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*A Newsletter About and For AmeriCorps/USDA Members and Staff ---
July 26, 1996*

Projects, Take Note!

August 19-25 designated as Food Recovery Week

The figures are preliminary -- but impressive. Our 20 special "Summer of Gleaning" projects have already rescued more than 100,000 lbs. of food for distribution to the hungry.

The program is based on the premise that up to one-fifth of the food produced for consumption in this country in fields, commercial kitchens, markets, stores, schools, and restaurants is lost -- but could be salvaged for use in the battle against hunger. Gleaning has been designated by Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman as one of his top priorities.

TO EXPAND THE effort, the week of August 19-25 has been designated as "National Week of Food Recovery" and all USDA AmeriCorps projects are urged to spend that week

-- or at least one day that week -- engaged in some activity to recover excess food.

Projects are encouraged to work with existing Summer of Gleaning sites and/or contact local anti-hunger groups to arrange to glean food from fields or to recover food from large events, institutions, and/or restaurants. **Projects are also encouraged to work with state, national, and community service commissions to recruit other, non-USDA, AmeriCorps members and community volunteers for the week's activities.**

WITH THIS EDITION of *L'Esprit d'AmeriCorps* is a form for information about your gleaning project to be faxed to the National Office, and a site list for the Summer of Gleaning projects.

Our Second Year Coming To A Close

AmeriCorps/USDA is about to graduate its second class, as projects nationwide plan special ceremonies.

In Kentucky, 14 Rural Development Team members and six Summer of Gleaning members have organized a service project for their final day. The members will serve food at Hope Center, a facility for homeless men in Lexington, then work in the center's garden. Later that evening, a banquet is planned and local dignitaries

have been invited. Let us know your project's graduation plans by faxing the accompanying form to the National Office at (202) 720-4614.

Commemorative Plaques Are Again Available

The metal signs that can be used to designate a site as an AmeriCorps/USDA project are available again this year.

Fax your request for plaques to Dee DiFiore at (202) 720-4614. Order as many as you

thing that you will need.

THERE ARE ABOUT 600 available and they will be divided among projects as fairly as possible. Projects are encouraged to use them as part of graduation ceremonies or some sort of ceremony that would make a good media event.

They should be erected as close as possible to the specific work site. Space has been left for projects to engrave more information as desired.

**AMERICORPS/USDA RESPONSE FORM FOR SPECIAL SERVICE
PROJECT DURING NATIONAL WEEK OF FOOD RECOVERY**

Location of Project (City or State): _____

Description of Event: _____

Event Site: _____

Date and Time: _____

Number of AmeriCorps/USDA members expected to attend: _____

County or counties of duty stations of AmeriCorps/USDA members expected to participate: _____

Collaboration with 1) existing gleaning project _____

2) local anti-hunger group _____

3) non-USDA AmeriCorps project _____

Local leader invited and/or confirmed: _____

Name, telephone and fax numbers of contact person for food recovery project:

Please fax to (202) 720-4614 when complete.

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Call (202) 720-6350 with questions.

AmeriCorps Summer Gleaning Projects

California (Rural Development) will use six Members in Watsonville and King County to provide fresh produce to over 5,500 people.

Contact: Toni Symonds (916) 668-2025

Connecticut (Rural Development/FSA) will conduct a joint project using four Members that will serve at least 100 needy families and enhance the relationship between local farmers and community food banks. The Connecticut project will focus on the Hartford and New Haven areas.

Contact: Richard Burke (RD) (413) 253-4319

Vincent Majchiers (FSA/CT) (860) 285-8483

District of Columbia/Northern Virginia (Food and Consumer Service), under the leadership of the Congressional Hunger Center (CHC), will implement a gleaning and perishable food rescue program in Washington, D.C. and the Northern Virginia area to provide meals and fresh produce to residents of the District (through the D.C. Central Kitchen) and Arlington (through the Arlington Food Assistance Center). This project will utilize three Members, who will work as an adjunct to the District of Columbia's existing USDA/AmeriCorps Anti-Hunger, Nutrition, and Empowerment Team.

Contact: Joshua Yates (CHC) (202) 547-7022

Georgia (Rural Development) will provide 2 Members to work closely with the Atlanta Community Food Bank in accomplishing the first-ever food rescue project associated with the Olympic Games. This project anticipates providing approximately 25,000 meals to city distribution centers **every** day during the event.

Contact: Donnie Thomas (RD) (706) 546-2171

Illinois (FSA) will, with the addition of only two new AmeriCorps Members, expand its gleaning project in Mason County to include most of Southern Illinois, resulting in a program that will provide the local soup kitchens and food banks, which serve a total of more than 8,500 people daily, with an additional 5 tons of produce.

Contact: Rod Atterberry (309) 543-2852

Indiana (Rural Development) will focus on providing nutritious foods to 10 new "Kids' Cafes" (that serve low-income and homeless children), spearheaded by the efforts of six AmeriCorps Members who will coordinate both food rescue and farm gleaning efforts in rural and urban areas. Terre Haute and Indianapolis are the main focus areas for the Indiana project.

Contact: Kelly Barmann or (317) 290-3104

Sharon Zapata

Iowa (FSA) will use three Members in the Model City area of Des Moines (A HUD Enterprise Community) to establish a gleaning and food rescue program that will also emphasize nutrition education and neighborhood gardens.

