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NRCS [Natural Resources Conservation Service] Application 1995 [1]

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Individual Site Application

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**Individual Site Application #6
Environment Team
Kansas**

SUMMARY

Two "Windbreak Renovation Teams" will be organized to implement a windbreak renovation demonstration program in five counties. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service and Kansas County Conservation Districts will sponsor and provide oversight for the project. The goal of this program is to prove that windbreak renovation is both technically feasible and cost-effective.

One mile of windbreak renovation will be completed in each of the five counties. In one of the counties a plant material field trial demonstration site will be established. The purpose of this field trial is to test the resistance and durability of plants developed at the Plant Materials Center. The results of this demonstration will provide data regarding the best type of plants to be used in future windbreaks.

This program will be implemented by two ten-member teams of AmeriCorps participants. Personnel from the local SCS field technicians and the District Conservationists will also be used to work with these two teams.

ANNUAL OBJECTIVES FOR AMERICORPS PARTICIPANTS ARE:

(1) Complete one windbreak renovation information and education program in cooperation with the County Conservation District and other interested state agencies and nongovernment organizations.

(2) Work with private landowners to identify local windbreak renovation needs and develop individual windbreak renovation plans.

(3) Renovate one mile of windbreaks in each of five counties.

(4) Develop a plant material field trial demonstration site at the SW Experiment Station in Tribune, Kansas.

NEEDS TO BE MET:

Kansas has 78,000 windbreaks. The windbreaks total 20,000 miles in length and cover 114,000 acres. According to the USDA Soil Conservation Service 1992 National Resource Inventory subsample for windbreaks in Kansas, the age and condition of these windbreaks are as follows:

AGE

25% 1-20 years

32% 21-40 years

43% 40 + years

CONDITION

13% Excellent

38% Good

34% Fair

15% Poor

The windbreaks protect thousands of acres of Kansas cropland from wind erosion. The windbreaks also reduce energy needs around farmsteads and livestock facilities, as well as provide wildlife habitat and biodiversity in the semiarid high plains of western Kansas.

Without windbreaks, Kansas soil suffers from severe erosion from winds. Windbreaks are a proven method of preventing erosion. Over 40% of Kansas windbreaks are 40+ years of age and 49% are only in fair to poor condition. These figures demonstrate the critical need for windbreak renovation.

If soil erosion is to be prevented, private landowners need to see that windbreak restoration is technically feasible and cost-effective. This program will be able to demonstrate this to them. The results of the plant material field trial could lead to more resistant and less costly plants for use in windbreaks which would benefit the private landowners.

There are approximately 400 windbreaks that need to be restored. This is approximately 100 miles per county. This represents a large investment in time and money for everyone involved - the landowner, state and local government, and federal government. Before undertaking such a large and costly project, all parties want to see a demonstration of the feasibility of the project and they want to see cost-effective methods for implementing this large scale project.

Windbreak Renovation needs have been identified through the SCS, 1992 NRI subsample of windbreaks in Kansas. It has been identified as a priority issue by Kansas State and Extension Forestry and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, State Conservation Commission as well as the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts and its member

districts.

PROGRAM DESIGN:

Two "Windbreak Renovation Teams" will be organized to implement a five-county windbreak renovation demonstration program. The Soil Conservation Service and County Conservation Districts will sponsor and provide oversight for this project.

The goals are to show that windbreak renovation is technically feasible and cost effective. One mile of windbreak renovation will be accomplished in each county. A plant materials field trial planting and demonstration will be established.

Annual objectives are: (1) Carryout a windbreak renovation information and education program in cooperation with the county conservation district and other interested state agencies and nongovernment organizations; (2) Identify local windbreak renovation needs; (3) Develop individual windbreak renovation plans; and (4) Implement and carryout windbreak renovation demonstration plans.

County Conservation Districts need to demonstrate that it is technically feasible and cost effective. Windbreak renovation is critical in the Great Plains area to maintain and improve the biodiversity of the region. Communities in these five counties will benefit from the increased biodiversity, reduction in wind erosion damage, and the positive effects on energy needs of the windbreaks renovated. After the proposal has been carried out, County Conservation Districts will be able to carry out their own windbreak renovation program based on what was demonstrated through the accomplishments of this proposal.

The above named agencies will provide multi-agency input and overview for the proposal and see that each goal has been accomplished as scheduled throughout the year.

The team leader will be responsible for working with the County Conservation District, agency personnel and nongovernment organizations to carry out all informational/educational program to promote windbreak renovation.

The field technician will be responsible for identifying windbreak renovation needs and techniques in the field. This person will be responsible for developing individual windbreak renovation plans and supervision of the windbreak renovation crews in carrying out renovation plans.

Team members will be trained to carry out renovation. The multi-agency group will evaluate and monitor the progress of the teams through monthly review of team activities, including weekly on-site visits. A formal evaluation process will be developed by the group and teams.

The Soil Conservation Service and the Conservation Districts will provide primary leadership to the teams. The teams will work from a base location and travel to identified sites to carry out their work. One team will be located in Scott City, Kansas, and will work in Scott and Greeley counties. The second team will be located at Oakley, Kansas, and will work in Grove, Logan, and Sheridan counties.

This project will build on existing programs available through USDA agencies, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, and State Conservation Commission, including the Great Plains Conservation Program, Agricultural Conservation Program, Water Resources Cost-Sharing Program, Stewardship Incentive Program, and Wildlife Habitat Improvement

Programs.

The team will carry out informational/educational activities each week, working closely with the Conservation District and multiagency personnel. These activities will include news releases, field days, demonstrations, displays and programs presented locally in the community.

The team will evaluate windbreaks in the field, determine proper renovation techniques and develop plans with individual landowners. This person will supervise the crews doing renovation work.

Crew members will provide the labor in carrying out windbreak renovation plans. This work will include removal of dead or damaged trees, pruning and topping, and tree planting activities.

(1) Team will meet at SCS office where site will be identified and a discussion of the site plan will begin. Discussion will include all team members.

(2) Team will then be transported to windbreak site.

(3) Once on site, team will agree to best approach to the tasks that must be accomplished. Work assignments will be made based on decision by supervisor and team members. Decisions will be reached through consensus and be a part of team building training. Work assignments will be rotated through all team members to give well rounded experience.

(4) Discussion/training will be on-going during the work day. For instance: discussion regarding choice of trees to be removed and why, types of trees used as replacement.

(5) As work progresses, tasks accomplished will be:

Cutting down trees, using power saws (Training will be provided on proper use of all tools).

Cutting trees into posts or firewood.

Collecting brush and consolidating into wildlife habitat.

Planting trees and shrubs.

When needed, installation of drip irrigation systems or laying down weed barriers.

(6) Members will work about 40 hours each week which will give the participants the required 1,700 hours of service.

(7) Members will spend at least one day each week on personal development, formal training and interaction.

(8) Members needing to work on high school completion will have an individualized program in cooperation with nearby community college.

PARTICIPANT TRAINING AND SUPPORT:

Participants will receive initial classroom training by the Soil Conservation Service and other agencies - This will be followed up by on-the-job training. Additional training will be provided as identified during evaluation and monitoring of team activities. Participants gain valuable experience in interpersonal communication skills in working with groups and individuals in carrying out their assigned activities.

Participant Placement and Supervision - The participants will work as a part of a ten-

member team. They will be located as described above. They will be under the direct supervision of the Soil Conservation Service, district conservationist in each of the five counties. The Soil Conservation Service will work closely with the Conservation District in each of the counties in preparation for the placement of the teams.

Tools and equipment needed will be provided by the project's partners. Farmers will pay the cost of tree replacement.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGY:

The Soil Conservation Service will carry out necessary recruitment activities with the area high schools and colleges including Kansas State University, University of Kansas, Fort Hays State University, Emporia State University, local community colleges and technical schools. The Soil Conservation Service will also seek participants through state and local job service centers. Recruitment fliers and local news media efforts will also be used. We will recruit a diverse socio-economic mix of participants including high school drop-outs, high school graduates, students who have attended and those who have graduated.

PARTICIPANT BENEFITS:

Participants will benefit through a wide range of training both formal and informal (see list earlier in proposal). Participants will benefit from working with a group and will learn various skills that will help throughout their life in working and communicating with other people. They will also learn various life skills; the importance of accepting responsibilities, such as taking care of equipment, practicing safety regulations, and working

with team members. They will learn discipline in reporting to work on time each day, accepting supervision and following directions. Problem solving skills will also be developed both for on the job and personal encounters. Participants will also gain knowledge about the environment and the natural resources found within it, including research skills.

