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ECONOMIC ACTION PROGRAMS

Divider Title: _____

ECONOMIC ACTION PROGRAMS

Goal Help America invest its forest-based resources to support sustainable community development goals

Program Description

The "Economic Action Programs" framework includes a set of programs aimed at investing in America's future by focusing on the needs of the overall community as well as its business sector. Help is provided by channeling technical and financial assistance to local communities, organizations, and businesses directly or through partner organizations.

The programs contribute by helping communities diversify and strengthen their local economies through a whole range of forest-based resources: cultural and historic; wildlife, fishing, and recreation; timber and non-timber special forest products; minerals and geology; scenic; and human. Together, they focus on integrating economic development and environmental protection concerns; and provide a way to address a range of pressing needs including:

- Organizing diverse community interests for resource-based economic development and conservation
- Fostering high value-added processing
- Spawning innovation through special products and alternative services
- Enhancing productivity of existing manufacturing and services
- Strengthening the marketing of commodity and amenity resources
- Improving information and promoting technology transfer
- Improving local human capital.

The 3 major program components are as follows.

• Rural Community Assistance

Targeted specifically to rural areas, this program component focuses on helping the whole community capitalize on available local human and natural resources to improve the quality of life and the social and economic situation. Assistance is provided in helping communities organize, plan, and implement actions that are community based, comprehensive in approach, and accomplished through partnerships.

• Forest Products Conservation and Recycling

This component encourages and facilitates the wise, more efficient use of forest resources to enhance economic development and promote better stewardship of the forest resource. Emphasis is on stimulating public and private sector innovation. Specific opportunities include new uses for wood and other forest-based resources through recycling and value-added secondary manufacturing, and alternative goods and services.

• Market Development and Expansion

This component provides a significant opportunity to strengthen local and regional economies through the creation of domestic and international markets for renewable and non-renewable forest resources. This is done by providing technical and financial assistance targeting wood use in transportation and expanding markets for forest products.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FOREST-BASED ACTIVITIES

Economic development is influenced by all forest-related activities associated with available commodity and amenity resources. By wisely using timber, minerals, wildlife, fishing, recreation, and other forest-based resources, rural economies can be diversified and strengthened. The following strategies provide the basis for developing joint projects involving the Forest Service and other public and private entities concerned about sustainable development through resource conservation and management. The strategies were identified in research conducted by the U.S. Department of Commerce as being key to "recoupling" natural resource assets with economic development efforts. Examples of projects are provided to demonstrate the possibilities.

STRATEGY: HELP COMMUNITIES ORGANIZE FOR RESOURCE-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION

Projects: (1) Bring together landowners and producers to work with local/regional economic development specialists to develop common visions about the future and study feasibility of diversification based upon wise use of various forest resources (2) Help form cooperative ventures to produce and/or market available products and services

STRATEGY: TARGET VALUE-ADDED PROCESSING

Projects: (1) Convert existing facilities, including "old growth" mills, into secondary processing plants (2) Develop forest industry parks to vertically integrate small primary and secondary manufacturing facilities at the same location

STRATEGY: PROMOTE ALTERNATIVE GOODS AND SERVICES FROM FOREST RESOURCES

Projects: (1) Promote development of small businesses based upon special forest products (e.g., mushrooms, wreaths, pine straw) and services (e.g., game farms, recreation fees, interpretation) (2) Promote development based upon use and interpretation of cultural, historical, and amenity resources

STRATEGY: ENHANCE PRODUCTIVITY

Projects: (1) Develop businesses based upon use of trim ends and other mill waste (2) Use computer-aided methods for increasing efficiency in secondary processing

STRATEGY: STRENGTHEN MARKETING

Projects: (1) Work with States/regions to promote communities and attractions along designated scenic highways and byways using signs, interpretive programs and other means of providing public information (2) Work with timber, minerals, and other resource-based industries to collectively market products of small-scale producers

STRATEGY: PROMOTE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Projects: (1) Focus on recycling to help solve municipal solid waste problems associated with wood/forest waste, and create small businesses to handle and recycle the waste (2) Work with States and local communities to promote fabrication and installation of modern timber bridges

STRATEGY: IMPROVE LOCAL HUMAN CAPITAL

Projects: (1) Work with employers to help train employees on use of new machines and technologies (2) Work with high schools and community colleges on vocational training programs which expose students to other resource areas and new technologies

EXAMPLES OF CURRENT FOREST-RELATED ECONOMIC ACTION PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Rural development is not altogether a new task for the Forest Service (FS). The agency's resources--human, technical, natural, and financial--contribute significantly to rural America in a variety of ways. The FS's contribution, however, is being strengthened through more focused and coordinated efforts as called for in the agency's strategy titled "Working Together for Rural America."