Contact: Kevin Fitzpatrick (515) 386-3138

Kentucky (Rural Development) will focus on the Kentucky Highlands Empowerment Zone in Eastern Kentucky, where six Members will glean and distribute excess crops to at least 100 local families, who will also be provided with training to improve the nutritional value of their meals through the addition of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Contact: Louis Elliott

(502) 633-0891

Maryland (FSA) will use four Members, in partnership with the 3,000-volunteer Washington Area Gleaning Network, to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to needy families in the Baltimore area.

Contact: Jim Voss

(410) 381-4550

John Ciekot (Member Issues)

(410) 366-8533

George Roche (Volunteers)

(301) 879-1484

Michigan (FSA) will use six Members, two of whom will be stationed in Detroit to coordinate an urban perishable food rescue effort as well as distribute some fresh produce to local food banks. Another four Members will work in the East Lansing area to recover fresh fruits and vegetables from farms after the mechanical harvesting is completed, provide these foods to the local food distribution center (run by the Red Cross), and take an active part in educating the recipients about the proper preparation and storage of the foods they receive.

Contact: Sandi Ramos

(517) 337-6660, ext.1212

Mississippi (Rural Development) will, through the joint efforts of four new AmeriCorps Members and the newest USDA AmeriCorps Anti-Hunger Project, work to provide fresh foods, poultry, and nutrition education to 425 families in the Mississippi Delta Empowerment Zone and nearby counties.

Contact: Bettye Oliver

(601) 965-5460

Missouri (FSA) will sponsor a 5-Member farm gleaning project near Kansas City, MO, that will serve nearly 400 poor, primarily elderly individuals this summer.

Contact: Cindy White

(816) 776-5861

New Jersey (Extension Service) will use five Members, in partnership with the Bonner Foundation and many other partners, to provide fresh produce to the southern New Jersey food bank network (Atlantic, Cumberland, Burlington, and Camden Counties) and over 100 families, with a secondary goal of effectively reducing crop waste.

Contact: Joni Elliott

(609) 292-8897

New Mexico (Rural Development and FSA) will actually operate two separate projects, one in the Albuquerque area and one in the Four Corners area of the state, with four Members each, and will serve a total of more than 200 soup kitchens, 800 individuals, and over 75 Native American families on the Navajo reservation.

Contact: Lloyd Wilhelm (FSA/Four Corners) (505) 334-3090

John Thomas (RD/Albuquerque) (505) 761-4960

New York (FSA) will use six Members in a five-county area around the state capital of Albany, in partnership with the Albany Service Corps, to provide fresh produce to 20,000 low-income individuals per month in the targeted Capital Region. Activities include maintenance of a large community garden, rescuing produce from local farmers and farmers' markets, and training the staff, volunteers and clients of local food pantries and soup kitchens on the preparation and use of the fresh foods obtained through this project.

Contact: Marc Smith (FSA) (315) 477-6304
Paul Winkeller (518) 434-2677
(Albany Service Corps)

Oregon (Rural Development) will, with six new Members, build on existing efforts by the Oregon Food Bank (Portland/Eugene area) to develop linkages between rural and urban populations, and to serve an additional 100 needy families during the summer months.

Contact: Bruce Kohler (503) 465-6850

Pennsylvania (Rural Development) will use five Members to organize volunteers to serve 200 needy people per day, through the local food banks serving Uniontown/Fayette County, using perishable foods that are rescued from area restaurants and cafeterias.

Contact: Lee Patterson (412) 482-4888

Rhode Island (FSA) will use three Members to serve needy families in the area by enhancing the relationship between local farmers and community food banks, as well as by providing extensive education to the local food bank operators about proper food storage, handling, and preparation techniques. Rhode Island's efforts are centered primarily around Providence.

Contact: Patricia Seites (FSA/RI) (401) 828-8232

Texas (Rural Development) will use five Members to help provide fresh food to 100 families living in the Colonias area inside and near the Rio Grande Empowerment Zone.

Contact: Lorraine Clements (817) 774-1304

Washington (Extension Service) will, with six Members, effectively double the amount of food gleaned from farms in Pierce and Yakima Counties this summer, thus dramatically increasing the number of families that will benefit from these efforts; an innovative partnership with the local cannery will provide job training opportunities for low-income recipients as well as preserved foods that can be distributed during the winter months.

Contact: Dr. Steven Garrett (206) 591-7180

USDA Contacts: Joel Berg, Director of National Service (202) 720-5746
Donna Hines, FCS Anti-Hunger Coordinator (202) 690-0693

NEWS

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USDA AMERICORPS MEMBERS SALVAGE 60 TONS OF FOOD AT SUMMER OLYMPICS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2, 1996--For the U.S. Department of Agriculture's AmeriCorps members, the Summer Olympics in Atlanta are particularly special: They are salvaging food from the various vendors and events and assisting in distributing it to those in need.

To date, the AmeriCorps members, who are working in partnership with the Atlanta Community Food Bank, have rescued more than 60 tons of perishable food. The food bank estimates the salvaged food is enough to provide some 80,000 meals.

