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**Individual Site Application #5
Anti-Hunger
Los Angeles**

SUMMARY

The Los Angeles Anti-Hunger and Empowerment Project seeks to address two of the four national priorities, Human Needs and Environment. The project consists of five key elements, all of which have a strong community focus: outreach, education, services, assets, and coordination. The Interfaith Hunger Coalition (IHC), as the lead agency, will coordinate with the Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC) to support 50 participants in the Anti-Hunger project to create neighborhood solutions to hunger, homelessness, poor nutrition and poverty by identifying and eliminating barriers to assistance and self-sufficiency commonly encountered by low-income persons and households.

IHC and LACC will implement the USDA AmeriCorps in partnership with several local organizations, including the LA Urban Garden Program (also known as Common Ground), the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, and Southland Farmers Market Association. Building Up Los Angeles, a collaboration of organizations currently coordinating National Service Program efforts in the area through the LACC, will also be integrally involved in the USDA AmeriCorps program.

NEEDS TO BE MET

Both the President and the Secretary of Agriculture have emphasized nutrition education as an important strategy in anti-hunger campaigns around the nation. A truly effective nutrition

education campaign must involve both parents and their children. In the areas of community outreach and services, IHC will focus on the widespread need for technical assistance and education on entitlement programs, such as AFDC, MediCal, and Food Stamps, and on the thousands of Los Angeles residents who were displaced by the January earthquake. A disproportionate percentage of the 35,000 housing units that were destroyed were occupied by low-income, Spanish speaking people. Based on a 1993 study, hunger is also a major concern in most of the 43 homeless encampments in the LA area. Food may be available, but homeless individuals may not have the information or the options necessary for nutritious meals. Community assets need to be improved in order to ensure access to adequate food for inner city residents; few supermarkets in the city translate to higher food prices for those who can least afford them, and the demand for assistance from emergency food providers has increased dramatically in recent years. Finally, service delivery in the Los Angeles area is fragmented and inefficient. There are 87 cities, hundreds of neighborhoods, and more than 80 school districts in Los Angeles County, making coordination of services very difficult.

These five elements of the AmeriCorps project respond to currently unmet national needs by working in schools with high concentrations of low-income students to emphasize the importance of nutrition education; helping homeless and low-income people move from public assistance to self-sufficiency; assisting disadvantaged and/or displaced people in meeting their basic survival needs of food and shelter, while working with community members to keep them from becoming homeless; and rebuilding and revitalizing neighborhoods by increasing participation in the local food system.

PROGRAM DESIGN

AmeriCorps participants will be divided into five teams, each of which will work on projects related to one of the key elements of the program, as follows:

1. **Community Education.** A Nutrition Education Team of 10 participants will coordinate existing school-based nutrition education programs and create innovative new programs at specially selected schools. This team will help students create and maintain a successful community garden, at a school with a large population of homeless children. It will also work with the USDA Extension Service's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) to develop and give presentations in area schools, and will coordinate special events designed to promote healthy eating in selected schools.

2. **Community Outreach.** This team will also consist of 10 participants, five of whom will work in the area of outreach on entitlement programs combined with client advocacy on an individual, case-by-case basis, and five of whom will concentrate on promoting USDA's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), working closely with the Food and Nutrition Service's Western Regional Office to do so. The target populations for these efforts are homeless, low-income, working poor and people with AIDS and/or other disabilities. Half the team members will visit neighborhood sites such as Social Services offices (for food stamp and AFDC assistance), local WIC offices, county health facilities, housing projects, and senior citizens' centers, to provide assistance that may be needed. They will also conduct training sessions on the Earned Income Tax Credit for those who may be eligible to receive it. The SFSP team will concentrate on promoting the significantly under-utilized SFSP in Los Angeles.

