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1st Quarter 95/95

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

AmeriCorps students work at RSC Reserve

By ROGERS STATE COLLEGE

The Rogers State College Conservation Education Reserve has five new caretakers this semester thanks to President Clinton's AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps is the national service program that allows students to work in a variety of community programs. In return, students are gi-

ven an educational award which may be used to pay for college, job training, graduate school or to pay back loans.

Arnold Hamilton, district conservation-national resource conservation service representative, said the college's reserve has five AmeriCorps students working in a variety of projects. The team's main

project is to complete the development of the hardwoods trail, but they assist in all projects at the reserve.

The RSC AmeriCorps students are Tonia D.L. Fitzpatrick and Tanisha Laverne Brooks, both of Oklahoma City; Steven M. Southard of Tahlequah; Melanie D. Sumter of Stillwater (formerly of Claremore); and Heather J. Dawson of Nowata.

"I think the AmeriCorps program is a very good idea," said Sumter. "It gives people a chance to get out in the world and get some experience for their future and it helps to pay off college."

Sumter has a degree in animal science from Oklahoma State University. She plans to work with youth in an extension program.

"I am looking forward to this spring when we get to present the programs and give educational tours to kids who visit the reserve," she said. "That will be great experience for me."

Nowata native Heather Dawson said she became interested in AmeriCorps while working in the National Resources Conservation Service office in Nowata.

"I was told about the program and decided it would be a good experience for me," she said. "I am planning on attending Rogers State College when I finish the program and to use AmeriCorps to pay for college. The fact that the program is giving me the opportunity to go to school is the biggest thing for me."

Hamilton said the students have undergone training in the environmental programs available at the reserve, such as "Project Wet, Wild and Learning Tree" and other environmental issues relating to tallgrass, forest and wetlands ecology.

"They have been trained to present the environmental education programs for the more than 10,000 visitors the reserve expects to have next spring," Hamilton said. "They will present the various programs and serve as staff members of the reserve."

Hamilton said the students were selected from a diverse background and have different environmental concerns. He said the goal is to teach the AmeriCorps students how to present programs to younger children so that they will be more interested and have a better understanding of the environment.

"We think the AmeriCorps students will be able to present these

programs in a new way so that younger kids will be able to relate better to the subject matter," he said. "The visitors will learn more, the AmeriCorps students will learn more, and the reserve will benefit tremendously from this program."

The RSC program is part of the Oklahoma Natural Resources Conservation Service's participation in AmeriCorps. Participants in this program will renovate windbreaks in western Oklahoma and develop conservation and environmental education opportunities in northeast Oklahoma, including the RSC group.

Hamilton said the five AmeriCorps students at RSC have the opportunity for self-improvement such

Education

as public speaking, management, team building and study skills. They also will be trained in natural sciences, stewardship projects, conservation education, wildlife management, environment and ecosystem relationships.

AmeriCorps participants may serve up to one year earning a stipend of at least \$7,945 and an educational award worth \$4,725 that may be used to pay back student loans or as a scholarship for higher education or vocational training.

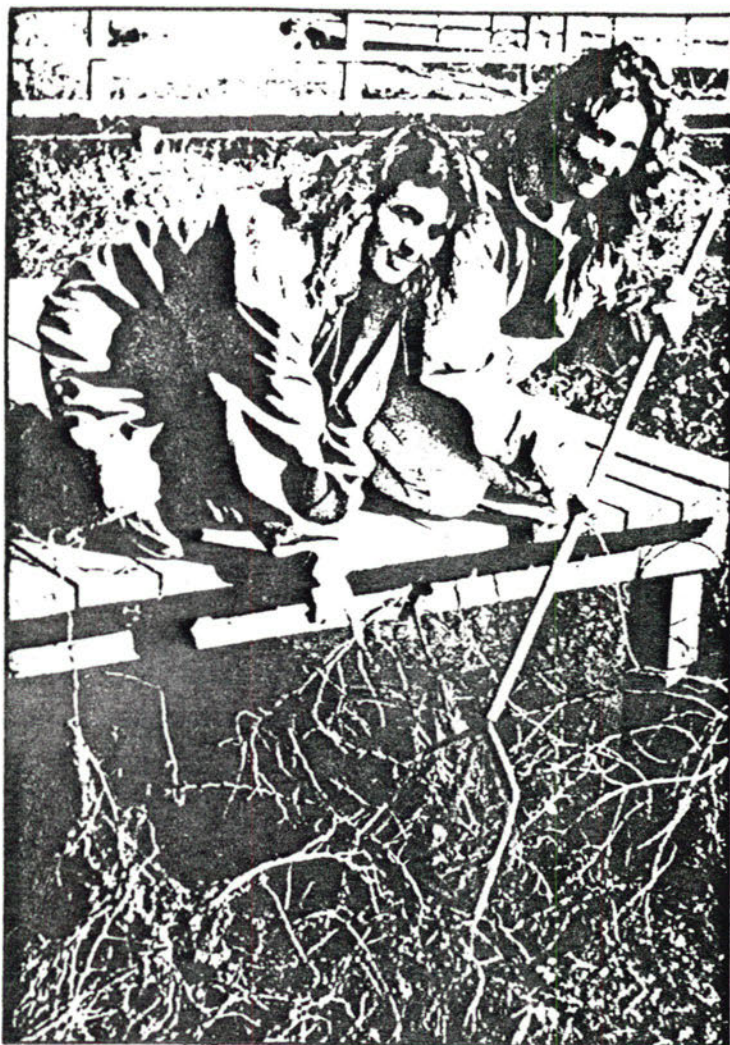
Currently, there are more than 20,000 young Americans participating in the AmeriCorps program nationwide.

