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Emergency Projects: Tornado Clean-Up

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May 20, 1996

Mr. Joel Berg
Director of National Service
USDA AmeriCorps
14th & Independence SW, Room 538A
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Joel,

This is to inform you that eighteen members of the USDA Rural Development (RD) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) AmeriCorps teams, recently responded to the tornado disaster in Van Buren, Arkansas, during the week of April 21, 1996. AmeriCorps team members aided the city of Van Buren with clearing of channels, roadways, and public areas. AmeriCorps members worked 837 hours aiding in the clean-up effort. I want to personally issue my thanks to you and Dee Difiore in securing travel funds to make this effort possible.

Even though motel space was not available, my staff was able to secure lodging at Fort Chaffee in Ft. Smith, Arkansas. AmeriCorps team members awoke each morning at 4:30 a.m. and were at the work site by 6:30 a.m. Their work day concluded at 6:30 p.m. Even though members put in long hours, their spirit never wavered. This speaks highly of the quality of members we have in the program. I continue to hear of the positive effort of our members from city officials. I am enclosing an article from the Fort Smith paper which recognized the efforts of our AmeriCorps teams.

RD and NRCS in Arkansas plan to recognize AmeriCorps members by having a cook out and presenting each with tokens of our appreciation. It is hoped that you and Dee will be able to attend. You will be notified as soon as a date is scheduled.

Thanks again Joel to you and Dee in making this effort possible.

Sincerely,

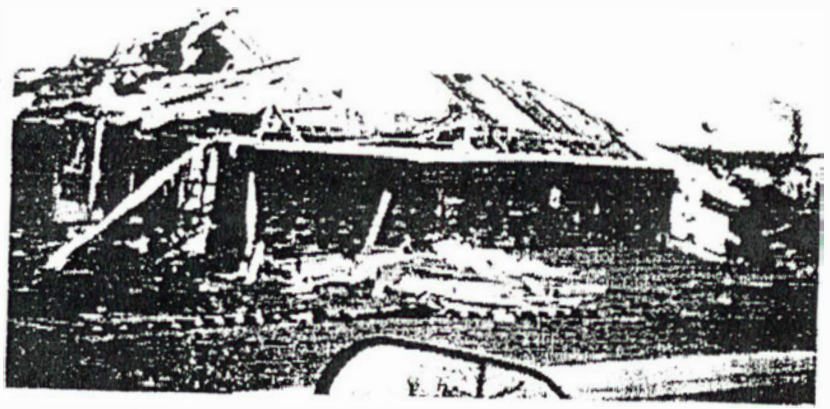


THOMAS H. WEHRI
State Conservationist

Enclosure

cc: w/encl.

Judith K. Johnson, Regional Conservationist, South Central Region, NRCS, Ft. Worth, TX
Dee Difiore, USDA AmeriCorps, 14th & Independence SW, Room 538A, Washington, DC 20250
Michael Dunaway, State Executive Director, RD, Little Rock, AR



AMERICORPS AIDS TORNADO VICTIMS ... The house pictured above was just one of many that received damage from a tornado that hit the Fort Smith\Van Buren Communities recently. The local Americorps team recently traveled to the communities to aid the tornado victims. The tornado did massive damage that caused four deaths and destroyed over 200 homes. The Americorps team from Holly Grove left on Tuesday, April 23 and worked through Friday, April 26. The team made a vital impact to the victims by providing community service to over 200 families. They worked together and gave major leadership by moving debris from damaged houses and streets. Members of the local Americorps team are Linda D. Knox, Gloria Wiley, Leroy Foster, James Stewart, George Phipps, Jr., Wayne Beadles, Aeric Cole, Willie Clayborn and Jana Coleman.

be accepted under

Please See Page 2A For Poll Results

GOOD DEEDS

● Sixteen Arkansas AmeriCorps members are assisting in Van Buren's tornado cleanup effort. Led by Bruce Leggitt, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service program manager for Arkansas, Americorps members have been working side-by-side with NRCS engineers and regional staff from the Fort Smith office, and city of Van Buren personnel.

Lodging overnight at Fort Chaffee, AmeriCorps members have been removing limbs from trimmed trees, raking areas close to roadways, and shoveling, piling and loading debris into dump trucks. Much of their work has been in Van Buren's Cedar Creek residential area.

Leggitt said AmeriCorps was asked to participate by NRCS State Conservationist Tom Wehri. AmeriCorps is President Clinton's domestic peace corps, a national service program.

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UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

Northeast Nebraska RC&D
RR 2 Box 67
Plainview, NE 68769-9504
PH 402/582-4866 - FX 402/582-3799

To: Joel Berg, AmeriCorps/USDA Program Director

From: Nadene Chavet and Carmen Shaffer, AmeriCorps/Team USDA

Date: May 20, 1996

RE: Homestead National Monument of America tornado debris clean-up

In response to your request for assistance from AmeriCorps/Team USDA, Mary Rose Backhaus, Nadene Chavet, Stephen Cook, Travis Dunekacke, and Carmen Shaffer worked at the park May 15 through May 17. While the tornado missed the park buildings, it did significant damage to the nearby homes in Pioneer Acres. Team members cleaned debris out of the tall grass prairie, park fence lines, and roadside ditches resulting from these damaged homes. Debris was then hauled to the Beatrice city dump. Members also replaced the park's damaged east entrance sign temporarily with an old sign until a new one arrives.

The group worked approximately 18 volunteer hours. By Friday, May 17, eight loads of debris had been taken to the dump, totaling about two tons. This debris consisted mostly of larger pieces, such as lengths of lumber, plywood with shingles, sheetrock, some tree branches, and other miscellaneous items. Members were instructed to save any personal items such as photographs so that owners could be located at a later date.

One member who was unable to do the physical work outdoors assisted in the visitors' center. She cataloged slides, did some data entry, handled sales, and operated the video equipment for the auditorium.

Team members appreciated the opportunity to assist in this endeavor. We were proud to be able to help preserve our national heritage.

OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-90)

FAX TRANSMITTAL

of pages 1

To <i>Joel Berg</i>	From <i>Nadene Chavet + Carmen Shaffer</i>
Dept./Agency <i>AmeriCorps/USDA Director</i>	Phone # <i>402/582/4866</i>
Fax # <i>402/690-1131</i>	Fax # <i>402/582/3799</i>
NSN 7541/01 317-7388	5099 101 GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

The Natural Resources Conservation Service, formerly the Soil Conservation Service, works hand-in-hand with the American people to conserve natural resources on private lands.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-90)

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NSN 7540-01-317-7368	5099-101 GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Joel,

In looking over the memo we faxed to you this morning, we realized some of the information may have been misleading. Members worked approximately 18 hours each, totaling 90 volunteer hours for these 5 members.

Other USDA Ameri Corps members worked Friday afternoon after this group left. Jo Britt, Bonnie Tyrrell, & Jeff Gorgen worked an additional 15 hours total.

Total Ameri Corps/Team USDA volunteer hours for this project: 105

Thank you.
Nadene Chavet

copy to Billie Cox
Joan Schaffer) 4th floor.