

**FINAL REPORT**  
**FOREST SERVICE GRANT NO. NA-98-0255**

Period covered by this report: September 30, 1998 through June 30, 2000

*NOTE: Please review the following information and revise/complete as necessary.*

**Issued to:** National Association of Service and Conservation Corps  
**Address:** 666 11<sup>th</sup> Street N.W., Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20001-4542

**Congressional District Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Name:** Regional Urban and Community Forestry Train-the-Trainer Sessions for Youth Corps Staff

**Contact Person/Principal Investigator:**

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**Date of Award:** September 30, 1998

**Grant Modifications:** Mod. 1: No-cost time extension from 3/31/00 to 6/30/00

**Date of Expiration:** June 30, 2000

**Funding:** Federal Share: \$43,892 plus Grantee Share: \$ 45,535 = Total Project: \$89,427

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**Please provide an abstract on your project and its results (approximately 200 words or less).**



National Association of  
Service & Conservation Corps

## **Regional Urban and Community Forestry Train-the-Trainer Sessions for Youth Corps Staff**

### **Final Report to the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council**

**Grant No. NA-98-0255, Period Ending June 30, 2000**

#### **ABSTRACT**

The National Association of Service and Conservation Corps conducted a series of intensive, hands-on training sessions for senior staff of youth conservation and service corps, in cooperation with host local corps, urban foresters, and citizen forestry groups. The four regional training sessions prepared 85 representatives of corps and cooperating community groups to play a larger role than at present in urban and community forestry nationwide, through pursuit of projects and partnerships at the local level. In addition, the training sessions better equipped corps to expose corpsmembers to best practices in urban and community forestry, thus to prepare youth and young adults to become part of the professional and volunteer forestry workforce of the future. After-the-fact evaluations confirmed that the training sessions: 1) Built informal regional networks of corps staff working in the UCF field; 2) Spawned significant numbers of follow-up training sessions at corps sites nationwide, and additional corpsmember interest in the field -- some corpsmembers have already secured internships and employment; and 3) Participating corps are laying the groundwork for greater expansion into urban and community forestry projects, are building technical and community relations skills, and are improving the working relationships between corps and forestry groups.



National Association of  
Service & Conservation Corps

## Regional Urban and Community Forestry Train-the-Trainer Sessions for Youth Corps Staff

### Final Report to the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council

Grant No. NA-98-0255, Period Ending June 30, 2000

#### Project Objectives:

NASCC set out to conduct four well-received, intensive, hands-on regional training-of-trainer sessions for staff of state and local youth service and conservation corps. In support of the training sessions, NASCC sought to develop a training curriculum and binder of training materials that would be at once useful nationwide, and modular to allow substitution of regionally-relevant materials. Also, NASCC intended to develop the binder of materials and conduct the training sessions while working closely with national, state, and local urban and community forestry agencies and citizen groups, in order to build stronger ties between the youth corps network and the network of key individuals involved in urban and community forestry.

Objectives met successfully to date: NASCC successfully conducted the planned regional training sessions between November, 1999 and May, 2000, as follows:

- The Midwest Regional Urban and Community Forestry Training Session took place in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, November 10-12, 1999, hosted by the Milwaukee Community Service Corps. Seventeen participants from six corps attended the pilot training. A community tree-planting event coordinated by Greening Milwaukee, a local community greening organization, anchored the agenda. The field project challenged the trainees to conduct a "best practices in tree planting and maintenance" workshop for over 100 members of the local community. The trainees gained valuable experience applying newly learned knowledge and were praised by the community members.

The City of Milwaukee Urban Forestry Department, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and Wisconsin Electric provided trainers. Wisconsin Electric and United Water also provided matching grant.

- The Northeast Regional Urban and Community Forestry Training Session took place in the New York Metropolitan Area, December 1-3, 1999, hosted by the New York Restoration Project. Twenty participants from twelve corps attended the session. The field project took place at High Bridge Park in Northern Manhattan, where the trainees guided twelve elementary age after-school program students to plant ten trees in the park. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection-Forestry Division, the City of New York Parks and Recreation Department, and the New York City Environmental Action Coalition all provided trainers. The Ittleson Foundation provided matching funds.
- The Northwest Regional Urban and Community Forestry Training Session took place in Seattle, March 22-24, 2000. Cascadia Quest's King County World Conservation Corps served as host, and 18 participants from 8 youth corps participated. Building on evaluation comments from previous trainings, NASCC adjusted the agenda to allow for increased project-based, hands-on learning. To that end, the agenda included two field project sessions in Frink Park, a City of Seattle facility. Participants took part in a field tour of forestry issues in urban parks, including illegal pruning due to desire for scenic vistas and exotic invasive plant species. Following a field demonstration, participants cleared a large hillside of invasive English Ivy and planted over 20 native trees in cooperation with the Friends of Frink Park