The AmeriCorps program is just one new aspect of the RSC Conservation Education Reserve.

This year, a new indoor wetlands lab was constructed. Hamilton said the lab will enable reserve staff members to present programs indoors on rainy days, as well as providing a place for student lab work.

The reserve is a 120-acre outdoor facility that features an amphitheatre for programs, a butterfly garden, walking trails, pond and dock, viewing tower, and a challenge course. Each year, thousands of visitors take advantage of the educational programs and other services available at the reserve.

For more information, call Hamilton at 341-4147.



AmeriCorps trainees

Melanie Sumter (right) of Claremore and Heather Dawson of Nowata work at the pond on the Rogers State Conservation Education Reserve. They are two of five AmeriCorps students working to help pay for their college. (RSC Photo)

USDA gives grant to Albany Service Corps

ALBANY — The USDA Farm Service Agency has awarded one of eight grants nationwide to the Albany Service Corps for a project called "Summer of Gleaning," which will employ six college-bound members to work with farmers and local emergency food suppliers in a multi-county area. Surplus produce will be harvested by the Americorps members and distributed to food pantries, soup kitchens and other facilities in Albany, Schenectady and Troy.

Through the efforts of this group and project partners, it is hoped that 20,000 low-income

individuals will benefit from this supply of fresh produce each month. Groups participating in this effort are many and include Albany County Farm Service Agency, Albany Department of Human Resources, The Hunger Action Network of NYS, Food Pantries of the Capital District, the Regional Food Bank, the Capital Gleaning Network, and The Schenectady Inner City Monasteries.

Tom Della Rocco, Farm Service Agency Director in Albany County, noted that in addition to serving as facilitators to move food from the field to

families in need; Americorps members will learn about New York State's number one industry, agriculture, and the challenges producers face to feed America.

Americorp members will also work in a 3/4-acre "Harvest for the Hungry" garden located on the SUNY Albany Campus. They will work with local food pantries.

The goal of this project is to glean 10 tons of food and make it available to 20,000 low-income individuals each month through 100 local emergency food sites.

OPINIONS

HAYS DAILY NEWS
HAYS, KANSAS
NOVEMBER 30, 1995

EDITOR'S OPINION

Americorps exists for a reason

Americorps is sometimes maligned as an example of unnecessary federal spending, of liberal Democratic policy run amuck.

We wonder if anybody in Hays sees it that way today.

Americorps is President Clinton's national service program for young adults, a sort of domestic Peace Corps. They work in exchange for a small stipend and college tuition.

One group, organized through Fort Hays State University, assists non-profit youth organizations. Nearly 30 volunteers are working in Hays and surrounding cities, helping in libraries, Head Start classrooms, counseling programs, and scout troops.

A second, more visible contingent, funded through the U.S. Agriculture Department, has been at work in Hays since mid-October cleaning up Big Creek.

Big Creek does not have the grandeur of, say, the Mississippi River, nor the power of the Colorado, but it is vital to Hays. People take pleasure in its trees and wildlife. They walk along its dike for exercise. They celebrate Oktoberfest on its banks.

Unfortunately, the creek has been littered with brush and dead trees since it flooded in 1993. Additional flooding this spring only made things worse.

Big Creek's eroded banks were not just an eyesore, said Ken Urban, an Ellis County Soil Conservation Ser-

vice official, they were a safety problem.

Enter a group of about 11 Americorps volunteers, supervised by Urban.

They've picked up the brush. They've cleared out dead trees. Big Creek is looking better already.

And along the way, something wonderful has happened. A group of young people from different backgrounds, with different skills, have learned to work together. They have discovered the satisfaction of hard, physical labor. They have experienced the value of public service, and they will be better because of it.

To those who regard Americorps as a waste of tax money, we ask this: Where have you and your volunteers been since 1993, when Big Creek flooded? Why didn't you collect the brush and clear the trees?

What have you done to assist the children of northwest Kansas? What have you done to improve its libraries? What skills have you shared in its classrooms?

What have you done to bring young people together? What have you done to cultivate their work ethic and make them better citizens?

Americorps exists because too few of us did what was needed, and it should continue to exist until the spirit of public service takes hold.

Which, considering how long Big Creek was neglected, could be a long time.

