6 to avoid eviction, and assisted 1 family to find clothing.
- * In Denmark, South Carolina, a member established a tutorial program run entirely by AmeriCorps, worked with local churches to establish a local drug prevention program, met with local schools to discuss improving their competitiveness, and worked with the community to establish a non-profit development corporation.
- * In Sumter, South Carolina, a member has worked with the local Council of Governments to organize over 20 volunteers to tutor over 100 youth.
- * In Sumter, South Carolina, another member has been working with the local Teen Pregnancy Prevention Council.
- * In Greeneville, Tennessee, a member is working with a local Area Agency on Aging to identify and catalog resources available to seniors.
- * In Morgantown, West Virginia, an RECD member has been working with an area-wide planning group and has assisted it in obtaining a grant to hire an immunization coordinator for the county.
- * In Logan County, West Virginia, an RECD member has organized service projects with local area High School volunteer organizations, helped organize a community safety patrol staffed by volunteers, organized and planned the remodeling of a Head Start program's playground by volunteers, and worked in a drug-infested neighborhood to obtain a building to renovate into a recreational and teen pregnancy prevention center.

Tree Planting, Windbreak Restoration, and Riparian Improvement

- * Members in Oregon organized, coordinated, and implemented a riparian enhancement demonstration involving the recruitment of 70 volunteers who planted 4000 native trees and shrubs along 1400 feet of streambank. They also assisted local middle school teachers and Forest Service personnel in the coordination and implementation of a two day bank revegetation stabilization program involving 80 adolescence;
- * Members in South Carolina worked in conjunction with a two-county planning team to collect data for the Beautification of the highway between Kingstree and Lake City

- * In Louisiana, Members completed initial work on the Small Business Tree Planting Program for Mangham, LA to beautify Hwy 15 through the community
- * Members in Minnesota assisted 6 rural communities complete tree inventories for "Tree City, USA" status which will enable these communities to be eligible for community forestry grants; organized and participated in a Community Windbreak Seminar and developed a video describing the benefits of community windbreaks that's being shown on local TV stations; assisted non-profit RC&D develop markets for Tree-Pacs, a containerized tree seedling package which promotes environmental education.
- * In Moab, Utah, Member conducted an inventory of all public trees in the city as part of an urban forestry program. Members in Utah also developed a tree planting guide for a community of 2,000 people that will be used to educate city workers and volunteers on correct tree planting procedures.

Tourism Development to Boost Local Economies

- * In Minnesota, Members planned bus tours of the River Bend Nature Center expecting to attract 1000 tourists to the area; Members also conducted a survey of 32 communities in northern MN to determine local interest in developing eco-tourism in the region.
- * Members in Louisiana completed final draft of a 12 Parish tourism brochure approved by the NE Delta RC&D council, completed a Richland Parish Tourism brochure, and completed the Winn Parish tourism brochure.
- * Member in Virginia developed a Tourism Site Log for the VA Coalfield Tourism Authority Area.
- * Member in Tennessee completed research and writing on Unicoi County Attractions Locator Map and presented it to the Tourism Committee for review.
- * Member in Georgia completed of new Recreation Opportunity Guide for the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests in preparation for the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, provided environmental education programs to hikers and backpackers in the Blood Mountain Wilderness in North Georgia.

Land Use Planning

- * In Colorado, Member developed a corridor Management Plan for the San Juan Skyway.

Recycling Promotion

- * Members in South Carolina helped construct a compost bin at Kingstree Elementary School and worked with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service to recycle natural Christmas trees after the holiday season.
- * Members in Mississippi worked to obtain grant funds to assist in the development of a facility and jobs for the sorting and packing of recyclable materials from Sharkey and Issaquena counties, helped start a recycling program in Greenwood, and worked with several local churches, the Downtown Development Organization, and the Garden Club to study the feasibility of starting a recycling program in Leflore County.
- * In Hancock County, Tennessee, 6,700 residents will soon have an approved collection site to take their recyclables to as a result of AmeriCorps working through the state red-tape to permit a convenience center collection site
- * Members in Tennessee helped create a process to 111,000 residents in 5 counties to have a way to safely dispose of toxic household hazardous waste and crafted a unique and innovative program to help residents offset expensive and valuable landfill space by teaching consumers not to buy products with excessive packaging. Members at another site in Tennessee worked with the State to get five collection days for residents to take household hazardous waste to a mobile collection unit for safe disposal. Member developed a framework for technical assistance and training to help local government meet state and federal mandates. Member organized the first Earth Day festival in one county. Sixty students prepared recycled art for display. Other Members organized a county wide litter pick-up in which 149 tons of litter was collected. Presentations on solid waste and recycling were made to 307 individuals and to the Middle Tennessee Regional Solid Waste Board. One Member used his civil engineer experience to survey a county landfill to determine the remaining life of the landfill.