"The international games have provided our AmeriCorps members with a unique opportunity in the battle to alleviate hunger in the host city," said Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman. "For the first time in history, we are recovering food at the Olympics. The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games is to be commended for their cooperation in this effort. I hope that this work is precedent-setting and that it will become standard practice at all sorts of special events nationwide."

"This AmeriCorps project is part of a national initiative by USDA to coordinate and promote public and private gleaning and food recovery efforts," Glickman said. "Every year millions of pounds of nutritious, uneaten food is thrown away. It is my highest personal priority to find ways to get this food to the hungry -- before it finds its way to the dumpster."

As the games are coming to a close each evening, the AmeriCorps members start their nightly service, according to Amy Hudson, community relations manager for the Atlanta Community Food Bank. "They have been invaluable, working all night to rescue food from events in Atlanta and delivering it to the food bank," she said.

Three of the AmeriCorps members are part of the Department's special 12-week Summer of Gleaning Program currently underway in 20 states. They are Casey Long and Gabe Weinberg of Atlanta, and Paul Soares of the Washington, D.C. Anti-Hunger Team, a USDA-sponsored AmeriCorps project in collaboration with the Congressional Hunger Center. Long and Weinberg are sponsored by USDA's Rural Development mission area.

Other AmeriCorps members from the Hunger Center assisting in the Olympic gleaning project are: Alex Dishun, Julia Dennehy, Sofia Ginzburg, and Aileen Cham.

-more-

AmeriCorps members participating in this summer's USDA gleaning projects across the country are recovering fresh fruits and vegetables left in the fields after harvesting, and salvaging perishable foods from commercial establishments.

AmeriCorps, President Clinton's national service program passed with bipartisan support by Congress, engages 25,000 Americans of diverse backgrounds in performing service that meets critical community needs in return for an award which may be used for college, job training, or to pay back student loans. The majority of AmeriCorps members are working in partnerships with states, local governments, and non-profit organizations.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is running three types of AmeriCorps teams in 45 states, composed of approximately 1,000 members: an anti-hunger team, a public lands and environment team, and a rural development team. Many of the AmeriCorps projects are sponsored by community-based organizations and all projects are designed to "get things done," while boosting community, opportunity, and responsibility.

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NOTE: USDA news releases and media advisories are available on the Internet. Access the USDA Home Page on the World Wide Web at <http://www.usda.gov>

FACT SHEET ON THE STATUS OF FUTURE USDA-SPONSORED AMERICORPS PROJECTS

In both the 1994-1995 program year and the 1995-1996 program year, USDA sponsored community-based AmeriCorps projects throughout the country that fought hunger, protected the environment, and boosted rural community development. In both program years, the projects were supported by four sources of funding:

- 1) Corporation for National Service (CNS) funding paid for educational awards for AmeriCorps Members that successfully completed the program; ***none of these funds were ever transferred to USDA*** --- they went into a trust fund that will eventually pay the lending and/or educational institutions of AmeriCorps graduates.
- 2) CNS funds were granted from CNS to USDA, which USDA, in turn, sub-granted to local AmeriCorps projects, especially to five anti-hunger projects; the total amount of these funds were minimal compared to the overall cost of the USDA program.
- 3) USDA utilized money from the Department's own appropriated funds; USDA used funds from a variety of agencies to support AmeriCorps projects that provided critical community services in areas related to the broad mission areas of those agencies.
- 4) State and local governments and private sector organizations provided matching funds; in the 1994-1995 program year, non-Federal sources provided \$1.7 million in funding to USDA-sponsored AmeriCorps projects.

In a compromise brokered between CNS head Harris Wofford and Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA), a leading critic of the program, CNS will no longer make grants of operating funds to Federal agencies. This deal compromise codified by the appropriations language governing CNS. Some of those critics who agreed to the compromise may have believed, incorrectly, that they eliminated CNS's legal ability to allow USDA to continue to sponsor AmeriCorps projects. In fact, neither the compromise nor the appropriations language restricted CNS' legal ability to continue to allow AmeriCorps Members sponsored by USDA to receive educational awards.

The only legal result of the compromise is that it eliminated AmeriCorps funding source #2 --- operating funds transferred from CNS to USDA. The few projects that were most dependent on this source of funding --- the five anti-hunger projects --- banded together as a consortium under the umbrella of the non-profit Congressional Hunger Center to successfully apply for funding directly from CNS. However, the over 1,000 remaining USDA sponsored AmeriCorps positions focused on environmental protection and rural development would be eliminated entirely if CNS could not continue to sign a cooperative agreement with USDA in which the Department would continue to use its own appropriated funds to support these projects. **These projects --- many of which are the only significant AmeriCorps presence in rural areas of their states --- would end if USDA's involvement in AmeriCorps was terminated. Most state commissions on national service have neither the available funds nor the technical expertise to continue these projects on their own.**

Under the current appropriations language governing CNS, while CNS can no longer transfer operating funds (source #2) to USDA, it may sign a cooperative agreement with the Department to allow USDA-sponsored educational awards funded by source #1. Under this arrangement, USDA would still be able to spend its own funds (source #3) and USDA AmeriCorps projects would still be able to obtain state, local and private funds (source #4).

