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USDA NATIONAL SERVICE TASK FORCE

DRAFT ACTION PLAN, JUNE 29, 1993

OLD DRAFT

I. Purpose of Action Plan

The purpose of the task force is to turn our generalized plans for national service into concrete, specific, realistic, and comprehensive grant proposals to be submitted to the soon-to-be formed Corporation for National service.

In the Administration's overall initiative, most of the service participants will be supervised by existing youth corps, non-profit organizations, and state and local government-managed corps. Yet a small percentage of participants may be in programs managed directly by the federal government. Toward that end, Secretary Espy has directed us to prepare three different proposals for possible incorporation into the President's national service program: a National Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Corps, a National Conservation Corps, and a National Rural Development Corps.

If any or all of these proposals are eventually funded by the new Corporation for National Service, we intend to make our programs models of reinventing government. All the USDA national service programs should:

- * Reinvent government by promoting opportunity, responsibility, and community.
- * Reunite the interests of the middle class and the poor by allowing young people from all types of families to earn their way through college.
- * Provide models for how the federal government can manage national service programs.
- * Expand dramatically as the President phases-in a full-scale national program.
- * Recruit groups of participants that are socio-economically diverse.
- * Provide valuable service to the community by systematically filling unmet social needs.
- * Allow young people to perform service either before or after attending post-secondary education.
- * Forge links to youth apprenticeship programs run by USDA and other Cabinet agencies.

- * Give the participants at least a minimum wage living expense, as well as adequate supervision and training.
- * Limit the work performed to tasks that fulfill significant missions of USDA and are supported by our major constituency groups (farming, consumer, commodity, environmental, etc.).
- * Encourage the leveraging of funds from states, localities, non-profit organizations, and corporations.
- * Act as a multiplier of other national service programs throughout the country.
- * Build a new form of entrepreneurial and non-bureaucratic government.
- * Create staff out of existing USDA personnel.
- * Be managed across traditional USDA agency lines.

The purpose of this action plan is to create a framework by which we can turn the general plans for three corps, based on the above principles, into concrete proposals for each one.

II. Process

Many questions must still be answered by the task force. A few are:

1. How will Corps applicants be selected, matched with suitable assignments, and trained? Will an age range be established for the participants?
2. Will applicants be assigned anywhere they are needed, or only within their community of origin? The former requires a higher degree of national organization; the latter would reduce re-location costs and might enhance cultural acceptance of the applicant.
3. Who will supervise the Corps member? There will be a need to judge performance, initiate additional training when needed, and even perhaps to terminate or initiate re-assignment when necessary.

4. What will be suitable assignments? Should local or county government agencies or community organizations have free rein in assigning Corps members wherever they wish, or should the assignments be limited to augmenting the functional capability of the agency - for example, providing tutoring services where none existed before. Would assignment as a file clerk, for example, be acceptable on the grounds that it frees up a staff member who can provide higher-level services to recipients, or would that assignment be viewed as supplanting efforts already underway and of no particular value to the Corps member?
5. How will this initiative relate to existing volunteer organizations?
6. What kind of structure will the initiative have? How will it interact with state and local governments?
7. How many USDA personnel will be required to manage the program?
8. How much will the program cost in total and per server?
9. What states, localities, non-profit organizations, and corporations can help fund this program?
10. How will the locations be selected and the sizes of the pilot program be set?
11. How many participants will be able to place in workable pilot programs? What will be the ultimate capacity of these programs?
12. How will we absolutely, positively ensure that we don't create yet another cumbersome Washington bureaucracy?
13. How will these programs meet the broader missions of USDA?
14. How will we create a program that will grow on its own regardless of the Administration in power?

The complete task force will meet regularly to keep all its members apprised of the progress of the entire group. However, most of the work to answer the above questions and other questions will take place in sub-groups.

The sub-groups will be subdivided in two ways -- one by the type of the corps and one by the major cross cutting issues that will affect all three of the corps.

There will also be an Outreach Group, chaired by Joel Berg and Katherine Gibney, which will focus on explaining our program to the media and building support for our plans with key USDA constituency groups.

The meetings of each of the other sub-groups will be attended by Joel Berg or by Katherine Gibney to ensure proper communication between all task force members.

Thus, we will create the following sub-groups:

Outreach

Rural Development Corps

Environmental Corps

Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Corps

Fundraising

Costs and Budget

Research

Pilot Project Selection

Youth Development

Diversity

USDA Administration and Personnel

Higher Education

Technical Assistance

III. Outreach Sub-Group

Provide briefings to constituency groups as soon as legislation passes.

Develop a media list of reporters likely to cover USDA-related service projects.

Provide media with continual releases about ongoing USDA service projects.

Provide the Secretary, and Under and Assistant Secretaries with lists of regional service projects and suggestions for media events when travelling.

Provide all top USDA officials with national service talking points for inclusion in their speeches and media appearances.

IV. Rural Development Corps Sub-Group

The Department of Agriculture would establish a corps of "professional" and "paraprofessional" participants could assist communities in identifying needs and resources necessary for economic well being. The participants would have diverse education and training and would be matched up with individual communities or regions that have specific needs that can be filled by someone with that specific background.

We make a concerted effort to recruit participants who want to return to their home-town or areas similar to those in which they were raised. Thus, this program can help begin reversing the "brain drain" from rural America.

This group of individuals would be able to assist communities of all sizes facing economic recovery and local leadership development issues to plan and prioritize efforts combining formal and non formal education to work locally. The corps would then assist the community in locating financial resources, preparing proposals, designing educational programs, and implementing strategies necessary for revitalization. The entire focus would be on the community generating its own vision for the future and the USDA corps assisting them in creating and attaining that vision.

Individuals will be placed in communities where their particular talents can be best utilized. Experts in tourism will be matched up with communities that want to develop their tourism. . Experts in grant writing will be matched up with communities that need grant writing. Experts in attracting small businesses will be matched up with communities that want to attract more small business. Etc. General planners would also be matched up with communities that need to develop overall economic plans.

This corps, consisting of participants older and more highly educated than the other two corps, could be funded by a special section of the Administration's proposed bill that would fund special professional corps such as "Teachers Corps" or "Police Corps."

The increased economic viability of our rural communities and small towns could be a major outcome. With the assistance of the corps, communities would be better able to develop a sound economic base that will take them into the next century. A core of community leaders for the future would be developed. Planning and implementing long-range strategies could result in increased environmentally sound agricultural production, a viable pollution-free light industry, and increased local tourism.

a. Social problems to be solved

Some of the worst pockets of poverty and highest rates of unemployment exist in rural America. While President Clinton's overall economic program should help significantly, special efforts are needed to boost rural America.

A recent study by USDA is rarely sufficient by itself to promote rural economic development.

Many rural communities that can afford to do so now pay high-priced consultants to advise them on development; right now the Forest Service even gives grants to some communities to hire such consultants. With proper training, our corps members could take the place of these consultants and help communities develop their tourism, high-tech industries, recreation sites, etc. The corps members would work with each community to create an economic development action plan that makes sense for that particular community.

This program could give a significant boost to our overall rural development efforts.

The objectives of the program would be:

- * accomplish much needed community planning activities necessary to assure the economic vitality and productivity of our rural and mid-sized communities;
- * teach specific skills in community building, coalition building, strategic planning and visioning, and leadership development;
- * develop improved federal ties with units of local government which people encounter in their everyday living;

To support these corps members, there already exists an information data base at the National Agriculture Library called the National Rural Information Center. This information center maintains a data base of organizations which provide financial

support to communities on a national, regional, and local basis. This data base is available to the Corps members for assisting the community in developing its own action plan and applying for funding.

Curricula for teaching leadership, volunteer development, program management, basic life skills, and understanding of basic business principles would be necessary.

b. How the corps will work with existing programs

Most states have local Planning and Development Districts which provide for the overall strategic and project planning efforts for a multi-jurisdictional area. Some of these cover several counties, and some cover multiple communities within a county or township. They are staffed by local citizens and all have one thing in common: they are understaffed.

Bob Nash, our Undersecretary for Small Community and Rural Development, has suggested strongly that our corps participants be physically located within the offices of local districts, so that they work with the districts and do not pose the threat of competition over turf.

We must still answer how this program will specifically interact with existing programs and the ambitious new rural development initiatives being planned by the Administration.

c. Outreach needed for stakeholders

We need a strategy for reaching out to the local planning districts, the state districts, and political and community leaders throughout rural America.

d. Residential or non-residential

Should this program have any residential, dorm-like component? Should the participants be required to live in the community in which they are working?

e. Sizes and sites of pilot projects

Where should the pilot projects be situated and how large should they be?

Thirty-two states currently have economic development councils or rural development councils so early pilot programs would be easy. Pilot programs could quickly be established in

five areas of our country:

Oregon and Washington
Four Corners: Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona
Tennessee and Kentucky
East Texas and Louisiana
North Carolina, Texas, Missouri
The Mississippi Delta

These areas already have an existing multi-agency coordination group functioning well and communities that are in dire need of assistance.

f. Growth scenarios

Where, and how quickly, should the program grow? Should we grow by expanding our pilot projects or by creating new ones?

g. Management structure needed

What new or existing office or offices at USDA will manage the program?

h. Staff needed

The Rural Development Corps should have a Director, who reports directly to the head of USDA national service programs. The Director of the Rural Development Corps should have deputies in charge of the following areas:

Recruitment
Training
Internal Communications
Day-to-Day Project Management
Intergovernmental, Congressional, and Public Affairs
USDA Inter-Agency Coordination
Fundraising, Grants, and Development
Monitoring and Evaluation

i. Costs

How much will the program cost to start and then run? What will be the total cost and how much per server? Will we pay the entire salary of the participants or only part?

Each participant will need access to a computer network in order to communicate with each other via an easy-to-use e-mail, access a USDA rural development database, and access INTERNET.

j. Funding sources

What non-profit groups, corporations, individuals, and/or foundations might be willing to help fund this?

k. Partnerships

Possible partnerships include:

Monday Management Group (17 federal agencies involved in rural development)
National Association of Counties
National Association of Development Organizations
National Governors Organization
National Association of Towns and Townships
State Rural Development Councils
State Economic Development Councils or Agencies
Local Planning and Development entities both private and public
National Association of State Foresters
Department of Defense Agencies, including the Army Corps of Engineers, 1890's, land-grant, and historically Hispanic colleges

l. Creating and maintaining diversity

How do we ensure that this program is managed by a diverse team and includes a diverse set of participants each and every year?

m. Special training and supervision issues

Participants of this program would hold either Bachelor's degrees or graduate degrees and use the benefits to pay back student loans. Unfortunately, only two graduate schools in the country now specifically teach rural development; perhaps we could form partnerships with others to do so. Participants could also be trained in public administration, civil engineering, or agricultural science. The participants would need to spend a period of training before being assigned to the local districts. They would then live and work in the communities for which they are providing the assistance.

n. Timeline

We need to develop a solid, day-to-day set of goals, for specific steps in creating and running this corps.

V. Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Corps Sub-Group

This program could be run in partnership with H.U.D. and/or H.H.S. Corps members would work in urban and rural areas to help low income families and individuals move towards self-sufficiency. The main focus of the corps would be fighting domestic hunger; it would be similar to EFNEP but would have a greatly expanded mission. Corps members would help individuals apply for food stamps, WIC, and the school breakfast program; overhaul their diets; learn to prevent foodborne illnesses; obtain the expanded Earned Income Tax Credits, microenterprise loans, and help from community development banks. In short, this corps would help put into effect the entire empowerment agenda promoted by President Clinton and Secretary Espy. An full-scale program could eventually provide a big boost to our efforts to eradicate domestic hunger.

a. Social problems to be solved

Hunger has skyrocketed in America over the last decade, particularly among children.