American Indian Tribal Empowerment

- * Member in Utah is conducting an assessment to determine how to assist the Navajo Nation in developing a strong tourism industry
- * A Member in Colorado initiated an oral history video program for Navajos in New Mexico, Utah and Arizona.
- * Member in North Carolina working with the Cherokee Indian Reservation completed the Parks and Recreation Community Needs Assessment Survey for the Eastern Band of the Reservation, developed a walking brochure for the Health Education unit that depicts walking trails around the Reservation, secured a grant with the "Adopt-A-Trail"

program for the restoration of a popular trail on the Reservation; organized and coordinated logistics for the "Adopt-A-Trail" project, coordinated several clean-up projects in the recreational areas of the reservation, assisted the Cherokee Indian Reservation Agriculture Extension Agent with programming special Arbor Day celebrations, and assisted with the coordination of the Annual Reservation Litter Clean-up Day in March.

* In Bernalillo, New Mexico, a member is coordinating packaging certification seminars for workers in nonprofit organizations working in the Native American pueblos, has increased the number of applications for RECD Section 504 Home Improvement loans/grants from Native American residents of the pueblos from 0 in FY94 to 42 in FY95, and assisted in the donation of surplus RECD office furniture to the local Chamber of Commerce.

* In Gallup, New Mexico, a member gave presentations on RECD's Section 502 Single Family and Section 504 Housing Preservation programs at 11 meetings on the Navajo reservation which generated 7 approved applications.

* In New Mexico, a member assisted the local Navajo school board and a local water authority with their applications for emergency water assistance grants, for \$481,000 to serve approximately 1,600 residents and \$386,000 to serve approximately 750 residents and 30 commercial customers respectively, as well as serving on 2 committees on health and environmental concerns for an interagency policy task force for rural and urban development.

* In Waynesville, North Carolina, an RECD member worked with Tribal leaders on the Cherokee Indian Reservation to inform them about RECD housing programs, met with 5 local banks to explain the unique loan situation and encourage increased loans to Possessory Land Holdings, and compiled a directory of local resources available for use on the Reservation.

Woodland Management

* In Virginia, Members developed a Logger Education Advisory Committee and workshop to teach loggers safety methods and to reduce environmental impacts, taught 20 classes (300 people) to local residents concerning the "how to's" of managing private woodlots, and developed presentations for various Economic Development Boards to encourage increased and proper forest management for a more profitable future.

* Members in West Virginia developed a software package in cooperation with state natural resource personnel, to compile information necessary to track forest products "waste"; and completed collecting forest data concerning the amount of biomass left in the woods unharvested and mill residuals in 3 counties.

Water Quality Protection

- * In Maine, Members trained students in ten high schools and citizens in eleven community groups in water quality monitoring and data management.
- * In the Casco Bay Watershed area of Maine, Members completed publication of a Land Use Inventory and distributed 350 units of the Inventory to the 44 communities within the watershed and various concerned interest groups. Completion of this project facilitates the water quality concerns and nonpoint source protection needs of the watershed.
- * In New Mexico, Member aided in writing a contract and a successful grant (\$10,000) for completing an environmental study in order to begin construction of the El Rito Waste Water Treatment System.
- * In North Dakota, Members are working with landowners to assist in sealing abandoned wells as a means of preventing water pollution during flooding.
- * In Louisiana, Farm*A*Syst is being conducted by AmeriCorps Members to help landowners assess and prevent water pollution risks. In Louisiana, 385 assessments were distributed to farmers and landusers. Eighty-two one-on-one assessments were completed and group assessments were completed in three parishes. In Michigan 438 assessments were completed.
- * Members planted trees along a half mile stretch of the Clinch River in Tennessee to help stabilize the bank. In Humphreys county 25 bald cypress trees were planted to control streambank erosion. Two hundred feet of critically eroding streambank was stabilized using rip rap and willow stakes on Bear Creek. Also in Tennessee, landowners are controlling non point source pollution through the effluent discharge program. Eight landowners have had their waste storage facilities dewatered (8.5 million gallons). Sites have been monitored for safe discharge.

Rural Housing Improvement

- * Members in South Carolina coordinated and planned a one day event on February 14th with a local scout troop to have nine scouts participate in the building of a home for Habitat for Humanity.
- * Members in Holly Grove, Arkansas appraised the homes of residents in the 100 year flood plane to help them obtain buy-outs from the Federal Emergency Management Administration.