— editorial by Gregory Halling

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[The Hays Daily News, Wednesday, November 29, 1995]

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

The Hays Daily News



ABOVE: Lance Hockett, an Americorps team leader, removes large logs that were cut in Frontier Park as Americorps volunteers continue the clean-up project along Big Creek this week in Hays. **ABOVE RIGHT:** A chipper was used to process the smaller branches and limbs that littered the creek bottom.

Dirty work



And the Americorps teams in Hays are the people doing it

Somehow, there are always things that should be done that ordinarily don't.

That's the whole reason for Americorps, said Ken Urban, an Ellis County Soil Conservation Service official.

At the same time, the two-year-old national service program gives college-age people a way to give back something to their communities for their education.

Urban supervises an Americorps group in Hays. Since mid-October, Urban's seven full-time and four part-time crew members have been concentrating on beautification and conservation projects both in the city and on the campus of Fort Hays State University.

His projects are being funded through the U.S. Agriculture Department.

Another Americorps component, organized through Fort Hays State University for up to 40 part-time members, is providing support to non-profit organizations dealing with youth, said Dee Strong, FHSU Americorps office director.

Much of Big Creek through the FHSU campus and Frontier Park has been cleaned of brush and dead trees in preparation for planting, beautification, accessibility and conservation projects in the coming year.

The job has needed doing since floods littered and damaged the banks in 1993 and again this year. Eroded banks

[The Hays Daily News, Wednesday, November 29, 1995]

PHOTOCOPY
CONSERVATION

Daily News



66TH YEAR, NO. 17585

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28-29, 1995



Photos by GARY McCRACKEN

Daniel Noonan, project leader, above left, and Scott Burgwin, along with a dozen other Americorps volunteers clear hurricane debris from the property of Robby and Brigitte LaPlace on St. Thomas. Volunteer Ana Gomes, below, prepares to throw debris into the back of a truck.

Americorps volunteers 'a blessing'



By NICOLE BOLLENTINI
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Brigitte LaPlace of Estate Mandahl calls them angels.

These angels wear gray T-shirts and work boots and have spent the last two days cleaning up the huge piles of debris that were once the LaPlace family home.

The group of 20 are Americorps volunteers from throughout the United States.

"This is such a big help," La Place said. "Contractors told us it would cost a couple of thousand to clean this up, and then these guys came along — it's a blessing."

The large trailer home that LaPlace

and her 5-year-old daughter, Grisette, and husband, Robby, lived in was completely demolished despite the fact that it was built to withstand 125 mph winds and was held by several anchor lines.

"We got out just in time," she said and pointed to the trailer's metal floor frame which was on its side and wrapped around two palm trees.

Americorps is the national service organization started by President Clinton. Most volunteers are exchanging their time for a scholarship or for help paying off student loans.

There are an estimated 1,200 Americorps volunteers across the country, said

▼ See VOLUNTEERS, page 2

VOLUNTEERS CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Team exchanges time for scholarships, to pay off loans

project leader Scott Burgwin of Washington. He said Americorps members work on all types of projects — from fighting hunger to saving forests.

The Americorps volunteers, who are mostly in their mid-20s, arrived on St. Thomas two weeks ago and will be in the Virgin Islands until Nov. 18.

Burgwin said about half the Americorps team was working with the Agriculture Department's food distribution program while the rest are spending their time doing mostly debris-removal.

"We can't build houses or give loans, but hopefully we are doing something that makes people's lives a little better," he said.

On Friday they sorted through what was left of the LaPlace home in Estate Mandahl. It was hot, dirty work and the Americorps volunteers said they had spotted tarantulas and scorpions while on the job.

But volunteer Vontese Crawford's enthusiasm could not be dampened.

"It is really amazing to see how much damage was done and to see what a difference we can make in people's lives by spending a little time helping them," Crawford said. "It is so inspirational, I wish I had 10 hands to do more and could stay longer."

Crawford, 21, works with the Los Angeles Interfaith Hunger Coalition. She and the other volunteers

were hand-picked from different Americorps groups across the country.

Before she began removing debris, Crawford worked to help set up the emergency food-stamp program on St. Croix.

Dina Kountoupes of Oberlin, Ohio, has most recently been volunteering at the Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont.

"This is similar to what I was doing before," she said. "You get up and eat breakfast and go out and work all day."

Kountoupes, 24, said the group has spent much of its stay in the Virgin Islands cleaning up the yards and homes of the elderly.

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people who can't help themselves," she said.

The Americorps workers, who are assigned their work by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, say they have a lot of sympathy for Virgin Islanders who have suffered as a result of Hurricane Marilyn.