Participants would provide outreach and access services, build the anti-hunger and anti-poverty infrastructure, and run innovative new empowerment programs:

1) Provide outreach/access services (educating eligible people about program availability and helping make benefits accessible)

* Outreach Workers - Inform target populations about program availability (all programs)

* Drivers - Help eligible people apply for and receive program benefits (WIC, CACFP, TEFAP, NPE, CSFP)

* Delivery Aides - Deliver program benefits to homebound elderly, physically disadvantaged, and homeless people (TEFAP, CSFP, FDPIR)

* Bilingual Aides - Provide program information, help with applications, etc. to eligible, non-English-speaking people (all programs)

* Service Facilitator - Conduct telephone follow-up with people who don't keep appointments, direct people to related health and welfare services (WIC, CSFP)

2) Bolster the infrastructure (providing the human capital necessary to deliver the programs according to congressional intent):

- * Food Handlers - Stock, warehouse, manage, distribute food products (TEFAP, charitable institutions, NPE, CSFP, school programs, FDPIR)
- * Day Care Workers - Provide child/adult care services to allow eligible people to apply for and receive program benefits (WIC, TEFAP, FDPIR)
- * Bilingual Case Assistants - Assist case manager with non-English-speaking clients (WIC)
- * Kitchen/Cafeteria Aides - Help with meal preparation and serving, maintaining, monitoring lunchrooms, and sanitation (school food, CACFP, and commodity programs)
- * Nutrition Assistants - Help with nutrition education, cooking demonstrations (WIC, school food programs)
- * CACFC Assistant - Improve supervision ratio of provider to participants in child care/meal preparation functions (CACFP)

3) Boost innovative new empowerment programs

- * EITC - Help families obtain the newly expanded Earned Income Tax Credit
- * Microenterprise - Teach people how to start small businesses
- * Community Development Banks - Inform families on how to apply for loans from community development banks
- * Assets Building - Work with families to develop savings plans
- * Tenant management - Help public housing tenants to develop organizations for self-management
- * Apprenticeship - Work with local schools and businesses to develop new school-to-work transition programs

b. How will work with existing programs

We must still answer how this program will specifically interact with the above existing programs and the ambitious new anti-hunger initiatives being planned by the Administration.

c. Outreach needed for stakeholders

We will need strong support from state welfare agencies and from the current participants in those programs.

d. Residential or non-residential

Should this program have any residential, dorm-like component?

e. Sizes and sites of pilot projects

Where should the pilot projects be situated and how large should they be?

f. Growth scenarios

Where, and how quickly, should the program grow? Should we grow by expanding our pilot projects or by creating new ones?

g. Management structure needed

What new or existing office or offices at USDA will manage the program?

h. Staff needed

How many USDA employees will be needed to manage the program? Will outside consultants also be required?

i. Costs

How much will the program cost to start and then run? How much will it cost total and per server?

j. Funding sources

What non-profit groups, corporations, individuals, and/or foundations might be willing to help fund this?

k. Partnerships

We must definitely work with state social service agencies. potential other partners include the Association of WIC Providers, the Food Research Action Center, the Children's Defense Fund, the Safe Food Coalition, the Urban League, etc. What other groups should be contacted?

1. Creating and maintaining diversity

How do we ensure that this program is managed by a diverse team and includes a diverse set of participants each and every year?

m. Special training and supervision issues

How would the participants be trained? For how long? Where? With what kind of curriculum?

How would they be supervised? Would they stay on one project throughout the year or frequently switch projects? What kind of extra supervision will be needed in residential programs?

n. Timeline

We need to develop a solid, day-to-day set of goals, for specific steps in creating and running this corps.

VI. Environmental Corps Sub-Group

The Department of Agriculture, possibly in conjunction with Interior and EPA, would establish an Environmental Youth Corps with urban and rural components. The urban component would be mostly non-residential and members would work on conservation projects on public and private lands in cities of various sizes. The rural component would be both residential and non-residential and would perform conservation-related work projects on private and public lands in rural America. The programs would be linked, with Corps members having the option of transferring between the rural and urban settings. For example, a Corps member could work in a rural environment for six months and then in an urban environment for another six months.

a. Social problems to be solved

There are currently an estimated 8 million tree planting sites in communities across America with the current replacement rate being one tree planted for every four removed. Thousands of water quality projects nationwide are awaiting manpower in our communities and our rural areas, as are riparian area restoration, erosion control, stream improvement, roadbank stabilization, and wildlife habitat projects. Urban gardening and sustainable agriculture would also have important places in this program.

Approaches:

Urban: More than 80 percent of the American population now live in cities of varying size. Currently, the Forest Service, with 620 Ranger Districts across the country, and the Soil Conservation Service, with more than 2,000 offices nationwide, have existing partnerships and delivery systems in many cities.

The program would take the Corps to where the people are, operating in any urban community with an existing network of Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, or Extension Service programs in partnerships with local governments or non-profit organizations.

The non-residential program would focus on urban conservation projects in the areas of water quality, waste disposal, erosion control, roadbank and streambank stabilization, urban gardening, the creation of urban buffers, rehabilitation and maintenance of deteriorating community infrastructure, urban forestry, and the recycling and reuse of resources. Corps members would live in the community or already be a community member.

While the Forest Service has authority over public lands or lands owned by non-profit organizations, the Soil Conservation Service has authority to perform work on private lands as well, allowing for a broad range of work projects.

Rural: Corps members would live in a residential setting in a rural area. The program would provide full-time logistical support for Corps members. As in the urban program, the Corps members would be expected to pay for living expenses from their wages.

Work projects could be in erosion control, fire prevention, fire suppression, building or improving recreation areas, restoration of infrastructure such as buildings and bridges, watershed protection, and other similar conservation projects. The land base of the National Forests would be available for projects as well as the privately held land in partnerships with the Soil Conservation Service.

Corps members could also focus on teaching sustainable agriculture, helping small farmers stay on the land, building rural housing, and engaging in rural development projects.

The Corps would provide much needed manpower for nationwide conservation projects. The work of the Corps could reduce the backlog of conservation-related work across the country.

With the shift from a rural population to an urban one, Americans are losing the ability to learn firsthand about natural resources. We currently have a relatively uneducated and uninformed citizenry with regard to natural resources and conservation issues. The Corps would provide an opportunity to learn about America's natural resources, their uses, and the need to protect them. The end result would be a citizenry better informed on national conservation issues.

Besides developing new skills, Corps members would have the opportunity to be exposed to a variety of career options in the conservation field through hands-on experience. The Corps would provide a broad span of time to explore options and plan for the future while also providing for food and shelter.

b. How will work with existing programs

We still need to answer how this program will specifically interact with existing programs and the ambitious new environmental initiatives being planned by the Administration.

c. Outreach needed for stakeholders

We need to gain the support from existing youth service corps, from environmental and conservation groups, from the National Forest Foundation, from labor unions, and from farming and commodity groups.

d. Residential or non-residential

What should be the mix of residential and non-residential participants? Can they have an exchange program?

e. Sizes and sites of pilot projects

Currently the Forest Service, in partnership with the National Forest Foundation, is operating three residential summer camps in Virginia, Oregon, and Washington. Through grants, the Forest Service and National Forest Foundation also are sponsoring urban programs in the southern California area. These could serve as initial sites.

What other facilities now exist in usable shape or near usable shape in the national forests that have been leftover from the YCC, the YAC, or even the original CCC?

f. Growth scenarios

Where, and how quickly, should the program grow? Should be grow by expanding our pilot projects or by creating new ones?

g. Management structure needed

What new or existing office or offices at USDA will manage the program?

h. Staff needed

How many USDA employees will be needed to manage the program? Will outside consultants also be required?

i. Costs

How much will the program cost to start and then run? How much will it cost total and per server?

j. Funding sources

What non-profit groups, corporations, individuals, and/or foundations might be willing to help fund this?

k. Partnerships

Possible partnerships include:

Association of Conservation Districts
Audobon Society
Department of Defense, including such agencies as the Army Corps of Engineers
Land Grant universities
National Recreation Coalition
National Association of State Foresters
National Parks Foundation
National Trust for Historic Preservation
National Tree Trust
Nature Conservancy
Telephone Pioneers of America

l. Creating and maintaining diversity

How do we ensure that this program is managed by a diverse team and includes a diverse set of participants each and every year?

m. Special training and supervision issues

How would the participants be trained? For how long? Where? With what kind of curriculum?

How would they be supervised? Would they stay on one project throughout the year or frequently switch projects? What kind of extra supervision will be needed in residential programs?

n. Creating and maintaining diversity

How do we ensure that this program is managed by a diverse team and includes a diverse set of participants each and every year?

o. Timeline

We need to develop a solid, day-to-day set of goals, for specific steps in creating and running this corps.

p. Boren bill

How will this program interact with the Civilian Conservation Corps, run in a quasi-military fashion, that was set up originally by the Boren bill?

VII. Fundraising Sub-Group:

We need clear guidelines from our Office of General Counsel on how we can raise money. Can we raise it directly? Can we funnel it through the Corporation of National Service? Can we funnel it through the national Forrest Foundation? How can we avoid even the appearance of impropriety in raising money from interests that might be regulated or affected by the Department of Agriculture?

Can various funders sponsor all or part of pilot projects?

Can we hold a national employees serve-a-thon in which USDA employees perform a day of service and get sponsored to do so by friends? If each of our 114,000 employees raises or personally donates an average of \$10, we will have raised over \$1 million.

Could we institute an employee check-off program in which our employees can donate weekly or yearly to our national service programs? Could we find a way to match those contributions with private contributions?

VIII. Costs and Budget Sub-Group

Does USDA have to pay for each \$5,000 voucher out of our grant or does that come from a separate account?

If most servers in the Environmental Corps are residential, then our estimated cost is about \$20,000 per servers. Thus a pilot program with 1,000 servers would cost \$20 million. This would allow us five rural sites of 100 each, and two urban sites of 250 each.

If we roughly estimate that each server in the Empowerment and Anti-Hungers Corps will cost \$15,000 per year, then 1,000 participants would cost \$15 million. That would fund twenty sites, half urban and half rural, with 50 participants in each site.

If we roughly estimate that each server in the Rural Development Corps will cost roughly \$30,000 per year, accounting for their higher pay, then 400 servers would cost \$10 million. That would fund ten state programs with 40 participants each.

The total for all three proposals is \$45 million. We would obviously have to raise private funds, in addition to Corporation for National Service Funds, to start pilots at such a grand scale. Yet these proposals would allow us to potentially have pilot operations in fully 37 states in our very first year of operation.

IX. Research Sub-Group

We need to fully research past programs such as CCC and YAC, as well as current programs such as YCC, EFNEP, 4-H, VISTA.

Task force members need to spend as much time as possible with as many nearby youth service corps as possible.

What has worked and what hasn't worked?

X. Pilot and Project Selection Sub-Group

How do we select the pilot locations and projects? How do we balance the need to be visible, yet effective.

XI. Youth Development Sub-Group

We need to study a wide variety of ways to boost the upward mobility of youth who participate in our programs. We need to discuss our service-learning, national service transcripts, guidance counselor centers, peer discussion groups and self-management, to help in obtaining other forms of federal student aid, and help in job placement.

Can extra private money we raise be used to supplement the national service voucher given to participants?

XII. Diversity Sub-Group

How can we make diversity -- by race, age, religion, class, gender, and orientation -- a reality in both our management team and our participants?

How can we incorporate physically disabled participants and program managers?

XIII. USDA Administrative and Personnel Sub-Group

Who will run this program at USDA and what we will have to do to free them from current programmatic and budgetary duties?

XIV. Higher Education Sub-Group

This group should coordinate extensively with land-grant universities, historically Black colleges, and historically Hispanic universities.