- * In Blytheville, Arkansas, a member conducted low-income home buyers workshops, assisted in developing a housing preservation pre-application, and assisted families in completing applications for RECD home buyer and utility assistance for approximately 200 families.
- * In Jonesboro, Arkansas, 2 members assisted 33 people in applying for RECD Section 504 Home Repair loans of which 22 were approved, and helped the EZ/EC community in locating land for housing.
- * In Brinkly, Arkansas, a member provided to an EZ/EC community on locating resources for asbestos removal affecting 2,200 residents, organized the provision of natural gas to 25 people, and helped locate funds for new sewer waste pumps affecting 2,300 people.
- * In Nogales, Arizona, a member is working on a building and lot inventory.
- * In El Centro, California, 2 members are performing outreach in English and Spanish for RECD programs which has resulted in a total of 6 new applications for Section 504 Housing Repair grants being approved at a total of \$26,250 and 7 applications at an estimated total of \$38,000 pending approval and in obtaining a \$4,900 loan for a local community to help an elderly man afford new housing.
- * In Prestonburg, Kentucky, a member has compiled a list of non-profit groups doing home repairs for low-income families, and has worked with the Kentucky Housing Corporation to handle difficult housing cases.
- * In Barbourville, Kentucky, another member is assisting in the completion of an emergency shelter to serve 225 people by recruiting various civic, religious, and volunteer groups to contribute supplies and support, and develop a schedule of needed resources.
- * In Barbourville, Kentucky, another member has helped 3 elderly home bound elderly people apply for RECD home repair loans, got one an RECD hardship grant and another a grant from the Kentucky Housing Corporation, publicized the various RECD programs, and worked on a community water project to facilitate easements and enroll water users.
- * In Somerset, Kentucky, a member has taken 11 applications for home repairs, worked on a project with the local sewer commission to install sewer lines for 300 families, and assisted a widow and an elderly home-bound man on oxygen to find money for needed home repairs through local aid sources.
- * In Bastrop, Louisiana, a member has assisted 50 rural residents in completing applications for RECD housing assistance,

- * In Tallulah, Louisiana, a member has been conducting extensive research into over 300 RECD borrower case files to improve program delivery for over 2,000 members of the local community.
- * In Ignont, Louisiana, has provided information on the RECD Section 504 housing repair program to the local council on aging.
- * In Jonesville, Louisiana, a member writes and distributes a rural housing and farmer programs newsletter to keep the local rural community informed about RECD programs, has obtained Section 504 housing repair for 2 senior citizens with 10 others on the waiting list.
- * In Winnsboro, Louisiana, a member has assisted in preparing 25 applications for RECD single-family housing assistance and has had 3 applications for housing repair loans approved.
- * In Boley, Louisiana, a member has assisted in the preparation for more than 75 applications for RECD Section 504 (housing repair) grants and loans.
- * In Lake Providence, Louisiana, a member has worked with the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service to assist in the processing of 30 applications for RECD aid, reached 286 applicants with information on the Home Energy Project in northern Louisiana, and conducted home buyer education workshops to help low-income families to own and maintain their own homes.
- * In Indianola, Mississippi, a member has designed and conducted a home buyer education program and made field visits to inspect housing in conjunction with RECD Section 504 Housing Repair loans approvals.
- * In Jackson, Mississippi, has informed residents about the RECD's housing programs and conducted home buyer education seminars.
- * In Yazoo City, Mississippi, a member designed and instituted a microenterprise program to assist low-income residents establish self-sufficiency through entrepreneurship and to apprise local banks of the increased chance of success that potential borrowers will have as a result.
- * In Lexington, Mississippi, a member induced a major employer in the area, with 700 jobs and a payroll of \$8,000,000, not to relocate by designing a business plan to reduce turnover by 68%, and added an additional 300 jobs to the payroll, and also designed a program to inform the elderly about fraud and scam techniques, began work on the creation of a county resource center, and has been working with the local EZ/EC to develop a local industrial park, working to acquire a baseball-throwing machine for the local public school district to serve 700 students and start a tuition assistance

program to benefit the 22,000 county residents, and devise an "honor loft" system for the local elementary schools to encourage scholarship.

- * In Canton, Mississippi, a member has helped residents apply for RECD housing assistance, including writing news releases, developed and conducted a series of "Money Matters" seminars.
- * In Natchez, Mississippi, a member has assisted a number of applicants for RECD housing assistance and has designed and given seminars on RECD assistance.
- * In Jackson, Mississippi, a member has assisted a number of applicants for RECD housing assistance and has designed and given seminars on RECD assistance and home buyer education.
- * In Greeneville, Mississippi, a member has designed informational materials to assist applicants for RECD assistance, worked on a survey to support the application for a housing rehabilitation grant.
- * In Webb, Mississippi, a member has worked with both the RECD Self-Help housing construction and the Section 515 Multi-Family Housing programs resulting in the eventual construction of 26 houses and 32 apartment units.
- * In Aztec, New Mexico, a member has assisted applications for RECD Section 502 Single Family Housing loans for the elderly and disabled and the completion of an RECD Housing Preservation Grant for Upper Fruitland Chapter of the Navajo Nation, organized and implemented a home buyers education workshop for 150 RECD applicants and community members, as well as to 88 senior citizens at 3 senior citizen centers, completed a business assistance and retention survey for the NW New Mexico Council of Governments, and gave presentations to 3 realty companies on the RECD Guaranteed Loan Program attended by 28 people.
- * In Hendersonville, North Carolina, an RECD member was able to assist on 3 applications for housing assistance, assisted inspecting several homes, helped replace water lines, coated mobile home roofs with winter sealant, helped install a handicapped shower, and gathered and stocked paint for use by Housing Assistance Corporation applicants.
- * In Hendersonville, North Carolina, another RECD member working with the local Housing Assistance Corporation, another AmeriCorps member, VISTA, and several volunteers was able to insulate and provide a heating system to a home for a single mother and her child in one (1) day.

