Watershed Stewards Project

California Water Quality Monitoring Council
December 12, 2013

A program of the California Conservation Corps
Presentation Overview

- Purpose of Presentation
- Program Overview
- WSP Video
- Founding/Key Partners
- Performance Measures/Accomplishments
- Program Design
- WSP Alumni
- Benefits of Partnering with WSP
WSP Seeking Additional Major Sponsors
Mission:

To conserve, restore, and enhance anadromous watersheds for future generations by linking education with high quality scientific practices.
The Watershed Stewards Project's (WSP) mission is to conserve, restore, and enhance anadromous watersheds for future generations by linking education with high quality scientific practices.

A special project of the California Conservation Corps, WSP is administered by CaliforniaVolunteers and sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service.
“In my 37 years of state service, one of the things I am most proud of is my involvement in the Watershed Stewards Project. This project has provided almost 1,000 WSP members hands-on experience with some of the finest resource professionals in coastal California. As a result of WSP many former members are now working as resource professionals.”

– Gary Flosi, Senior Environmental Scientist, Regional Program Coordinator, DFW Fortuna
“For the past 20 years, the Watershed Stewards Project has played a key role in monitoring and restoring north coast watersheds...The Watershed Stewards Project is an outstanding example of the success community-based programs can achieve through partnership, and I hope to see their contributions continue well into the future.”

- Jared Huffman, Member of Congress, 2nd District of California
A collaboration between Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California Conservation Corps

Envisioned a community-based watershed restoration, education, and outreach program

Funding first received in 1994, the first year of AmeriCorps
WSP is a program of the CCC

- Original founder
- Major funder
- Fiscal agent
CDFW is a key partner of WSP

- Original founder
- Major funder
- Multiple WSP placement sites
“…Outside of being instrumental in advancing careers and expanding opportunities for members, it has been an incredibly successful program for getting feet on the ground to do the work that needs doing to improve our watersheds and fisheries resources. This program is invaluable in the services it provides to its members and the communities and watersheds they serve.”

- Trevor Tollefson
CDFW Senior Environmental Scientist Supervisor (Fortuna)
WSP Alum, Service Year 3 and WSP Mentor for 10 years
## Annual Performance Measures

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<td><strong>Watershed Recovery:</strong></td>
<td>1,850 stream, riparian and upslope miles will be assessed, monitored and/or restored</td>
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<td><strong>Education:</strong></td>
<td>1,000 K-12 students will receive a series of Real Science watershed and salmonid education presentations. 70% will increase their knowledge of watershed processes by at least 20%</td>
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<td><strong>Community Outreach:</strong></td>
<td>7,400 community members, natural resources professionals, and students will be reached through outreach and educational opportunities</td>
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<td><strong>Volunteer Recruitment:</strong></td>
<td>630 community volunteers will participate in watershed restoration projects throughout California</td>
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<td><strong>Professional Development:</strong></td>
<td>44 members will participate in WSP’s Core Training to prepare them for professional careers in related fields with 80% improving their skills by 20%</td>
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WSP Accomplishments 1994-2013

- Inventoried over 34,504 miles through stream, riparian and upslope surveys
- Generated over 2,620 scientific reports and databases
- Developed over 1,600 watershed restoration projects
- Instructed over 40,573 students on salmon lifecycles and watershed processes
- Provided outreach to over 237,174 students and community members
- Engaged more than 16,995 community volunteers in hands-on restoration projects
“[WSP members] have played an integral role in maintaining viable restoration and monitoring programs that benefit salmon and steelhead.”

-Tyrone Kelley, Forest Supervisor, Six Rivers National Forest
Service Year 20

Current Placement Site Locations

44 members
24 placement sites
WSP members improve watersheds through the implementation of a four-part strategy:

- Watershed Protection & Recovery
- Watershed Education
- Community Outreach
- Professional Development
WSP members assess, monitor, and enhance watersheds

- Assessment/Monitoring
- Data Collection (Sampling)
- Data Analysis and Compilation
- Watershed Restoration
WSP members present *Real Science* watershed/salmonid focused curriculum in local K-12 classrooms.

Creek Days Environmental Education Fair (Humboldt County)

Year 18 RCD Santa Cruz County members present *Real Science*

Student outfitted in egg sac costume
Community Outreach

Coastal Discovery Fair (San Simeon)

CCC Volunteer Day (San Luis Obispo)
Volunteer Recruitment

Individual Service Projects

Native Grass Planting, BLM King Range National Conservation Area (Petrolia)

Riparian Planting, Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Loleta)
WSP develops the next generation of natural resource professionals by providing experience, and training opportunities for individuals to enter the natural resources field.

60% of current placement sites employ WSP alumni!
Alumni Testimonial

Amber Villalobos

Environmental Scientist
State Water Resources Control Board

WSP Service Year 15 - DFW Hopland
WSP Service Year 16 - DFW Fort Bragg
Notable WSP Alumni

- **Devin Best**, National Resource Management Specialist, *National Marine Fisheries Service* (Years 6, 7)
- **John Wooster**, Geomorphologist/Hydrologist, Habitat Conservation Division, *NOAA Fisheries* – (Years 4, 5)
- **Jennifer Peters**, National Water Campaigns Coordinator, *Clean Water Action* (Years 9, 11)
- **Lesley Merrick**, Water Quality Specialist, *Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality* (Year 9)
- **Cyndi Dawson**, Environmental Scientist, *CA State Parks* (Year 4)
- **Lisa Bolton**, North Coho Project (NCP) Project Manager, *Trout Unlimited* (Years 11, 12)
- **Lindsay Righter**, Field Representative, *U.S. Congress Jared Huffman* (Years 9, 11)
Benefits of Partnering with WSP
Selection process is HIGHLY competitive
- over 400 applications for 44 positions