AMERICORPS/USDA

DRAFT ACTION PLAN, OCTOBER 25, 1993

I. PURPOSE OF ACTION PLAN

President Clinton's national service initiative --- now known as AMERICORPS --- will fund programs around the country in which Americans will perform at least a year of full-time community service in exchange for significant educational benefits.

Participants will earn small living stipends while performing work that addresses unmet human, environmental, educational, and public safety needs. For each year of service successfully performed, participants will also earn an educational voucher of \$4,725, which they may use to pay for college, vocational school, job training, or graduate school.

The purpose of this plan is to outline how we will turn our generalized plans for Americorps/USDA into concrete, specific, realistic, and comprehensive grant proposals to be submitted to the new Corporation for National service.

Most of the funds provided by the National Service Trust Act will be distributed through state commissions to programs managed by existing youth corps, non-profit organizations, and state and local governments. Consequently, USDA will provide significant information and technical assistance to the wide range of our constituency groups --- including environmental, consumer, farming, higher education, minority, rural development, agribusiness, and nutrition groups --- to help them apply for such funds or otherwise become involved in Americorps.

USDA will also develop curriculums in key areas --- such as nutrition, sustainable agriculture, the environment, and rural development --- for external groups that are planning to run Americorps programs related to these areas.

Yet the focus of this action plan is on the three service programs that USDA itself will run through a provision of the National Service Trust Act that dedicates over \$18 million for federal agencies to manage Americorps programs of their own. Secretary Espy has directed us to prepare three different Americorps team proposals to develop as grant applications for submission to the Corporation for National Service:

Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Team

Public Lands and Environment Team

Rural Development Team

The Rural Development Team will be a professional corps of mostly college and professional school graduates in which the participants will perform the majority of their work individually and at separate locations. The Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Team and the Public Lands and Environment Team, more similar to traditional youth corps, will allow participants to join the programs before, during, or after post-secondary education or job training; most of the participants in these two programs will perform their work together at project sites in crews of ten.

II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR ALL AMERICORPS/USDA PROGRAMS

We intend to make our programs models of reinventing government. All the USDA Americorps programs should:

- * Reinvent government by promoting opportunity, responsibility, and community.
- * Reunite the interests of the middle class and the poor by allowing young people from all types of families to earn their way through post-secondary education.
- * Provide models for how the federal government can manage national service programs.
- * Expand dramatically as the President phases-in a full-scale national program.
- * Recruit groups of participants that are socio-economically diverse.
- * Provide valuable service to the community by systematically filling unmet social needs.
- * Allow young people to perform service either before, during, **or** after attending post-secondary education.
- * Forge links to youth apprenticeship programs run by USDA and other Cabinet agencies.
- * Give the participants at least a minimum wage living expense, as well as adequate supervision and training.
- * Limit the work performed to tasks that fulfill significant missions of USDA and are generally acceptable to our main farming, consumer, environmental, and rural development interest groups.
- * Encourage the leveraging of funds from states, localities, non-profit organizations, corporations, and other government programs.

- * Act as a multiplier of other national service programs throughout the country.
- * Forge a new form of entrepreneurial and non-bureaucratic government.
- * Obtain funding from a combination of sources, including the Corporation for National and Community Service, USDA program funds, non-profit organizations, charitable foundations, corporations, and voluntary contributions from USDA employees.
- * Build a management team from existing USDA personnel.
- * Be managed across traditional USDA agency lines.

III. RURAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The Rural Development Team would establish ~~a~~ groups of "professional" and "paraprofessional" participants who would assist communities in identifying needs and resources necessary for economic well being. Participants would have diverse education and training, holding either college degrees or graduate degrees in planning, engineering, agriculture, public administration, etc.

We will make a concerted effort to recruit participants who want to return to their hometown or areas similar to those in which they were raised. Thus, this program can help begin reversing the "brain drain" from rural America.

The need to develop new leadership in rural America was a continuing theme of Secretary Espy's recent Rural Development Forum. Americorps/USDA Rural Development Team can help redress that need by playing a major role in developing that leadership.

The team participants would be matched up with individual communities or regions that have specific needs that can be filled by someone with their specific background. Individuals will be placed in communities where their particular talents can be best utilized. Experts in connecting rural homes to municipal water systems will be matched up to areas with that need. Experts in tourism will be matched up with communities that want to develop their tourism. Experts in sustainable agriculture will be matched up with groups of farmers who need technical assistance in that area. Experts in grant writing will be matched up with communities that need grant writing. Experts in attracting small businesses will be matched up with communities that want to attract more small business. Experts in watershed protection will be matched up with areas that need such help. General planners would also be matched up with communities that need to develop overall economic plans.

This group of individuals would be able to assist communities in planning and prioritizing efforts. The corps would then assist the community in locating financial resources, preparing proposals, designing educational programs, and implementing strategies necessary for revitalization. The focus would be on the community generating its own vision for the future and the USDA corps assisting them in creating and attaining that vision.

a. Social problems to be solved

Some of the worst pockets of poverty and highest rates of unemployment exist in rural America. While President Clinton's overall economic program should help significantly, special efforts are needed to boost rural America.

A recent study by USDA indicates that physical infrastructure is rarely sufficient by itself to promote rural economic development; in order to significantly boost economic growth, it is necessary to develop the human infrastructure.

Some rural communities that can afford to do so now pay expensive consultants to advise them on development; for instance, the Forest Service now gives grants to some communities to hire such consultants. With proper training, our team members could take the place of these consultants.

b. Meeting the rural development goals of USDA

This team will meet many of the top rural development goals of President Clinton, Secretary Espy, and Undersecretary of Small Community and Rural Development Bob Nash by empowering communities to develop local leadership to help themselves. The team could accomplish much needed community planning activities necessary to assure the economic vitality and productivity of our rural and mid-sized communities; teach specific skills in community building, coalition building, and strategic planning; and develop improved federal ties with units of local government which people encounter in their everyday living.

The team could also focus on meeting secretary Espy's personal goal of bringing running water to every rural home in America.

c. Working with existing programs

Most states have local Planning and Development Districts which provide for the overall strategic and project planning efforts for a multi-jurisdictional area. Some of these cover several counties, and some cover multiple communities within a county or township. They are staffed by local citizens and all have one thing in common: they are understaffed.

Undersecretary Nash has suggested strongly that our team participants be physically located within the offices of local districts, so that they work with the districts and do not pose the threat of competition over turf.

To support these team members, there already exists an information data base at the National Agriculture Library called the National Rural Information Center. This information center maintains a data base of organizations which provide financial support to communities on a national, regional, and local basis. This data base should be made available to all team members for assisting the community in developing its own action plan and applying for funding.

We must still answer how this program will specifically interact with the districts, with existing government programs, with 4-H programs, with existing non-profit and volunteer organizations, with VISTA, and with the ambitious new rural development initiatives being planned by the Administration.

d. Specific types of service to be performed

The types of positions that could provide useful work are almost infinite. The SCS alone has suggested the following five possible positions, which are focused mostly on environmental protection:

Watershed Assistance Process Facilitator - Work to coordinate local watershed protection programs in order to save wetlands, guard drinking water quality, and prevent flooding. The team member would explain watershed assistance programs, identify key potential participants in local watershed steering committees, arrange local organizational meetings, and facilitate the identification of watershed needs, problems, and concerns.

Natural Resource Specialist - Under the direction of a Soil Conservation Service professional employee, the team member would work in low-income and socially disadvantaged areas to assist in the acceleration of watershed protection, work with field engineers in the design and lay-out of community projects, and work with the local (RC&D) Coordinator for economic development for disadvantaged groups.

Resource Conservation & Development

Landscape Architect - The team member would work with soil conservation districts, RC&D councils, and area conservationists to coordinate and include landscape architectural planning for the purpose of maintaining, enhancing, or restoring ecological, social, and economic conditions.

Recreation Specialist - The team member would provide technical assistance for all activities relating to recreation and tourism, including coordinating efforts among all government agencies, furnish recreation planning and design, and collect and disseminate information on what alternatives will best fit local needs.

USDA rural development agencies will submit job descriptions with much more economic focus than those provided by SCS.

One other possible jobs:

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Regional 4-H Youth Development Coordinator - The team member would work with county Extension agents and 4-H coordinators to manage local students involved in youth service.

Forest Service and SCS Volunteer Coordinators - The team member would recruit and supervise adult and youth volunteers from local communities to work on Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service projects.

e. Selecting and matching applicants

Participants will be paid \$15,000 per year. In addition, they will receive an educational voucher worth \$4,725 at the end of a year of service. participants may be of any age, but, because of the special educational requirements of the Rural Development team, it is unlikely that any participants will be younger than 21.

Will communities or regions be responsible for recruitment or will that be a task handled centrally by USDA?

Information and applications should be sent to post-secondary institutions in or near the pilot project areas. Packets should be sent to financial aid counselors, placement officers, deans, and student organizations. we should also target news stories and public service announcements at the student media. we should also attempt to hold recruitment seminars on key campuses.

What will be suitable service assignments? What role will USDA, state government, and local government agencies have in making these assignments?

How will we decide how to match the needs of each community and region with the specific education and training obtain by each participant?

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f. Creating and maintaining program diversity

How do we ensure that this program is managed by a diverse team and includes a diverse set of participants each and every year?

Diversity must be a key consideration during recruitment, curriculum design, project development, and training.

How will we balance the need to recruit participants from their own communities, some of which are NOT very diverse, with the need to have an overall program that is very diverse?

g. Training the team members

Curricula for teaching leadership, volunteer development, program management, basic life skills, and understanding of basic business principles would be necessary.

Participants of this program would hold either Bachelor's degrees or graduate degrees. Unfortunately, only two graduate schools in the country now specifically teach rural development; perhaps we could form partnerships with others to do so. Participants could also be trained in public administration, civil engineering, or agricultural science. What other degrees would be useful for participants to have?

The participants would also need to spend a period of training before being assigned to the local districts. Who will conduct the training? How much of the training should be identical for all participants and how much should be unique to the specific jobs that each participant will be performing? Will the location of the training be centralized nationally or regionally?

What type of training will participants receive after they have started the program?

h. Supervising the team members

Who will supervise the team member? There will be a need to judge performance, initiate additional training when needed, and even perhaps to terminate or initiate re-assignment when necessary.

How much self-government will team members have? How will team members be able to participate in designing their own programs, mandating their own rules, and helping enforce the rules?

What types of interactions will team members have with participants in other areas?

i. Evaluating the team programs

How will we ensure constant evaluation of the program in order to correct problems immediately?

j. Sizes and sites of pilot projects

Where should the pilot projects be situated and how large should they be? *Should there be a limit on the population size of communities where there will be pilot projects?*
How many participants will be able to place in pilot programs? What will be the ultimate capacity of these programs?

Thirty-two states currently have economic development councils or rural development councils, so early pilot programs would be easy. Some of the following regions or states would provide us a good mix of pilots:

- The Mississippi Delta
- The Texas/Mexico Border
- Maine
- Kansas
- The Pacific Northwest
- Oklahoma
- North Dakota
- Southern Illinois
- Four Corners (Arizona, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico)
- Alaska
- Appalachia
- Oklahoma
- California

Pilot programs could also be specifically targeted at rural communities facing short-term job dislocations because of NAFTA, the Northwest Forest Plan, or military base closings or defense plant shut-downs.

k. Growth scenarios

Where, and how quickly, should the program grow? Should we grow by expanding our pilot projects or by creating new ones?

How will we create a program so popular that it will grow on its own, regardless of the Administration in power?

l. Management structure

How much of the programs should we run ourselves and how much should we contract out to existing groups?

How will we absolutely, positively ensure that we don't create yet another cumbersome Washington bureaucracy?

How can our programs utilize the latest communications technologies?