Thus, CNS still has the *legal* ability to sign an agreement with USDA to sponsor AmeriCorps projects with funds provided by USDA and non-Federal sources. Under this condition, USDA-sponsored AmeriCorps Members would still have the legal ability to receive educational awards from the CNS. However, even though both agencies have the legal ability to ensure that USDA can continue to run an AmeriCorps program, the Department and CNS are seeking to reach a bi-partisan *policy* consensus with key leaders in Congress that USDA will do so. The Department wants to be sure that no critics of AmeriCorps believe that either CNS or USDA have , in essence, “broken the deal” regarding Federal agency programs.

Consequently, both USDA and CNS are seeking at least tacit approval from Senator Christopher S. (Kit) Bond of Missouri, the Chairperson of the Senate VA/HUD appropriations sub-committee that funds CNS, to support a compromise in which USDA would no longer receive operating awards from CNS but in which USDA would still be able to spend its own already-appropriated funds on AmeriCorps, and in which USDA-sponsored AmeriCorps Members would still be able to receive educational awards funded by CNS.

Tom Amontree 202-720-4623
Joel Berg 202-720-5746

CONGRESS CANCELS FOREST SERVICE AMERICORPS PROJECTS PLANNED FOR 19 STATES

WASHINGTON, July xx, 1996--Congress has canceled the portion of the AmeriCorps national service program planned for this fiscal year that would have engaged 683 participants in USDA Forest Service projects in 19 states, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said today.

The program was canceled because Interior Appropriations Subcommittees in Congress denied the U.S. Department of Agriculture's request to reprogram Fiscal Year 1996 Forest Service funds for AmeriCorps. However, Glickman expressed his desire to work with Congress to obtain bipartisan support to begin new, year-long USDA Forest Service AmeriCorps projects nationally beginning this October using FY97 funds.

The Forest Service AmeriCorps projects would have engaged AmeriCorps members in building and restoring trails, rehabilitating campground sites, fighting forest fires, making recreation areas accessible for disabled persons, protecting habitats for endangered and threatened species, improving timber stands, boosting rural development, providing environmental education services to local schools, and preserving historic sites. AmeriCorps members who successfully completed a full term of service would have received educational awards worth \$4,725 to pay for college, job training, graduate school, or to pay back existing student loans.

"It is unfortunate that the people of the United States will not receive the beneficial services that AmeriCorps members would have performed on national forests. It is also unfortunate that potential participants in the program will not be able to aid their own post-secondary educations," said Glickman, who oversees the USDA Forest Service. "Given that Congress has recently taken bipartisan steps to work with the President to preserve the entire AmeriCorps program, I hope we can reach bipartisan agreement to continue AmeriCorps projects on national forests starting this fall."

USDA Forest Service AmeriCorps projects were planned this fiscal year for Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee, Washington, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

AmeriCorps is the President's domestic national service program, authorized by the National and Community Service Act of 1993, which allows Americans of all backgrounds to perform community service in exchange for educational benefits. While most AmeriCorps projects are not run by federal agencies, USDA manages a small portion of AmeriCorps focused nationally on rural development, environmental protection, and anti-hunger work--most of which were allowed by Congress to continue this year. All USDA AmeriCorps projects are designed to "get things done" while strengthening communities, expanding educational opportunity, and promoting personal responsibility.

Nationally, in the Forest Service's first operational program year (1994-1995), AmeriCorps members nationally constructed, maintained, and improved 682 miles of trails, achieved 2,569 acres of wildlife habitat enhancement, improved 668 acres of timber stands, built or completely rehabilitated 446 campground sites, reforested 638 acres of land, prepared 42 campsites for accessibility to people with disabilities, improved 760 acres of fisheries habitat, and provided conservation education to 8,373 public school students.

Also in the first year of the program, in rural development projects implemented nationally by the USDA Forest Service, AmeriCorps members promoted alternative energy sources and wood technologies, improved emergency response and prevention, helped home owners relocate from a flood plain, and developed and implemented municipal recycling initiatives.

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DRAFT MODEL STATE PRESS RELEASE

Tom Amontree 202-720-4623

Joel Berg 202-720-5746

CONGRESS CANCELS VERMONT AMERICORPS PROJECT ON GREEN MOUNTAIN NATIONAL FOREST

WASHINGTON, July xx, 1996--Congress has canceled the portion of the AmeriCorps national service program planned for this year on the Green Mountain National Forest, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said today.

The program was canceled because Interior Appropriations Subcommittees in Congress denied the U. S. Department of Agriculture's request to reprogram Fiscal Year 1996 Forest Service funds for AmeriCorps. However, Glickman expressed his desire to work with Congress to obtain bipartisan support to begin a new, year-long USDA Forest Service AmeriCorps project in Vermont beginning this October using FY97 funds.

The Vermont program would have engaged 20 citizens as AmeriCorps members performing critical work clearing and restoring trails, rehabilitating and cleaning campground sites, protecting wildlife, improving timber stands, providing environmental education services to local schools, improving fisheries, and preserving historic sites. All the AmeriCorps members who successfully completed the program would have received educational awards worth \$4,725 to pay for college, job training, graduate school, or to pay back existing student loans.