3. **Community Services.** The role of this 10-member team will be to participate in efforts

to prevent "marginal" families and individuals (i.e., those without sufficient resources to sustain an unexpected expense) that were victims of the 1994 Northridge earthquake from becoming homeless, and to provide direct services, rather than referrals, to homeless people currently living in encampments.

4. Community Assets. Twelve participants will work closely with the most appropriate agency (Common Ground, Southland Farmers Market Association, etc) to increase the role of small scale food growers and community members in the production and distribution of food, and to develop community institutions and public spaces that can also serve as flexible centers for social services information and referrals. Community gardens will be started, certified farmers' markets that can also serve as community information centers will be added to areas of the city that are supermarket-deficient, and additional food-related microenterprises, such as Food from the Hood and Justice Bakery, will be established.

5. Community Coordination. The remaining eight team members will be responsible for cross-communication among the other teams, and for publicizing and communicating the work of each team to the wider community, including unions, businesses, and religious organizations. They will also make sure that the work of each of the other teams is coordinated with similar ongoing community efforts.

The Americorps/USDA Anti-Hunger Project in Los Angeles will be structured to promote maximum efficiency, avoid duplication of effort, and involve the participants in a way that encourages innovative, self-reliant thinking. The Steering Committee will consist of individuals with considerable experience in the various facets of the Project and thorough knowledge of key players in the areas where each team will be working. Members of the Committee will include

representatives from IHC, LACC, and all of the partnering agencies. They will meet regularly to advise, evaluate, and comment on, but not dictate, the strategies and tactics of the team.

The eight team co-captains working with the component of Community Coordination will quarter themselves at the L.A. Services Authority offices and work closely with its administrators. They will report to the Program Coordinator as liaisons to the team members and will act as a clearinghouse for project-related problems arising at any of the work sites. They will also collect all project data and evaluate the project components daily at the ground level.

The remaining team members will be headquartered either at IHC, the Farmers Market Association, or Common Ground, and will perform most of their work in the field. They will meet daily with their respective co-captains to discuss work plans and develop/implement strategies for the completion of their assignments.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE/RECRUITMENT/BENEFITS

Participants will be selected to represent the diversity of the community of Los Angeles, with particular sensitivity to age, gender, ethnicity, language and economic status. IHC's goal is to have five diverse teams that represent not only the greater community, but also the areas of work to which they will be assigned.

A full-time recruiter, with a corpsmember assistant, actively provides outreach to various low-income communities throughout Los Angeles. By speaking at schools, youth fairs, other community-based organizations, and social service agencies, the recruiter reaches young people who may not have heard of the Corps. LACC specifically targets young women who may

otherwise not hear about LACC by making presentations at continuation schools serving pregnant and parenting teenage women. Additionally, LACC provides tuition-free child care to young parent participants with children between the ages of three and five. However, LACC's most successful recruitment is by word-of-mouth, and many young adults are referred by friends or relatives who are or were corps-members.

After applicants are interviewed by a hiring committee composed of LACC staff and current corpsmembers, selections are made based not only on the personal characteristics of the candidates, but with the overarching goal of ensuring diversity in the Corps population. Each new crew hired is looked at in itself for the diversity it represents, and looked at in the larger context of the Corps for overall diversity. Interested applicants who are not selected for one hiring session continue to be eligible and are often selected for the next hiring session. As long as an applicant is willing to be considered, he or she will be on the waiting list to be hired.

Each participant will be given a base salary of \$7,600 a year, health insurance, and an educational stipend of \$4,725. The Los Angeles Conservation Corps also offers participants a wide variety of educational life skills and employment training, such as basic academics, GED preparation, English as a second language, life skills development, Project Conserve, Work/Learn, and College Bound. In addition to the financial and educational benefits the participants will receive, the participants also gain invaluable leadership, problem-solving, entrepreneurial and managerial skills, and begin to develop the life-long characteristics of active, productive citizens. Finally, participants will receive the benefits of actively learning the ethic and methodology of community building and neighborhood revitalization.