Many examples of FS involvement are provided in the appendix of the strategy document. The strategy emphasizes a total FS effort in which the agency carries out its rural development responsibilities through existing programs such as cooperative forestry, research, recreation, wildlife and fishing, timber, minerals, land management planning, technology transfer and others. The following examples demonstrate the breadth of current FS efforts to foster rural development through the wise use of all forest resources.

CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES: Using Rural Development funding available in FY 1990, Region 10 (Alaska) supported a project in Klawock to replace an aging totem pole and demonstrate totem carving to students. The totem served as the basis for renewed efforts by the community to develop a local totem park and museum complex as an additional attraction for tourism. The celebration and blessing of the totem pole were completed in June 1991 with about 1000 people in attendance.

HUMAN RESOURCES: In Idaho, the FS is working with several State and local agencies, a State college, and community organizations in the Clearwater Valley on attracting retirees for tourism development and relocation purposes. A workshop has been held, and workbook will be available for use by others. A Rural Development seminar was held for citizens of counties in West Virginia and Ohio. Topics included business planning, recreation and tourism opportunities, and secondary manufacturing of forest products.

TIMBER RESOURCES: A variety of efforts are underway to make better use of timber resources for various rural development purposes. Since FY 1989, the FS has been implementing a Timber Bridge Initiative through which modern design and construction techniques are being demonstrated. Demonstration bridges (primarily highway) are being cost-shared and installed nationwide, and workshops are being held to build understanding among bridge designers, transportation planners, and economic development specialists--to name a few. Also, twelve counties in Ohio which comprise the Crossroads Resource Conservation and Development Area have launched a marketing campaign to promote better utilization of low-grade hardwoods. A brochure will be distributed which will list woodcrafters and vendors who utilize hardwoods in their businesses.

WILDLIFE, FISHING AND RECREATION: The FS is collaborating with the Bureau of Land Management and the Sport Fishing Institute on a study of how rural communities or areas can diversify their local economies nationwide based upon wildlife, fishing and related outdoor recreation. Case studies of communities in five states are included in the project. In addition, a project is underway in Montana (Region 1) to work with State and local interests around the Choteau area to identify options and foster economic diversification based upon these resources.

MINERALS AND GEOLOGY: Efforts are being made to foster rural development through minerals and geology resources in a sustainable and environmentally sound manner. A national workshop was held in October 1991 to foster better understanding of the potential within the building stone industry and to integrate building stone operations with other activities such as recreation, mineral showcasing, and interpretation. It is hoped that efforts underway in Minnesota on the Superior National Forest will serve as an example to other areas of the country.

ALTERNATIVE FOREST RESOURCES: The FS is currently developing a guidebook on the rural development opportunities associated with a whole range of special forest products such as mushrooms, berries, and floral and landscape products. Region 6 also helped organize a Special Forest Products Conference to develop understanding about the opportunities in the Pacific Northwest.

SCENIC RESOURCES: Through efforts related to the designation of scenic highways, the FS is working with a variety of public and private entities. In Colorado and Utah, special efforts are being made to integrate scenic highways with the economic development needs of local communities and the State.

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**DRAFT ACTION PLAN -
USDA NATIONAL SVC TASK FORCE**

Divider Title: _____

AMERICORPS/USDA

DRAFT ACTION PLAN, FEBRUARY 1994

National service is a 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...President Clinton has made it absolutely clear to his cabinet members that he wants every one of us to make national service a top priority.

- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy

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.

The focus of this action plan is on the three AmeriCorps 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 as grant applications for submission to the Corporation for National Service:

Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Team

Public Lands and Environment Team

Rural Development Team

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 curricula 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. Still, the focus of this plan is on three teams we will run ourselves.