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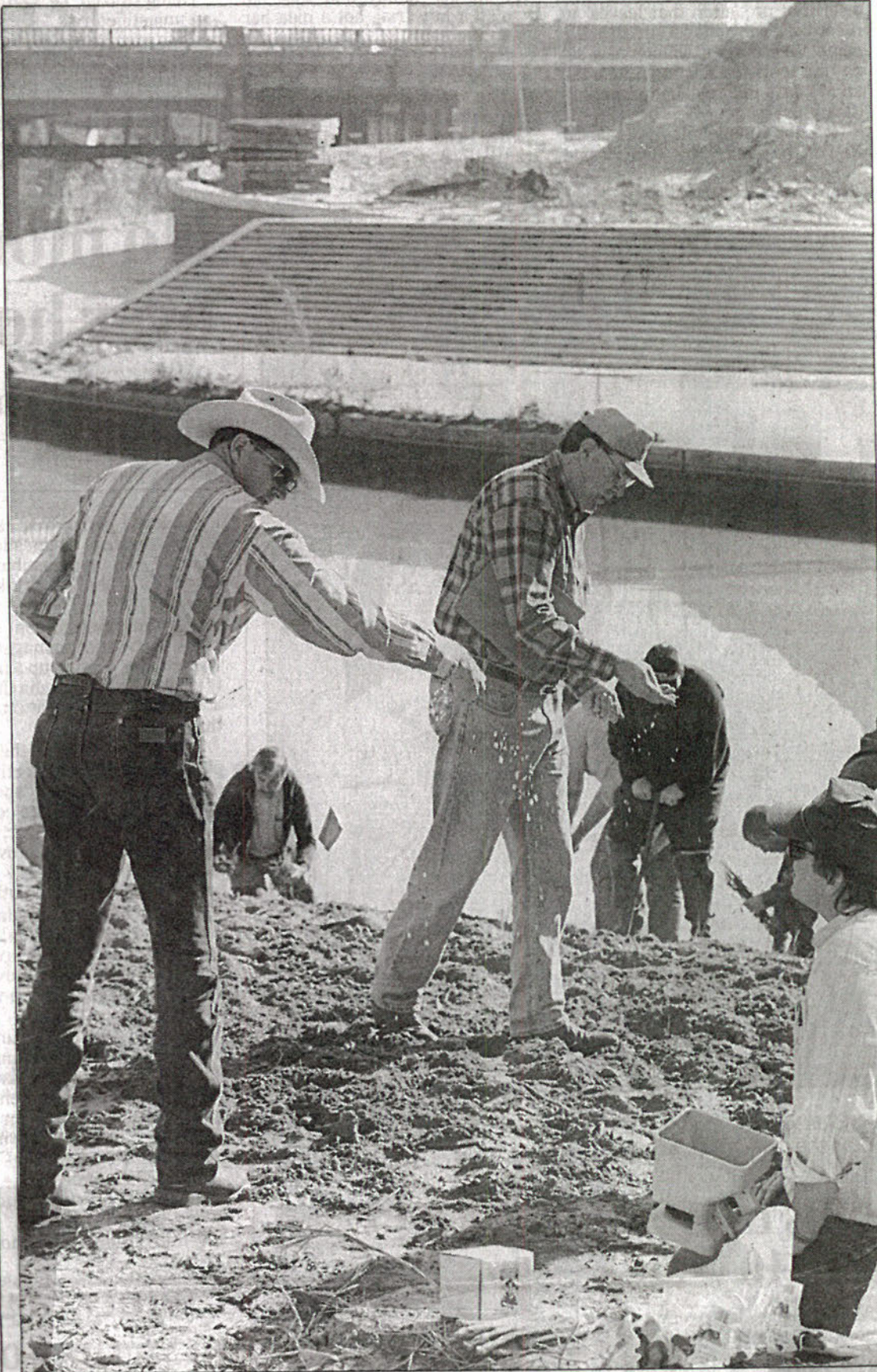
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Let it grow, let it grow



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HOUSTON, TEXAS
JANUARY 11, 1996**

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

Buster Dean / Chronicle
Jam Alderson, left, and Bennie Billington spread grass seed while AmeriCorps Houston workers plant grass along Buffalo Bayou in Sesquicentennial Park. The project is part of a plan to beautify areas along the bayou and control erosion.