"It is unfortunate that the people of Vermont will not receive the beneficial services that AmeriCorps members would have performed in the Green Mountain National Forest. It is also unfortunate that potential participants in the program will not be able to aid their own post-secondary educations," said Glickman, who oversees the Forest Service. "Given that Congress has recently taken bipartisan steps to work with the President to preserve the entire AmeriCorps program, I hope we can reach bipartisan agreement to continue AmeriCorps projects on national forests starting this fall."

AmeriCorps is the President's domestic national service program, authorized by the National and Community Service Act of 1993, which allows Americans of all backgrounds to perform community service in exchange for educational benefits. While most AmeriCorps projects are not run by federal agencies, USDA manages a small portion of AmeriCorps focused nationally on rural development, environmental protection, and anti-hunger work. All USDA AmeriCorps projects are designed to "get things done" while strengthening communities, expanding educational opportunity, and promoting personal responsibility.

USDA currently sponsors both anti-hunger and rural development AmeriCorps projects in Vermont, which were allowed to continue by Congress.

Nationally, in the Forest Service's first operational program year (1994-1995), AmeriCorps members constructed, maintained, and improved 682 miles of trails, achieved 2,569 acres of wildlife habitat improvement, improved 668 acres of timber stands, built or completely rehabilitated 446 campground sites, reforested 638 acres of land, prepared 42 campsites for accessibility to people with disabilities, improved 760 acres of fisheries habitat, and provided conservation education to 8,373 public school students..

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DRAFT MODEL STATE PRESS RELEASE

Tom Amontree 202-720-4623
Joel Berg 202-720-5746

CONGRESS CANCELS ARKANSAS AMERICORPS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS PLANNED BY USDA FOREST SERVICE

WASHINGTON, July xx, 1996--Congress has canceled the portion of the AmeriCorps national service program planned by the USDA Forest Service that would have implemented community development projects in Arkansas, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said today.

The program was canceled because Interior Appropriations Subcommittees in Congress denied the U. S. Department of Agriculture's request to reprogram Fiscal Year 1996 Forest Service funds for AmeriCorps. However, Glickman expressed his desire to work with Congress to obtain bipartisan support to begin a new, year-long USDA Forest Service AmeriCorps project in Vermont beginning this October using FY97 funds.

The Arkansas program would have engaged three AmeriCorps members in performing critical work in Holly Grove, North Little Rock, and Batesville, Arkansas that would have promoted economic development, protected the environment, and relocated families living in flood plains. All the AmeriCorps members who successfully completed the program would have received educational awards worth \$4,725 to pay for college, job training, graduate school, or to pay back existing student loans.

"It is unfortunate that the people of Arkansas will not receive the beneficial services that AmeriCorps members would have performed. It is also unfortunate that potential participants in the program will not be able to aid their own post-secondary educations," said Glickman, who oversees the Forest Service. "Given that Congress has recently taken bipartisan steps to work with the President to preserve the entire AmeriCorps program, I hope we can reach bipartisan agreement to continue Forest Service-sponsored AmeriCorps projects starting this fall."

AmeriCorps is the President's domestic national service program, authorized by the National and Community Service Act of 1993, which allows Americans of all backgrounds to perform community service in exchange for educational benefits. While most AmeriCorps projects are not run by federal agencies, USDA manages a small portion of AmeriCorps focused nationally on rural development, environmental protection, and anti-hunger work. All USDA AmeriCorps projects are designed to "get things done" while strengthening communities, expanding educational opportunity, and promoting personal responsibility.

USDA currently sponsors other community development AmeriCorps projects in Arkansas, which were allowed to continue by Congress.

Nationally, in the Forest Service's first operational program year (1994-1995), AmeriCorps members constructed, maintained, and improved 682 miles of trails, achieved 2,569 acres of wildlife habitat improvement, improved 668 acres of timber stands, built or completely rehabilitated 446 campground sites, reforested 638 acres of land, prepared 42 campsites for accessibility to people with disabilities, improved 760 acres of fisheries habitat, and provided conservation education to 8,373 public school students..

Also in the first year of the program, in community development projects implemented nationally by the USDA Forest Service, AmeriCorps members promoted alternative energy sources and wood technologies, improved emergency response and prevention, helped home owners relocate from a flood plain, and developed and implemented municipal recycling initiatives.

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REVISED DRAFT EXAMPLE LETTER TO SENATORS, CONGRESSMEN

The Honorable James Jeffords
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Jeffords:

I regret to inform you that, because the Interior Appropriations Subcommittees in Congress have denied the Department's request to reprogram Fiscal year (FY) 1996 Forest Service funds for AmeriCorps, USDA has been forced to cancel the AmeriCorps program that was planned in Vermont on the Green Mountain National Forest for this year.

However, I want to assure you that the Department will take every possible step to obtain bi-partisan support to begin a new, year-long, Forest Service AmeriCorps program beginning this October with funds from FY 1997.

This program in Vermont would have would have engaged 20 citizens --- most of whom would have been from the state --- as AmeriCorps members performing critical work on the Forest clearing and restoring trails, rehabilitating and cleaning campground sites, protecting wildlife, improving timber stands, providing environmental education services to local school, improving fisheries, and preserving historic sites. All the AmeriCorps Members who successfully completed the program --- most of whom would have been from middle class families --- would have received educational awards worth \$4,725 to pay for college, job training, graduate school, or to pay back existing student loans.