* In Jefferson, North Carolina, an RECD member developed a brochure to explain how RECD home improvement loans and grants can be used, and inspected over 110 homes to determine home repair needs.

* In Pendleton, Oregon, a member is assisting low-income applicants for repair and weatherization, and RECD Section 504 Rural Housing Repair assistance, is assisting members of the Umatilla Tribe to apply for RECD's Section 502 Single Family Housing and Section 504 Home Repair assistance, including negotiation loans with lenders, assisting the Umatilla Tribe to complete a pre-application for a \$9.5 million community facility loan and tribal interpretive center, and is working with the tribal public works department to expedite the pre-construction process for a water and waste disposal system.

* In LaGrande, Oregon, a member has contacted a number of local organizations about RECD programs which encouraged 7 people to apply, of which one has been approved and 4 additional are being processed, has explained the value of connecting to the Internet to bring communities together to share information and discuss issues, is collaborating with another RECD AmeriCorps members on a home-painting project for at least 12 low-income senior and disabled citizens, has compiled a USDA farmer program resource list for Oregon, has assisted a local organization to obtain a housing preservation grant, has assisted a non-profit organization to apply for an RECD Self-Help Technical Assistance grant to train people to build their own homes, and has assisted in identifying possible construction sites.

* In Baker City, Oregon, a member has taken a leadership role in bringing together various government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community activists, has met with over 25 groups and 60 individuals to locate qualified applicants for the RECD's Section 504 Housing Repair program which generated 8 applications (1 approved, 4 being processed), has worked with the USDA AmeriCorps regional facilitator to work with the National Civilian Community Corps, the Oregon State Volunteer Program, and other civic organizations on a paint project in the area, including getting paint donations.

* In Ontario, Oregon, a member has made presentations on the RECD Section 504 Home Repair program, resulting in 3 applications, has located 2 additional sources of underutilized sources of money to complement RECD funds, has procured necessary equipment and supplies for an emergency shelter and has helped in the application process for an RECD \$134,000 Rural Housing Preservation Grant.

* In Roseburg, Oregon, a member promoted the RECD's Section 502 Single Family Housing and Section 504 Rural Housing Repair programs to a variety of organizations and meetings, resulting in 3 low-income families receiving aid, worked to find temporary shelter and transitional housing for the homeless, assisted a town to file an application to become a water district.

- * In Allendale, South Carolina, a member assisted a local state university in surveying housing needs, worked with the local EZ/EC Champion community on its strategic plan, proposed the establishment of a home for the elderly in the community to the local Department of Social Services, and with a number of other social service providers in the area.
- * In Blackville, South Carolina, a member also assisted in a local housing survey, helped establish a Habitat for Humanity chapter in the community, worked on a Housing Preservation Grant for the community, and assisted a variety of social service organizations.
- * In Holly Hill, South Carolina, a member worked with a local university to obtain a Housing Preservation Grant for 10 houses, formed a group within the local EZ/EC Champion community to work on environmental issues, assisted 25 applicants for RECD Section 504 Housing Repair loans, designed and conducted a seminar on local business improvement, and worked with the local utility company to establish a seminar on weatherization.
- * In Beaufort, South Carolina, another member has worked with the elderly on housing repair needs, and met with local banks and lending institutions to obtain information on home ownership requirements in conjunction with the RECD's Section 502 Single Family Housing and Section 504 Housing Repair assistance.
- * In Hebbronville, Texas, a member has assisted in generating 159 applications for RECD housing rehabilitation funds where it is anticipated that at least 42 applications will be approved, and has gotten RECD Section 504 housing assistance for an elderly man whose house burned down, and has continued to help this man by actually assisting in building the new home.
- * In Marion, South Carolina, has met with a variety of individuals and organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Youth Build USA, the National PTA, the National Crime Prevention Council, etc. to try to eliminate substandard housing.
- * In Orangeburg, South Carolina, a member met with 8 banks to secure assistance for poverty-impacted areas, and has worked with approximately 50 individuals and businesses to assist with community economic development by identifying abandoned houses for demolition or renovation to prevent them from becoming drug havens.
- * In Carrizo Springs, Texas, a member has worked on establishing a neighborhood crime watch program and on a program to reduce the cost of long-distance phone calls in rural areas.

* In Yakima, Washington, a member has been working with a local housing foundation to determine the demand for housing from farmworkers during peak season, including organizing a conference on farmworker housing issues, and has arranged tours of local housing conditions to inform local businessmen, bankers, city council board members, etc. about local housing issues.

* In Mingo County, West Virginia, an RECD member has assisted the local housing authority by conducting over 30 briefings on application requirements, performing 25 housing inspections, taking applications, and working with landlords and tenants to bring housing up to code; member plans on assisting an additional 150 families on the waiting list. The member has assisted over 15 families to get into quality standard homes, as well as developing a family self-sufficiency program helping families find jobs, go to school, etc, and helping to evaluate proposals for a development plan for the county.