INTERNAL EVALUATION AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES

Results and benefits to the community can be based on the following factors: 1) Establishment of plant materials trial demonstration site; 2) Five miles of windbreaks renovated; 3) Areas of wildlife habitat created; 4) Number of private landowners involved; 5) Number of plans and designs developed for windbreak restoration; 6) Number of communities involved to maintain the windbreaks.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONNEL INFORMATION:

The Soil Conservation Service has offices in each county and works closely with the local Conservation Districts. SCS and the Conservation District will share supervisory responsibilities for the teams and the windbreak renovation.

James N. Habiger is the State Conservationist for the State of Kansas. Mr. Habiger will have final responsibility for the AmeriCorps participants. Mr. Lonnie Schultz, Assistant State Resource Conservationist, will have responsibility for the design and implementation of the projects. Day-to-day operations will be under the local SCS employee and the state district conservationist.

**Individual Site Application #7
Environment Team
Oklahoma**

SUMMARY

Twenty participants will work in two teams in twenty-two county area in west Oklahoma (Beaver, Beckham, Blaine, Caddo, Cimarron, Comanche, Cotton, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Greer, Haron, Harper, Jackson, Kiowa, Major, Roger mills, Texas, Tillman, Washita, Woods and Woodward counties) in windbreak restoration.

Following the "Dust Bowl" of the 1930's, conservationists through the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Soil Erosion Service began planting the bare land with trees forming miles of living windbreaks. These windbreaks have provided protection for the soils from the constant blowing winds in western Oklahoma, acted as snow fences along some highways, provided habitat diversity for wildlife, protected crops, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation of streams and have added beauty to the landscape. / Participants will work fulltime, or 1,700 hours per participant, in teams restoring dying windbreaks. Work will include, but will not limited to, reviewing plans, removing trees, creating wildlife habitat, and planting trees and shrubs.

NEEDS TO BE MET

Thousands of miles of windbreaks have been planted in western Oklahoma. Unfortunately, many of these windbreaks have reached maturity and are dying. Diseases and weather have also taken their toll on these windbreaks. The oldest living windbreak in America is in Greer County and is slowing deteriorating and is in need of restoration. If these windbreaks are not renovated, these trees will deteriorate and eventually will have to be

removed, thus leaving the land to blow once again.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Approximately 80% of the participants time will be spent in the field, with the other 20% in training. Renovation of windbreaks involves cutting dead and trees that have been marked for cutting. Large trees will be cut for post and while brush will be piled for wildlife habitat. Windbreak establishment involves the proper tree and shrub species as outlined by the plan.

Participants will plant and shrubs as needed. Weed barriers may be used for weed control and participants assist in laying barriers down. Participants will also assist in the installation of irrigation systems if needed.

Most of the work to be performed will be on private lands. This project will be a cooperative effort between the following public and private partners:

RC&D - Resource Conservation and Development Councils

CD - Conservation Districts

OCC - Oklahoma Conservation Commission

SCS - Soil Conservation Service

ODF - Oklahoma Department of Forestry

ODW - Oklahoma Department of Wildlife

ODOT Oklahoma Department of Transportation

OTH - Other units of government, vo-techs, foundations and environmental groups

Training subjects will include:

- Job orientation - 2 days

- Safety in the work place - 1 day
- CR & EEO training 1 day
- Equipment safety - 3 days
- Effective Presentations - 3 days
- CPR - 1 day
- Forest Stewardship Planning, 3 days
- Conservation Planning - 3 days
- Project Wild - 1 day
- 2 days certification training
- Project Learning Tree - 2 days
- TQM principles - Awareness training, 3 days
- Roadmap to Problem Solving - 2 days,
- Team Building and Team Working skills - 1 day
- Self Improvement Skills 2 days
- Soils class - 3 days
- Range management class 3 days
- Wildlife Management- 2 days
- Weather conditions 1 day
- Forestry management 2 days
- Environment and Ecosystem relationships - 2 days
- Water quality testing - 4 days
- Prescribed Burning 1 day

- Job opportunities 1 day
- Effective study skills - 1 day.

All participants will be supervised by the Soil Conservation Service. The 20 participants will be divided into four work groups at different locations across the 22 county area. The work groups will be located at four SCS offices under the direct supervision of the local district conservationists.

1. Team will meet at local SCS office where site will be identified and discussion of site plan will begin. Discussion will include all team members.
2. Team will then be transported to site location.
3. Once on site, team will agree on the best approach to the tasks that must be accomplished. Work assignments will be made based on decisions by supervisor and team members. Decisions will be reached through consensus and be a part of the team building training. Work assignments will be rotated through all team members to give well rounded experience.
4. Discussion/training will be on-going during the work day. For instance: discussion regarding choice of trees to be removed and why, types of trees used as replacements.
5. As work progresses, tasks accomplished will be:

Cutting down trees, using power saws (training will be provided on proper use of power saws).

Cutting trees into posts or firewood.

Collecting brush and consolidating into wildlife habitat.

Unloading trees and shrubs for planting.

Planting trees and shrubs.

When needed, installation of drip irrigation systems or laying down weed barriers.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGY:

AmeriCorps participants will be recruited through the employment and training program of the South Western Oklahoma Development Authority and the Oklahoma Economic Development Association. These two regional councils of government administer the Job Training and Partnership Act Program. Each program will provide the Youth Coordinator for recruitment. The process is in place for the Summer Youth Program which is used to give economically disadvantaged, minority, handicapped and at-risk youth work experience. Recruitment will also be aimed at the local vo-tech schools, state universities, employment offices, and through advertisements in the local papers.

PARTICIPANT BENEFITS

Participants will benefit through a wide range of training both formal and informal (see list earlier in proposal). Participants will benefit from working with a group and will learn various skills that will help throughout their life in working and communicating with other people. They will also learn various life skills; the importance of accepting responsibilities, such as taking care of equipment, practicing safety regulations, and working with team members. They will learn discipline in reporting to work on time each day, accepting supervision and following directions. Problem solving skills will also be developed both for on the job and personal encounters. Participants will also gain knowledge about the

environment and the natural resources found within it.

INTERNAL EVALUATION AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES

Activities will be monitored and evaluated throughout the year to insure that the project is on track. Approximately four miles of windbreaks should be restored per month. At the end of the year, results and benefits to the community can be based on the following factors:

of miles of windbreaks restored.

of feet of drip irrigation systems installed.

of large trees cut and removed.

of trees planted.

of private landowners involved.

of plans and designs developed for windbreak restoration in the future.

of communities involved to maintain the windbreaks.

Areas of wildlife habitat created.

Lower maintenance costs and increased production in fields.

The total environmental benefit will not be realized for several years. However, the protection of the soil in Oklahoma has an immense value.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONNEL INFORMATION

The Soil Conservation Service has offices in each county and works closely with the local Conservation Districts. SCS and the Conservation District will share supervisory responsibilities for the teams and the windbreak renovation.

Bobby Jack Jones is the State Conservationist for the state of Oklahoma for SCS. Mr. Jones will have final responsibility for the AmeriCorps participants. Mr. William Puckett, Assistant State Conservationist for Operations, will have responsibility for the design and implementation of the AmeriCorps program. Day-to-day operations will be under the local SCS employee and the state district employee.

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**Individual Site Application #8
Environment Team
Texas Coastline**

SUMMARY

Two ten-member teams with one crew leader per team will provide community service by protecting shorelines from further erosion. Several critical areas have been identified for shoreline erosion control projects. These service projects will affect individual landowners, as well as the economy of Texas by reducing sedimentation into the marsh and bay areas critical to shrimp and fin fish production. This is a service for which there is no current labor force.

The projects will be administered by the Soil Conservation Service and will provide students with education on marine habitat, the need to protect the marine environment, and how this issue relates to humans and public safety.

NEEDS TO BE MET

The shoreline of the Texas Gulf Coast is eroding at an average annual rate of four feet per year and the subsequent loss of wetlands vegetation is a major concern. Loss of wetlands habitats and coastal erosion will continue unless low-cost, effective measures are developed and implemented for shoreline erosion control and habitat enhancement. Once established, smooth cordgrass, *Spartina alterniflora*, provides an effective means of shoreline erosion protection. Several critical areas have been identified for shoreline erosion control projects.