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. TWENTY ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES FOR ALL AMERICORPS/USDA PROGRAMS

We intend to make our programs models of reinventing government. Each and every AmeriCorps/USDA pilot project will be guided by the following critical 20 principles:

- * 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.
- * Recruit groups of participants in each pilot project that are socio-economically diverse.
- * Ensure that citizens of every race, class, gender, age, and region work side-by-side.
- * Give the participants at least a minimum-wage living expense, as well as adequate supervision, training, and education.
- * Allow young people to perform service either before, during, or after attending post-secondary education.
- * Provide valuable service to the community by systematically filling unmet social needs.

- * Ensure that none of the work performed duplicates existing programs.
- * 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.
- * Base participant and site selection on quality, not patronage.
- * Reinvent government by promoting opportunity, responsibility, and community.
- * Provide models for how the federal government can manage national service programs.
- * Ensure that projects are based on local community's needs -- rather than fulfill mandates of Washington-based bureaucrats. Projects will be expected to build effective partnerships between community, state, and local groups and the federal government.
- * Build a distinct identity for the President's AmeriCorps program that is explicitly different from either targeted jobs programs or diffuse "Points of Light" volunteerism efforts.
- * Expand dramatically in the next few years as a full-scale national program is phased-in.
- * Forge links to other key Administration initiatives such as empowerment zones, youth apprenticeship, welfare reform, microenterprise, and health care reform.
- * 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 monies, non-profit organizations, charitable foundations, corporations, contributions from USDA employees, and state and local governments.
- * Build a management team from existing USDA personnel.
- * Be managed across traditional USDA agency lines.

The above 20 principles are essential and should be evident in every pilot proposal. AmeriCorps can only succeed if every entity helping carry out the program insists on the highest standards of consistent quality.

III. RURAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The Rural Development Team would establish regional clusters of "professional" and "paraprofessional" participants who 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.

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.

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

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.

Our eventual goal is for as many Rural Development Team graduates as possible to be permanently hired by host communities.

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.

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.

One issue that must be addressed is to define measurable goals in terms of meeting human needs.

c. Working with existing programs

How will this Americorps Team build upon existing programs, including federal 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.

We could also work with: RDA Coordinators, Soil Conservation Service RC&D program, the Extension Service, community-based organizations, and independent agencies such as the Appalachian Regional Commission or the Tennessee Valley Authority.

To support these team members, there already exists an information data base at the National Agriculture Library called the 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. Participants should be able to easily add to the database and find information about the activities of their peers. Access to this information could be through the Rural Information Center's Bulletin Board System.

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

Some possible job descriptions:

1) Assistant State Rural Development Coordinator - Assists USDA State Rural Development Coordinators in helping boost Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities. Collects data, provides outreach, coordinates community resources, helps develop strategic plans, helps implement the program, analyzes local data for agencies and organizations so that the needs of the under-served are considered.

2) Small Business Plan Developer and Information Broker - Assists in the assessment and development of markets for unique local products.

3) Regional Circuit Rider - Works part time in a number of towns in a region. Provides technical assistance to communities throughout a region in brokering, strategic planning, and community assessment.

4) Sustainable Agriculture Advisor - Works with farmers in the region to develop model sustainable agriculture farms. Directs volunteers to perform some of the labor intensive work, such as fence-building, needed for successful sustainable farming.

5) Watershed Assistance Process Facilitator - Works 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.

6) 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 layout of community projects, and work with the local Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Coordinator for economic development for disadvantaged groups.

7) 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.

8) 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.

9) 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.

10) 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.

11) Forest Service Resource Assistants - This position is outlined in the Public Lands Corps section of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. In this position, Rural Development team participants could work with District Rangers to identify and manage service projects in the forest for Public Lands and Environment Team members.

e. Recruiting and selecting applicants

What percentage of participants will be recruited from a national pool of applicants to USDA or the Corporation?

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.

Recruitment and selection will be ultimately be accomplished at a centralized, national level, but applications from pilot locations will be given priority.

We need a comprehensive recruitment strategy. Some ideas: 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. We should work closely with the Peace Corps and VISTA to recruit former volunteers in those programs.

f. Matching participants with host communities

Communities should apply for team members through an informal competitive process. Target communities should be asked what kind of resources would be offered

enrollees- -such as office space, computer equipment, social support, travel, office support -- in exchange for their services. Extra credit should be given to communities that apply jointly for the services of a team member or members. Our program should strongly encourage partnerships and teamwork arrangements between and among adjacent jurisdictions, multi-county consortiums, and/or regional entities.