Cultural and Historic Resource Preservation

* In Louisiana, Member completed the revision of the Louisiana Political Museum By-laws so the Museum's legal representatives are now able to complete documentation for 501(c) status.

* Member in Utah is conducting an inventory of 22 sites identified for inclusion in the Trail of the Ancients that will provide information for site interpretation, education, and marketing,

* Member in Tennessee conducted 2 oral history interviews in Unicoi county for the Hidden Heroines project, a regional cultural arts project covering women's history in Appalachia in 8 counties.

* In Penn Center, South Carolina, is assisting in designing the master plan for the local community, an area of major historical significance, by performing land studies and title research, and she has also prepared an application for a successful grant application for \$1 million to establish a farm cooperative and production processing plant.

AmeriCorps/USDA is "Getting Things Done" Educating Americans

Many USDA AmeriCorps environmental and rural development projects have educational components. Educational achievements related to hunger are detailed in the hunger section above. In the second quarter, USDA AmeriCorps Members:

- * Members in Minnesota conducted 20 adult and family environmental education courses at the River Bend Nature Center (500 attendees)
- * Member in Virginia gathered historical information on the area and then made an educational presentation on that information to twenty schools, reaching more than 400 students.
- * Member in Georgia spoke with at least 450 people on "Leave No Trace" outdoor ethics, presented environmental education programs to 900 children and young adults at day care centers, schools, churches and hospitals,
- * In Colorado, Members presented an Environmental Education program to 300 students and 14 teachers at the Delores Elementary School.
- * Members in Tennessee taught 933 students in 42 classrooms lessons to be more responsible citizens towards the environment and how to encourage adults to do the same through a "Garbage Busters" program, developed and conducted an in-service training for 25 teachers across TN to expose them to environmental education programs, organized Conservation Camp for 1,200 6th grade students and teachers and developed a companion workbook, successfully located property and negotiated a lease for long term use of a riverfront environmental education center for the Camp and other programs, completely revised a 3rd grade water quality curriculum called Water Wizards and facilitated this education program to 400 students in 5 counties, created a successful grant proposal for Conservation Camp for 4th graders, and coordinated, planned and registered 775 students for the 2 day event.
- * In Atlanta Members have presented 27 programs to about 850 students at 15 different schools. Ten schools have been assisted with gardening projects; outdoor classrooms have been constructed at 2 schools; and 100 students have been taught about gardening techniques.
- * In Goldendale, Washington, Members responded to teacher requests for presentations on environmental education for 160 participants.
- * Boston Members have conducted educational museum tours for school children.

- * Several Members in Boston organized collection and distribution at a local food bank.
- * In Missouri, 740 elementary school children were given presentations on soil and water conservation.
- * In South Carolina, 3 outdoor classrooms were constructed, including 5 miles of nature trails and 2 teacher curriculum guides.
- * In Tennessee, member taught 933 students in 42 classrooms in five counties environmental stewardship. In service training was conducted for 25 teachers. Since last year, participation in Environthon has gone from 7 teams to 17 teams thanks to AmeriCorps. About 90 students are being trained to participate. Member has revised a third grade water quality curriculum called Water Wizards and is sharing it with 400 students in 5 counties.
- * Fourteen schools have been selected to serve as pilot environmental study areas. Over 700 trees have been planted, 100 bluebird boxes have been installed. More than 100 classroom presentations on environmental education.
- * Members in the Casco Bay Watershed area of Maine held a Water Quality Monitoring/Education teacher workshop with thirty participants. This workshop was held in conjunction with the Environmental School in Brighton, Maine.
- * In Machias, Maine, Members organized a county-wide environmental education newsletter, written and produced by high school students, subsidized by a \$200 grant. The newsletters are distributed throughout participating schools and in several area grocers.

(b) AmeriCorps Member Development Objectives:

Because USDA has spent so much time and energy to date documenting the accomplishments towards meeting community service objectives, we only do not have a tremendous amount of hard, empirical, aggregated evidence to date on our success in meeting Member development objectives. Our best empirical evidence of success in meeting Member development needs is our excellent rate, which has been between 85% to 90% since the start of the program.

In addition, our quarterly site reports, as well as site visits in every region of the country, indicate the following:

- * All USDA Members have received extensive training --- in the vision of AmeriCorps, team-building and citizenship development, and the specific technical skills they need to perform their service.
- * By performing hard work together under the philosophy of "sweat equity," Members have learned to bridge their diverse racial, gender, religious, generational, and geographical backgrounds in order to work together as cohesive teams.
- * Many USDA Members have significantly increased their leadership, public speaking, and project planning skills in just the few months since the launch of the program.
- * Of the USDA Members who joined the program after dropping out of high school, many have either earned their GEDs or made significant progress towards obtaining their GEDs. Of the Members who joined the program with either some college education, college degrees, or some graduate education, many have expressed the belief that AmeriCorps has increased both their ability and their desire to continue their educations.
- * Some USDA Members have freed themselves from dependence on public assistance by joining AmeriCorps.