Coastal salt marshes are a very valuable resource. They serve as a nursery for over

90% of coastal marine organisms in the Gulf of Mexico. Under favorable conditions, they will produce more vegetation than almost any ecosystem on earth. The production will far exceed the production of any intensive agricultural crop. Tidal marshes are also important in the storage and assimilation of nutrients from the surrounding estuarine waters. They are also very important in trapping sediment and reducing turbidity in runoff water. Marshes are important in reducing flood control impacts by storing floodwater and releasing it slowly after peak flow. In many situations, these coastal wetlands also stabilize shorelines and afford protection to upland areas during storms by absorbing and dissipating wave energy. Coastal wetlands in the Galveston Bay complex are rapidly disappearing. Channelization, salt water intrusion, pollution, shoreline erosion, and the possible impact of sea level rise are contributing factors to the loss of coastal wetlands habitats. Wetlands surveys conducted in Galveston Bay between 1956 and 1979 indicate that approximately 25,000 acres or 16% of its coastal marshes have been lost. Transplanting vegetation to re-create lost wildlife habitat and mitigate impacts of shoreline erosion has been used with success in Louisiana wetlands and in Galveston Bay.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Corps members will work on one erosion project at a time and will complete that project before starting on the next. Participants on the two teams of ten will work with partners on erosion projects and will be taken by van or boat each morning to the site.

Partners will include: Texas A&M University at Galveston, Galveston Bay Foundation, Galveston Bay National Estuary Program, Resource Conservation and Development Areas, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Houston Lighting and Power,

Port of Houston Authority Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas General Land Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife National Marines and Fisheries. This project will directly tie to the Gulf of Mexico Program, Galveston Bay National Estuary Program, Corpus Christi Bay National Estuary Program, and the Coastal Zone Management Plan.

A study of the Texas Gulf Coast identified shoreline erosion and wetlands loss as high priority items. All partners in this study have worked together to identify areas that have critical problems, as well as developed projects for AmeriCorps participants. Resource Conservation and Development Areas have involved residents of communities whose livelihood is directly tied to the Gulf of Mexico and the need to protect the fragile ecosystems. Each partner will be fully involved in all phases of each identified project. One of the tasks to be performed by the participants will be the construction of an artificial wave barrier made of used cargo parachutes and plastic barricade fencing attached to wooden fence posts. The installation of the wave barrier protection increases the success for smooth cordgrass establishment. The barrier will dissipate some of the wave energy, thus protecting the cordgrass transplants until they are rooted and well-established.

Participants also will transplant smooth cordgrass between the natural shoreline and the wave barrier in the intertidal zone for protection. They also collect fish samples to determine baseline data. Two fifty-foot seine hauls will be periodically conducted at each site adjacent to the transplant plots to determine initial species diversity and relative abundance. Fish and shellfish collected at all sites will be identified, enumerated and released. Participants will also be utilized for soil mapping of Gulf Coast counties.

Students will be located at Baytown, Texas, and will work from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.

at project sites. SCS shoreline specialists will provide day-to-day supervision.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

Workforce will be socio-economically diverse. These individuals will be recruited by the SCS Hispanic Liaison and Black Liaison as well as other schools. Several Texas universities that have diverse student bodies will be targeted for recruitment. These universities include: University of Houston, Prairie View A&M, Pan American, Texas A&I, University of Texas at San Antonio, Sul Ross State, and the University of Texas at El Paso. Twenty-five percent will come from the Corporation's national pool, if desired.

PARTICIPANT BENEFITS

Participants will benefit from working on community and environmental projects that make a difference to the coastal shores of Texas. They will also have invaluable educational experiences that can only be obtained by hands-on experience.

INTERNAL EVALUATION AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES

A specific number of feet of shoreline erosion establishment will be targeted monthly. This progress will be monitored and evaluated weekly. By the end of the project, five sites will be completed, treating approximately 5,280 feet of critical shoreline erosion.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONNEL INFORMATION

The Soil Conservation Service has offices in each county and works closely with the local Conservation District offices. SCS and the Conservation District will share supervisory

responsibilities.

Harry W. Oneth is the State Conservationist for the state of Texas and will have final responsibility for AmeriCorps participants. Mark Freeman, Assistant Conservationist, will have overall project responsibility.

**Individual Site Application #9
Environment Team
Atlanta, Georgia**

SUMMARY

Twenty participants will be divided into three groups to work on water quality improvement projects in the metropolitan area. The goal is to provide a metrowide awareness of water quality concerns. A long-term program will be developed to restore and maintain the stream corridor. Overall supervision will be the responsibility of the district conservationist. Detail supervision will be provided by staff members and the Clean and Beautiful Organization.

The processes used for implementing the AmeriCorps projects will result in information that will be used in program development, planning, and implementation of a natural resource education curriculum. A detailed stream management project will be developed by the participants. Participants will identify problem areas, create a monitoring schedule, perform stream monitoring (and train volunteers), identify non-point source problems, and contact appropriate individuals to correct these problems. Data will be collected and evaluated for use by various agencies. Additionally, they will assist in stream restoration projects and land reclamation using plant materials provided by the satellite plant materials center. These satellite centers will be designed and operated by the participants.

Education, recruitment and ongoing activities will take place in the Atlanta Metropolitan area. The participants will work with school groups and youth organizations to establish outdoor classrooms and to help teach environmental science.

NEEDS TO BE MET

The specific need is to improve water quality within the metropolitan area and provide

a metro-wide awareness of water quality concerns. Georgia has a population of over six million people. Two million or 34 percent of those people live in the Metropolitan Atlanta area. Atlanta is one of the fastest growing cities in America. Atlanta and surrounding areas are facing problems with soil erosion and sedimentation, poor water quality, inadequate water supplies, storm-water management, deterioration of stream-banks, and development pressure on environmental and culturally sensitive land.

Seventy percent of the population of the entire Appalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint basin live in the metro Atlanta area. This basin drains 19,600 square miles in Georgia, Alabama, and Florida. The Atlanta metro area has the greatest impact on the watershed. The Chattahoochee is soon to be named one of the nations fifteen most threatened rivers by American Rivers, a Washington based environmental organization. The importance of identifying and correcting contributing tributaries affecting the basin will have direct affects on public recreation facilities that are in place and ones that are being planned.

The 1996 Olympic games in Atlanta provide extra opportunities for improvement and education regarding water quality. The problem identification and preventive measures need to be in place prior to the 1996 Olympics, which will add millions of individuals to the population for a period of eight weeks.

Currently, plants that are used in the urban landscape require a high amount of maintenance fertilizer and chemicals. Fertilizers and chemicals are carried in storm water runoff, thus creating an urban non-point source pollution problem. A solution to this problem is to plant and nurture native plants that will not require the type of maintenance that is needed for some of the current exotic plants.

Needs have been identified through Soil and Water Conservation Districts long range plans, and the Atlanta Regional Commission Vision 2020 strategy in planning process. Requests for assistance from local units of government and concerns of local based groups of citizens also aided to identify the needs of the area. In the Vision 2020 process, needs were primarily identified using a Delphi survey. Over 500 people participated in one session in addition to 23 community forums conducted region-wide. Over 90 presentations were made to civic, community business and government organizations, including tenant associations and Asian and Hispanic groups. Over 79% of persons surveyed by the ARC for the Vision 2020 planning process agreed that Atlanta streams and rivers are irreplaceable assets and protection of them should be top priority.

Metropolitan Atlanta has been approved as a pilot city for an Urban Resource Partnership. Natural resource agencies within the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Interior, Environmental Protection Agency, and the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service are available as a team to provide assistance to governmental officials and community groups for natural resources related problems. In the developmental stages of this partnership an assessment was made of the type of services that could be provided based on records of requests. In order to approach the urban resource problem from a watershed approach, information needs to be gathered and problems solved in a consistent manner. The AmeriCorps program will be a natural complement to the Urban Resource partnership.

PROGRAM DESIGN

A crew of five people will be needed to propagate and care for plants. This group will be supervised by a qualified agronomist. The second crew of five people will be used to provide education to schools, community groups and individuals. The third group consisting of 10 people will be used to

do stream monitoring, restoration, and land reclamation. An evaluation will be done on each participant based on their assigned duties.

The project will have an urban and a rural component.

Individuals in rural areas with agronomic skills can work with urban youth to collect and propagate native plants and transfer them to the urban areas for their intended use.

Building on existing programs, the project will impact four program areas. Installation of the plants will provide water quality protection for the streams in Georgia. Collection and propagating plants in rural Georgia with a potential of creating markets will help stimulate some RC&D efforts. Creating an educational awareness of urban environmental issues will satisfy one objective in the Community Assistance Program. The process of collecting and evaluating native plants will help carry out some of the objectives of the Plant Materials Program.

Primary training responsibility will come from the District Conservationist and area support staff of the Soil Conservation Service. Some basic concepts of types of training will be agency orientation, safety, basic soil and water conservation, and water quality indicators. All additional training will be on the job training. We will provide the participants the opportunity of a short intern period with other agencies. This will provide some exposure to natural resource related careers. Soil Conservation Service will provide support for transportation and equipment.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

A diverse socio-economic mix of people including high school dropouts or graduates and students who have attended or completed college will be recruited. Participants are needed who have the skill to work with people.