We will develop a needs profile for each applicant community and a skills bank and inventory for the enrollees. The communities and the enrollees would then be matched up by computer.

All assignments for participants should be mutually agreed upon by USDA and by any community, county, or organization with whom that participant would closely work. Local labor unions should also agree to any position in which the participant would perform work even somewhat similar to work performed by local unionized workers.

g. 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. The first year's program must meet all our diversity requirements since original problems are nearly impossible to fix.

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?

A concentrated recruitment effort must be made at 1890s schools and at all Historically Black Colleges and Universities. We must also target HACU schools, as well as the many junior and community colleges throughout the Southwest with substantial American Indian populations.

Special plans should be developed to recruit and place Americans with disabilities

h. Training the team members

Curriculums 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. Participants could also be trained in Rural Sociology, Adult and Extension Education, Agricultural Communications, Marketing, Organizational Development, Applied Social Research, Urban and Regional Planning, Applied Anthropology, Architecture, Economics, Business, Geography, Environmental Science, and Computer Science, 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. This training should be planned and held nationally. 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?

What type of training will participants receive after they have started the program? They should receive regional training between 2-4 times a year. This could happen in a one-week seminar format that included elements of direct education, experience-sharing, and a critical debriefing session where members input lessons learned, problems overcome, and significant relationships created into the program's ongoing monitoring and evaluation process.

Will there be a pre-professional training program element of the rural development corps? Can universities train people for these skills?

i. Supervising the team members

Who will supervise the team members? There will be a need to judge performance, initiate additional training when needed, and to terminate or initiate re-assignment when necessary. What role can State Rural Development Administration Rural Development Coordinators have in supervision?

How will the Team involve participants in leadership positions in implementing and evaluating the programs?

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?

j. Effect on the Participants

How will the program promote civic responsibility and produce positive change in participants through training and participation in meaningful service with opportunities for reflection?

What measurable goals can we set for personal benefits obtained by team members?

k. Evaluating the team programs

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

Will we contract out for evaluation or ask the Corporation for a waiver so we can do our own evaluation?

How can we judge whether the program has met the general goals of Americorps and the specific goals of the Team? The program should be evaluated as to whether it has meet each of the 20 basic principles in the Section II of this plan.

How many graduates of the program remain in the communities?

l. 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?

One suggestion has been to limit participants to communities of less than 15,000 people and counties with no town larger than 15,000 residents. In Texas alone, over 1,000 communities meet this description. While limiting community size would wipe some medium-sized rural towns out of consideration, it would ensure than each placement would have a sizable impact.

How many participants will be able to be placed 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 a good mix of pilots:

- The Mississippi Delta
- The Texas/Mexico Border
- Maine
- Kansas
- The Pacific Northwest
- Oklahoma
- North Dakota
- Southern Illinois
- Tennessee
- 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-down.

For Corporation for National and Community Service application, we need a description of the criteria and process through which our grantee programs were selected.

The proposal to the Corporation for National and Community Service will need a description of the type and number of positions that will receive awards and a description of how approved national service positions will be apportioned by the applicant.

For each pilot location, how will we consult with participants and potential participants, representatives of communities served, community-based agencies with demonstrated records of experience in providing services, and labor organizations?

How will our pilots help priority areas affected adversely by federal policies?

Where are recently closed military installations need potential pilot projects?

m. 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 continue to expand, regardless of the Administration in power?

n. Management structure

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

The proposal to the Corporation for National and Community Service will need a detailed description of key members of the management team.

How will we 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?

How will health care be provided to participants?

What percentage of participants will need child care? How will we provide it to them?

What kind of support will disabled participants need?

o. Staff needed

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

Recruitment and Training Coordinator
Internal and External Communications Coordinator
Project Management Coordinator
USDA Inter-Agency Coordinator
Partnership Liaison
Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator
Support Staff

p. 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 to the National Agriculture Library's Rural Development Center Bulletin Board System, and access to INTERNET. Can we get this system donated? If not, how much will it cost?