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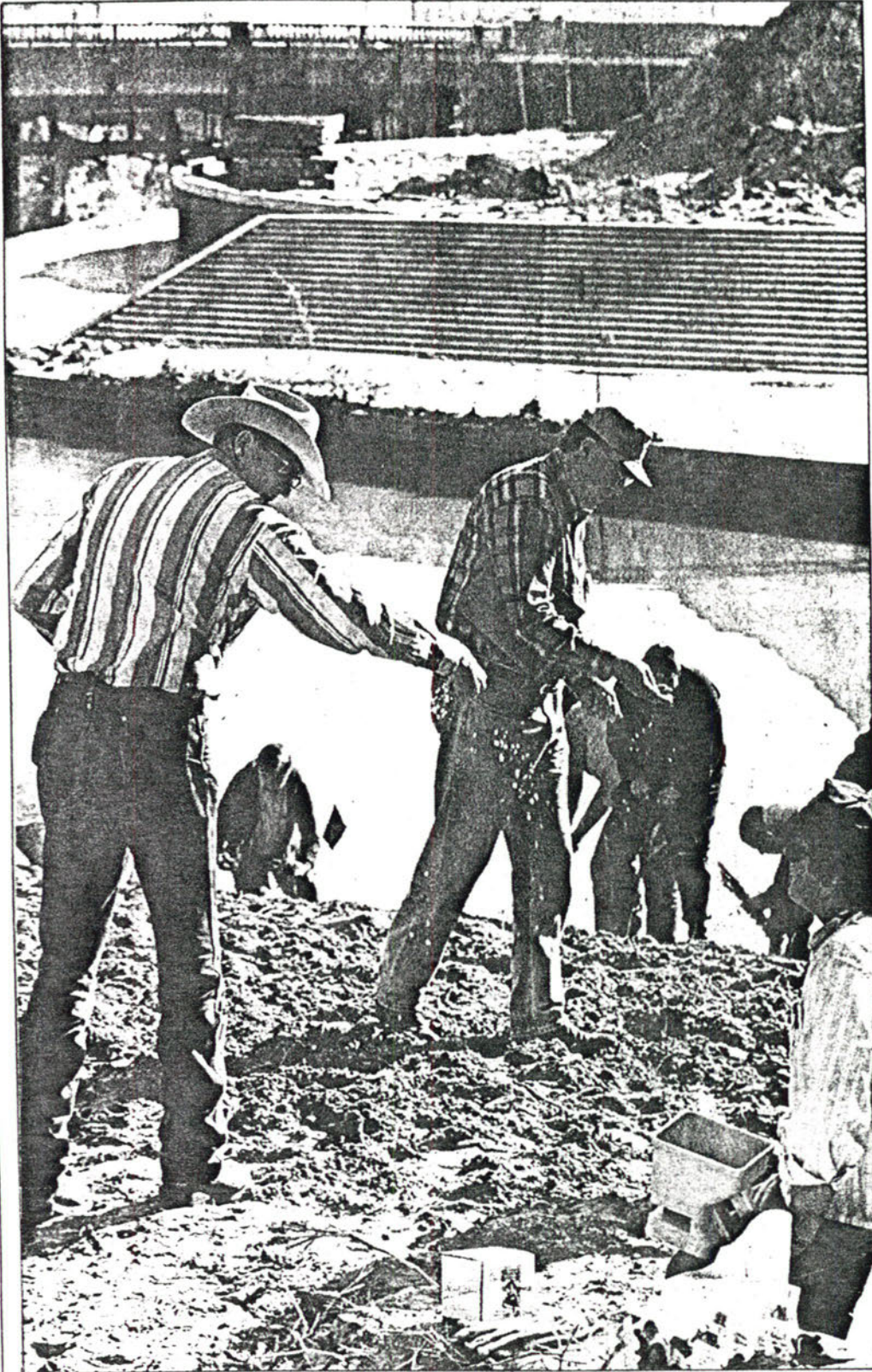
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THE BENNETT COUNTY BOOSTER II
MARTIN, SOUTH DAKOTA
OCTOBER 26, 1995

Domestic Peace Corps To Work On Reservations

Fifteen AmeriCorps/Team United States Department of Agriculture members took their Oath of Service on Tuesday, October 24, at Rosebud.

The AmeriCorps members are making a 10-12 month commitment to their communities and will be headquartered at Ft. Pierre and Rosebud, says Joyce Watkins, Project Director.

Watkins says, "AmeriCorps is the President's national service initiative establishing a 'domestic Peace Corps' and the AmeriCorps/Team United States Department of Agriculture and

was designed to rebuild rural America, protect the environment, and fight hunger."

"AmeriCorps/Team United States Department of Agriculture members will be helping with range improvement and water quality activities including: planting vegetation for erosion control; planting and harvesting timber; building fence; testing and monitoring recreational waters, streams and wells; educational outreach to adults and children, as well as, other locally identified natural resource improvement projects to help communities," she continues.

In exchange for 1,700 hours of service to their communities, members earn a living stipend of \$7,945 or \$12,000 based on qualifications and experience, and an educational award of \$4,725. "The educational award is like a savings account that members can use to pay back qualifying student loans or to continue their education any time during the next seven years, says Watkins." Members also have options for health insurance, educational loan deferment on qualifying loans, and may qualify for child care assistance.

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[Claremore Progress, Sunday, November 19, 1995]

CLAREMORE PROGRESS
CLAREMORE, OKLAHOMA
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For more information, call Hamilton at 341-4147.



AmeriCorps trainees

Melanie Sumter (right) of Claremore and Heather Dawson of Nowata work at the pond on the Rogers State Conservation Education Reserve. They are two of five AmeriCorps students working to help pay for their college. (RSC Photo)

AmeriCorps Team finishes first project

By EMILY WHITE HAT
AmeriCorps Team Member

ROSEBUD - The Rosebud AmeriCorps Team has finished cutting 100 cords of wood that will be distributed to the elders and needy people on the reservation.