How will OWCP (liability) be covered?

m. Staff needed

The Rural Development Teams should have a Director, who reports directly to the head of USDA national service programs, as well as ~~the~~ to the Undersecretary for Rural Economic and Community Development. The Director of the Rural Development Team should have ~~deputies in charge of~~ the following areas:

staff dealing with

- Recruitment
- Training
- Internal Communications
- Day-to-Day Project Management
- Intergovernmental, Congressional, and Public Affairs
- USDA Inter-Agency Coordination
- Fundraising, Grants, and Development
- Monitoring and Evaluation

n. Costs

We roughly estimate that each server in the Rural Development Team will cost roughly \$30,000 per year. Thus 400 servers --- 40 in each of ten states or regions --- would cost \$10 million.

Each participant will need access to a computer network in order to communicate with each other via an easy-to-use e-mail, access a USDA rural development database, and access INTERNET. Can we get this system donated? If not, how much will it cost?

o. Outreach needed for stakeholders

We need a strategy for reaching out to the local planning districts, the state districts, and political and community leaders throughout rural America.

p. Funding sources

What non-profit groups, corporations, individuals, and/or foundations might be willing to help fund this?

q. Partnerships

What kind of partnerships can we form with other federal agencies? Could the Departments of Commerce, Interior, Labor, and Health and Human services, each of which has significant rural development roles, play significant parts in helping fund and manage these program? How can we involve the Monday Management Group, a grouping of 17 federal agencies involved in rural development?

Other possible partnerships include:

National Association of Counties
National Association of Development Organizations
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Governors Organization
National Association of Towns and Townships
State Rural Development Councils
State Economic Development Councils or Agencies
Local Planning and Development entities both private and public
National Association of State Foresters
Department of Defense Agencies, including the Army Corps of Engineers
1890's, land-grant, and historically Hispanic colleges
VISTA
National Rural Health Care association
Center for Rural Affairs

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r. Learning from the VISTA model

What can we learn from both previous and ongoing VISTA rural development projects?

IV. EMPOWERMENT AND ANTI-HUNGER TEAM

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Team members would work in urban and rural areas to help low-income families and individuals move towards self-sufficiency. The main focus of the corps would be fighting domestic hunger; it would be similar to the Extension service's EFNEP program, but would have a greatly expanded mission. Team members would help individuals apply for food stamps, WIC, and the school breakfast program; overhaul their diets; learn to prevent foodborne illnesses; obtain the expanded Earned Income Tax Credits, microenterprise loans, and help from community development banks. In short, this team would help put into effect the entire empowerment agenda promoted by President Clinton and Secretary Espy. A full-scale program could eventually provide a big boost to our efforts to eradicate domestic hunger.

a. Social problems to be solved

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Hunger has risen in America over the last decade, particularly among children. One-in-ten Americans now use food stamps, and many more are eligible. Many women and children now eligible for WIC do not receive it.

b. Meeting the empowerment and anti-hunger goals of USDA

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This team will meet many of the top empowerment and anti-hunger goals of President Clinton, Secretary Espy, and Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer services Ellen Haas. It will help reduce domestic hunger, facilitate welfare reform, bolster the preventative medicine objectives of the Administration's health care plan, and empower citizens to work their own way out of poverty.

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This program can also play a role in helping states enlarge their capacity to run WIC programs and thus move towards President Clinton's goal of eventually making WIC available to all eligible Americans.

c. Working with existing programs

We must still answer how this program will specifically interact with the above existing programs and the ambitious new anti-hunger initiatives being planned by the Administration.

How will this initiative relate to existing volunteer organizations? To existing 4-H programs? To existing youth service corps? What kind of structure will the initiative have? How will the structure interact with state and local governments?

d. Specific types of service to be performed

Participants would provide outreach and access services, build the anti-hunger and anti-poverty infrastructure, and run innovative new empowerment programs:

1) Provide outreach/access services (educating eligible people about program availability and helping make benefits accessible)

* Outreach Workers - Inform target populations about program availability (all programs)

* Drivers - Help eligible people apply for and receive program benefits (WIC, CACFP, TEFAP, NPE, CSFP)

* Delivery Aides - Deliver program benefits to homebound elderly, physically disadvantaged, and homeless people (TEFAP, CSFP, FDPIR)

* Bilingual Aides - Provide program information, help with applications, etc. to eligible, non-English-speaking people (all programs)

* Service Facilitator - Conduct telephone follow-up with people who don't keep appointments, direct people to related health and welfare services (WIC, CSFP)

2) Bolster the infrastructure (providing the human capital necessary to deliver the programs according to congressional intent):

* Food Handlers - Stock, warehouse, manage, distribute food products (TEFAP, charitable institutions, NPE, CSFP, school programs, FDPIR)

* Day Care Workers - Provide child/adult care services to allow eligible people to apply for and receive program benefits (WIC, TEFAP, FDPIR)

- * Bilingual Case Assistants - Assist case manager with non-English-speaking clients (WIC)
- * Kitchen/Cafeteria Aides - Help with meal preparation and serving, maintaining, monitoring lunchrooms, and sanitation (school food, CACFP, and commodity programs)
- * Nutrition Assistants - Help with nutrition education, cooking demonstrations (WIC, school food programs)
- * CACFC Assistant - Improve supervision ratio of provider to participants in child care/meal preparation functions (CACFP)

3) Boost innovative new empowerment programs

- * EITC - Help families obtain the newly expanded Earned Income Tax Credit
- * Microenterprise - Teach people how to start small businesses
- * Community Development Banks - Inform families on how to apply for loans from community development banks
- * Assets Building - Work with families to develop savings plans
- * Tenant management - Help public housing tenants to develop organizations for self-management
- * Homelessness Programs - Help staff homeless shelters, soup kitchens, and food banks; find innovative ways to include homeless citizens in USDA nutrition programs
- * Apprenticeship - Work with local schools and businesses to develop new school-to-work transition programs
- * Improvements in USDA Feeding Programs - Indian reservations could be encouraged to grow foods that could be sold to USDA commodity programs and then provided to the reservation through various USDA feeding programs. This could save taxpayers money while allowing the reservations to themselves produce healthier and more culturally-sensitive food for their residents.

4) Engage in Community Outreach

Team members can go door-to-door in neighborhoods dispensing information on all the above-listed programs. The information distributed would be holistic, tying together our nutrition, anti-hunger, welfare reform, and food safety initiatives.

We can also experiment with innovative approaches such as "healthy baby festivals," where we attract crowds with music and food and then provide nutrition and anti-hunger services.

e. Selecting and matching applicants

We will pay participants either the federal or state minimum wage, whichever is higher in their particular locality. In addition, they will receive an educational voucher worth \$4,725 following their year of service. While Americans of any age will be eligible to participate in this program, the structure of the educational voucher will make it likely that the bulk of participants will be between the ages of 17-24.

How will Corps applicants be selected, matched with suitable assignments? Should participants be picked randomly from among applicants or should they be screened and ultimately hand-picked? What will be suitable service assignments? What role will USDA, state government, and local government agencies have in making these assignments?

f. Creating and maintaining program diversity

How we ensure that this program is managed by a diverse team and includes a diverse set of participants each and every year?

Diversity must be a key consideration during recruitment, curriculum design, project development, and training.

g. Training the team members

How would the participants be trained? For how long? Where? With what kind of curriculum?

team members will need training on working with diverse team-mates. they will need training about how to interact with low-income citizens in a non-patronizing yet helpful manner. They will need to be taught about the specific government programs they will be helping deliver.

h. Supervising the team members

How would they be supervised? Would they stay on one project throughout the year or frequently switch projects? What kind of extra supervision will be needed in residential programs?

Who will supervise the team member? There will be a need to judge performance, initiate additional training when needed, and even perhaps to terminate or initiate re-assignment when necessary.

We now assume one crew leader for every crew of ten people. What projects can suitably use ten people at once. If members of a crew are separated at different sites, how will the crew leader be able to manage them?

What types of interactions will team members have with participants in other areas?

What kind of uniforms should the crew leaders wear?

How much self-government will team members have? How will team members be able to participate in designing their own programs, mandating their own rules, and helping enforce the rules?

i. Evaluating the team members

How will we ensure constant evaluation of the program in order to correct problems immediately?

j. Sizes and sites of pilot projects

Where should the pilot projects be situated and how large should they be?

k. Growth scenarios

Where, and how quickly, should the program grow? Should we grow by expanding our pilot projects or by creating new ones? How will we create a program that will grow on its own regardless of the Administration in power?

l. Management structure needed

How much of the programs should we run ourselves and how much should we contract out to existing groups?

How will we absolutely, positively ensure that we don't create yet another cumbersome Washington bureaucracy?

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How can our program utilize the latest communications technologies?

How will OWCP (liability) be covered?

m. Staff needed

How many USDA employees will be needed to manage the program? Will outside consultants also be required?

n. Costs

If we roughly estimate that each server in the Empowerment and Anti-Hungers Corps will cost \$15,000 per year, then 1,000 participants would cost \$15 million. That would fund twenty sites, half-urban and half-rural, with 50 participants in each site.

o. Outreach needed for stakeholders

We will need strong support from state welfare agencies and from the current participants in USDA nutrition programs.

p. Funding sources

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What section of the National Service Act could potentially fund this program?

What non-profit groups, corporations, individuals, and/or foundations might be willing to help fund this?

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q. Partnerships

What kind of partnerships can we form with other federal agencies? Could we run projects at public housing units in tandem with HUD? Could we run health projects in tandem with HHS? Could we run community development projects in tandem with Commerce? Could we run weatherization projects in tandem with the department of Energy? Could we run nutrition education programs in tandem with the department of education?

We must definitely work with state social service agencies. *potential* ~~potential~~ other *3* partners include:

Association of WIC Providers ~~Food~~
Research Action Center-Children's Defense Fund
Safe Food Coalition
Urban League
World Hunger Year

r. Engaging senior citizens

How can we engage senior citizens --- who generally underutilize food stamps -- involved in helping other senior citizens obtain nutrition help? How can this program work with the existing Retired ~~senior~~ Volunteer Program?

s. Lessons from EFNEP

What lessons can we learn from the EFNEP nutrition program now run by the Extension Service?

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V. PUBLIC LANDS AND ENVIRONMENT TEAM

The Public Lands and Environment Team would have both urban and rural components. The urban component would be mostly non-residential and members would work on conservation projects on public and private lands in cities of various sizes. The rural component would be both residential and non-residential and would perform conservation-related work projects on private and public lands in rural America.

The urban and rural programs could be linked, with teams members having the option of transferring between the rural and urban settings. For example, a team member could work in a rural environment for ten months and then in an urban environment for another two months.

This wide scope of projects will be possible because the new National Service Trust Act gives all federal agencies --- including all USDA agencies --- broad authority to manage community service projects on private and public lands in both urban and rural areas.

Significant portions of these programs will perform work on federal, state, and municipal lands, thus fulfilling the specifications of the Public Lands Corps, which Congress -- with the full support of the Clinton Administration -- has recently required the Departments of Agriculture and Interior to run.

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a. Social problems to be solved

There are currently an estimated 8 million tree-planting sites in communities across America with the current replacement rate being one tree planted for every four removed. Thousands of water quality projects nationwide are awaiting manpower in our communities and our rural areas, as are wetlands restoration, erosion control, stream improvement, roadbank stabilization, and wildlife habitat projects. Urban farming and sustainable agriculture would also have important places in this program.

Urban: More than 80 percent of the American population now live in cities of varying size. Currently, the Forest Service, with 620 Ranger Districts across the country, and the Soil Conservation Service, with more than 2,000 offices nationwide, have existing partnerships and delivery systems in many cities.

The program would take the ~~team~~ *teams* to where the people are, operating in any urban community with an existing network of Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, or Extension Service programs in partnerships with local governments or non-profit organizations.