Participant training and support will be divided between the program skills necessary to

perform their jobs (provided by IHC) and the ongoing technical assistance, education and support (provided by LACC).

IHC will coordinate the training of team members in the program components of the project, beginning with one month of intense theoretical and hands-on training. Specific aspects of this training include familiarization with the structure and regulations of all public assistance programs; training in handling telephone calls for assistance from needy persons, including staffing the Child Nutrition Hotline (1-800-EAT-N-GRO); observing and assisting advocates who directly assist clients at the governmental agencies where they apply for benefits; practice and training in public speaking as a method of prompting community involvement; and observation and practical assistance at community gardens and farmers markets, including a review of local and state regulations.

LACC will be responsible for the education components of the project. For the duration of the Project they will train the team members in skills useful throughout life, including recycling and environmental restoration to beautify the city; GED preparation, English as a second language, and other academic skills necessary for the pursuit of an empowered, quality life; workshops and classes on family development, especially for those team members who may already have children; civic activity, including voter rights and education; communicating about urban problems such as gangs, drugs, and violence; and planning and organizing for positive change in the community.

INTERNAL EVALUATION and MONITORING

Each of the five components will be evaluated separately, based primarily on the team's

success in achieving previously-established quantitative goals, e.g., increased SFSP participation, number of community gardens established, etc. Qualitative aspects of each initiative will also be assessed through recipient feedback methods such as interviews and questionnaires. The team captains will be responsible for evaluating the performance of team members; process evaluations will be conducted periodically for most of the initiatives to determine if strategies need to be revised or redirected. The Project Directors from IHC and LACC will collect evaluation data from the team co-captains in order to develop a summary report of the various components of the AmeriCorps/USDA Anti-Hunger Project in Los Angeles at the end of the year.

INSTITUTIONAL and PERSONNEL INFORMATION

The five organizations that make up the LA Anti-Hunger and Empowerment Project have a combined 58 years of experience in working on hunger, homeless and anti-poverty issues in the Los Angeles community.

IHC operates an extensive Food Stamp Outreach Program (one of only two fully funded by USDA) and a School Breakfast and Summer Food Outreach Campaign, and recently worked with UCLA on a ground-breaking study, *Seeds of Change*, on food access issues in Los Angeles. Oversight of the AmeriCorps/USDA Anti-Hunger Project will be provided by the IHC's Executive Director, who will be ultimately responsible for major administrative and financial decisions, but will work in tandem with the Project Manager and be advised by the members of the Project Steering Committee. The Project Manager will work full time on coordination and administration of the entire project, communicating constantly with the Executive Director and

the members of the Steering Committee. The Manager will take part in all Committee meetings and act as a liaison between the Committee and the actual team members, so that the advice and suggestions of the Committee will enhance rather than simply override the original creative work of the team members.

The Associate Director and Child Nutrition Specialist of the IHC will act in advisory capacities to the Program Coordinator and team members as well, on a more regular and ongoing basis than the Committee. They will be accessible to the team members and assist in the clarification of problem areas.

The IHC will employ a full-time Program Coordinator, as will the LACC. These two will execute the direct education and training of the team members and will work with them on a daily basis. They will be responsible for keeping attendance records and information relevant to payroll, insurance, etc, and will also exercise direct action should any case arise of improper conduct or inability to perform duties of any team member.

Elizabeth Riley has been the Executive Director of the Southern California Interfaith Hunger Coalition since 1991, providing overall direction for program development and administration, including fundraising, publications, personnel, and program leadership and supervising staff. Ms. Riley oversaw the recent merger of IHC with Food Partnership, Inc.; increased budget by 200%; instituted direct mail program and celebrity sponsorships; serves as LA City Commissioner for the Martin Luther King Hospital Authority; was nominated by the City Council President to serve on the Volunteer Advisory Council on Hunger; serves as Secretary for the California Council of Churches; and makes public appearances and presentations on behalf of IHC.