It is unfortunate that the people of Vermont will not be able to benefit from such service and that possible participants will not be able to aid their own post-secondary educations.

Nationally, Forest Service AmeriCorps projects in the first year of the program (1994-1995 program year) achieved impressive results. In Public Lands teams serving directly in National Forests, USDA AmeriCorps Members:

- * Constructed, maintained, and improved 682 miles of trail.
- * Achieved 2,569 acres of wildlife habitat improvement; built 133 structures to shelter or protect wildlife; built 296 nesting boxes; and constructed a threatened and endangered plant greenhouse.
- * Improved 668 acres of timber stand.
- * Built or completely rehabilitated 446 campground sites.

- * Reforested 638 acres of land.
- * Prepared 42 campsites for accessibility to people with disabilities.
- * Improved 760 acres of fisheries habitat.
- * Constructed 86 miles of new fence.
- * Maintained 18 miles of vehicle trails to keep them free of obstructive growth and slides.
- * Improved watersheds damaged by fire by cutting and planting 92,500 willows in riparian areas.
- * Improved Forest Service road and safety conditions ---- by "day lighting" 50 curves.
- * Released 775,000 salmon fry in a fish stocking operation.
- * Constructed a major visitor information center.
- * Provided conservation education to 8 8,3 7 3 students K- 1 2.

Also in the first year of the program (1994-1995 program year), AmeriCorps Members serving in Rural Development teams in local communities:

- * Promoted alternative energy sources and wood technologies.
- * Improved emergency response and prevention.
- * Helped home owners relocate from a flood plain.
- * Provided environmental and conservation education to school children.
- * Helped design and construct timber bridges.
- * Developed and implemented municipal recycling initiatives.
- * Created plans for improving local recreational areas.
- * Helped implement historic, scenic, and tourism trails.

In order to start the second program year of Forest Service AmeriCorps projects, we took every possible effort to obtain bi-partisan Congressional support. In both February and May, I wrote letters to Senator Slade Gorton and Congressman Regula, the Senate and House chair people, respectively, of the Appropriations Subcommittees on Interior. Unfortunately, both requests were denied.

However, I am encouraged that recent votes in both the House and the Senate have demonstrated growing bi-partisan support for the overall AmeriCorps program. I believe that the portion of AmeriCorps managed by the Forest Service was responsible for some of the highest quality projects in the entire AmeriCorps program.

Therefore, we expect to soon submit an AmeriCorps reprogramming letter for FY 1997, for which we are extremely hopeful that we will receive bi-partisan support from the Interior appropriations sub-committees in both Houses.

I hope I can have your support in requesting the Interior Appropriations Subcommittees to support our upcoming reprogramming request. If you have any questions on this matter, please contact me or Joel Berg, Director of National Service for USDA, at (202) 720-5746. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Dan Glickman
Secretary

PRO-VOLUNTEER LANGUAGE IN FY 1997 AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS

Doc Contents

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1997 (Enrolled Bill (Sent to President))

production or the lack of a conserving use is a consequence of drought, flood, or other natural disaster.

SEC. 727. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act shall be used to extend any existing or expiring contract in the Conservation Reserve Program authorized by 16 U.S.C. 3831-3845.

SEC. 728. None of the funds appropriated in this Act may be used to carry out the provisions of section 918 of Public Law 104-127, the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act.

SEC. 729. Hereafter, funds appropriated to the Department of Agriculture may be used for incidental expenses such as transportation, uniforms, lodging, and subsistence for volunteers serving under the authority of 7 U.S.C. 2272, when such volunteers are engaged in the work of the United States Department of Agriculture; and for promotional items of nominal value relating to the United States Department of Agriculture Volunteer Programs.

SEC. 730. No employee of the Department of Agriculture may be detailed or assigned from an agency or office funded by this Act to any other agency or office of the Department for more than 30 days unless the individual's employing agency or office is fully reimbursed by the receiving agency or office for the salary and expenses of the employee for the period of assignment.

SEC. 731. Section 747 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 is amended by inserting, 'effective October 1, 1996,' following 'The Secretary shall make grants' in section 310B(e)(2) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act: *Provided*, That this section shall take effect upon enactment of this Act into law.

SEC. 732. LABELING OF RAW POULTRY PRODUCTS-

(a) **IN GENERAL-** Notwithstanding any other provision of law, none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to implement or enforce the final rule related to the labeling of raw poultry products promulgated by the Food Safety and Inspection Service on August 25, 1995 (60 Fed. Reg. 44395), and the final rule shall not be effective during fiscal year 1997.

(b) **FINAL RULE-** Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall issue a revised final rule related to the labeling of raw poultry products that--

USDA AmeriCorps Projects in Missouri

In Missouri, USDA sponsored 11 full-time Members last year, is sponsoring 5 full-time Members this year, and will be sponsoring 5 additional Members this summer in a special project focused on transferring excess food to hungry people.

Last Year (1984-1985) Program Year

Eleven AmeriCorps Members aided flood recovery work on 53,000 acres of land; provided conservation education to 1,770 students; helped maintain 27 flood-retarding dams; assisted 95 landowners in assessing herbicide runoff into the water supply; worked with 11 farmers to develop water management plans; completed flood prevention work on 3,600 acres of land; and restored 995 acres of wetlands.