Can we get every member of the team an outdated 286 or 386 laptop computer? Can we get these donated? If so, could they interface with the rest of the system?

q. 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.

r. Funding sources

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

s. Learning from the VISTA model

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

IV. EMPOWERMENT, NUTRITION, AND ANTI-HUNGER TEAM

In the Empowerment, Nutrition, and Anti-Hunger Team, participants would work in urban and rural areas to help low-income families and individuals move towards self-sufficiency. The main focus of the team would be fighting domestic hunger. Team members could help individuals apply for food stamps, Women, Infants, and Children, and the school breakfast program; overhaul their diets; learn to prevent foodborne illnesses; and 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.

How can we tie into the DC initiative between HUD and DC government aimed at homelessness?

How can we connect with HUD anti-homeless initiative?

a. Social problems to be solved

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.

Recent studies show that 60 percent of those eligible for the food stamps and WIC program do not participate. Many of those are the elderly, American Indians, and the homeless.

A new study by the Urban Institute found that 12 percent of older Americans sometimes went hungry or had to choose between paying the rent and eating or between buying their medications and eating. In poorer areas, the number is considerably higher. (One in two in poor New York neighborhoods.)

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

The new goals of Food and Consumer Services are:

- 1) To increase outreach to those eligible, but not participating, in food assistance programs
- 2) To expand the nutrition component of food assistance programs
- 3) To promote self-sufficiency through job training, microenterprise development, and the earned income tax credit.

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 preventive medicine objectives of the Administration's health care plan, and empower citizens to work their own way out of poverty.

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.

How we define measurable goals for this program in meeting human needs?

c. Working with existing programs

How will this Americorps Team build upon existing programs, including federal programs?

We imagine that most pilot projects will be run jointly by an existing state or local youth corps and a non-profit group currently involved in fighting hunger or poverty.

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

- * 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 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

What percentage of participants will be recruited from a national pool of applicants to USDA or the Corporation? 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. The first year's program must meet all our diversity requirements since original problems are nearly impossible to fix.

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 teammates. They will need training about how to interact with low-income citizens in a culturally and socially sensitive 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 will the Team involve participants in leadership positions in implementing and evaluating the programs?

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. Effect on The Participants

How will the program promote civic responsibility and produce positive change in participants through training and participation in meaningful service with opportunities for reflection?

What measurable goals can we set for personal benefits obtained by Team members?

j. Evaluating the team

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

Will we contract out for evaluation or ask the Corporation for a waiver so we can do our own evaluation?

k. Sizes and sites of pilot projects

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

For the Corporation for National and Community Service application, we need a description of the criteria and process through which our grantee programs were selected.

The proposal to the Corporation for National and Community Service will need a description of the type and number of positions that will receive awards and a description of how approved national service positions will be apportioned by the applicant.

For each pilot location how will we consult with participants and potential participants, representatives of the community served, community-based agencies with demonstrated record of experience in providing services, and labor organizations?

How will our pilots help priority areas affected adversely by federal policies?

Where are recently closed military installations on which we might be able to house participants?

I. 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?

m. Management structure needed

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

Possible staff for Team:

Director

Recruitment and Training Coordinator

Internal and External Communications Coordinator

Pilot Project Liaison

Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator

Support Staff

The proposal to the Corporation for National and Community Service will need a detailed description of key members of the management team.

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

How can our program utilize the latest communications technologies?

How will OWCP (liability) be covered?

n. Staff needed

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

o. 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.

How will provide health care to participants?

What percentage of participants will need child care? How will we provide it to them?

What kind of support will disabled participants need?

p. Outreach needed for stakeholders

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

q. Funding sources

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?

r. 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? How can we utilize the 60,000 doctors in the Army Reserve and National Guard?

s. 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?

t. Lessons from EFNEP

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

V. PUBLIC LANDS AND ENVIRONMENT TEAM

The Public Lands and Environment Team would have both urban and rural components. Participants could renovate urban and rural parks, plant trees, perform conservation work in national forests, teach environmental education, promote urban farming, test water quality, boost sustainable agriculture, clean-up rivers and lakes, help families weatherize their homes, instruct the public on how to dispose of household chemicals, and restore wetlands.

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.

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 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 nonprofit 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 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

How we define measurable goals for this program in meeting environmental needs?

c. Working with existing programs

How will this AmeriCorps Team build upon existing programs, including federal program?

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 National Civilian Community Corps, run in a quasi-military fashion, that was set up originally by the Boren bill?

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 to perform the most valuable work needed on public lands.