Specific training is needed in natural resources and earth science. The participants should be able to teach and perform demonstrations. They should be able to work outside in varying degrees of temperatures.

PARTICIPANT BENEFITS

AmeriCorps participants will learn valuable work skills on maintenance and management of natural resources. The skills acquired will prepare them to enter a range of jobs and hopefully encourage them to continue formal education in a related field of study. They will also learn the skills of teambuilding and problem solving and have practiced leading and supporting common goals. Their work will give them a sense of accomplishment and increase community commitment and responsibility as a result of the contributions they have made.

INTERNAL EVALUATION AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES

The project can be evaluated quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative items are the number of acres treated, number of plants collected, number of plantings, plant survival rate, number of people employed, number of people in business. From a qualitative standpoint, measurement can be on soil savings, improved water quality, and general improvement in the environment.

SCS Technical staff and the project director will develop tools and objectives to evaluate the effectiveness of this project and its participants.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONNEL INFORMATION

The institution that will be responsible for the project is the Marietta Atlanta Field office of the USDA, Soil Conservation Service. The staff consists of one district conservationist, two soil conservationists, one agronomist, one soil scientist, one engineer and one public information specialist. The field office is part of an Urban Resource Partnership with access to technical people within the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Park Service and the Cooperative Extension Service.

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**Individual Site Application #10
Environment Team
Boston, Massachusetts**

SUMMARY

Two ten-member teams with one crew leader per team will address the environmental needs of minority and inner-city neighborhoods in Boston including Roxbury, Chinatown, and Dorchester, through such activities as environmental education, cleaning up vacant lots, identifying hazardous waste sites, and developing water quality improvement plans. SCS will administer the program. A diverse group of participants, including high school graduates, students working on getting a GED, and students with at least two years of college, will be recruited locally, through the Corporation's national pool, and the USDA/AmeriCorps recruitment system. Some participants should be fluent in the target languages in these neighborhoods in order to translate needed environmental materials from English. The program also will include an educational component for the participants.

NEEDS TO BE MET

Residents in areas with a highly-urbanized mix of single-family, apartment buildings, and projects see little connection between themselves and the environment. When faced with issues such as recycling, disposal of trash, household hazardous wastes, or motor oils, lawn or pet management, most residents are not aware of the environmental effects of their actions and of environmentally sound alternatives. Residents in these neighborhoods speak a variety of languages, and some are not fluent in English. Information on environmental issues exists, but much is unavailable in Spanish, Vietnamese, Cape Verdean Creole or Chinese. Further, many of the materials written in English are written in "Techno-speak" and are difficult to understand.

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI), which covers 1.5 square miles and has a population of 24,000, has identified 1,300 vacant parcels of land.) A few are city owned. Most of the parcels used to have houses on them; arson, vandalism, and official neglect and "disinvestment", have combined to create entire streets that are now empty. As these areas grow weeds and trees, they become dump sites and havens for criminal activity. Neighborhood activists are seeking short-and-long-term solutions to the problems that land vacancy creates.

Many of the vacant parcels are used for community or individual gardens. Although residents look for parcels with low levels of soil contaminants, or places where the soil has been removed and replaced, they may end up taking whatever they can find to put food on the table. Nearly all of the soils in these areas have been contaminated with lead. Testing, identification of the most usable parcels, and remediation of others are vital for public health.

In some cases, ownership of vacant parcels is unclear, and needs to be determined. Parks and green spaces are expensive to maintain. It takes money and willing local commitment to ensure that open parcels can legally be used and maintained for parkland. City government has developed parcels that the community thought was theirs, and had long been used for passive recreation. Maintenance and improvement funds have only been sporadically available. Once the funds are available, neighborhood groups must build the identification, capacity and commitment to carry out long-term maintenance.

According to the Environmental Diversity Forum (EDF) and (DSNI), residents of poorer and minority communities have become accustomed to seeing some neighbors and "midnight

haulers" from other communities come in and dump trash and hazardous wastes on abandoned parcels. DSNI has identified 56 hazardous waste sites within its borders. Most of these sites are contaminated with petroleum products. Inner-city neighborhoods have very few open streams or urban rivers.

Urban contaminants also affect water quality. With education, water testing and access to remedial options, it is possible to improve water quality in urban areas.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Participants on the two teams would rotate among the various tasks so that all participants perform as much of each type of work as skills allow. The program would include an environmental component for participants one day a week. Work to be performed by the participants will include:

- 1) Clean Up Vacant Land. Each team will have a four-person crew working cleaning up and renovating vacant parcels of property. Cleanup (removal of trash and woody debris) takes an average of two days/site. The crews will spend 1/3 of their available time on cleanup which should result in cleanup of 2-25 lots.
- 2) Renovating Greenspace: The grounds crews discussed in item 1 above will spend the remaining two thirds of available time renovating greenspace. According to the Boston Natural Areas Fund, renovation (the cleanup mentioned above, seeding eroding areas, beautification and landscape plantings, construction of paths, steps, etc. for access) takes an average 1-2 weeks per site. The crews should be able to renovate 10 greenspace parcels.
- 3) Establishing Endowment Funds for Long-Term Maintenance of Greenspaces: One person per crew would research models for long term maintenance of land, and work with citizens,

agencies and community groups to establish maintenance endowments. This project involves research, outreach, development of community support, fund-raising, etc. Research and outreach will take 3 months; development of local support and getting commitments of seed money will take the remainder of the year and beyond.

4) Determining Ownership of Vacant Parcels and Those with Identified Hazardous Materials:

This is a 1-2 month job for one person per crew and will include work in Assessors and environmental agencies' offices to determine ownership, send form letters requesting permission to clean up or otherwise manage sites, and develop priority listing for action. It would be part of the duties for the person doing Task 3 above.

5) Soil Testing of Greenspace and Vacant Parcels: This includes testing soils in parcels where citizens (especially children) may play, or otherwise have access, to determine levels of lead and other soil contaminants. Once testing is complete, the crew would develop lists of priority sites for remedial work if possible, or fencing or other methods to keep people away from health hazards. With 1300 vacant parcels in one neighborhood alone, this will be a full-time job for two people.

6) Water Testing and Tracing Non-point Source Pollution through the Storm Drain System. Two people per crew will work full-time testing water and tracing contaminants back to likely sources. They will prepare a list of priority areas for remedial action. They will work with other crews, program managers, citizens' groups, etc. to develop goals for water quality improvement, and seek ways to fund the improvements.

7) Translating Environmental Information for Non-English Readers: Two people per crew will work full-time on this effort. They will prepare and translate at least 20 documents into

INTERNAL EVALUATION AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES

The Environmental Diversity Forum and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative will provide day-to-day oversight and monitoring of the projects. These organizations will serve as a forum to insure that regulatory agencies, citizen groups, and others consulted and communicated with the broad range of interests involved to insure that improvement projects were based on community needs and had widespread community support.

Participants will be trained by qualified individuals to do the tasks outlined. Supervisors will prepare goal and schedule sheets for each job (vacant lot cleanup, site rehabilitation, number of soil or water tests taken, etc.) They will visit work sites to get crews started, then check periodically during the day to insure that the tasks and goals outlined for the job are being met. A crew chief will be assigned to each field crew. Trainers will work with individuals doing specific technical tasks, such as soil and water tests, to insure adherence to Standard Methods for collection and analysis of samples. They will standardize data collection forms, check results daily at first, then, as participants become competent, weekly. The results will be checked both to insure quality and to provide information that community groups can use in establishing goals for site improvement, watershed management, etc.

Selection of sites for cleanup and rehabilitation material to be translated, etc. will be based on recommendations from the Executive Councils for the local nonprofits, interviews with citizen groups, technical agencies, etc.