Carolyn M. Olney has been the Associate Director of the Southern California Interfaith Hunger Coalition since 1991, responsible for implementing public education and media efforts, and for promoting projects that survey the level of hunger and poverty in California. Ms. Olney coordinated with UCLA researchers on "Seeds of Change," a study of the food system in inner-city Los Angeles; coordinates and promotes projects that assist the emergency food system with needed resources; and serves as Food Policy Chair for the Los Angeles Emergency Food and Shelter Program's Local Board (FEMA).

As Child Nutrition Specialist, **Frank Tamborello** coordinates School Breakfast and Summer Food Outreach projects, government benefits trainings, and Food Stamp outreach efforts. He is an organizer for the Association of Community Organizers for Reform Now, recruiting families for grassroots projects to improve neighborhoods, and is fluent in Spanish, literacy methods and research methods.

Martha Diepenbrock has been the Executive Director of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps since 1986, and has been a leading force in the national service movement, "Building Up Los Angeles." She has worked with the California Conservation Corps and helped to start New York City's Volunteer Corps. She began her service career working with the United Farm Worker's Movement.

Los Angeles Anti-Hunger and Empowerment Project

Budget Narrative and justification

B. @a -

1. Project Manager @ \$42,000
Grantee Match Source: Los Angeles Services Authority
2. Project Coordinator for Interfaith Hunger Coalition (Program) @ \$30,000
3. Project Coordinator for Los Angeles Conservation Corps (Technical Assistance, Education) @ \$30,000
4. Half-time Coordinator for Community Assets (Southland Farmers Market Association) @ \$15.00= \$15,480
5. Summer Food Coordinator @ \$30,000
Grantee Match: USDA

Subtotal: \$147,480

Benefits:

Project Coordinator @.20= \$6,000

Project Coordinator @.20= \$6,000

1/2 Time Coordinator @.20= \$3,096

Project Manager Benefits @ .20= \$8,400

Grantee Match Source: Los Angeles Services Authority

Summer Food Coord. @ .20= \$6,000

Grantee Match Source: USDA

Subtotal: \$29,496

C. *Operational:*

Transportation:

4 Vans (1 for each project: Community Outreach, Education, Services and Assets) @ \$1,000 per month for 12 months = \$48,000

150 miles per month for 8 co-team leaders (Community Coordination) for 12

\$62,400

months = \$14,400

Subtotal:

Supplies:

Office supplies @ \$5,000

Grantee Match Source: USDA

Subtotal: **\$5,000**

Equipment:

4 computers (one for each team) @ \$2,000 each = \$8,000

Grantee Match Source: USDA

Subtotal: **\$8,000**

Other:

Insurance for 4 vans @ \$250 per month for 12 months \$12,000

Phones @ \$10,000

Postage @ \$5,000

1-800- EAT-N-GRO @ \$30,000

Rent @ \$15,000

Outreach materials @ \$25,000

Special Event Coordination @ \$15,000

Printing @ \$6,000

Grantee Match Source: USDA

Subtotal: \$118,000

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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.

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**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. Disease and weather have also taken their toll on these windbreaks. The oldest living windbreak in America is in Greer County and is slowly 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 - I 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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Divider Title: _____

**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.

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Divider Title: _____

**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 Appalachian-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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Divider Title: _____

**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

Spanish, Vietnamese, various Creoles, etc. as needed based on neighborhood populations. They will also seek funds for publications from foundations, agencies, etc.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

Twenty diverse participants will be recruited primarily locally. However, team members will also be recruited through the Corporation's national pool and USDA/AmeriCorps resources.

Locally, participants will be recruited through Roxbury Community College, the network of local organizations (newsletters, meetings, and job bulletin boards) and through the local media.