One type of obvious work that team members can perform is trail maintenance. 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.

According to a December 1992 report issued by the Forest service, 1,349 service slots could be created in our forests immediately to begin addressing the vast work backlog. 78,312 slots could be created within four years.

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The attached chart outlines the major types of work that the Forest Service believes that youth servers can perform:

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES	COST (\$MILLIONS) AND JOBS					
	IMMEDIATE -				2ND THRU 4TH YEARS	
	First Year					
	LOW RANGE		HIGH RANGE			
	COSTS	JOBS	COSTS	JOBS	COSTS	JOBS
Watershed Improvements	13.4	276	32.8	674	76.5	1,560
Range Improvements	7.2	181	17.5	438	22.2	458
Range Vegetative	2.9	56	4.8	96	146.4	2,928
Wildlife Habitat Improvement	20.6	514	50.1	1,253	97.5	2,433
Fish Habitat Improvement	14.4	289	34.9	698	92.1	1,846
T&E Species Habitat	4.3	108	27.0	675	50.5	1,268
Timber Stand Improvement	40.7	1,234	81.3	2,464	243.9	7,392
Insect and Disease Control	6.0	120	10.0	200	30.0	600
Minerals (Inactive Mine	--	--	4.5	90	6.0	120
Fuels management	1.3	40	132.0	4,000	396	12,000
Facilities						
Administrative Buildings	21.4	325	39.6	600	150.0	2,250
Research Buildings	15.6	237	29.3	443	82.0	1,200
Roads and Bridges	48.3	805	80.8	1,347	300.0	5,000
Dams	3.0	50	5.0	80	10.0	170
Recreation						
Facilities Backlog	33.1	663	60.7	1,214	200.0	4,000
Trail Backlog	18.1	548	30.0	909	140.0	5,100
Site Routine O&M	84.0	2,230	140.0	3,720	364.0	9,660
Land Line: Boundary Survey &	3.5	100	8.5	250	29.9	885
Research Inventory Plots	4.3	145	10.0	333	30.0	999
Post Graduate Training	9.0	300	15.0	500	45.0	1,500
Urban & Community Tree	50.0	2,500	100.0	5,000	300.0	15,000
Reforestation and TSI on Non						
Forest Land	20.0	606	20.0	606	60.0	1,818
Timber Bridges	1.2	20	1.2	20	7.5	125
TOTALS	\$422.3	11,349	\$935.0	25,610	\$2879.5	78,312

Note: Employment estimated based on ratios of jobs per thousand dollars in costs. These ratios vary from \$20,000 per labor intensive job to over \$60,000 per heavy construction job. They include materials, supervision and program support.

A program initiated in 1993 could generate from 11,000 to 25,000 jobs at a cost of \$935 million. Thousands of backlogged and unfunded projects would be completed. Some type of tasks that could be performed by AmeriCorps participants:

Watershed Improvements - Projects to protect wetlands, reestablish vegetative cover in riparian zones, shape gullied land, revegetate denuded areas and to eliminate acid and other pollutant drainage from abandoned mines and oil and gas wells -- all in order to improve watershed conditions, fisheries and wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities.

Range Improvements - Range improvements consist of fencing and water development structures, and revegetation of denuded areas to improve forage conditions, wildlife and fish habitat, and soil and water quality.

Range Vegetation Management - Encompasses all activities associated with the management of NFS rangelands. Includes the description of baseline resource information for rangeland ecosystems, resource management planning, monitoring, administration of permitted livestock grazing, coordination of other land uses, and tracking compliance with forest plan and other management objectives. This is an interdisciplinary effort requiring significant coordination and commitment of resources by affected resource areas, user groups, and interested members of the public.

Wildlife Habitat Improvement - Construction and maintenance of structures and enhancement of habitat. Improvement activities include prescribed burning, opening construction and rehabilitation, wildlife stand improvement, seeding and planting, and water hole construction.

Fish Habitat Improvement - Reservoir rejuvenation and enhancement, stream bank stabilization, construction of fish ponds and spawning riffles, access trails for the disabled, and fish viewing stations.

Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species Habitat Improvement - Protection and enhancement of required habitats, including breeding and nesting sites, feeding areas and escape cover, protection from adverse developments and disturbing human activities.