Measurable results of the project or activities will include: 1) Posters, brochures, news stories and other publicity (stencils for storm drains, for instance), education for pet owners in picking up their pets' wastes, how-to guides (for water quality monitoring, tree planting,

erosion-control work, etc.). Participants would develop a portfolio they could show prospective schools or employers; 2) Hundreds of vacant parcels cleaned up, with eroding areas stabilized; 3) A complete listing of ownership of vacant land, and development of several models for funding long-term maintenance of public lands; 4) Establishment of a maintenance endowment fund for public parcels through local nonprofit corporations, such as the Environmental Diversity Forum and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative; 5) Lead and other soil contaminant testing to set priorities for rehabilitating parcels that have the most potential for public use. Establishment of long-term agreements with the City of Boston and private landowners for use of appropriate parcels for community gardens, recreational open space, and other community uses; 6) Water testing and information on water quality problems, point and estimated non-point sources, and development of remedial plans for specific watersheds where behavioral or land management changes could improve water quality; 7) A ranked list of hazardous waste sites, their potential toxicity to humans or the environment, and a plan for working with landowners and regulatory agencies to clean up sites where possible, cover the wastes to minimize human contact, or otherwise isolate them (with fencing, for instance) to prevent human or environmental impacts; 8) A coordinated training program (one day per week for AmeriCorps participants to expose them to career opportunities, communication and mobilization skills, specific environmental and natural resource issues, methods of resource management, business development, and other skills enabling participants and volunteer residents to improve their economic, educational and political opportunities; 8) Development of a cadre of citizens who will volunteer their time, labor and talents to help direct and supplement the efforts of the AmeriCorps participants.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Prepared by: The U. S. Soil Conservation Service's Community Assistance Unit

West Wareham, Mass. in cooperation with: The Environment Diversity Forum, Inc.

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Inc, The Massachusetts Bays Program

The Massachusetts Riverways Program, Environmental Improvement Through Local Empowerment.

Richard Gallo is the State Conservationist for the State of Massachusetts.

Marc McQueen of the Community Assistance Unit will provide overall oversight for SCS with assistance from the Massachusetts Bay Program.

Other partners, such as the Boston Parks Department and the Boston Public Works Department, will loan tools and equipment, such as dump trucks, for land cleanup, and supervise site cleanup work. The Massachusetts Riverways Program and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection will train people in soil and water testing, and interpretation of results. Youth Build Boston helps youth who have not graduated from high school to get their G.E. D. and gain work experience in construction. Youth Build will help recruit individuals who have construction experience, and who are looking for ways to fund their college education. The Environmental Careers Organization (ECO) has established minority training and internship programs to help students in college, and those pursuing graduate, degrees, get paid work experience while carrying out internships of various terms.

The Massachusetts Water Watch Partnership, under the auspices of the Massachusetts Water Resources Research Center, helps citizens groups establish citizen water quality monitoring programs. This organization will provide training.

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**Individual Site Application #11
Environment Team
East St. Louis, Illinois**

SUMMARY

Twenty AmeriCorps participants will work in two teams to improve the East St. Louis community.

The teams, along with community residents, will establish urban gardens by restoring available land to a productive level. These teams will then develop markets for the produce grown on this restored land. This project will serve two purposes: 1) a source of income to area residents; 2) a source of low-cost fresh produce to the community.

The teams will also focus on community clean-up and beautification. The will work with Operation New Spirit, a community group dedicated to restoring the area. This clean-up will be accomplished with the help of landscape architects and the urban forestry program. This effort will reach out to the immediate urban area including parks and recreation areas.

While performing these tasks, participants will learn the proper use of fertilizers and other chemicals in order to avoid non-point source pollution problems. They will develop skills in marketing and selling. They will also develop a sense of civic pride and responsibility.

- Identify culturally based attitudes toward natural resources and the environment in order to better focus the direction of change.
- Conduct and document natural resource inventories on a community basis.
- Develop multi-lingual curriculums for various age groups.
- Assess water quality annually.
- Enact community based stream clean-up days and water watch groups.
- Develop community gardens.
- Establish riparian buffer areas.
- Mobilize businesses to participate in on-going activities.
- Stabilize eroding stream banks.
- Improve fish, song-bird, and small mammal habitats.
- Work with corporate centers to reduce lawn chemical usage and increase alternative ground covers.
- Develop multi-lingual video and print information on chemical products for home usage.
- Recommend specific sites that should be protected from development.
- Develop a long-term action plan to guide water quality activities in the local community for five years after the AmeriCorps program is complete.

The AmeriCorps project work will be located on public and private lands in the following communities:

Musconetcong River Watershed - Hunterdon, Morris, Sussex and Warren Counties.

Raritan River Watershed - Middlesex, Monmouth and Somerset Counties

Arthur Kill Watershed - Union County.

A team retreat will be scheduled annually to promote this understanding and to build on all participants' strengths. These sessions will also build individuals' self-confidence levels, and will help them in all future endeavors.

The partners will provide specialized training and assistance to the Action Team members. Training will be provided by existing staff members of SCS and other organizations. Basic skills will be developed in the first stages of the program before teams begin actual project work. Additional training will be provided weekly as projects progress, and will be targeted to ensure program participants can fully accomplish each project they undertake. Topics may include but will not be limited to the following: forest ecosystem management, water quality monitoring, community impacts on water resource, mobilizing communities, stream stabilization with bioengineering techniques; ecosystems and natural resource inventories; basic horticulture, tree planting, and grass establishment, soil fertility, soil testing, and team building skills.

Various partners will be involved in training and in the oversight of team activities, and most will provide in-kind services and support. The Vocational-Technical High School will expand their natural resource curriculum and provide basic training to participants who need their GED. The County Parks and Recreation Departments will provide equipment and plant materials as feasible. The County Youth Service Commissions will be active in recruitment and guidance of participants. The South Branch Watershed Association will provide training and support for project identification and implementation. The Upper Raritan Watershed Association will utilize their GIS (Geographic Information Systems) system to keep inventory records and analyze watershed restoration techniques. Both Associations have extensive government and volunteer

contacts within their river communities which will ensure community involvement. The North Jersey RC&D Council will provide some seed money for project activities and help coordinate sponsor activities. The Soil Conservation Districts will provide training support, and keep the media informed of program accomplishments.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

The recruitment goal is to have equal numbers of females and males with 50% being from the targeted minority groups. We estimate 20-30% of the participants will not have completed their high school education and will need specialized training for a GED degree.

Existing job referral services, direct referrals from sponsoring county agencies, and multi-lingual newspaper advertisements will be used to recruit participants. Individual team sponsors (Union County Parks and Recreation, North Jersey Resource Conservation & Development Council) will be responsible for selecting the participants and ensuring that recruiting goals are met.

PARTICIPANT BENEFITS

The benefits for participants will include: 1) training in marketable job skills; 2) increased knowledge and awareness of natural resource conservation issues; 3) completion of high school degree or GED and/or the opportunity to continue their education; 4) learning team building and leadership skills; 5) learning about and working with people from diverse cultural backgrounds; and 6) experiencing a sense of accomplishment and contribution to the community.

INTERNAL EVALUATION AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES

Throughout the duration of the initiative, for all teams, SCS will continually evaluate activities, techniques, and progress to ensure that 1) Resources are used efficiently and work is

scheduled in advance; 2) Work is performed only on authorized activities; 3) Maximum program benefits are obtained; 4) Productivity is maintained at a high level without sacrificing quality; 5) Projects address the identified goals and objectives; 6) Commendable work is recognized.

The SCS project director will remain in close contact with all partners and the local communities to ensure completed activities have met their objectives, and that the local communities have remained involved in the projects.

Community satisfaction with the results is important both to the long term viability of the projects themselves and to the effectiveness of replicating this type of activity in other areas around the state and nation. Therefore, this will be emphasized in all team, committee, and community meetings.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONNEL INFORMATION

The three targeted watersheds include six Soil Conservation Districts (SCD) and five SCS field offices (FO). Four District Conservationists and six District Managers who are knowledgeable about the specific sites within each watershed that are experiencing the most severe resource related problems will be involved in the projects. They are aware of the willingness of the individual communities to support, both politically and through in-kind services, specific projects. They have the contacts with other local and county agencies that could provide additional support.

The local staffs, totaling seven soil conservationists, three technicians, and fifteen site inspectors, deal on a day-to-day basis with the erosion and pollution problems within the watersheds and can assist in providing technical assistance as needed.

The New Jersey 1990 State Water Quality Inventory Report was used as a guide in selecting

target watersheds, along with requests from sponsors who are interested and willing to carry out the work in these areas. Background material to support this initiative was also obtained from the Union County "State of the County" report, the state and federal census, the "Greenways to the Arthur Kill" plan for the Arthur Kill watershed, and the NJ-DEPE Musconetcong Watershed Initiative and Implementing grant proposals. Representation from six Soil Conservation Districts (Sussex, Morris, Warren, Hunterdon, Somerset, Union and Freehold), the NJ Department of Agriculture, State Soil Conservation Committee and Soil Conservation Service District Conservationists, annually review and assess soil and water resource needs on a watershed basis. Requests for assistance are prioritized based on the amount of local support, severity of the problems, and community impact.