This Year (1985-1986) Program Year

As of the second quarter ending June 30, the five AmeriCorps Members had performed "Farm-a-Syst" water quality evaluations for 147 farm families, 65% of whom adopted all or some of the water quality protection measures recommended by the AmeriCorps Members; ***this project has been aided significantly by the support of local Farm Bureau offices.*** The AmeriCorps Members also provided conservation education to 1,747 students and 622 adults, of whom 99% and 97%, respectively, later demonstrated improved knowledge of conservation issues.

This Summer and Fall ("Summer of Gleaning" Initiative)

As part of Secretary Glickman's personal initiative to increase the nation's commitment to recovering excess food for distribution to hungry citizens, AmeriCorps Members will serve this summer and fall in a food recovery project in the Kansas City area.



STATE OF KANSAS
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & PARKS

Operations Office
512 SE 25th Avenue
Pratt, KS 67124-8174
316/672-5911 FAX 316/672-6020



March 6, 1996

Joel Berg
Director of National Service
U. S. Department of Agriculture
Ag. Box 1301
Washington, DC 20250-1301

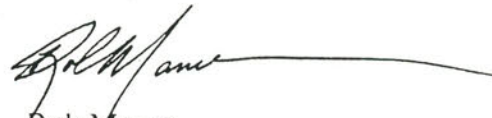
Dear Mr. Berg:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to allow Kansas, and specifically the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, to be associated with the USDA Americorps program. Those crews who served for the Natural Resources Conservation Service on flood-related projects at our reservoirs have been particularly beneficial. These crews have completed many projects with tremendous long-term resource and economic benefits. Kansas' natural resources, our state parks, our wildlife areas, and our citizens will derive many benefits for years to come from the service provided by these individuals.

While these individuals have accomplished much, there is much more that must be accomplished. If possible, we would like you to consider renewing commitments to allow these existing crews to continue their efforts next fiscal year. Due to restructuring within the Department, which was effective March 10, 1996, Americorps coordination for the Department has been reassigned from Mr. Robert Barbee to Region 4 Parks Supervisor Alan Stark (Great Plains Nature Center, 6232 E. 29th St. N., Wichita, KS 67220 316-683-8069). You should be receiving documents soon from Mr. Stark concerning the support these crews will have. Should any additional crews be available, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks would be greatly interested in discussing future possibilities with you.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and again for the opportunity to be associated with this fine program. I hope it was as beneficial for the members who served as it was for Kansas.

Sincerely,


Rob Manes
Assistant Secretary for Operations

kp
cc: Jerry Hover
Alan Stark
Robert Barbee
File: 807 c

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

May 23, 1996

Jan 30
Plainview

COMMITTEE ON
AND FINANCE

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY
OPPORTUNITY
AND CONSUMER CREDIT

Mr. Stephen K. Chick
State Conservationist
USDA/NRCS
Federal Building, Room 152
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, NE 68508-3866

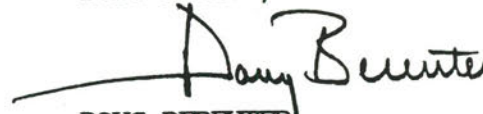
Dear Mr. Chick:

Thank you for your assistance in sending the Americorps/Team USDA to participate in the cleanup effort in Beatrice and the Homestead National Monument of America. Please convey my appreciation directly to the Americorps volunteers.

As you know, I visited Beatrice the weekend after the tornado struck and surveyed the extensive damage and the large amount of debris created by the storm. The participation of the volunteers from Americorps certainly made the difference in the cleanup process. The Americorps/Team USDA are to be commended for their work to remove debris from the Homestead National Monument and from Pioneer Acres. Their flexibility and quick response to the overwhelming need in Beatrice is an example of the good that Americorps was created to do.

Thank you again for your assistance in this matter.

Best wishes,


DOUG BEREUTER
Member of Congress

DB/js

29 MAY 1996

MAY 28 1996

TALKING POINTS ON THE USDA AMERICORPS PROGRAM

*** USDA is sponsoring approximately 1,000 AmeriCorps Members who are serving in over 45 different states in projects fighting hunger, improving the environment, and re-building rural communities.** The USDA portion of AmeriCorps is a relatively small, yet important, portion of the larger overall program; the overall program now enrolls approximately 23,000 AmeriCorps members serving in every state of the nation. The USDA portion of the program is highly unusual because the vast majority of AmeriCorps projects are not funded or managed by Federal agencies --- most are funded through state commissions appointed by each state's governor and are managed by non-profit organizations and local government organizations. USDA AmeriCorps projects do **NOT** duplicate the functions of AmeriCorps projects funded by state commissions; rather, USDA AmeriCorps fill unique needs that can not generally be filled by state commission-funded projects.

*** USDA AmeriCorps Members are reducing government bureaucracy by performing community service that rapidly and directly aids citizens.** USDA AmeriCorps Members are not Federal employees and are not performing functions generally performed by Federal employees. However, they are performing work far more cost-effectively than would be provided through normal government methods.