Some jobs, including translation of environmental information, require specialized skills, such as fluency in foreign languages and knowledge of environmental issues. AmeriCorps participants will receive training in all other skills as needed. Participants will rotate from one crew to another, and be exposed to the different tasks discussed in this proposal. They will receive comprehensive training as needed both to carry out specific tasks and to understand the environmental, public policy and technical context in which their work becomes necessary. Training will also include information on educational and career opportunities.

PARTICIPANT BENEFITS

Participants will learn the relationship between public policy, environmental issues and community empowerment. They will learn how to identify and analyze problems as well as leadership and organizational skills for taking action. Participants will become sensitive to ethnic groups with different languages and customs. As a result of this experience, participants will be encouraged and guided to continue their education and being advocates for improving the quality of life in their community.

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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Divider Title: _____

**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. They 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.

NEEDS TO BE MET

East St. Louis and the surrounding area is in desperate need of additional help to rebuild the community and its infrastructure. The city suffers from severe urban blight, which includes vacant lots filled with litter and garbage, abandoned and condemned buildings, graffiti filled walls and trash in the streets.

Mass exodus of industry has occurred over the past 30 years, leaving few factory jobs for local residents. Rebuilding of the area will need to come from within and especially through grassroots. This rebuilding will come from natural resource-related jobs and training opportunities.

The people of East St. Louis suffer from depression, hopelessness and fear. The crime rate is high, unemployment is high, poverty is high. There is no beauty and no green spaces in this city.

This project will provide the manpower needed to clean-up these vacant lots, get the trash off the street, and plant some green trees and shrubs. Through the urban gardening component it will bring an added source of income and a supply of fresh vegetables.

This project will provide hope and inspiration to the members of the community. It will demonstrate to the residents what can be accomplished when a community bands together.

This project will also provide a learning experience for the participants and provide them with the opportunity to further their education. It will provide a means of enhancing self-esteem and instilling a sense of purpose. It will demonstrate to the participants the impact each individual can have on their community.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The basic concept of the Citizen Environmental and Land Use Improvement Project is to work in teams at individual work sites that support the need of community cleanup and urban gardening. Supervision and technical assistance will be provided by Soil Conservation Service, State Community College, the Bakri Institute, Operation New Spirit, the Win-Stanley Neighborhood Organization, St. Clair Co. Sheriff's Departments, St. Clair Co. Soil and Water Conservation District and many others. The University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service has placed additional technical services to help develop local community leaders.

Team members will be involved in developing work strategies and methods. Teams will develop work plans for targeted clean-up areas. For example, amount of trash to be removed, soil improvement needed, number of trees and shrubs for replanting.

One initiative that the Citizen and Environmental Land Use Improvement participants will engage in is improved community clean-up throughout the area. A typical day might include removing debris and rubble from abandoned lots, planting vegetation and landscaping the areas as needed. Urban forestry projects, such as planting trees, pruning, and transplanting would be typical tasks that participants would engage in daily or weekly. Participants will also be involved in stream clean-up along the local tributaries. This would be one way in which businesses can be attracted to this area to stimulate economic renewal and foster aesthetic appreciation for the community.

PARTICIPANT TRAINING AND SUPPORT

It is planned that each participant will be provided basic job orientation and community awareness by State Community College's Office of Vocational Services. In addition, to this

orientation and awareness training, additional specific task related training sites will be offered by the Soil Conservation Service to assure that the job and the individual are matched. Follow-up of each participant will be done by the project director to determine additional training needs and/or help. This follow-up will also help the participant to determine their career choices and additional formal training needs after completion of the AmeriCorps program.

Participant Placement and Supervision: The participants will be trained for the purpose of developing leadership abilities. The choice of assignment will be made based upon the individual training, skills, abilities and evaluate and performance. When the individual is assigned, the effort will be based on the above criteria. Sites hosted for the project will be for extensive long term enhancement. These sites will be selected and evaluated by the community partners, USDA, RC&D, or Community Horticulture Council for long term community environmental enhancement.