**Individual Site Application #13
Environment Team
Washington, D.C. and Maryland**

SUMMARY

Building upon a unique public-private partnership already formed to run a special Summer of Service program without Corporation for National and Community Service funds, USDA will run a 40-person environmental team in the District of Columbia and nearby Maryland. Working in four crews of ten people each, the participants will conduct water quality monitoring, upgrade and renovate public parks and playgrounds, help clean-up the Anacostia River, plant trees in urban neighborhoods, run urban farming projects at the National Arboretum, and facilitate workshops in environmental education, and build an environmental education center and trail in Beltsville, Maryland.

NEEDS TO BE MET

There are similar natural resource problems throughout the jurisdictions that comprise the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Both the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers flow from Maryland, through Washington, D.C. where they converge and continue through Virginia before emptying into the Chesapeake Bay. Improvement of the resources in one location is often dependent on a comprehensive approach between states. Collaboration between Maryland and the District of Columbia is underway to improve conditions of the Anacostia River.

There are 26 miles of rivers and streams in the District of Columbia which support 66 different species of fish. The Anacostia and Potomac Rivers are both spawning grounds for a number of fish which travel from the Chesapeake Bay. Water quality is impacted by the impervious surfaces in this urban environment. Each year over of 5,000 permits are issued for

of paved surfaces and exposed soils at construction sites is detrimental to regional water quality. Accelerated storm water runoff carries sediments, hydrocarbons, heavy metals, oil, grease, trash, nitrogen, phosphorous and other pollutants to the rivers and potentially to the Bay.

Just 20 miles from the White House, the USDA Soil Conservation Service (SCS) has established its National Conservation Center (NCC) at Beltsville, Maryland. Initially comprising some 250 acres around the SCS National Plant Materials Center, the NCC-managed area will eventually comprise nearly 1,400 acres. The NCC will grow to provide on-the-land demonstrations of many state-of-the-art resource conservation practices and technologies, provide training, and environmental and agricultural education programs aimed at improving the understanding of the environment, resource conservation, and agriculture. NCC is at the crossroads of 30,000 acres of land, water, agriculture, wildlife areas, and space programs. Just a mile from NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, near the Agricultural Research Service's Visitor Center, and close to the Fish and Wildlife Service's new Patuxent National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, the NCC will be the major international facility that will demonstrate and educate interested citizens, environmental professionals, and students and educators from around the world about resource conservation programs, technologies, and practices. Being at the headwaters of the Anacostia River Watershed, and surrounded by intense metropolitan development, the NCC on-the-land conservation efforts will play a significant role in benefiting the water quality initiatives within that watershed and the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

AmeriCorps participants can play a vital role in this expansion.

The United States National Arboretum (USNA) -- run by USDA -- is a vital oasis of beauty, science, and environmental education in a highly urbanized and low-income area of

Northeast Washington. However, USNA has a tremendous backlog of renovation and maintenance projects. There are areas throughout the USNA which have not been adequately maintained for years. The impact of the inadequate maintenance on some of these areas may not have been considered critical because some areas were relatively isolated. Other areas are more visible, such as the Azalea Hillside, and have generated considerable concern from the public. An extremely critical consequence of inadequate maintenance has been the deterioration of many of the trails throughout the USNA and the loss of stormwater runoff controls. It is estimated that in the Asian collections alone repair of the existing trail system, utilizing the federal contracting system, will cost between \$500,000 to \$1 million. Extensive trail renovation is also required in the Azalea Collection and the Dogwood Collection. A well designed, constructed, and maintained trail system is mandatory for the USNA. Without it, it is difficult for the staff to maintain the plantings and for visitors to move about through the collections. The inadequate trail system is a safety hazard to both staff and visitors and undermines the stormwater runoff controls. The curatorial and research staff at the USNA, if provided additional gardening and maintenance support, could accomplish many more of the numerous tasks required to develop and maintain horticultural collections.

PROGRAM DESIGN

In the summer of 1994, USDA will run a unique AmeriCorps environmental program in the District of Columbia without any funding whatsoever from the Corporation for National and Community Service. Building upon that project, USDA is requesting Corporation funds to extend and amplify that program yearround with a 40-person environmental team working in the District of Columbia and nearby Maryland. Working in four crews of ten people each,

the participants will conduct water quality monitoring, upgrade and renovate public parks and playgrounds, help clean-up the Anacostia River, plant trees in urban neighborhoods, run urban farming projects at the National Arboretum, and facilitate workshops in environmental education, and build an environmental education center and trail in Beltsville, Maryland.

The team will undertake projects in four different areas:

1) Urban Environmental Projects in the District of Columbia

AmeriCorps participants will be instrumental in making a visible difference in DC. They will improve the grounds on at least eight recreation centers. Tree planting will be done as part of an urban reforestation initiative to replace trees lost due to elms, and sycamores lost to disease and other trees lost to the stress of an urban environment. Plantings will be done to beautify streets and avenues. Maintenance needed along Watts Branch and other tributaries to the Anacostia River will be conducted by the AmeriCorps crews.

2) Environmental Education in DC and Maryland

The Thomas L. Ayers Outdoor Classroom Program has received national awards. Thirty-six of the District's 146 public schools are currently participating in establishing outdoor classrooms on the school grounds. Teachers participate in workshops twice a year to share ideas and be exposed to information concerning environmental education. AmeriCorps participants will help to provide technical assistance to schools through this program. The work will include site surveys, landscape practices and hands-on educational activities with students.

3) Projects at National Conservation Center in Beltsville, Maryland

Participants would work under the general direction of the Director, National Conservation Center and be located at the NCC, Beltsville, Maryland.

Participants will: Create and build a state-of-the-art trail system, with handicapped accessibility for some or all of the trail, develop appropriate informational and educational materials for use on the trail and in environmental education programs, research and organize a visual information system (i.e., planning for slide to CD-ROM transfers) for use in educational and informational programs, and complete planning and initial construction activities for an outdoor amphitheater.

The first focus of 1994 National Service Corps activities is to develop a trail system from the parking area through the woods and around the 14-acre lake and back to the parking area. Enrollees will also locate the site of a planned outdoor amphitheater. Enrollees will link the proposed trail system to an old, abandoned trail in the area. Following approval of the trail location, enrollees will design, layout, and construct the trail(s) according to state-of-the-art trail construction practices and concepts. Enrollees will also construct rest areas, benches, viewing areas, and other approved structures along the trail and at the trailhead. Following the location and design of the trail system, enrollees will be locating the site for an amphitheater overlooking the lake. Trail crew members will be trained to determine trail location, and design and layout a trail system; understand construction methods and techniques using available resources whenever possible; ability to use hand equipment (hammers, screw drivers, axes, shovels), and have knowledge of basic construction techniques for benches, overlooks, small bridges, etc. Trail crew members will be trained to walk through unimproved terrain, handle heavy objects (i.e., buckets of water, rocks, and timbers).

After construction is completed, crew members would be responsible for revegetating disturbed areas with appropriate vegetative species determined in conjunction with the SCS

National Plant Materials Center (NPMC).

The second focus, beginning after the trail crew has laid out the trail system and sited the amphitheater, is to identify the multitude of natural features along the trail system and on-site environmental elements; i.e., climate; then plan and develop popular and educational materials and develop a visual (i.e., CD-ROM) library for use in the conference room, and propose, design, and write text for trail signs.

Trail signs should be developed to complement both the popular and educational materials. Participants would research modern trends and methods for trail signs, including ADA requirements and locate sites for appropriate signs. Material development enrollees will design the signs, develop verbiage, and obtain necessary visuals for signs.

Participants will also develop a Plant Materials program involving Conservation Plant Material displays and demonstration areas for use by the community and general public. This is an accessible area which yields great opportunities for education to the public from school age to retirement as well as several local university populations who are interested in natural resource management, conservation plant materials uses, and growing techniques and enjoyment of native plants during every season. The participants will work with federal and state agencies to develop Plant Material demonstration areas, involving organization, conservation planning, plant maintenance, planting, coordinating, and scheduling work with NPMC staff to accomplish goals.

4) Projects in the United States National Arboretum -

Participants will renovate areas throughout the USNA, including: the Gravel pit, Glenn Dale Azalea Hillside, and lower valley streambed along Hickey Run and Springhouse Run, Holly-Magnolia Collection, Bird Garden Area, the woods adjacent to the Old Conifer collection, Old Actinidia/Magnolia area, Hickey Hill area, area between Gotalli Collection and Dogwood Collection, the area between the Dogwood Collection and the Anacostia River, the area encompassing the Old Lilac Collection and Hickey Creek, and legume planting area. Such renovation would be either restoration to a natural condition or removal of weeds (to include unwanted woody shrub and trees) from around accessions. It will also include repair of drainage problems in an area, if appropriate. It could also include repair of hard structures in an area, such as roof repair on a building, replacement of trellises, or planting beds. Participants will also repair, widen, relocate or maintain trails throughout the USNA.