Timber Stand Improvement - Treatment of timber stands to remove excess and competing vegetation to improve species composition, quality, growth rates, vigor and resistance to attacks from insects and diseases. Treatments are generally labor intensive as they favor the enhancement of selected trees.

Insect And Disease Control - The Forest Service provides protection and control services from insects and diseases on both Federal and non-Federal lands.

Administrative Facilities - Pertains to office buildings, warehouses, and living quarters that are primarily needed to administer the National Forests, rather than serve the public. Includes repair and maintenance in the short term and new construction for long term projects.

Roads and Bridges - Addresses deferred maintenance of transportation infrastructure and new construction essential for public recreation, access for the disabled, fire control and other activities. This work will reduce negative environmental impacts of roads and bridges and increase the safety and enjoyment of persons accessing and traveling on the National Forests.

Recreation Facility Backlog - Rehabilitation, repair, and reconstruction of recreation facilities and sites to restore them to the established standard. Includes work to meet current legal, safety, or sanitation standards, restoration of soil and vegetation, and elimination of facilities and restoration of site.

Trail Backlog - Maintenance and reconstruction to restore trails to assigned standards. This is one-time restoration and repair to correct maintenance that has been deferred in the past. Include realignment of segments, upgrading to accommodate different uses, and obliteration of unneeded trails.

Recreation Operations and Maintenance - This activity includes the day-to-day care and operation of developed recreation sites cleaning, painting, routine maintenance, and other operational tasks are included. Increased attention over current budget levels is needed to prevent deterioration of facilities and to avoid potential health and safety problems.

Land Line: Boundary Survey & Marking - Only 38% of the 272,409 miles of Forest Service property have been properly established. This proposal would accurately locate the legal boundaries between National Forest and private land ownership. Work would enhance private sector employment of survey and engineering firms.

Establishment and Remeasurement of Forest Inventory Plots - Establish and extend permanent field plot grid in the Western United States so that both commodity and noncommodity value statistics would become available on all forest land regardless of ownership and management status. These statistics are necessary in carrying out needed long- term research studies and for making decisions on the sustainability of the forest ecosystems and a basis for rational resource decision-making.

Reforestation and Timber Stand Improvement on Nonindustrial Private Lands: To demonstrate U. S. commitment to world leadership in forestry, ensure an adequate timber supply, to sequester atmospheric carbon dioxide, and to provide employment in rural areas.

Timber Bridges - Installation of new modern timber bridges and the replacement of existing structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridges with local labor to improve transportation infrastructure in rural areas. Almost one-half (215,398) of rural bridges greater than 20 feet in length in rural America are deficient.

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.

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.

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 the 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.

American Forest Foundation's Project Learning Tree is an award winning K-12 curriculum and training program.

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 (CIA), a national volunteer program established by University of Pennsylvania students in 1980s to address basic housing needs of low-income communities in urban areas. Materials are donated by corporate sponsors.

5. River and Streams Protection

We could possibly run river protection teams in conjunction with the Department of Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency. In a Hudson River Team, USDA participants could work with farmers in the river's watershed to reduce the run-off of agricultural pesticides.

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.

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.

8. Urban Farming Projects

Team members could help low-income urban residents to grow their own food. We could possibly run such a program at public housing complexes in tandem with the Department of Housing and Urban Renewal. We could possibly run a city-wide program in Chicago in tandem with the Chicago high school of agriculture.

9. Wetlands Restoration

The Department of Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency has expressed interest in potentially running a joint program to help restore the Everglades.

10. Disaster Relief and Recovery

Existing youth corps have played a vital role in the recovery of the flooded Midwest. For most disasters, team members could provide physical labor so critical to short-team clean-up, as well as human services needed for long-term recovery. They could also assist in some of the long-term infrastructure repair such as levee re-building.

11. Sustainable Agriculture - Team members could work under the direction of Extension agents or other sustainable agriculture experts to help local farmers complete some of the labor intensive work -- such as constructing fences -- that is needed to implement a sustainable agriculture plan.

e. Selecting and matching applicants

What percentage of participants will be recruited from a national pool of applicants to USDA or the Corporation? Can some participants meet the voucher requirement by working four summers in a row? Would such an approach hinder our ability to build diverse crews? Could possibly a small percentage of people in each program be on the four-year plan?

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 team 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. The first year's program must meet all our diversity requirements since original problems are nearly impossible to fix.