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MISSION (TODD COUNTY) TRIBUNE
TODD COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA
DECEMBER 14, 1995

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SIOUX CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA

A 6—The Sioux City Journal, Sunday, October 29, 1995

Siouxland

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PRESERVATION

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DECEMBER 14, 1995

THE BENNETT COUNTY BOOSTER II
MARTIN, SOUTH DAKOTA
OCTOBER 26, 1995

Domestic Peace Corps. To Work On Reservations

Fifteen AmeriCorps/Team United States Department of Agriculture members took their Oath of Service on Tuesday, October 24, at Rosebud.

The AmeriCorps members are making a 10-12 month commitment to their communities and will be headquartered at Ft. Pierre and Rosebud, says Joyce Watkins, Project Director.

Watkins says, "AmeriCorps is the President's national service initiative establishing a 'domestic Peace Corps' and the AmeriCorps/Team United States Department of Agriculture and

was designed to rebuild rural America, protect the environment, and fight hunger."

"AmeriCorps/Team United States Department of Agriculture members will be helping with range improvement and water quality activities including: planting vegetation for erosion control; planting and harvesting timber; building fence; testing and monitoring recreational waters, streams and wells; educational outreach to adults and children, as well as, other locally identified natural resource improvement projects to help communities," she continues.

In exchange for 1,700 hours of service to their communities, members earn a living stipend of \$7,945 or \$12,000 based on qualifications and experience, and an educational award of \$4,725. "The educational award is like a savings account that members can use to pay back qualifying student loans or to continue their education any time during the next seven years, says Watkins." Members also have options for health insurance, educational loan deferment on qualifying loans, and may qualify for child care assistance.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Woodward News

■ Lobbyist Law / page 6

■ Area Basketball / page 16

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One Section

The Daily Newspaper For All of Northwest Oklahoma

Thursday, November 30, 1995

[Woodward News, Thursday, November 30, 1995]

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

AmeriCorps members underway

Having recruited only nine persons previously for the possible 10 positions available for the Nebraska AmeriCorps/Team USDA Program, the Plainview position has now been filled by Nadene Chavet of Plainview.

AmeriCorps is the president's national service initiative to achieve direct results in addressing the nation's critical education, human service, public safety and environmental needs at the community level.

Of the 10 positions filled by the program, five are located in southeast Nebraska and five in northeast Nebraska.

Chavet was recently added to the northeast's staff and will be located at the Plainview Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) office.

Chavet graduated from Wayne State College in December with a BS degree in Business Administration and is beginning to work on a MBA program this month.

The other four in northeast Nebraska are Mary Rose Backhaus of Randolph and Stephen Wilson Cook of Sioux City at the Ponca site, Carmen Shaffer of Randolph at the Plainview office and Bonnie Tyrrell at the North Central RC&D office in Bassett.

AmeriCorps members are available to assist communities and their volunteers with rural development projects. Community projects considered can be in areas other than the three main objectives of the group. The three objectives are:

1. Identify and reduce the volume of solid waste reaching landfills by 20 percent through establishment of five community programs.
2. Initiate the collection and recycling of household hazardous waste by the establishment of one collection center, and



Members of the AmeriCorps/Team USDA are, front row, left to right: Mary Rose Backhaus and Nadene Chavet; back row: Stephen Wilson Cook, Bonnie Tyrrell and Carmen Shaffer.

3. Develop and implement a recreational trail.

Each member of AmeriCorp also will have an individual community service objective.

Shaffer has set a goal of updating or establishing eight community profiles. A community profile is information about a town. Each profile will list a variety of information, like housing, transportation, health facilities, education, among other items.

Chavet, who is the newest member, has yet to set up her individual goal.

Other goals being looked at are recycling in five communities, hazardous waste collection day in three RC&D offices, a strategic plan for

economic development of multiple communities along the Cowboy Trail, establishment of park restrooms and flower gardens in Chambers, develop an educational presentation on the importance of recycling and develop an extended database of recycling resources and providers.

The Ponca group has already accomplished one of their goals, which was a photometric index of Ponca.

With the help of Ponca High School students, Wilson and Backhaus mapped and photographed areas of Ponca to watch the increase or decrease of waste material in parts of town.

PHOTOCOPY
RESTRICTION

[The Plainview News, Wednesday, January 10, 1996]

AMERICORPS BEGINS PROJECTS IN R.M. COUNTY



AmeriCorps/USDA projects celebrated the beginning of the second year of participation in the country's national service program during October with swearing ceremonies nationwide.

AmeriCorps is President Clinton's national service program, passed with bipartisan support from Congress, that engages 20,000 Americans of diverse backgrounds in performing service that meets critical community needs in return for an educational award, which may be used to pay for college, job training, or graduate school, or to pay back student loans. The majority of AmeriCorps Members are working in partnerships with states, local governments, and non-profit organizations.