Furthermore, participants would help expand gardens worked on by DC Public school students, and would help run expanded nature tours for public school students and the general public.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE AND RECRUITMENT

Participants in the Summer of Safety program will receive first preference for joining the yearlong program. Any remaining participants needed would be recruited to maintain a full socio-economic mix in the program.

PARTICIPANTS BENEFITS

Before beginning project work, participants will receive extensive training and education

in conflict resolution, urban agriculture and forestry, team-building, work habits, and citizenship. Each Friday, corps members will participate in developing learning activities in leadership development, building self-esteem, decision making, developing interpersonal skills, and setting personal goals. Curriculum will be selected from a number of available sources identified by the National 4-H Youth Development Office of USDA, the USDA Soil Conservation Service, and the Forest Service. For both the AmeriCorps participants and the volunteers, the goals are to improve the spirit of citizenship, boost their knowledge of farming, gardening, and urban restoration issues, improve their ability to work together with peers from diverse backgrounds, and boost their knowledge of potential careers in agriculture.

Each participant in the program will also be matched-up with a USDA employee from national headquarters who will spend at least two hours a week with each participant providing mentoring and other personal assistance.

INTERNAL EVALUATION AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES

Throughout the duration of the initiative, SCS will continually evaluate activities, techniques and progress to ensure that resources are used effectively, work schedule is maintained, productivity is maintained, and work is being performed on authorized projects. Benchmarks will be established by a team, including AmeriCorps participants which will go through facilitated process evaluation meetings to identify and resolve problems and needs of the project and the participants. This process will be documented and submitted in the final report.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Technical assistance and administrative support will be provided to this entire project under the supervision of Robert Klumpe, State Conservationist of Maryland. The project will

be under the overall coordination of Jeff Anlicker, Director of the SCS Earth Team Program.

At the Washington, D.C. site, the work will be supervised by Lillian Woods, District Conservationist. She will work with the environmental staff of the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, the Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors, D.C. Department of Recreation, Dept. of Public Works, and the University of the District of Columbia.

Individual Site Application #14
Environment Team
Chicago, Illinois

SUMMARY

USDA has just received a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service to run a Summer of Safety program in conjunction with the Chicago High School Agricultural Sciences, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Chicago Housing Authority. In this summer program, a socio-economically diverse group of 50 participants will engage in both urban agriculture and public safety projects at the Ida B. Wells Public Housing Development, as well as at a large vacant lot in another crime-ridden neighborhood. The application proposes continuing the project year long with a group of 30 participants who will help sustain and expand the program in 1995. In the fall, the participants will help maintain and harvest the agriculture projects and continue to protect the project areas as safe havens. In the winter, the participants will run environmental education and conflict resolution seminars in Chicago schools. In the spring and summer of 1995, the participants will recruit 500 younger volunteers to help expand the urban agriculture and public safety projects to an additional two public housing developments and an additional two empty lots. This project will meet critical public safety, educational, and environmental needs in neighborhoods of Chicago with extraordinarily high levels of poverty, violence, and unemployment. The project will also demonstrate the long-term sustainability and expansion potential of AmeriCorps.

NEEDS TO BE MET

Street gang activity has caused the widespread destruction of lives and property in many low-income Chicago neighborhoods. The statistics are staggering. According to a December report by the National Institute of Justice, between 1987 and 1990, there were 17,085 reported criminal offenses in Chicago classified by the police as street gang-related. These included 288 homicides, 8,828 nonlethal violent offenses, and 5,888 drug offenses. About 38,000^{people} mostly young people, are active in Chicago's 40 major street gangs. Many young Chicagoans are engaged in criminal activity independent of gangs. As a result, the state of Illinois ranks 20th among states for the death rate of children ages 1 - 14. In addition, the state ranks 19th in the number of juveniles (10-17 years of age) arrested for violent crimes.

The City of Chicago also is in great need of the kind of urban gardening and forestry projects that would increase the green space in the city. The USDA Forest Service recently concluded a three-year, cost-benefit analysis of trees in the city of Chicago. The study showed that each tree costing \$402 for planting and care resulted in annual energy savings of \$50-\$90 per dwelling unit. In addition, it was estimated that in 1991, the trees removed 6,145 tons of air pollutants, providing air cleansing valued at \$9.2 million dollars. The trees captured approximately 155,000 tons of carbon emissions, in addition to reducing carbon emissions from power plants by about 12,600 tons due to lower demand. There were about 50.8 million trees in the area surveyed. These economic factors are only one consideration. Trees provide an aesthetic quality to an area, reduce erosion, cut down wind abrasion, and

provide a renewable resource.

PROGRAM DESIGN

This September, the USDA Soil Conservation Service (SCS) will take over lead agency responsibilities for this project from the Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences, which is serving in this capacity for the Summer of Service program. SCS will provide overall administration for the program.

The 30 participants will work in three crews of ten each. Two of the crews will be managed directly by the Soil Conservation Service and one of the crews will be managed directly by the USDA Forest Service. The U.S. Department of Justice, the Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences, and the Chicago Housing Authority will provide ongoing technical assistance.

The purpose of this project is fourfold: to stem the rising tide of Chicago youth involved in violent crimes by engaging at-risk youth at an early age in productive and safe community activities; to engage a socio-economic mix of participants working with younger at-risk youth on environmental projects critical to the city; to promote awareness and appreciation of the benefits of land restoration in an urban environment; and to create safe spaces for community gardening and vacant lot projects to allow community residents to engage in other activities at that site. To meet those purposes, the projects will have three specific goals: 1) to engage 30 full-time, stipended corps members and at least 500 volunteers in creating urban farms and planting trees at three public housing projects and in reclaiming vacant lots for community gardens and quiet spaces at no less than three other

sites throughout the city; and 2) to help maintain these eight sites as safe places; 3) to teach classes on environmental education and conflict resolution in Chicago-area schools.

Given that more than half the students majoring in agricultural and natural resources in post-secondary institutions today come from non-farm backgrounds, this project can play an important role in encouraging some youths to prepare for eventual careers in agriculture.

At each site, a committee will be organized to provide input and direction to the agriculture and public safety projects, select topics for personal and leadership development, and determine appropriate supplemental activities. By canvassing neighborhoods, corps members will research prospective sites within the neighborhood even before the school vacation begins. This in itself will prove to be a valuable learning experience for corps members. Thus, the neighborhoods will have significant input in determining whether the summer program is appropriate to meet the community's needs.

Neighborhood support is essential to involve youth from the neighborhoods and to develop pride and respect for the efforts that are expended. Previous experience teaches us that when neighborhood members are involved, incidents of vandalism, harassment, etc. are significantly reduced and volunteer recruitment is significantly bolstered. To perpetuate some of the program's activities beyond the summer program, volunteer structures will be created to keep the gardens open and safe throughout the remainder of the year.

Participants will engage in urban farming, tree planting, and environmental education projects at the following three public housing projects:

- 1) Ida B. Wells, prime site of the Chicago Housing Authority Summer of Safety program, located on the City's south side, has a population of 5,660 living in 2,788 units.

Wells is a target site for the U.S. Department of Justice's Weed & Seed Program and has received substantial assistance in both law enforcement and prevention efforts ranging from recreational to educational activities.

2) The Robert Taylor Homes, located on 95 acres on Chicago's south side, has 12,320 residents and is the largest public housing development in the world. This development is very much in need of greening.

3) The Henry Horner Homes house 3,057 people on Chicago's west side and were the site for the award-winning book and subsequent television movie *There Are No Children Here*. Because of its location adjacent to train tracks and within a desolate and poverty-stricken area, Horner would benefit tremendously from a greening program.

The project will also work on an empty lot selected for the Summer.

The two other sites will have the following three components:

1) Farms/Gardens

- A. Children's garden - 25 - 30, 4' x 4' raised vegetable, flowers and herbs beds.
- B. Adults garden - 25 - 30, 4' x 8' raised beds. Parents of youth and other adults in neighborhood would be assigned individual plots.
- C. Market garden - maintained by youth and adults; vegetables and herbs to be sold through Windows for Opportunity, Inc., Farmers Market Nutrition Program at Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) Robert Taylor Homes.
- D. Educational - Meeting area - front of the garden will be seeded or sodded with turf; flowers, shrubs and small trees will be planted with picnic tables available for meetings, or programs.

E. Windowbox gardening -- Public housing residents will learn how to grow flowers or small plants in their windows.

2) Quiet Corners

- newly built and installed benches
- play areas for small children
- open community centers for arts and crafts and other displays
- open spots for farmer's markets, healthy baby festivals, etc.