*** USDA AmeriCorps projects are "getting things done" providing vital and mainstream service to rural, suburban, and urban communities throughout America.** For instance, USDA projects are building trails and fighting fire on National Forests, improving city parks, aiding rural fire departments, creating urban gardens, bringing running water to low-income rural families, and teaching children how to improve their nutrition.

*** USDA AmeriCorps projects provide taxpayers with double the "bang for the buck."** USDA is simply utilizing funds already appropriated to the Department. For instance, USDA Forest Service projects use some funding from existing trail repair budgets. Not only do the AmeriCorps Members repair more trails than would be repaired by other means, they also bring communities together, promote personal responsibility, and help them earn their own way through college --- all for the same tax dollars that normally would fund just the trail repair.

*** USDA AmeriCorps projects are strengthening communities.** Usually working in partnership with community-based organizations, USDA AmeriCorps Members are meeting the most pressing needs in each of hundreds of locales in which they are operating. **The service projects are not designed or implemented as a "cookie cutter" approach dictated from Washington --- all the projects are locally-proposed and locally-administered.** Consequently, virtually all of the USDA AmeriCorps projects have received broad-based bi-partisan support from local community leaders.

*** Most USDA AmeriCorps projects are in rural and suburban areas that often receive less aid from the Federal government.** These areas also often lack significant non-profit sector support networks. USDA has a field structure that is uniquely suited to run programs in traditionally under-served areas. USDA AmeriCorps projects are particularly important in North and South Dakota, which currently do not have state national service commissions.

*** The USDA program enables AmeriCorps Members to perform tasks requiring technical expertise far beyond the capabilities of the vast majority of non-profit organizations.** For instance, under direct and sustained supervision from experts in the field, USDA AmeriCorps Members are inspecting flood-damaged dams, implementing strategic plans to create local jobs, designing and implementing entire recycling programs for counties, helping farmers diversify their crops, bolstering Empowerment Zones and Enterprise communities, designing and building timber bridges, and decreasing ground water pollution. If AmeriCorps Members are to "get things done" that require more than simple physical labor and that result in long-lasting improvements in communities, then Members need the kind of advanced technical training and supervision that can be provided by entities such as USDA.

*** The USDA AmeriCorps program forges common bonds of unity among all Americans.** By bringing together Americans of all races, classes, genders, religions, and physical abilities to work side-by-side, AmeriCorps strengthens the cords that bind us together as a people. The "sweat equity" created by AmeriCorps is playing a role in healing the nation's wounds and bridging our divisions. AmeriCorps is changing the country because it creates a new civic compact in which any citizen can be tied to the nation by the simple virtue of making a difference in the lives of others.

*** The USDA AmeriCorps program expands educational and economic opportunity.** Participants in the program receive a small living stipend and an educational award worth \$4,725 that can be used to pay for college, graduate school, job training, or to pay back existing student loans. There is NO economic needs test to participate in this program -- the only requirement to participate is a desire to serve the country. Thus, this program greatly boosts students from the middle class, who were previously told that their families "make too much money" to qualify for most existing Federal aid programs. Yet the program also helps low income families for whom aid programs are clearly insufficient.

*** The USDA AmeriCorps program promotes personal responsibility.** All AmeriCorps projects require extremely hard work in exchange for educational benefits, while helping AmeriCorps Members build a life-long commitment to community service. AmeriCorps gives all Americans a new way of giving something back to the country. It reminds us that, along with rights we enjoy as citizens, we all have certain obligations to protect those rights and to aid our own communities. Furthermore, AmeriCorps gives young people a tangible way to take charge of their own lives.

USDA AMERICORPS SUMMER OF GLEANING

* In partnership with literally dozens of locally based anti-hunger groups, youth service corps, food pantries, and food recovery organizations, USDA is sponsoring special "Summer of Gleaning" AmeriCorps projects in 20 states. This special summer initiative is a small, but important, part of both the USDA AmeriCorps program and the overall AmeriCorps program.

* The "Summer of Gleaning" projects promote the general idea of food recovery, a top personal priority of Secretary Glickman. These projects are designed to work with farmers, agribusinesses, food distribution organizations, institutions, and restaurants to recover and glean food that would be otherwise thrown away and to distribute that food to hungry people.

* The "Summer of Gleaning" projects are based on the so-called "volunteer generator" model in which a handful of AmeriCorps Members recruit numerous non-compensated volunteers to help implement the project.

* The "Summer of Gleaning Projects last twelve weeks, during which the AmeriCorps Members receive small living stipends. All AmeriCorps Members who successfully complete this special summer program will receive a \$1,000 educational award that can be used to pay for college, job training, graduate school, or to pay back existing student loans.

* The "Summer of Gleaning" is **NOT** based on the traditional liberal premise that a heavy-handed, bureaucratically driven, large government program based in Washington has all answers to the nations' problems. Conversely, the "Summer of Gleaning" is **NOT** based on the traditional conservative premise that the free-market, volunteers, and non-profit organizations alone --- without any government help at all --- can solve all the nation's social problems. Rather, the **"Summer of Gleaning" is based on the reinventing government philosophy of President Clinton, Vice-President Gore, and Secretary Glickman which believes that government must provide energy, vision, and some limited Federal funds as a catalyst to empower local communities to help solve their own problems.**