U.S. Department of Agriculture will sponsor approximately 1,350 members in 45 states during 1995-96. Members will continue to serve on one of three types of teams: Anti-Hunger, Public Lands and Environment, and Rural

Development. On November 29 the AmeriCorps Team stationed at the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in Cheyenne was visited by Joel Berg, Director of National Service (USDA) Washington, D. C. Mr. Berg's goal for his trip to Oklahoma was to personally meet and work alongside AmeriCorps Members. During his visit to the area Mr. Berg helped the team renovate a tree row in western Roger Mills County. Renovations involve removing old, dead and diseased trees and planting new seedlings in the spring.

The team members are Octavio Villa Jr., Elk City, Jeremy Moler, Charles Hughes, Robert Jencks all of Cheyenne, and Brant Rogers, Rcydon. The AmeriCorps Team will be looking for renovations projects throughout the next nine months. If you are an interested landowner please contact your local USDA-NRCS office. The Cheyenne Team will be working in Roger Mills, Beckham and Custer Counties.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Agriculture

Serving, learning and earning in the AmeriCorps

In North Dakota this year the program's object is to increase awareness of the need for protecting ground and surface water

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON**
Staff Writer

Kelly Bosch and Jessica Krumwiede both were looking for a way to finance their college educations. They found it in a relatively new program similar to the Peace Corps, and their experience is paying off in more ways than just financially.

Bosch and Krumwiede, both of Devils Lake, signed up for AmeriCorps, a national service program started by President Clinton in 1994. Bosch is in his first year of service, Krumwiede in her second. They don't regret postponing their educations to work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"It's a worthy project — I really believe in it," Bosch said. "It's good for the experience and the scholarship."

Those who complete 1,700 hours of community work during nine months in the program earn a \$4,725 grant, said Jay Mar, manager of the Natural Resource Conservation Service Lake Agassiz Regional Council in Fargo. Mar is directing the AmeriCorps project in North Dakota this year.

The grant can be used to pay tuition or to pay off student loans.

Bosch, 19, and Krumwiede, 21, are two of five people in North Dakota working in AmeriCorps this year. Mar said they all want to go back to school but can't

afford to without some help.

Fulfilling a need

In North Dakota, AmeriCorps is run through the conservation service. The program's main objective this year is to increase awareness in rural communities and on farms — particularly in the southeastern part of the state — of the need for protecting ground and surface water from contamination.

That involves identifying potential sources of contamination both on farms and in towns, and documenting those sources, Krumwiede said.

"We put all that on a map, in case there was ever an accident," she said. "The town would then come up with a plan of what they would do in that situation."

Identifying possible sources of contamination means a lot of knocking on doors and asking questions, Bosch said.

"A lot is with farmers, and I can relate there," said Bosch, who grew up on a farm. "That



Krumwiede



Bosch

helps. If a vehicle with government plates pulls up, you never know what farmers will think. So it's nice to be able to relate."

The AmeriCorps members are also helping ranchers in the southeastern part of the state implement proper grazing management plans. They're doing that by sponsoring workshops and by doing inventories of field plant species for ranchers.

Communities also can request the AmeriCorps workers for a local project, Mars said.

"These are services that are not offered by anyone else," he said. "There's kind of a void, and that's where AmeriCorps comes in and provides assistance. And the beauty of the program is ... AmeriCorps does not charge the community."

For example, this year the AmeriCorps workers, who often work separately, teamed up to shore up the banks of the Turtle River in Grand Forks County using a method called bioengineering. The workers used willow cuttings and old evergreens to shore up the bank.

The AmeriCorps team will likely be undertaking a similar project on Brekken Lake in McLean County late next spring, Mar said.

Money and experience

For Bosch and Krumwiede, their experience with AmeriCorps has been nothing but beneficial.



Submitted photo

BANK WORK — Members of the AmeriCorps team shore up the banks of the Turtle River in Grand Forks County last fall. Next spring they'll probably be doing a similar project on the Brekken River in McLean County. "We don't call it working, we call it performing a service," said Jessica Krumwiede, a member of the team.

"It's given me confidence in myself and given me a great learning experience" said Krumwiede, who works out of the conservation service office in Fargo. "And the college scholarship will help immensely."

Krumwiede is planning to attend the University of North

Dakota in Grand Forks after her time with AmeriCorps ends next August. She's considering majoring in anthropology.

Bosch, who works out of the conservation service office in Wahpeton and plans to attend the North Dakota State School of Science in Wahpeton, said he

would like to work two years in AmeriCorps.

"It's real interesting work," he said. "I'm getting a lot of experience, and the scholarship does help a lot."

"It will help out with college, and it'll look real good on a resume."

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[False World]

Program's Worth Stressed

■ Conservation benefits are cited as the work of AmeriCorps crews is assessed in Oklahoma.

By A.B. Sidibe
World Staff Writer

CLAREMORE — Joel Berg, director of National Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, briskly stepped up and down winding trails, stopped to observe pond life, traded hiking stories with his hosts and glimpsed deer darting across the forest.

Berg was not on vacation, but on the last leg of a four-day visit to Oklahoma to see what AmeriCorps workers are doing.