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?

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 will the Team involve participants in leadership positions in implementing and evaluating the programs?

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. Effect on The Participants

How will the program promote civic responsibility and produce positive change in participants through training and participation in meaningful service with opportunities for reflection?

What measurable goals can we set for personal benefits obtained by Team members?

This program can help future farmers attend college. Farmers who graduated college earn an average of \$68,652 in off-farm income, compared to \$29,334 for those who were only high school educated.

j. Evaluating the Team

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

Will we contract out for evaluation or ask the Corporation for a waiver so we can do our own evaluation?

k. 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.

For the Corporation for National Service Proposal, we need a description of the criteria and process through which our grantee programs were selected.

The proposal to the Corporation for National and Community Service will need a description of the type and number of positions that will receive awards and a description of how approved national service positions will be apportioned by the applicant.

For each pilot location, how will we consult with participants and potential participants, representatives of the communities served, community-based agencies with demonstrated record of experience in providing services, and local labor organizations?

How will our pilots help priority areas affected adversely by federal policies?

Where are recently closed military installations that we might be able to use to house participants?

l. 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 effective and so popular that will grow on its own regardless of the Administration in power?

m. 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?

The proposal to the Corporation for National and Community Service will need a detailed description of key members of the management team.

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?

n. Staff needed

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

Possible staff for Team:

Director

Recruitment and Training Coordinator

Internal and External Communications Coordinator

Pilot Project Liaison

Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator

Support Staff

o. 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.

How will health care be provided to participants?

What percentage of participants will need child care? How will we provide it to them?

What kind of support will disabled participants need?

p. Outreach needed for stakeholders

We need to gain 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.

q. 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?

r. 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.

p. Residential and non-residential

Most of the rural programs will be residential and most of the urban programs will be non-residential. How many residential facilities does the Forest Service now have? What is their capacity and how much money and time would it take to renovate them for year-round use?

Our partnership programs will be hampered by the lack of residential facilities owned by the Department of Interior. How can we work with the Department of Defense to use their residential facilities?

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. Where 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 ensure adequate residential facilities for participants in rural areas?

VI. HOW AMERICORPS/USDA PROGRAMS WILL INTERACT

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 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? Will we have a joint training session for all three corps? If so, where will it be held and who will manage it? We need to build this cost into the budget. Can they have caravans from around the country while performing 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 private money that we raise be used to supplement the national service voucher be 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? Diversity must be a key consideration during recruitment, curriculum design, project development, and training.

How can we use a national recruitment pool to boost diversity? How can we incorporate physically disabled participants and program managers?

X. INTERACTING WITH ENTERPRISE ZONES AND COMMUNITIES

As much as possible, our programs will be placed in empowerment zones and enterprise communities.

Each Empowerment Zone gets two HHS Title XX grants totalling \$40 million. Each Enterprise Community gets one HHS Title XX grant of up to \$3 million.

Employer tax credits to Eligible Enterprise Zone employers equal to 20% of the first 415,000 of wages or training expenses for qualified Enterprise zone employees. Can host organizations that hire Rural development corps participants obtain this benefit? Are there other deductions that may be available?

XI. TIMELINE FOR RUNNING AMERICORPS/USDA

By March 1, 1994: Work with USDA budget and legal offices to develop tentative FY95 budget

By March 5, 1993: Identify possible pilot project locations and partnerships

By March 10, 1994: Sign memorandums of understanding with other agencies with whom we will jointly make proposals

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

April, 19, 1994 - NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY, (Possible national Serve-A-thon)

By May 15, 1994: Start-up plans finalized for projects approved by the Corporation for National Service

By May 20, 1994: Project personnel interviewed and placed

By May 30, 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

For more information, contact:

**Joel Berg or Katherine Gibney
USDA Office of Public Liaison
Room 213-A
14th and Independence, SW
Washington, DC 20250
Phone # (202) 720-2798
Fax # (202) 720-5043**

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 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. *own upward mobility* *most their*

- * 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.

Perform work that adds community value
is appropriate
Not

have these be
volunteer coord at
local level

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 - Joel, Katherine

\ 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" members who could assist communities in identifying needs and resources necessary for economic well being. 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. 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.

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

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

How will we get special authority under the law for Forest Service employees to work on non-Forest Service land?

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?

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?

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. 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 makes 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