This non-residential program would focus on urban conservation projects in the areas of water quality, waste disposal, erosion control, running environmental program in schools, roadbank and streambank stabilization, urban gardening, the creation of urban buffers, rehabilitation and maintenance of deteriorating community infrastructure, urban forestry, and the recycling and reuse of resources. Team members would live in the community or already be a community member.

Rural: Team members would live in a residential setting in a rural area. The program would provide full-time logistical support for team members. As in the urban program, the team members would be expected to pay for living expenses from their wages.

Work projects could be in erosion control, fire prevention, fire suppression, building or improving recreation areas, restoration of infrastructure such as buildings and bridges, watershed protection, and other similar conservation projects. The land base of the National Forests would be available for projects as well as the privately held land in partnerships with the Soil Conservation Service.

Team members could also focus on teaching sustainable agriculture, helping small farmers stay on the land, building rural housing, and engaging in rural development projects. Environmental Team members could also work under the direction of older participants in the USDA Rural Development Corps.

The team would provide much needed peoplepower for nationwide conservation projects. The work of the team could reduce the backlog of conservation-related work across the country.

With the shift from a rural population to an urban one, Americans are losing the ability to learn firsthand about natural resources. We currently have a relatively uneducated and uninformed citizenry with regard to natural resources and conservation issues. The team would provide an opportunity to learn about America's natural resources, their uses, and the need to protect them. The end result would be a citizenry better informed on national conservation issues.

b. Meeting the public lands and environment goals of USDA

The team will meet many of the top public lands and environmental goals of President Clinton, Vice President Gore, Secretary Espy, and Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment Jim Lyons.

The Team can be used, as part of the Administration's global warming initiative, to help dramatically increase the number of ~~trees~~ ^{trees} planted throughout America.

The Team can also begin to reduce the massive backlog of repair and improvement projects needed for National Forest and other public lands. Youth service corps are perhaps the single most cost-effective providers of such project work; the Forest service estimates that Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) participants in 1992 performed \$1.32 worth of work for each dollar spent on the YCC program by the American taxpayer. With total spending of only \$2.508 million in 1992, YCC participants provided a \$3.339 million worth of work, broken down into the following areas:

Recreation Management	\$1,789,447
Fish and Wildlife Management	\$401,093
Timber Management	\$317,723
Facility Construction and Maintenance	\$218,863
Water and Soil	\$197,706
Range and Forage Management	\$139,592
Administration	\$138,665
Protection	\$42,300
Research	\$15,120
All Other	\$79,344

c. Working with existing programs

How will this initiative relate to existing volunteer organizations? To existing 4-H programs? To existing youth service corps?

What kind of structure will the initiative have? How will the structure interact with state and local governments?

We still need to answer how this program will specifically interact with existing programs and the ambitious new environmental initiatives being planned by the Administration. How will it interact with the existing Soil Conservation Service Earth Team?

How will our program affect current Youth Conservation Corps programs managed by USDA and the Department of Interior? Will any staff or funds be transferred from the existing program? YCC coordinators believe strongly that the existing program should basically be left intact, and that it should be used as a "farm team" for 15-17 year-olds who may later enter year-round programs.

We need to fully research past programs such as CCC and YAC, as well as the current YCC, to learn any lessons that might be useful for planning our program.

How will this program interact with the Civilian Community Corps, run in a quasi-military fashion, that was set up originally by the Boren bill?

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d. Specific types of service to be performed

Here are just a few, non-representative, samples of work projects team members can perform:

1. National forests and parks conservation

Because all team members will be at least 18 years old, all of them will be able to use equipment and machinery that will allow them ~~do~~ ^{to} perform the most valuable work needed on public lands.

One type of obvious work that team members can perform is trail maintenance. We should reach out to some of following groups that already perform similar work:

- Appalachian Trail Conference-David Startzell, 304-535-6331
- Appalachian Mountain Club-Kelly Short, 617-523-0636
- American Hiking Society-Susan Henley, 703-385-3252
- Student Conservation Association

Team members can also engage in some of the following types of work, which are already performed by YCC participants: recreation management, fish and wildlife management, timber management, facility construction and maintenance, water and soil work, range and forage management, administration, protection, and research. More specifically, they can build barricades around restoration areas, replace old fire pits with new fire grates/stoves, maintain anti-bear food storage bins, build foot bridges, build campsites, make facilities wheelchair accessible, and construct leach fields for collecting graywater (?)

2. Water quality assessments

Team members can conduct samplings and provide technical help with delivery systems. They can also work on sanitation and sewerage (wastewater treatment) system improvement.

We should reach out to the following groups that already perform similar work:

- Clean Water Action-Paul Schwartz, 202-457-1286, ext. 130
- Friends of the Earth-Velma Smith, 202-544-2600, ext. 294

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3. Education-

Team members --- going door-to-door, working in schools and speaking at civic clubs --- could teach a wide variety of topics: safe handling of food, how to make your household more eco-friendly, testing for radon (Greenpeace has information programs on the latter two); recycling and waste reduction; and reducing non point-source pollution.

Some examples:

The Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) offers a "waste away" program each year to teach elementary students about the challenges of the solid waste problem. VINS provides program curriculum and tries to engage entire community by culminating program with community-wide event - a "trash festival."

VINS also has an excellent education program called "ELF" -- Environmental Learning for the Future" geared for elementary students. VINS trains volunteers to go into the classrooms monthly for an afternoon filled with role playing, hands-on projects, and field trips. The complete curriculum is taught over the course of five years and is enthusiastically supported by the community. (802)457-2779.

American Forest Foundation's Project Learning Tree is an award winning K-12 curriculum and training program. Contact: Kathy McGlauffin, 202-463-2455.

4. Energy Conservation- --- Team members could work in crews to provide the physical assistance in weatherizing homes and generally making them more energy efficient. Participants could work in public housing and low-income areas in both urban and rural communities. Team members would need basic training in carpentry, electrical or plumbing skills. We would recruit professional carpenters, electricians, and plumbers to help with basic training or to serve as team leaders.

Team members could also provide practical advice about basic ways to make homes more energy efficient. The participants could also develop educational material on energy conservation, such as "how to save dollars and help the planet" or a "guide to existing cost-saving programs provided by utility companies," etc.

One somewhat similar example is Christmas in April, a national volunteer program established by University of Pennsylvania students in 1980s to address basic housing needs of low-income communities in urban areas. With the help of church and community groups, CIA identifies families that have greatest need for assistance in home maintenance-weatherization, painting, carpentry, plumbing, cleaning - and organizes groups of volunteers

to spend a full day doing the work. Materials are donated by corporate sponsors.
Christmas in April USA: 202-326-8268

Another example is EPA's Green Lights program.

5. River and Streams Protection

Team members could clean up and restore rivers and lakes. We should consult the following groups who already perform similar work:

- Trout Unlimited- stream restoration project including clean-up, habitat mapping, water quality monitoring.

Contact: Neil Emerald, 703-281-1100

- Izaak Walton League- Save our Stream program. Stream and river clean up and quality monitoring.

6. Tree planting

As part of the Clinton Administration's initiative to combat global warming, the Public lands and Environmental team could play a lead role in tremendously expanding the number of trees planted annually in America. Plantings could take place in urban and rural areas on both public and private lands.

We should consult with the following groups already engaged in similar work:

- National Arbor Day Foundation- sponsors numerous tree planting programs. 402-474-5655.

- American Forests' Global Relief program, 202-667-3300.

- Trust for Public Land- Jenny Cross, 714-557-2575. Urban Forestry Program.

- Yale School of Forestry's Urban Resources Initiative. Lee Shemis, 203-432-5100

- Tree People, urban planting program in Los Angeles

7. Urban Conservation Projects

Team members can repair facilities in public parks, paint murals, fix playgrounds and other facilities at public schools, run recycling programs, and run urban farming programs in which low-income individuals grow their own food.

General Note: Community cleanup, restoration, and urban renewal activities should have an educational and outreach component. The long-term success of an effort is dependent on the personal investment of the participants. Groups of volunteers (led by an Americorps volunteer) who do the clean-up should include people who use the area, who are touched by the changes, who "benefit" from the restoration effort. This suggestion relates to the general challenge of attracting volunteers from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

e. Selecting and matching applicants

We will pay participants either the federal or state minimum wage, whichever is higher in their particular locality. In addition, they will receive an educational voucher worth \$4,725 following a year of service.

Team members will be between the ages of 18 and 25.

How will Corps applicants be selected and matched? Should participants be selected randomly or should they be screened and hand-picked?

What will be suitable service assignments? What role will the program have in making these assignments?

Will participants be engaged in the same type of work for the entire year or will they rotate between different types of projects?

f. Creating and maintaining program diversity

Diversity must be a key consideration during recruitment, curriculum design, project development, and training.

How do we ensure that this program is managed by a diverse team and includes a diverse set of participants each and every year?

How can we engage participants in complex and challenging work without requiring educational levels that would stratify the participants and reduce participants? Simply put, how can we guarantee that less well educated participants don't spend all their time with shovels while better educated participants spend all their time with test tubes?

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g. Training the team members

How would the participants be trained? For how long? Where? With what kind of curriculum?

team members will need training about the general environment in which they will be working, especially in issues relating to safety. They will need training in use of the tools they will be using. They will need general training on often-used skills and specific training before each new project.

h. Supervising the team members

Who will supervise the team member? There will be a need to judge performance, initiate additional training when needed, and even perhaps to terminate or initiate re-assignment when necessary.

How would they be supervised? Would they stay on one project throughout the year or frequently switch projects? What kind of extra supervision will be needed in residential programs?

We now assume one crew leader for every crew of about ten participants.

What kinds of uniform will team members be required to wear?

What kinds of tools, equipment, and supplies will the participants need and how will our programs obtain them?

How much self-government will team members have? How will team members be able to participate in designing their own programs, mandating their own rules, and helping enforce the rules?

What types of interactions will team members have with participants in other areas?

i. Evaluating the team members

How will we ensure constant evaluation of the program in order to correct problems immediately?

j. Sizes and sites of pilot projects

The Forest Service and youth corps from Oregon and Washington have just received a major grant from the Commission on National and Community Service to run a national service training academy. This project will be based on a highly successful summer program. This program provides us with a very useful model, as do existing YCC programs.

What other facilities now exist in usable shape or near usable shape in the national forests that have been leftover from the YCC, the YAC, or even the original CCC?

We also want to ensure that we run pilot projects in a wide variety of different ecosystems, such as old growth forests, cities, coastal areas, new growth forests, suburbs, wetlands, tundra, and grasslands.

k. Growth scenarios

Where, and how quickly, should the program grow? Should ^{we} ~~be~~ grow by expanding our pilot projects or by creating new ones?

How will we create a program so effective and so popular that will grow on its own regardless of the Administration in power?

l. Management structure needed

How much of the programs should we run ourselves and how much should we contract out entirely or partially to existing groups?

How will we absolutely, positively ensure that we don't create yet another cumbersome Washington bureaucracy?

We need ^{to} devise a legal system in which funds can be delivered directly to national service programs run by USDA agencies without going through a bureaucracy to charge administrative overhead. For example, if certain Forest Service employees are running a pilot project, we need for the funds to go from the USDA Office of National Service directly to the pilot program, without going through either the national, regional, or local offices of the Forest Service. Can the USDA Office of National Service issue payment vouchers directly?

We need to investigate how we can produce payroll checks for less than the \$5-per-check fee now charged by the National Finance Center.

We need to produce one single enrollment form, including a code of conduct and a performance contract, instead of the seven to twelve different forms now required for entry into the YCC.

How can our program utilize the latest communications technologies?