Berg visited Rogers County Conservation District's Education Reserve located at Rogers State College.

The USDA is using 20 AmeriCorps workers in Oklahoma. They are among about 200 AmeriCorps workers doing everything from counseling teen-agers about avoiding sex to planting windbreaks near crops.

The USDA AmeriCorps program in Oklahoma has a budget of about \$300,000 said Berg. The national budget for the USDA AmeriCorps workers is about \$30 million.

The five AmeriCorps workers at the conservation district's reserve are Steven Southard, Tonia Fitzpatrick, Tanisha Brooks, Melanie Sumter and Heather Dawson. They spent the last month building trails, and in January will teach environmental classes to area students from kindergarten through eighth grade.

Last spring, about 8,000 children visited the reserve, and the group hopes to serve 12,000 to 15,000 next year.

"I don't know if that would have been possible without these guys," said Arnold Hamilton, local project manager for the USDA AmeriCorps workers.

Dale Long, an educator for the conservation district, said: "They have helped us tremendously. They have been working hard dumping this wood chip material on the trails, and I tell you, they are using wheel barrows to do this."

Besides the nature trails, the reserve has a stocked pond, and an aquarium building.

AmeriCorps, created as a national service program by President Clinton in 1994, is funded through 1996. For 1,700 hours of service a year, workers receive a living allowance of \$7,500, health care, child care when needed and an academic award of \$4,725, to be used for college.

Republican congressional leaders want to cut it, in order to save taxpayers \$817 million. The program cost \$376 million last year and slightly more this year, as the number of workers went

See Corps on News 26



World staff photo by Mike Simons

AmeriCorps worker Steven Southard, left, and Joel Berg, national director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture AmeriCorps program, hike through a Claremore conservation site.

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PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

[The Sioux City Journal, Sunday, October 29, 1995]

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Holt County Independent

Volume 116 - Number 46

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Box 360, O'Neill, Nebr. 68763

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AMERICORPS -- Chamber of Commerce manager Pat Fritz works with Americorps volunteer Bonnie Tyrell on one of the projects that will develop working partnerships within communities in Region 24.

Americorps Volunteer Aims To Build Working Partners

Helping to develop working partnerships within communities is the goal of the new Americorps volunteer in O'Neill.

Bonnie Tyrell, an Amelia native, began work this month as the Americorps volunteer for the area.

Her primary responsibility will be to coordinate and help develop projects in the Region 24 area of Holt, Boyd, Keya Paha, Brown, Rock and Cherry counties.

Among projects already in the workings are compiling a community resources manual, helping with the Cowboy Trail and helping to develop a Holt County Visitor's Brochure.

She plans to meet with the chambers of commerce in each of the communities in the area and will also help with projects for schools and organizations.

Tyrell is one of five people in northeast Nebraska accepted for the Americorps program which

was set up by the Northeast Nebraska RC&D at Plainview.

Originally, two Americorps volunteers were to be assigned to the O'Neill area and the second position may be filled next year.

Pat Fritz, manager of the O'Neill Area Chamber of Commerce, is the site supervisor for Tyrell's 9-12 month assignment.

The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gene Hansen of Amelia, she moved to Atkinson from Lincoln where she has lived with her family for 23 years.

Her husband, Stan, is a rancher and works for JTI Trucking.

The couple has two children, Tyson, 20, a student at Drury College in Springfield, MO., and Tracy, 16, a junior at West Holt.

Mrs. Tyrell is the former quality assurance director at the Lincoln Regional Center and is a pre-occupational therapy major at Southeast Community College - Beatrice.

She plans to continue her education in occupational therapy at the College of St. Mary in Omaha after her Americorps stint is completed.

Tyrell signed a 1,700 hour

agreement with Americorps in return for a living allowance, education award and health insurance.

She found out about the Americorps program in college and said it has made her family's move back to Atkinson possible.

The family wanted to move to a rural area for four years, she said, and returning to Holt County is a dream come true.

"I'm excited about the program and excited to be in O'Neill," she said.

"Pat (Fritz) is helping me to learn more about O'Neill and the area. There are a lot of very positive people here and I'll really enjoy working with them."

Tyrell said she was concerned when she moved to the area that she might not know many people but she was surprised at the people still in the area who know her.

There are two parts to the Americorps program, she said, an action-based program which works with youth and an environment-based program which works with rural development.

She chose the environment-based program because of her concern for the environment.

Americorps grew out of the national and Community Service Trust Act of 1993.

That act created the Corporation for National and Community Service to engage people of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service to address educational, public safety, human and environmental needs.

Other Americorps programs include VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) and NCC (National Civilian Community Corps).

The program is open to volun-

teers, age 17 and older, regardless of their educational level.

Members go through a training program before they are assigned to a community.

People wishing to learn more about the program and the services offered by Mrs. Tyrell may contact her through the O'Neill Area Chamber of Commerce, 336-2355.

[Holt County Independent, Thursday, November 16, 1995]

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By EMILY WHITE HAT
AmeriCorps Team Member

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