Locations Identified:

East St Louis Park District (Jones Park) This work includes maintenance and monitoring of park facilities. Included will be the rehabilitation of several park facilities needing maintenance to bring the park back into compliance with the Urban Parks and Recovery Program.

Tasks included will be: 1) rehabilitation of several park facilities, including the greenhouse, fountains, athletic fields, and flower gardens, in order to bring the park back into compliance with the Urban Parks and Recovery Program, 2) establishment of new greenhouse capabilities, gardens, and recreational areas, and 3) assessment and planning for future needs.

Urban Clean-Up/Landscaping and Beautification: This is work with Operation New Spirit to assist in the clean-up of urban sites. This will lead to community pride by cleaning the area. The Operation New Spirit Organization is the key to the rehabilitation of unsightly structures which clutter the community skyline. One of the key problems for this organization is the inadequate number of unskilled workers. Heavy equipment operators are hard to find. Large dozers and track hoes remain idle, while there is a need to demolish and clean-up sites. In addition, sites which are demolished and leveled, cannot be kept in a safe condition, because of a lack of code enforcement support people. Additional special clean-up and landscaping assistance cannot be carried out to sustain improvements.

Holton State Park: This work is the maintenance of a newly developed golf course adjacent to the State Community College. This site is used for stormwater management and erosion control for the community. This assistance is provided as part of the Soil Conservation Service floodplain management and technical assistance. Training and support will be provided by the Soil Conservation Service.

Farmers Market: These tasks are to assist in the management, promotion, and community outreach to insure the success of the Farmers Market.

Community Urban Garden Project tasks will include coordinating site development and clean-up, site preparation, planting and management of the plants. Included in this position is the exposure to other crops and the potential to explore specialty crops. Packing and marketing assistance will also be provided.

This initiative will involve coordinating site development, clean-up, and preparation as well as planting and management of the gardens. Participants will be involved in : 1.)

development of science demonstration sites at various district schools; 2) soil testing/sampling; 3) marketing, management and sales techniques; 4) pesticide management techniques; 5) community relations; 6) small business practice; 7) crop selection; 8) soil management.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

Each participating organization will be encouraged to identify potential participants. State Community College will utilize their public TV Channel 13 to promote the program. Press releases will be provided to the East St. Louis Monitor, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and Belleville News-Democrat on the program and service opportunities. School District 188 and 189 will be contacted for potential candidates. Individuals over sixteen interested in serving the community will be encouraged to apply. State Community Colleges's skills center will be utilized to evaluate program applicants. Selection of the twenty participants will be made by the Ecosystem Advisory Council.

PARTICIPANT BENEFITS

Each participant will come to the program to assist in community projects that cover a wide range of natural resource needs. As a result they will gain greatly from the hands on experience gained at each of the worksites. They will gain significant knowledge about natural resources, job skills, teamwork, problems solving, and community development. They will be able to increase their educational level, improve their job skills, and be more employable in the future.

INTERNAL EVALUATION AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES:

The Soil Conservation Service and the Community College will monitor weekly progress to ensure that the program is on track and moving forward. Day-to-day supervision will be provided by the various organizations involved in the project. An overall evaluation of the worksites will be done every quarter by the Ecosystem Advisory Council of the State Community College and the Soil Conservation Service.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PERSONNEL INFORMATION

All the various institutions and organizations involved in this project are well established and experienced in their field. These organizations and personnel are as follows:

State Community College - Dr. Campbell

Lincoln University - Jefferson City, MO

St Clair County Sheriff Department - Sgt. Steve Saunders

Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation and Development Council - Ed Weilbacher

St. Clair County Soil and Water Conservation District

USDA, Soil Conservation Service - Rufus Williams

Operation New Spirit

East St. Louis Park District

Bakari Institute - Jahi Bakeri

Frank Holton State Park - Dr. Willie Williams

University of Illinois Extension Service

SIU - Carbondale

School Districts of Lovejoy and East St. Louis - Dr. Clarence Jason