Screening process is VERY extensive
- DOJ/FBI background check
- NSOPW (National Sex Offender)
- Pre-Employment Physical
- Pre-Employment Drug Test
WSP Covers Employer and Member Benefit Costs

**Employer Costs:**
- Monthly paychecks
- Workers compensation
- Healthcare benefits and liability insurance
- Reimbursement for WSP related travel

**Member Benefits:**
- $5,550 scholarship upon completion of the year’s commitments
- No-cost medical insurance
- Dental insurance
- Full uniform, safety, and field gear
Thorough Member Training/Certifications

- State/Federal policies
- Wilderness first aid/CPR
- Swift water safety
- State certified driver safety training
WSP Staff Provide Ongoing Support

- Annual site visits
- Member management
- WSP Team Leaders
- Monthly conference calls
- Email updates
When you partner with WSP...

You get a:

- low cost
- great value
- exclusively selected
- extensively screened
- thoroughly trained
- highly enthusiastic
- extremely hard working

...potential recruitment pool for future hiring!
State Water Resources Control Board (Sacramento)

Regional Water Quality Control Boards:

- North Coast (Santa Rosa)
- San Francisco Bay (Oakland)

Nick Ryu, Year 20 North Coast RWQCB member
“Members have expanded the capabilities of our agency in important ways that we could not achieve before they came…”

- Ann Riley, PhD
  Watershed and River Restoration Advisor,
  SF Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board

Will Logsdon, Year 20 SF Bay RWQCB member
New Monitoring Capabilities

- Assistance with State Water Board (SWAMP) monitoring
- Expansion of GIS mapping, watershed inventory and assessments
- Wetland environments data collection
- Assessing restoration project performance
- Anadromous fish population surveys
- Hydrology data collection

- Ann Riley, PhD
  Watershed and River Restoration Advisor,
  SF Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
Community Relations

- Ambassadors to stakeholders who come under state permit programs
- Community education and outreach on water quality storm water problems

Community volunteers replace outdated storm drain markers in Santa Barbara
Placement Site Satisfaction

- 71% documented watershed improvements during the years WSP members served with their organization

- 91% said having WSP members increased the productivity of their organization in ways staff could not

- Over half said WSP members increased capacity building in their local communities beyond the member’s original placement term(s).

- 96% have been either satisfied or very satisfied with the community benefits of WSP
“The Watershed Stewards Project (WSP) attracts college educated individuals that are bright and eager to contribute to conservation efforts… The WSP is an important program and one that has greatly enhanced salmonid conservation efforts throughout California.”

-Joseph Kiernan, Research Ecologist, NOAA Fisheries
“The Watershed Stewards Project (WSP) members placed with our agency have been essential for implementing the salmon conservation and monitoring work we do... It would be very difficult to find seasonal staff that have the training, experience, and enthusiasm that our WSP members have had. We are enormously grateful for the successful partnership we've built with WSP.”

- Eric Ettlinger, Aquatic Ecologist, Marin Municipal Water District
WSP is currently seeking additional agency partners to expand the capabilities of agencies to protect and recover watersheds, reach the community through education and outreach, and develop the next generation of natural resource professionals.
Questions

For more information, please contact:
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“The Watershed Stewards Project is an excellent example of a public private partnership that leverages an initial public investment and multiplies it with private funding and community volunteer engagement.”

- Alex Von Feldt, Program Director, Acterra: Action For A Healthy Planet
“WSP members play a critical role in supporting the Mattole Salmon Group’s work to restore native salmon populations to self-sustaining levels in the Mattole Watershed. Their assistance in salmonid population monitoring, habitat assessment, and habitat restoration work allows the MSG to magnify the scope and magnitude of our projects and effectiveness. Additionally, the talents and energy WSP members bring to our small rural communities support many important endeavors...”

-Nathan Queener, Mattole Salmon Group
“The Watershed Stewards Program has been vital in providing much needed support in order to better monitor endangered coho salmon in the Russian River. Our volunteers are passionate, caring, and involved in the whole watershed community. Without the program our ability to monitor coho salmon would be greatly diminished.”

- Nicolas Bauer, Fisheries Biologist, Sea Grant Extension Program, UCCE
“WSP has affected all of us individually by helping us grow as mentors, along with leaving their own impression of the importance of community service on each of us. As a former member, all of this holds true on the opposite side of the spectrum, bringing me full circle to mentor future restorationists and community servants.”

-Mathew Hanington, Environmental Protection Specialist, Yurok Tribe Environment Program
“The unique partnership with the Watershed Stewards Program has brought talented young professionals from throughout the country to Point Reyes National Seashore upholding the mission of the National Park Service to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

- Michael Reichmuth, Fisheries Biologist, Inventory and Monitoring Program, Point Reyes National Seashore
“…we have had the pleasure of witnessing each WSP member gain valuable technical skills and knowledge related to watershed restoration that informed their decision to pursue environmental graduate studies and/or positions with local conservation organizations. The long-term benefit that this Program has on participating members, mentors and the communities in which the organizations are placed is tremendous.”

- Sooni Gillett, Conservation Program Specialist, RCD Santa Cruz County
“The WSP has graciously helped us complete education, outreach and research projects in the Santa Monica Mountains over the past three years... Through their Independent Service Projects (ISPs), they are helping connect the community with their surrounding natural resources, which is key to the long-term conservation of these resources and overall sustainability of the environment.”

- Jenna Krug, Conservation Biologist, RCD Santa Monica Mountains