How will OWCP (liability) be covered?

m. Staff needed

How many USDA employees will be needed to manage the program? Will outside consultants also be required?

n. Costs

If most servers in the Environmental Corps are residential, then our estimated cost is about \$20,000 per server. Thus a pilot program with 1,000 servers would cost \$20 million. This would allow us five rural sites of 100 each, and ten urban or suburban sites of 250.

o. Outreach needed for stakeholders

We need to gain ~~the~~ support from existing youth service corps, from environmental and conservation groups, from the National Forest Foundation, from labor unions, and from farming and commodity groups.

p. Funding sources

The National ~~And~~ Community Trust ~~acts~~ mandates that 25% of all funds used to contract out work to non-federal conservation corps be obtained from non-federal sources.

What states, municipalities, non-profit groups, corporations, individuals, and/or foundations might be willing to help fund this?

What types of project might the team be able to complete on a fee-for-service basis?

q. Partnerships

What kind of partnerships can we form with other federal agencies? How would we run the Public Lands Corps in partnership with the Department of Interior? How can we revise our Memorandum of Understanding with the department of Interior that we already have to jointly run the YCC?

Could we run urban farming projects at public housing units in tandem with HUD? Could we run weatherization projects in tandem with the department of Energy? Could we run environmental education programs in tandem with the Environmental Protection Agency or the Department of Education? Could we run a program in tandem with the department of Transportation in which team members would perform conservation and planting projects on highway right-of-ways?

Could the team work with the Army Corps of Engineers to repair levees?

We have already discussed with the Department of Interior the idea of jointly running a "Greater Everglades Recovery Team" that would partner up farmers, National Park Service employees, and youth volunteers in replacing seagrass and taking other steps to save the fragile ecosystem of the Everglades.

Possible partnerships include:

Audubon National Association of Conservation Districts

~~Audobon~~ Society

Land Grant universities

National Association of State Foresters

National Forest Foundation

National Parks Foundation

National Trust for Historic Preservation

National Tree Trust

Nature Conservancy

National League of Cities

r. Residential and non-residential

Most of the rural programs will be residential and most of the urban programs will be non-residential.

We will try to develop an exchange program so that young people in each type of program can experience at least a few weeks of the other. ^{urban} Were will rural residents be housed when visiting urban areas? Can we get local residents to put them up in their homes, as if they were exchange students from Europe? How will we transport participants between urban and rural areas?

What kinds of work will have to be performed and what kind of funds will have to be spent ^{to} ensure adequate residential facilities for participants in rural areas?

VI. HOW AMERICORPS/USDA PROGRAMS WILL INTERACT

We will attempt to place as many of these programs as possible in newly created Empowerment Zones and Empowerment Communities. In one rural Empowerment Community, we might want to test placing a Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Team program, a Public Lands and Environment Team, AND a Rural Development Team program. How will each of our three programs interact with each other? In one urban community, we might want to test placing a Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Team program AND a Public Lands and Environment Team. We should test how programs in the same area can trade staff, cross-train participants, and maybe even exchange participants in order to maximize benefits to the community.

In some rural areas, we might want to place both a Rural Development Team and a Public Lands and Environment Team; the Rural Development Team could actually plan projects for the Public Lands and Environment Team. For instance, after studying a local rural economy, members of a Rural Development Team might determine that the best way to help the area is to upgrade recreation facilities at a nearby National Forest; they would then design that upgrade and then direct local members of the Public Lands and Environment Team to actually perform the construction work.

How will ^{we} ~~be~~ build a national identity for disparate pilot programs? How will we tie the identity of the USDA programs to the larger national initiative?

Will these programs have joint training either before or during the period of service?

VII. FUNDRAISING

We need clear guidelines from our Office of General Counsel on how we can raise money. Can we raise it directly? Can we funnel it through the Corporation of National Service? Can we funnel it through the National Forest Foundation? How can we avoid even the appearance of impropriety in raising money from interests that might be regulated or affected by the Department of Agriculture?

Can various funders sponsor all or part of pilot projects?

Can we get an exemption from the Combined Federal Campaign monopoly in raising money from federal employees?

Can we hold a national employees serve-a-thon in which USDA employees perform a day of service and get sponsored to do so by friends? If each of our 114,000 employees raises or personally donates an average of \$10, we will have raised over \$1 million.

Could we institute an employee check-off program in which our employees can donate weekly or yearly to our national service programs? Could we find a way to match those contributions with private contributions?

VIII. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

We need to study a wide variety of ways to boost the upward mobility of youth who participate in our programs.

We need to discuss our service-learning, national service transcripts, guidance counselor centers, peer discussion groups and self-management, to help in obtaining other forms of federal student aid, and help in job placement.

Can ~~we raise, in~~ extra private money we raise be used to supplement the national service voucher given to participants?

IX. DIVERSITY

How can we make diversity -- by race, age, religion, class, gender, and orientation -- a reality in both our management team and our participants?

How can we incorporate physically disabled participants and program managers?

XI. USDA ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL

Who will run this program at USDA and what we will have to do to free them from current programmatic and budgetary duties?

XII. COSTS AND BUDGETS

If most servers in the Environmental Corps are residential, then our estimated cost is about \$20,000 per server. Thus a pilot program with 1,000 servers would cost \$20 million. This would allow us five rural sites of 100 each, and two urban sites of 250 each.

If we roughly estimate that each server in the Empowerment and Anti-Hungers Corps will cost \$15,000 per year, then 1,000 participants would cost \$15 million. That would fund twenty sites, half-urban and half-rural, with 50 participants in each site.

If we roughly estimate that each server in the Rural Development Corps will cost roughly \$30,000 per year, accounting for their higher pay, then 400 servers would cost \$10 million. That would fund ten state programs with 40 participants each.

The total for all three proposals is \$45 million. We could potentially meet this target with a combination of Corporation for National Service Funds, USDA program funds, and private and non-profit funds.

The above-listed proposals -- if fully funded -- would allow us to have 37 pilot operations with a total 2,400 participants in our very first year of operation.

Even if we run programs somewhat less ambitious than the ones outlined above, USDA will have, by far, the LARGEST national service programs in the federal government. Properly managed, they will also be the BEST programs in the federal government.

XIII. TIMELINE FOR RUNNING AMERICORPS/USDA

By November 30, 1993: Identify possible pilot project locations and partnerships

By December 15, 1993: Meet with key leadership of 1890's institutions to create national service partnerships.

By December 20, 1993: Sign memorandums of understanding with other agencies with whom we will jointly ~~make~~ ^{make} proposal

By December 30, 1993: Preliminary proposal completed for submission to Corporation for National Service

By February 1, 1994: Work with OBPA to develop line-item budget requests for FY95 budget

By March 1994: Start-up plans finalized for projects approved by the Corporation for National Service

By April 1994: Project personnel interviewed and placed

By May 1994: Recruitment of participants for Fall programs begin

By June 1994: Summer training starts for project managers ^{and} crew leaders

By September 1, 1994: Pilot projects begin

APPENDIX: TIMELINE FOR PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO
CONSTITUENCY GROUPS

How can we provide technical assistance to USDA constituencies that want to apply for funding from the Corporation for National Service to run their own programs? How can we help them obtain their funds and how can we aid their actual programs?

Push the Vice-President to brief environmental groups, the First lady to brief ^{anti} ~~ant~~-hunger groups, and the Secretary to brief rural development, higher education, and farming groups.

by December 1993, complete series of meetings and phone briefings with all possible constituency groups who might be interested in program.

by December 1, 1993, have identified staff responsible for preparing environment, nutrition, sustainable agriculture, and rural development curriculum

By January 1, 1994, (or earlier, if Commission regulations are published earlier) print brochure explaining new Corporation for National and Community Service regulations and explaining in simple english how groups may apply for the funding.

By, January 10- mail the brochure to all interested groups.

By January 15 - Have all four curriculum first drafts.

By January 25 Have all four curriculum drafts reviewed and start the design process.

By February 1 - Submit final reports to printers.

by March 1- Mail printed reports to all key constituency groups.

CONCEPT PAPER

By: James R. Coppedge

Food and Fiber for the Future - A Public Service Program

1. Context. This program targets those college graduates who have received student loans in exchange for 2 years of public service. The proposal is to ask them to fulfill their public service obligations through employment in the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) for a period of 2-3 years. During their employment, the students will be required to do postgraduate training and research in such areas as environmental issues in agriculture, food safety, ground and surface water quality, human nutrition, agricultural waste management, and environmentally compatible pest control technology. The purpose of this public service will be to develop college graduates with advanced degrees who are educated and trained to respond to agricultural issues of the future. The initiative will result in a model program that can be adapted to other sectors of the U.S. Government.
2. Prerequisites for feasibility. For the program to be functional and a benefit to the public, the ARS, and the college graduates, the following prerequisites are necessary: (a) full time employment in the ARS while undergoing special training and education must be allowable as a means of completing the public service requirements of a student loan, (b) the Civil Service has to allow ARS to use 2-3 years terminal appointments, and (c) these trainees will not count as full-time employees (FTE's). A program can still be developed if one or more of the prerequisites cannot be met; however, the most productive and beneficial program will result if all prerequisites are feasible.
3. Opportunities. This program will help meet the current and future need for technical help in ARS that is being created by limitations imposed on new hires. It will develop more college graduates with advanced degrees and career interest in a safe and abundant food and fiber supply in the future. Additionally, this program can be integrated with ongoing Federal programs such as stay-in-school and scholarships to 1890 colleges, etc., to build a system where economically disadvantaged high school graduates can attend college and eventually obtain an advanced degree in agriculture and related sciences.

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4. Personal. The rating panels, and the Executive Resources Board (ERB) determined that my plan for personal development could be strengthened by additional experience in the area of human resources. The battery of tests that I have undergone while attending the Senior Executive Service Candidacy Development Program have supported the suggestions of the panels and the ERB. The development and implementation of this program should provide invaluable experience in the areas of human resources.
5. Special Provisions. Special consideration will be given to candidates who obtain their undergraduate degree while participating in stay-in-school programs and where ARS scientists can act as mentors and help plan curricula around the 2-3 year Food and Fiber for the Future Program.
6. Methodology and Time Line. The task that will lead to the development of a successful program and the time line for each area is outlined below.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Time Line</u>
a. Meet with Administrative Management and Civil Service officials and review the concept and feasibility of 2-3 year full-time terminal positions in ARS	June 8, 1993
b. Meet with ARS Administrator, Deputy Administrator, and Associate Deputy Administrator to discuss concept paper and get their comments and support	June 15, 1993
c. Develop first draft of prospectus with an accompanying one-page executive summary	June 20, 1993
d. Prepare and submit final draft of prospectus	July 1, 1993
e. Review current ARS and other agency programs in student assistance	July 1, 1993
f. Meet with appropriate officials from other agencies/departments and review programs relating to this proposal	July 15, 1993
g. Assemble focus group to discuss project idea and subsequently add their input	August 1, 1993

- 3 -

<u>Task</u>	<u>Time Line</u>
h. Develop the criteria for selecting trainees, i.e. undergraduate courses, interest, financial need, etc.	September 15, 1993
i. Determine which ARS locations/universities and 1890's colleges would be involved	October 1, 1993
j. Develop criteria (with the assistance of ARS Area Directors) for involvement of ARS Management Units (i.e. availability of funds, program development, buy-in by associated colleges and universities, etc.)	November 1, 1993
k. Prepare final report and present to ARS officials and to SES-CDP	December 1, 1993

USDA NATIONAL SERVICE TASK FORCE

DRAFT ACTION PLAN, JUNE 29, 1993

I. Purpose of Action Plan

The purpose of the task force is to turn our generalized plans for national service into concrete, specific, realistic, and comprehensive grant proposals to be submitted to the soon-to-be formed Corporation for National service.

In the Administration's overall initiative, most of the service participants will be supervised by existing youth corps, non-profit organizations, and state and local government-managed corps. Yet a small percentage of participants may be in programs managed directly by the federal government. Toward that end, Secretary Espy has directed us to prepare three different proposals for possible incorporation into the President's national service program: a National Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Corps, a National Conservation Corps, and a National Rural Development Corps.