A good example of such member development is offered by a statement prepared by Regina Lynn, a Member serving in Waynesville, North Carolina:

"Then I heard about AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps would allow me to pursue my goal of family self-sufficiency--one step at a time. Rather than entering the work world unprepared for the responsibilities involved in full-time employment, I would volunteer in return for a stipend. This would allow me to give back to my community and support others in their efforts to meet their needs and pursue their dreams. In addition, I would gain invaluable work experience. I was supported by public assistance much of my life and had virtually no work experience. AmeriCorps lessened the fear of letting go of a way of life and setting out on an unfamiliar path."

(c) Community Building/Strengthening Objectives:

All USDA AmeriCorps projects are building long-term partnerships that are resulting in significant structural improvements in communities.

As indicated in the attached site reports, virtually every USDA project is receiving from and/or providing the following to local units of government and non-profit organizations: technical assistance, physical labor, advice, moral support, and funds.

The USDA Rural Development Team is making a particularly effective impact strengthening communities. By allowing talented and well-educated young people to return to live in the communities in which they grew up, it is helping reverse the "rural brain drain" which has done so much to deprive rural America of critical human capital. Rural development team members provide energy, idealism, and technical expertise to their communities every day.

Some examples:

"The information will now be assembled into revised maps of the county which will be distributed to the emergency and law enforcement personnel. The AmeriCorps Newberry One team touched the lives of every resident of Saluda County with their work in a very short time, and we truly appreciate having met and known them all."

-Carol S. Williams, Saluda County Chamber of Commerce
Saluda County, South Carolina

"According to Arthur James, Executive Director of Yazoo Community Action, Inc., the AmeriCorps/USDA member has been essential in getting this program off the ground. 'LaDonna initially worked closely with Diane Meyerhoff who served as our consultant for the Microenterprise Program,' he said. 'She has coordinated the program, held several meetings with partners, went to training workshops around the State, designed the Yazoo Microenterprise brochure and numerous other things in preparation for the program,' he said."

-Yazoo Community Action, Inc. Press Release
Yazoo County, Mississippi

7. Unique successes or great stories:

Before the USDA AmeriCorps Anti-Hunger project began in the Mississippi Delta, a pregnant woman in Belzoni, Mississippi went into a local, county-run, social services offices to obtain food stamps. The clerk at the office balled-up her application and threw it into the trash bin, telling the pregnant woman that, since she was irresponsible in getting pregnant, she did not deserve food stamps. Even though the clerk's action's violated Federal law, the pregnant woman was effectively denied Federal nutrition assistance and began to lose weight, even as she became more pregnant. As soon as the USDA AmeriCorps Anti-Hunger Team started, Members obtained for the pregnant the food stamps and WIC benefits to which she was legally entitled. She gained back her normal weight, and continues to gain weight as her pregnancy advances. According to her doctor, the service of the AmeriCorps members may have saved the life of her child.

Members of the Milwaukee Anti-Hunger Corps literally saved nine children from a burning building at great risk to themselves. They have been given a proclamation by the mayor.

Musical superstar, artistic genius, and community activist Stevie Wonder helped Members of the Los Angeles Anti-Hunger Team conduct a nutrition assembly for 350 elementary students.

"Recently, I met with three generations of a family who has run a small logging and mill operation for 30 years. As I was leaving the patriarch, who had been a bit gruff at first, called me back and said "We really appreciate your taking the time to just come out here and listen to what we think."

-AmeriCorps Member, Carla M. Garrison
San Juan National Forest

"Getting the job done-that is the goal of the AmeriCorps program. It's in our pledge. It is our motto. I joined the AmeriCorps program for many reasons, not the least of which was the opportunity to make a difference in the community-to get the job done."

-AmeriCorps Member Rebecca Estep
Kentucky

"AmeriCorps is my chance to help our most valuable asset...children. I joined AmeriCorps now...to help them grow for tomorrow."

-AmeriCorps Member Diggs Hill, Jr.
Greenville, South Carolina

"Members, most of who are from an urban/suburban background, are gaining invaluable experience, understanding, and appreciation for the rural situation, condition and way of life. Our AmeriCorps Members battle daily with the complexities, the realities and the dilemmas of building sustainable rural communities. Our communities are being rejuvenated with the assistance of these energetic and creative AmeriCorps Members. Small groups and individuals in our communities, guided and aided by AmeriCorps Members, are making REAL progress toward their goals."

-Clinch-Powell RC&D Council
Rutledge, Tennessee

"AmeriCorps is an adventure of opportunities in community service. For its members, it has been an exciting trip into towns and communities in rural SC to make a positive impact by helping those in need. For those affected by AmeriCorps' accomplishments, it represents a sign of hope that someone cares."