3) Tree Planting

- Tree planting at public housing developments
- Tree planting at vacant lots
- Joint agreements to plant and maintain trees in front of homes

The participants will continue to receive ongoing training and assistance in the public safety aspects of the program from the Chicago Public Housing Authority and the Chicago Police Department.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE AND RECRUITMENT

Participants in the Summer of Safety program will receive first preference for joining the year long program. Any remaining participants needed would be recruited to maintain a full socio-economic mix in the program.

PARTICIPANT BENEFITS

Before beginning project work, participants will receive extensive training and education in conflict resolution, urban agriculture and forestry, community policing, team-

building, work habits, and citizenship. Each Friday, corps members will participate in developing learning activities in leadership development, building self-esteem, decision making, developing interpersonal skills, and setting personal goals. Curriculum will be selected from a number of available sources identified by the National 4-H Youth Development Office of USDA, the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, the USDA Soil Conservation Service and Forest Service, and the Chicago Housing Authority.

For both the AmeriCorps participants and the volunteers, the goals are to improve the spirit of citizenship, decrease the likelihood that participants will engage in illegal activities, improve knowledge of farming, gardening, and urban restoration issues, improve their ability to work together with peers from diverse backgrounds, boost their knowledge of potential careers in agriculture, and obtain an increased understanding of the need for public safety in their neighborhoods.

INTERNAL EVALUATION AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES

National service staff from the Washington offices of the Department of Agriculture and Justice will make at least one unannounced visit to the project within its first month of operation. The local project staff will also use both an ongoing process evaluation and an impact assessment. In-depth interview and observation data will be gathered to keep track of the implementation process project.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Charles Whitmore is the State Conservationist for SCS in Illinois. He will have final responsibility for the AmeriCorps project in Chicago. Kent Sims, District Conservationist for SCS, will be the project manager in Chicago.

**Individual Site Application #15
Environment Team
Portland, Oregon**

SUMMARY

Twenty participants will work in teams of two on this project which will include work on the Columbia Slough, an important waterway in Portland.

The Columbia Slough is an 18-mile long waterway which is a remnant of the historic Columbia River flood plain and wetlands. The slough begins in the headwaters of Fairview Creek in Gresham which travels north to Fairview Lake and then through agricultural and urban land uses before emptying into the Willamette River. The Slough has been designated "water quality limited" meaning that its water quality does not meet state water quality standards. Point source and nonpoint source pollution have caused these degraded conditions and resulting loss of beneficial uses in many streams within the urban area. AmeriCorps participants will be trained in habitat restoration and natural resource management skills while working to restore a portion of the Columbia Slough at the Whitaker Pond. Water quality/watershed issues are complex and of increasing concern to the public in the Portland Metropolitan area. Increasing growth and development pressures are impacting on agriculture, recreation, wildlife, along with protection of river corridors for flood control and water quality. In addition, citizens value rivers, streams, and natural areas for the sense of place, livability and enjoyment of the region they provide. Watershed resources management plays a role in these issues and serves as the interconnecting link between local residents' expectations and impacts on the natural landscape.

This proposal represents a unique collaboration between agencies: the Metropolitan

Service District (Metro), the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Community Assistance Office, Portland State University, Portland Public Schools and the City of Portland (Bureaus of Environmental Services. and Parks and Recreation). In addition to these project sponsors, a number of support agencies including youth organizations and conservation groups will provide important technical and community support for the proposed projects. Each of the sponsoring agencies have joined forces in this program to focus on two critical issues within this community: the challenges of preserving and restoring vital natural resources in the urban area and the crisis facing our endangered urban youth. Together these agencies bring a continuity of commitment and experience with youth and conservation work which provides a strong and diversified base of support to assure success.

NEEDS TO BE MET

During the last few years numerous studies and media articles have generated awareness about polluted streams in the region, noting that increasing urbanization and poor land management threatens the water quality of surface and ground water throughout the metropolitan area. Groundwater has been contaminated in different locations and groundwater shortages are of a growing concern to industry as well as rural and urban residents in the area. In all cases, water quality problems do not stay within political or jurisdictional boundaries. Coordinated efforts among a coalition of agencies, organizations, industry and citizen groups will be required to address issues on bioregional or basin-wide basis for the approximately 120 water basins and sub-basins in the region.

This proposal is a timely response to the convergence of a number of natural resource management factors 1992 Area Wide Water Quality Report, Metropolitan Service District

focuses on the impact of increasing population, development and urban density in the region and the importance of balancing the need for growth management and protection of the natural environment.

Process to identify needs:

During the summer and early fall of 1993, representatives from the SCS and SWCD in the region met with individuals from several agencies, governmental units, and citizens from throughout the region to discuss the environmental needs of the region and the role of SWCDs in addressing these needs. An agreement was reached to develop a proposal for a cooperative program to address these concerns and to submit this proposal for the location of a Community Assistance Office in the Portland area. As a result of these meetings, a consensus was formed on water quality and watershed issues in the region as a common priority environmental concern.

The Community Assistance Program Office is a recently formed cooperative approach to sharing new program and technical resources between the SCS and the four SWCD's covering the three counties with the active participation of the partner agencies of Metro and the City of Portland. A priority for the member SWCD's of this new Program Office is the development of opportunities for inner city youth to participate in important urban conservation efforts. This collaboration is considered the most cost effective way to address pressing urban conservation issues and youth opportunity needs.

Oregon's child poverty rate has increased by 26.7% in the last decade; only eleven other states exceeded Oregon in the percentage increase in childhood poverty during this period. Many complex, inter-connected problems such as malnutrition, poor health care,

homelessness, drug abuse, crime and violence, dysfunctional families, and school dropout are the tragic consequences of poverty.

A special problem for Portland, and a major factor endangering children and youth, is the rapid increase in gang activity. Police cases involving gang activity have risen from almost none in 1986 to over 3,000 in 1992. Gang violence devastates neighborhoods with robberies, assaults, drive-by murders, and drug sales. Drug selling by out-of-state gang members, largely from California, is increasing. Black gangs in Portland were involved in 142 known shootings, 426 assaults, and 171 robberies in 1991. Vietnamese, Chinese, and other Asian gangs have grown in power and violence, with police reporting 346 gang related incidents in 1991, including 102 acts of violence. White supremacy gangs are increasing in Portland and last year were involved in 47 assaults, 104 acts of intimidation or harassment, and one homicide. This proposed program will establish important new opportunities for youth and young adults within the most poverty impacted areas.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Whitaker Ponds/Columbia Slough Pilot Project addresses the natural resource restoration needs of the Columbia Slough in North Portland and education and skill-building needs of inner city youth. This pilot project will be implemented in partnership with the Whitaker School site on the Columbia Slough with young adults, between the ages of 17 and 24 over a two year period. The work sites offers the unique opportunity for restoration and training, as well as improving water quality and habitat along the Columbia Slough. Each participant in the program will be provided with highly supported and supervised work experience.

The project is intended to be a pilot for the development of a new curriculum and certificate program in urban natural resource management and stream restoration. This curriculum will be developed through the collaborative efforts of Portland State University and Portland Public Schools. The certificate program is envisioned to be an end use degree which qualifies participants for the emerging career and job opportunities within this region. The certificate can also be used as a prerequisite qualification to a further degree in higher education.

Participants for the two projects will be trained through a combination of staff and faculty resources from the sponsoring agencies. The Portland Parks Bureau and Metro will provide orientation and field training for participants performing conservation work and supervising youth work crews in the natural resources areas targeted by this project. Through direct involvement, Portland State faculty will provide employability and skill training as well as educational support for participants in the program. This will provide an opportunity for the participants who are not in college to gain access to higher education and for those in college to sustain and enhance their education.

Participants will be placed in projects as determined by a planning committee comprised of representatives from the sponsoring agencies. These placements will be consistent with the priorities established within Metro's Green Spaces program and the City of Portland's Natural Resource Management Areas. Supervision of participants will be provided by Portland Park Bureau and Metro staff which provide management services to the project areas. In addition, the proposed budget funds two crew supervisor positions to provide in-the-field supervision for the Whitaker Ponds/Columbia Slough Pilot Project.

maintained, productivity is maintained, and work is being performed on authorized projects. Benchmarks will be established for the Columbia Slough project to ensure that it stays on track.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONNEL INFORMATION:

The Soil Conservation Service will have the lead responsibility for this project. Robert Graham is the State Conservationist for Oregon. His staff includes a range of technical experts and administrative personnel to handle the management of this work.

They are working in partnership with the Portland Metro, recently consolidated with the Multnomah County Parks Department. Metro will provide on-site supervision, training and project funding through their Green Spaces program. In addition, the City of Portland Parks and Recreation and the Bureau of Environmental Services will provide staff for field supervision to the work crews.