If any or all of these proposals are eventually funded by the new Corporation for National Service, we intend to make our programs models of reinventing government. All the USDA national service programs should:

- * Reinvent government by promoting opportunity, responsibility, and community.

- * Reunite the interests of the middle class and the poor by allowing young people from all types of families to earn their way through college.

- * Provide models for how the federal government can manage national service programs.

- * Expand dramatically as the President phases-in a full-scale national program.

- * Recruit groups of participants that are socio-economically diverse.

- * Provide valuable service to the community by systematically filling unmet social needs.

- * Allow young people to perform service either before or after attending post-secondary education.

- * Forge links to youth apprenticeship programs run by USDA and

other Cabinet agencies.

- * Give the participants at least a minimum wage living expense, as well as adequate supervision and training.
- * Limit the work performed to tasks that fulfill significant missions of USDA and are supported by our major constituency groups (farming, consumer, commodity, environmental, etc.).
- * Encourage the leveraging of funds from states, localities, non-profit organizations, and corporations.
- * Act as a multiplier of other national service programs throughout the country.
- * Build a new form of entrepreneurial and non-bureaucratic government.
- * Create staff out of existing USDA personnel.
- * Be managed across traditional USDA agency lines.

The purpose of this action plan is to create a framework by which we can turn the general plans for three corps, based on the above principles, into concrete proposals for each one.

II. Process

Many questions must still be answered by the task force. A few are:

1. How will Corps applicants be selected, matched with suitable assignments, and trained? Will an age range be established for the participants?
2. Will applicants be assigned anywhere they are needed, or only within their community of origin? The former requires a higher degree of national organization; the latter would reduce re-location costs and might enhance cultural acceptance of the applicant.
3. Who will supervise the Corps member? There will be a need to judge performance, initiate additional training when needed, and even perhaps to terminate or initiate re-assignment when

necessary.

4. What will be suitable assignments? Should local or county government agencies or community organizations have free rein in assigning Corps members wherever they wish, or should the assignments be limited to augmenting the functional capability of the agency - for example, providing tutoring services where none existed before. Would assignment as a file clerk, for example, be acceptable on the grounds that it frees up a staff member who can provide higher-level services to recipients, or would that assignment be viewed as supplanting efforts already underway and of no particular value to the Corps member?

5. How will this initiative relate to existing volunteer organizations?

6. What kind of structure will the initiative have? How will it interact with state and local governments?

7. How many USDA personnel will be required to manage the program?

8. How much will the program cost in total and per server?

9. What states, localities, non-profit organizations, and corporations can help fund this program?

10. How will the locations be selected and the sizes of the pilot program be set?

11. How many participants will be able to place in workable pilot programs? What will be the ultimate capacity of these programs?

12. How will we absolutely, positively ensure that we don't create yet another cumbersome Washington bureaucracy?

13. How will these programs meet the broader missions of USDA?

14. How will we create a program that will grow on its own regardless of the Administration in power?

The complete task force will meet regularly to keep all its members apprised of the progress of the entire group. However, most of the work to answer the above questions and other questions will take place in sub-groups.

The sub-groups will be subdivided in two ways -- one by the type of the corps and one by the major cross cutting issues that will affect all three of the corps.

There will also be an Outreach Group, chaired by Joel Berg and Katherine Gibney, which will focus on explaining our program to the media and building support for our plans with key USDA constituency groups.

The meetings of each of the other sub-groups will be attended by Joel Berg or by Katherine Gibney to ensure proper communication between all task force members.

Thus, we will create the following sub-groups:

Outreach

Rural Development Corps

Environmental Corps

Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Corps

Fundraising

Costs and Budget

Research

Pilot Project Selection

Youth Development

Diversity

USDA Administration and Personnel

Higher Education

Technical Assistance

III. Outreach Sub-Group

Provide briefings to constituency groups as soon as legislation passes.

Develop a media list of reporters likely to cover USDA-related service projects.

Provide media with continual releases about ongoing USDA service projects.

Provide the Secretary, and Under and Assistant Secretaries with lists of regional service projects and suggestions for media events when travelling.

Provide all top USDA officials with national service talking points for inclusion in their speeches and media appearances.

IV. Rural Development Corps Sub-Group

The Department of Agriculture would establish a corps of "professional" and "paraprofessional" participants could assist communities in identifying needs and resources necessary for economic well being. The participants would have diverse education and training and would be matched up with individual communities or regions that have specific needs that can be filled by someone with that specific background.

We make a concerted effort to recruit participants who want to return to their home-town or areas similar to those in which they were raised. Thus, this program can help begin reversing the "brain drain" from rural America.

This group of individuals would be able to assist communities of all sizes facing economic recovery and local leadership development issues to plan and prioritize efforts combining formal and non formal education to work locally. The corps would then assist the community in locating financial resources, preparing proposals, designing educational programs, and implementing strategies necessary for revitalization. The entire focus would be on the community generating its own vision for the future and the USDA corps assisting them in creating and attaining that vision.

Individuals will be placed in communities where their particular talents can be best utilized. Experts in tourism will be matched up with communities that want to develop their tourism. . Experts in grant writing will be matched up with communities that need grant writing. Experts in attracting small businesses will be matched up with communities that want to attract more small business. Etc. General planners would also be matched up with communities that need to develop overall economic plans.

This corps, consisting of participants older and more highly educated than the other two corps, could be funded by a special section of the Administration's proposed bill that would fund special professional corps such as "Teachers Corps" or "Police Corps."

The increased economic viability of our rural communities and small towns could be a major outcome. With the assistance of the corps, communities would be better able to develop a sound economic base that will take them into the next century. A core of community leaders for the future would be developed. Planning and implementing long-range strategies could result in increased environmentally sound agricultural production, a viable pollution-free light industry, and increased local tourism.

a. Social problems to be solved

Some of the worst pockets of poverty and highest rates of unemployment exist in rural America. While President Clinton's overall economic program should help significantly, special efforts are needed to boost rural America.

A recent study by USDA is rarely sufficient by itself to promote rural economic development.

Many rural communities that can afford to do so now pay high-priced consultants to advise them on development; right now the Forest Service even gives grants to some communities to hire such consultants. With proper training, our corps members could take the place of these consultants and help communities develop their tourism, high-tech industries, recreation sites, etc. The corps members would work with each community to create an economic development action plan that makes sense for that particular community.

This program could give a significant boost to our overall rural development efforts.

The objectives of the program would be:

- * accomplish much needed community planning activities necessary to assure the economic vitality and productivity of our rural and mid-sized communities;
- * teach specific skills in community building, coalition building, strategic planning and visioning, and leadership development;
- * develop improved federal ties with units of local government which people encounter in their everyday living;

To support these corps members, there already exists an information data base at the National Agriculture Library called the National Rural Information Center. This information center maintains a data base of organizations which provide financial

support to communities on a national, regional, and local basis. This data base is available to the Corps members for assisting the community in developing its own action plan and applying for funding.

Curricula for teaching leadership, volunteer development, program management, basic life skills, and understanding of basic business principles would be necessary.

b. How the corps will work with existing programs

Most states have local Planning and Development Districts which provide for the overall strategic and project planning efforts for a multi-jurisdictional area. Some of these cover several counties, and some cover multiple communities within a county or township. They are staffed by local citizens and all have one thing in common: they are understaffed.

Bob Nash, our Undersecretary for Small Community and Rural Development, has suggested strongly that our corps participants be physically located within the offices of local districts, so that they work with the districts and do not pose the threat of competition over turf.

We must still answer how this program will specifically interact with existing programs and the ambitious new rural development initiatives being planned by the Administration.

c. Outreach needed for stakeholders

We need a strategy for reaching out to the local planning districts, the state districts, and political and community leaders throughout rural America.

d. Residential or non-residential

Should this program have any residential, dorm-like component? Should the participants be required to live in the community in which they are working?

e. Sizes and sites of pilot projects

Where should the pilot projects be situated and how large should they be?

Thirty-two states currently have economic development councils or rural development councils so early pilot programs would be easy. Pilot programs could quickly be established in

five areas of our country:

Oregon and Washington
Four Corners: Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona
Tennessee and Kentucky
East Texas and Louisiana
North Carolina, Texas, Missouri
The Mississippi Delta

These areas already have an existing multi-agency coordination group functioning well and communities that are in dire need of assistance.

f. Growth scenarios

Where, and how quickly, should the program grow? Should we grow by expanding our pilot projects or by creating new ones?

g. Management structure needed

What new or existing office or offices at USDA will manage the program?

h. Staff needed

The Rural Development Corps should have a Director, who reports directly to the head of USDA national service programs. The Director of the Rural Development Corps should have deputies in charge of the following areas:

Recruitment
Training
Internal Communications
Day-to-Day Project Management
Intergovernmental, Congressional, and Public Affairs
USDA Inter-Agency Coordination
Fundraising, Grants, and Development
Monitoring and Evaluation

i. Costs

How much will the program cost to start and then run? What will be the total cost and how much per server? Will we pay the entire salary of the participants or only part?

Each participant will need access to a computer network in order to communicate with each other via an easy-to-use e-mail, access a USDA rural development database, and access INTERNET.

j. Funding sources

What non-profit groups, corporations, individuals, and/or foundations might be willing to help fund this?

k. Partnerships

Possible partnerships include:

Monday Management Group (17 federal agencies involved in rural development)
National Association of Counties
National Association of Development Organizations
National Governors Organization
National Association of Towns and Townships
State Rural Development Councils
State Economic Development Councils or Agencies
Local Planning and Development entities both private and public
National Association of State Foresters
Department of Defense Agencies, including the Army Corps of Engineers, 1890's, land-grant, and historically Hispanic colleges

l. Creating and maintaining diversity

How do we ensure that this program is managed by a diverse team and includes a diverse set of participants each and every year?

m. Special training and supervision issues

Participants of this program would hold either Bachelor's degrees or graduate degrees and use the benefits to pay back student loans. Unfortunately, only two graduate schools in the country now specifically teach rural development; perhaps we could form partnerships with others to do so. Participants could also be trained in public administration, civil engineering, or agricultural science. The participants would need to spend a period of training before being assigned to the local districts. They would then live and work in the communities for which they are providing the assistance.

n. Timeline

We need to develop a solid, day-to-day set of goals, for specific steps in creating and running this corps.

V. Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Corps Sub-Group

This program could be run in partnership with H.U.D. and/or H.H.S. Corps members would work in urban and rural areas to help low income families and individuals move towards self-sufficiency. The main focus of the corps would be fighting domestic hunger; it would be similar to EFNEP but would have a greatly expanded mission. Corps members would help individuals apply for food stamps, WIC, and the school breakfast program; overhaul their diets; learn to prevent foodborne illnesses; obtain the expanded Earned Income Tax Credits, microenterprise loans, and help from community development banks. In short, this corps would help put into effect the entire empowerment agenda promoted by President Clinton and Secretary Espy. An full-scale program could eventually provide a big boost to our efforts to eradicate domestic hunger.

a. Social problems to be solved

Hunger has skyrocketed in America over the last decade, particularly among children.