-AmeriCorps Member Susan Miller
Lexington, South Carolina

"On behalf of the Saluda County Chamber of Commerce, I wish to express my thanks to the NRCS for their assistance in allowing us the opportunity to witness firsthand the services of AmeriCorps volunteers in our community from January 3 through January 25th. The Newberry One team: Diggs Hill, Abby Gage, Karen Kinard, Madeline Cislo, and John Morgan, III, exhibited sunny attitudes, abundant energy, and a willingness to work that will be hard to match by anyone else. Their work was so extremely significant to our project here for the implementation of the "911" program.

- Carol S. Williams
Executive Secretary
Saluda County Chamber of Commerce, South Carolina

"You're really talking about basic citizenship among our young, and that's something that is a worthy, public, national goal to instill..and there is nothing wrong that educational assistance, so these young people in AmeriCorps can go to college and get their education."

- State Senator Diane Bynum
Onondaga, Michigan

8. National Identity Activities this Quarter:

USDA has woven the national AmeriCorps identity and philosophy into every steps of our program. All USDA members are required to wear at least one article of uniform identifying them as AmeriCorps Members. All our press releases and informational materials are now required to have at least two standard paragraphs on AmeriCorps.

In addition, USDA has strengthened its requirement that all our sub-grantees give full credit to both AmeriCorps and USDA.

Over 100 Members of the Rural Development Team met together in March for a week-long training and team-building session.

USDA AmeriCorps Members attended an event with President Clinton in Arkansas. The Chief of the USDA Natural Resources and Conservation Service, Paul Johnson, a former Peace Corps volunteer, also continues to visit sites around the country and explained his especially-relevant view of national service.

The USDA Director of National Service visited sites --- and in many cases, performed service alongside the Members ---- and conducted numerous media interviews in Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

USDA regular sends national newsclips, CNCS talking points, and speeches on AmeriCorps by the President and by Eli Segal to all our members throughout the country.

USDA has also begun sending a weekly newsletter to all our AmeriCorps Members.

9.Changes in Program Organization or Key Staff Positions during this Quarter:

The only major staff change has been John Seymour replacing Lou Woltering as the Forest Service AmeriCorps coordinator.

10. Primary Challenges Encountered this Quarter:

USDA has faced an immense burden submitting both our application and our second quarter report on the same day. We urge CNCS never again to have both documents due on the same day.

USDA has been hampered by shifting and new reporting requirements from CNCS. For the second quarter in a row, we received revised report formats after we sent report requests to all our operating sites.

USDA also has had difficulty responding to the requests for operating site forms, given the short notice we were given by CNCS and the fact that, for a number of weeks, CNCS did not have a sufficient amount of forms for the Department to send to all our sites.

USDA believes that, not only did the Member handbooks arrive months too late to be fully useful, but that they are so vague and so skimpy on programmatic suggestions, that they would provide very little value-added to our members. Much of the information in the CNCS Member handbook is covered in the USDA Member and staff handbook, the first version of which was over 100 pages long and the second version of which will be over 150 pages long. USDA recommends that next year's CNCS Member handbook be ready in time for the launch --- and have much more detailed information on practical matters such as project planning, forms required to be filled out, an extensive discussion of loan deferment, the full policy on release for cause, etc.

It is problematic that USDA and CNCS have differing site and Member databases. USDA staff will work extremely hard with CNCS staff to ensure that all databases are the same.

USDA has been hampered by mailings that CNCS has sent directly to members or project notices without our knowledge. For instance, we received no advance notice that the President was sending letters to all our members --- this is wonderful, but when we were told by members to thank the President for his letter we were embarrassed not to know what they were talking about. NCCC mailings sent directly to our project managers created massive confusion about "cashing out" the educational award and the deadline for recruitment. Letters sent to our project managers offering them opportunities to buy uniforms and other materials confused them greatly about what materials should be free and which materials should be purchased. USDA urges CNCS to inform the Department in advance of all future mailings directly to members or project managers.

Many of our Members still have incomplete sets of uniforms. We will work with CNCS to rectify this. Still, Members and project managers were furious that CNCS did not even print uniforms until Winter was well over. None of our Members have received lapel pins, which are particularly critical for Rural Development Team members who typically wear business attire. USDA is also working to print our own uniforms.

Many of our project managers have complained that they received too few AmeriCorps signs, and that the signs they did receive are not suitable for long-term, outdoor, use. Consequently, USDA is printing permanent aluminum signs to be placed at work sites.

Many Members were furious and frustrated upon learning that their educational ward can be taxed. USDA hopes that CNCS can work with the Internal revenue Service to reverse this ruling.

Universities and loan agencies throughout the country are continuing to deny loan forbearance to Members. USDA will work with CNCS and the Department of Education to rectify as many of these matters as possible.

Some Members have PLUS Loans under their parents' names or education loans that were taken out through credit unions, both of which can not be repaid with the education award. USDA hopes that CNCS will make a concerted effort to obtain either legislative or administrative redress for this problem.

Some Members have illegally had their food stamps benefits reduced or eliminated as a result of their AmeriCorps stipends improperly being counted by state social service agencies as income. USDA, as the Federal agency responsible for food stamps interactions with the states, will make a concerted effort to inform all states of the specific provisions of the national and Community Service Act of 1993 regarding food stamps and WIC.