Participants would provide outreach and access services, build the anti-hunger and anti-poverty infrastructure, and run innovative new empowerment programs:

1) Provide outreach/access services (educating eligible people about program availability and helping make benefits accessible)

* Outreach Workers - Inform target populations about program availability (all programs)

* Drivers - Help eligible people apply for and receive program benefits (WIC, CACFP, TEFAP, NPE, CSFP)

* Delivery Aides - Deliver program benefits to homebound elderly, physically disadvantaged, and homeless people (TEFAP, CSFP, FDPIR)

* Bilingual Aides - Provide program information, help with applications, etc. to eligible, non-English-speaking people (all programs)

* Service Facilitator - Conduct telephone follow-up with people who don't keep appointments, direct people to related health and welfare services (WIC, CSFP)

2) Bolster the infrastructure (providing the human capital necessary to deliver the programs according to congressional intent):

- * Food Handlers - Stock, warehouse, manage, distribute food products (TEFAP, charitable institutions, NPE, CSFP, school programs, FDPIR)

- * Day Care Workers - Provide child/adult care services to allow eligible people to apply for and receive program benefits (WIC, TEFAP, FDPIR)

- * Bilingual Case Assistants - Assist case manager with non-English-speaking clients (WIC)

- * Kitchen/Cafeteria Aides - Help with meal preparation and serving, maintaining, monitoring lunchrooms, and sanitation (school food, CACFP, and commodity programs)

- * Nutrition Assistants - Help with nutrition education, cooking demonstrations (WIC, school food programs)

- * CACFC Assistant - Improve supervision ratio of provider to participants in child care/meal preparation functions (CACFP)

3) Boost innovative new empowerment programs

- * EITC - Help families obtain the newly expanded Earned Income Tax Credit

- * Microenterprise - Teach people how to start small businesses

- * Community Development Banks - Inform families on how to apply for loans from community development banks

- * Assets Building - Work with families to develop savings plans

- * Tenant management - Help public housing tenants to develop organizations for self-management

- * Apprenticeship - Work with local schools and businesses to develop new school-to-work transition programs

b. How will work with existing programs

We must still answer how this program will specifically interact with the above existing programs and the ambitious new anti-hunger initiatives being planned by the Administration.

c. Outreach needed for stakeholders

We will need strong support from state welfare agencies and from the current participants in those programs.

d. Residential or non-residential

Should this program have any residential, dorm-like component?

e. Sizes and sites of pilot projects

Where should the pilot projects be situated and how large should they be?

f. Growth scenarios

Where, and how quickly, should the program grow? Should we grow by expanding our pilot projects or by creating new ones?

g. Management structure needed

What new or existing office or offices at USDA will manage the program?

h. Staff needed

How many USDA employees will be needed to manage the program? Will outside consultants also be required?

i. Costs

How much will the program cost to start and then run? How much will it cost total and per server?

j. Funding sources

What non-profit groups, corporations, individuals, and/or foundations might be willing to help fund this?

k. Partnerships

We must definitely work with state social service agencies. potential other partners include the Association of WIC Providers, the Food Research Action Center, the Children's Defense Fund, the Safe Food Coalition, the Urban League, etc. What other groups should be contacted?

1. Creating and maintaining diversity

How do we ensure that this program is managed by a diverse team and includes a diverse set of participants each and every year?

m. Special training and supervision issues

How would the participants be trained? For how long? Where? With what kind of curriculum?

How would they be supervised? Would they stay on one project throughout the year or frequently switch projects? What kind of extra supervision will be needed in residential programs?

n. Timeline

We need to develop a solid, day-to-day set of goals, for specific steps in creating and running this corps.

VI. Environmental Corps Sub-Group

The Department of Agriculture, possibly in conjunction with Interior and EPA, would establish an Environmental Youth Corps with urban and rural components. The urban component would be mostly non-residential and members would work on conservation projects on public and private lands in cities of various sizes. The rural component would be both residential and non-residential and would perform conservation-related work projects on private and public lands in rural America. The programs would be linked, with Corps members having the option of transferring between the rural and urban settings. For example, a Corps member could work in a rural environment for six months and then in an urban environment for another six months.

a. Social problems to be solved

There are currently an estimated 8 million tree planting sites in communities across America with the current replacement rate being one tree planted for every four removed. Thousands of water quality projects nationwide are awaiting manpower in our communities and our rural areas, as are riparian area restoration, erosion control, stream improvement, roadbank stabilization, and wildlife habitat projects. Urban gardening and sustainable agriculture would also have important places in this program.

Approaches:

Urban: More than 80 percent of the American population now live in cities of varying size. Currently, the Forest Service, with 620 Ranger Districts across the country, and the Soil Conservation Service, with more than 2,000 offices nationwide, have existing partnerships and delivery systems in many cities.

The program would take the Corps to where the people are, operating in any urban community with an existing network of Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, or Extension Service programs in partnerships with local governments or non-profit organizations.

The non-residential program would focus on urban conservation projects in the areas of water quality, waste disposal, erosion control, roadbank and streambank stabilization, urban gardening, the creation of urban buffers, rehabilitation and maintenance of deteriorating community infrastructure, urban forestry, and the recycling and reuse of resources. Corps members would live in the community or already be a community member.

While the Forest Service has authority over public lands or lands owned by non-profit organizations, the Soil Conservation Service has authority to perform work on private lands as well, allowing for a broad range of work projects.

Rural: Corps members would live in a residential setting in a rural area. The program would provide full-time logistical support for Corps members. As in the urban program, the Corps members would be expected to pay for living expenses from their wages.

Work projects could be in erosion control, fire prevention, fire suppression, building or improving recreation areas, restoration of infrastructure such as buildings and bridges, watershed protection, and other similar conservation projects. The land base of the National Forests would be available for projects as well as the privately held land in partnerships with the Soil Conservation Service.

Corps members could also focus on teaching sustainable agriculture, helping small farmers stay on the land, building rural housing, and engaging in rural development projects.

The Corps would provide much needed manpower for nationwide conservation projects. The work of the Corps could reduce the backlog of conservation-related work across the country.

With the shift from a rural population to an urban one, Americans are losing the ability to learn firsthand about natural resources. We currently have a relatively uneducated and uninformed citizenry with regard to natural resources and conservation issues. The Corps would provide an opportunity to learn about America's natural resources, their uses, and the need to protect them. The end result would be a citizenry better informed on national conservation issues.

Besides developing new skills, Corps members would have the opportunity to be exposed to a variety of career options in the conservation field through hands-on experience. The Corps would provide a broad span of time to explore options and plan for the future while also providing for food and shelter.

b. How will work with existing programs

We still need to answer how this program will specifically interact with existing programs and the ambitious new environmental initiatives being planned by the Administration.

c. Outreach needed for stakeholders

We need to gain the support from existing youth service corps, from environmental and conservation groups, from the National Forest Foundation, from labor unions, and from farming and commodity groups.

d. Residential or non-residential

What should be the mix of residential and non-residential participants? Can they have an exchange program?

e. Sizes and sites of pilot projects

Currently the Forest Service, in partnership with the National Forest Foundation, is operating three residential summer camps in Virginia, Oregon, and Washington. Through grants, the Forest Service and National Forest Foundation also are sponsoring urban programs in the southern California area. These could serve as initial sites.

What other facilities now exist in usable shape or near usable shape in the national forests that have been leftover from the YCC, the YAC, or even the original CCC?

f. Growth scenarios

Where, and how quickly, should the program grow? Should be grow by expanding our pilot projects or by creating new ones?

g. Management structure needed

What new or existing office or offices at USDA will manage the program?

h. Staff needed

How many USDA employees will be needed to manage the program? Will outside consultants also be required?

i. Costs

How much will the program cost to start and then run? How much will it cost total and per server?

j. Funding sources

What non-profit groups, corporations, individuals, and/or foundations might be willing to help fund this?

k. Partnerships

Possible partnerships include:

Association of Conservation Districts
Audobon Society
Department of Defense, including such agencies as the Army Corps of Engineers
Land Grant universities
National Recreation Coalition
National Association of State Foresters
National Parks Foundation
National Trust for Historic Preservation
National Tree Trust
Nature Conservancy
Telephone Pioneers of America

l. Creating and maintaining diversity

How do we ensure that this program is managed by a diverse team and includes a diverse set of participants each and every year?

m. Special training and supervision issues

How would the participants be trained? For how long? Where? With what kind of curriculum?

How would they be supervised? Would they stay on one project throughout the year or frequently switch projects? What kind of extra supervision will be needed in residential programs?

n. Creating and maintaining diversity

How do we ensure that this program is managed by a diverse team and includes a diverse set of participants each and every year?

o. Timeline

We need to develop a solid, day-to-day set of goals, for specific steps in creating and running this corps.

p. Boren bill

How will this program interact with the Civilian Conservation Corps, run in a quasi-military fashion, that was set up originally by the Boren bill?

VII. Fundraising Sub-Group:

We need clear guidelines from our Office of General Counsel on how we can raise money. Can we raise it directly? Can we funnel it through the Corporation of National Service? Can we funnel it through the national Forrest Foundation? How can we avoid even the appearance of impropriety in raising money from interests that might be regulated or affected by the Department of Agriculture?

Can various funders sponsor all or part of pilot projects?

Can we hold a national employees serve-a-thon in which USDA employees perform a day of service and get sponsored to do so by friends? If each of our 114,000 employees raises or personally donates an average of \$10, we will have raised over \$1 million.

Could we institute an employee check-off program in which our employees can donate weekly or yearly to our national service programs? Could we find a way to match those contributions with private contributions?

VIII. Costs and Budget Sub-Group

Does USDA have to pay for each \$5,000 voucher out of our grant or does that come from a separate account?

If most servers in the Environmental Corps are residential, then our estimated cost is about \$20,000 per servers. Thus a pilot program with 1,000 servers would cost \$20 million. This would allow us five rural sites of 100 each, and two urban sites of 250 each.

If we roughly estimate that each server in the Empowerment and Anti-Hungers Corps will cost \$15,000 per year, then 1,000 participants would cost \$15 million. That would fund twenty sites, half urban and half rural, with 50 participants in each site.

If we roughly estimate that each server in the Rural Development Corps will cost roughly \$30,000 per year, accounting for their higher pay, then 400 servers would cost \$10 million. That would fund ten state programs with 40 participants each.

The total for all three proposals is \$45 million. We would obviously have to raise private funds, in addition to Corporation for National Service Funds, to start pilots at such a grand scale. Yet these proposals would allow us to potentially have pilot operations in fully 37 states in our very first year of operation.

IX. Research Sub-Group

We need to fully research past programs such as CCC and YAC, as well as current programs such as YCC, EFNEP, 4-H, VISTA.

Task force members need to spend as much time as possible with as many nearby youth service corps as possible.

What has worked and what hasn't worked?

X. Pilot and Project Selection Sub-Group

How do we select the pilot locations and projects? How do we balance the need to be visible, yet effective.

XI. Youth Development Sub-Group

We need to study a wide variety of ways to boost the upward mobility of youth who participate in our programs. We need to discuss our service-learning, national service transcripts, guidance counselor centers, peer discussion groups and self-management, to help in obtaining other forms of federal student aid, and help in job placement.

Can extra private money we raise be used to supplement the national service voucher given to participants?

XII. Diversity Sub-Group

How can we make diversity -- by race, age, religion, class, gender, and orientation -- a reality in both our management team and our participants?

How can we incorporate physically disabled participants and program managers?

XIII. USDA Administrative and Personnel Sub-Group

Who will run this program at USDA and what we will have to do to free them from current programmatic and budgetary duties?

XIV. Higher Education Sub-Group

This group should coordinate extensively with land-grant universities, historically Black colleges, and historically Hispanic universities.

XV. Technical Assistance Task Force

How can we provide technical assistance to USDA constituencies that want to apply for funding from the Corporation for National Service to run their own programs? How can we help them obtain their funds and how can we aid their actual programs?

XVI. Timeline for Suggested Action:

By September 1, 1993: Detail staff or obtain full-time help from appropriate agencies to serve on a USDA working group to hammer out specific details of each proposal.

By October 1, 1993: Agencies identify possible pilot project locations and partnerships

By November 1, 1993: Sign a memorandum of understanding with other agencies with whom we will jointly make proposal.

By December 1, 1993: Preliminary proposal completed for submission to Corporation for National Service

By March 1994: Start-up plans finalized for projects approved by the Corporation for National Service

By April 1994: Project personnel interviewed and placed

By June 1994: Summer training starts for crew leaders

By September 1, 1994: Pilot projects begin