Many Members still do not have regular access to computers. USDA is working to send as many excess computers as possible to field sites, but we have no funds to purchase new computers and no current legal authority to obtain donated computers.

Some Rural Development Team Members have already run out of their year's allotment of travel funds. We are seeking travel funding from partners and working to increase the travel allotments in next year's applications.

USDA still has a great problem communicating rapidly and accurately with all our project managers. The Department will work with our internal agencies to improve this flow of information, as well as to develop a system of directly faxing materials to each site simultaneously.

USDA still has some problems with project planning and in the management of diverse Members in some of our urban environmental teams. We will work to obtain technical assistance from CNCS for these sites, send staff from our national office to facilitate matters at those sites, and work with their parent agency to provide additional staff resources and guidance.

Some youth corps to whom USDA has sub-contracted still have some difficulty in fully adapting to the AmeriCorps model. We will continue to work with them to provide intensive oversight and, occasionally, make it clear that we will discontinue funding if they do not fully meet the legal programmatic requirements of AmeriCorps.

Part III—Report on Grantee Activities

12. Primary Accomplishments this Reporting Quarter:

The USDA Director of National Service, as well as his staff and the staff of the USDA agencies sponsoring AmeriCorps projects, continue to be hands-on partners in each and every project site.

These staff members are in daily contact with CNCS staff in every conceivable part of the Corporation for National and Community Service, dealing with project management issues, budget issues, media issues, intergovernmental affairs issues, uniform issues, state commission issues, Congressional affairs issues, database issues, NCCC issues, and Federal partnership issues. We continue to be proud that, by tackling many difficult issues proactively, we solve many issues not only on behalf of USDA, but on behalf of other Federal agencies as well.

We are also in daily contact with AmeriCorps facilitators and project managers throughout the country.

This quarter, we strengthened the roles and clarified the duties of regional facilitators, who focus on identity building activities. These facilitators also provided weekly progress reports on virtually all of our projects, and served as liaisons to state commissions and to the CNCS state directors.

We have almost completed and extremely detailed revised staff and member handbook which will soon be sent to the field.

We also have played a continuing role in distributing our first quarter report to Congressional offices, state government offices, and to the media.

13. Program Monitoring Activities this Quarter:

AmeriCorps staff from the national office have personally visited countless sites in every region of the country and have provided on-site technical assistance.

The Director of National Service personally read each of the over individual first quarter site reports, totalling over 1,000 pages. He then prepared a 16-page document outlining problems identified in the report, which explained how CNCS, the Department, and the site managers could work cooperatively together to solve those problems.

In addition, the Department provided concrete feedback to each individual site on their first quarter report. The Department was demanding in working with project managers to strengthen the community service objectives and to refine work plans to ensure that the objectives would be met.

In addition, the Director of National Service obtained and read reports from regional and state AmeriCorps facilitators, and provided immediate feedback by either memorandum or by phone when particular successes or problems were identified.

Lastly, at a week-long training in Memphis, over 125 members of the Rural Development Team --- as well as their project managers -- had extensive conversations with the Department about the specific successes and challenges at each of their individual sites.

14. (a) Training and Technical Assistance Activities this Quarter:

The most significant training this quarter was a national conference held for over 125 members of the Rural Development Team --- as well as their project managers. Part of the training was run directly by the Department, but most of the training was contracted-out to the heartland Institute, national recognized experts in rural development and community-building issues. Those who attended almost uniformly believe the conference was helpful. The Department focused on clarifying objectives, improving workplans, and improving quarterly reporting.

(b) T/TA needs/trends for the reporting quarter:

Many Members still report the need for computer training, and will work to provide that at the site or state local level.

(c) Review and forwarding of T/TA Requests Made by Operating Sites:

We have already begun working with the United Way to arrange specific training partnerships at individual USDA sites throughout the country.

In addition, we will request significant assistance from CNCS staff is helping is conduct a national training sometime in July for all our AmeriCorps. the site is yet to be determined, but it will likely be in the Midwest.

15. Fund-raising Activities this Quarter:

Under Federal current law, USDA employees can not engage in significant fundraising activities. However, I am working on a proposal for the 1995 Farm Bill which, if enacted by Congress, would create the AmeriCorps USDA Foundation to raise funds from private businesses and non-profit organizations for our programs.

16. Plans for Next Quarter.

Many USDA projects participated in Earth Day Activities and the National Day of Service. USDA national staff will intensify our focus on quality control at individual sites through intensified site visits. We will work hand-in-hand with CNCS to get all remaining sites uniform parts they are missing, obtain outstanding site operating forms, and generally ensure that our database has the same information at the CNCS database. We will work to ensure a more timely distribution of all critical CNCS and USDA information directly to all project managers. We will work towards distributing a newsletter to all our members on a weekly basis. We will prepare our sites for their end of service, but creating graduating "transcripts," preparing graduating certificates, and planning ceremonies at each site. Lastly, even before we receive notification from CNCS about our renewal application, will begin full-scale recruitment for next year's program.