Expert trainers from the City of Seattle's Parks and Recreation Department, Tree Steward Program, and Horticulture Center offered insights and training from a local government perspective while staff from Friends of Frink Park, TREEmendous Seattle, and a local consulting firm, Restoration Logistics, provided community-based expertise as trainers.

Contributors of matching funding and in-kind donations included the Ittleson Foundation, Henry M. Jackson Foundation, Seattle City Light and the Washington Service Corps.

- The Southwest Regional Urban and Community Forestry Training Session took place in Los Angeles May 2-5, 2000. Hosted by the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, the training drew 30 participants from 12 youth corps, and 4 community groups. The agenda made use of Los Angeles' "groundbreaking" Cool Schools Program as an example. Trainees participated in a Cool Schools design charette, in which they were challenged to site trees and vegetation using the principles of urban and community forestry including energy efficiency to "green" a 95% impervious surface school campus. The field project also involved having participants plant more than 15 shade trees in an urban elementary school taking part in the Cool Schools Program.

Experts from community groups including Northeast Trees, TreePeople and the American Society of Landscape Architects as well as the City of Los Angeles, Calvin Abe and Associates and the California Urban Forestry Division served as trainers.

The Ittleson Foundation and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Cool Schools Program contributed matching funds.

The attached Evaluation Report from Wittke and Associates underscores the high level of participant satisfaction with the training sessions. Wittke's review of participant evaluations found:

- Eighty-eight percent (88%) agreed or strongly agreed that the training session was useful; none disagreed - the remaining 12% were "neutral".
- Eighty-five percent (85%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were given adequate resources and information to train corps members on urban and community forestry principles and practices.
- Ninety-three percent (93%) agreed or strongly agreed that the sessions were well-organized, and that NASCC staff and guest speakers were well prepared and responsive.

Wittke's report also determined that within 180 days, the first two NASCC training sessions produced intended additional training opportunities for corpsmembers and other corps staff members, as well as exploration of careers in the urban and community forestry field:

- Seven (7) of 11 follow-up survey respondents reported conducting 11 sessions - training 115 corpsmembers and 11 fellow corps staff members - using information and resources provided at UCF regional sessions in the Midwest and Northeast;
- Seven (7) of eleven respondents stated that a total of 14 corpsmembers expressed interest in receiving further training in UCF skills and/or certifications since they conducted follow-up trainings at their sites.
- Two (2) respondents reported that corpsmembers they trained using UCF resources from the NASCC sessions went on to receive more in-depth training. At one site, 10 corpsmembers participated in an expanded arboriculture session.
- Following training they received at their sites, two corpsmembers found employment as arborists with a private firm and one secured an internship.... Participating staff from two other sites reported that three additional corpsmembers expressed interest in employment or internships in the field.

**Objectives not met: None.**

Major research or policy findings of the project:

- **Corps and Urban Forestry Networks Still Getting to Know Each Other.** The training sessions proved NASCC's hypothesis that most of the nation's youth corps needed to be introduced to the network of agencies and organizations active in urban and community forestry projects and programs, and vice versa. Undoubtedly the training sessions have made substantial strides in building a closer relationship between the parallel networks, by introducing or referring selected corps staff members to those working on the front lines of urban and community forestry — at least in those states where training sessions took place. This "getting to know you phase" can be expected to proceed for some time, but the pace of contacts could be enhanced by stepped-up efforts to promote and publicize pilot joint projects. This finding is also consistent with the determinations of the Wittke and Associates evaluation.
- **Policy Could Be Developed to Promote Opportunities for Cross-Training and Pilot Projects.** In response to the first finding (above), the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry branch, as well as groups such as the network of state urban foresters, could aid and abet partnership formation by: 1) Encouraging corps involvement in high-profile projects through financial or other incentives; 2) Identifying and promoting opportunities for cross-training of corps staff and urban and community foresters; and 3) Compiling and disseminating the features of successful joint projects nationwide.
- **Substantial Training Expertise Exists in the Urban and Community Forestry Field, Though Such Expertise Could Be Better Coordinated and Training Skills Could be Enhanced.** If any doubt existed that sufficient practical transferable expertise was present in the urban and community forestry field, the NASCC experience should put that doubt to rest. NASCC drew variously on youth corps, urban foresters working for cities, state urban forestry coordinators, citizen organizations, utilities, and landscape architects as hands-on or stand-up trainers throughout the four regional training sessions. Post-session evaluations suggested that training ability varied considerably, though the knowledge of the trainers was unquestioned. No national or regional clearinghouse was available, however, to provide referrals to potential trainers, nor was it easy to check references of trainers. The Forest Service and NUCFAC may wish to consider, as a matter of policy, increasing the investment in training of trainers and in quality control and professional development among trainers.
- **Substantial Written Material Exists in the Urban and Community Forestry Field, Though Such Material Could be More Easily Accessible In Print and On the World Wide Web.** With some effort, NASCC staff members were able to pull together nationally- and regionally-relevant written materials. Once again, even with the help of national organizations and experienced citizen groups, no "one-stop-shopping" option was available. The Forest Service and NUCFAC may wish to implement policy to streamline indexing and availability of urban and community forestry reference materials.

How did the project increase the knowledge we have about urban forestry? How did/will the public benefit?

At a minimum, the project substantially increased and provided an opportunity to "package" knowledge concerning potential contributions youth corps and similar programs can make to urban and community forestry. Such knowledge is reflected in each of the regional training manuals. The public will benefit as corps and other participants in the urban and community forestry network begin to apply their newfound knowledge of one another's strengths, and also as they replicate or modify partnership models demonstrated at the training sessions. As time and resources permit, NASCC and its members will place more of these project examples on Web sites, so that the public may benefit from further application of corps to urban and community forestry projects.

**Recommendations for community foresters or others who might benefit from the project?**

NASCC recommends that community foresters note its policy findings (above) as well as the rapidly growing group of examples of successful youth corps urban and community forestry projects. State by state, community foresters may wish to undertake cross-training with youth corps, and increasingly look to corps as a potential source of employees.

**Reports / Publications:**

In order to mount effective training sessions, and to send trainees away with materials they could use to train others and to pursue new projects and partnerships, NASCC staff developed and self-published a thorough resource manual that underwent pilot testing at the Midwest Regional Training Session. Based on the Midwest experience, staff revised the contents of the Manual slightly, and then adapted certain sections of the manual to include region-specific information for each subsequent training session. Examples of region-specific information in each regional edition of the Manual include:

- Lists of contacts for the urban and community forestry network of citizen groups and government agencies;
- State, local and regional funding opportunities, programs, and potential partnerships; and
- Lists of native plants and information on specific planting and maintenance challenges, as well as invasive exotic issues

An outline of a sample Manual and a full sample Manual are attached. NASCC will make copies of the Manual available for the cost of copying to members of the public who request them.

**How were results disseminated to the public?**

NASCC has not directly disseminated results to the public, but will post this report and relevant related materials on its Web site as time and resources permit.

**List active partners (key organizations or individuals) involved in the project:**

- National: American Forests  
USDA Forest Service  
National Tree Trust
- Northeast: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection-Forestry Division  
City of New York Parks and Recreation  
New York City Environmental Action Coalition  
New Jersey Youth Corps  
New York Restoration Project
- Midwest: City of Milwaukee Forestry Department  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Wisconsin Electric  
Milwaukee Community Service Corps  
Greening Milwaukee
- Southwest: Northeast Trees  
TreePeople  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
City of Los Angeles  
Calvin Abe and Associates  
State of California Department of Forestry, Urban Forestry Division  
Los Angeles Conservation Corps
- Northwest: City of Seattle Parks and Recreation Department  
City of Seattle Tree Steward Program  
City of Seattle Horticulture Center  
Friends of Frink Park  
TREEmendous Seattle  
Restoration Logistics

**Photo or Illustration:**

Copies of selected photos attached. NASCC can make copies or provide scanned electronic versions of these photos.

Photo Credit: Tina Yin/NASCC



**If a no-cost time extension has been requested for this project, why is it needed?**

NASCC requested a no-cost, three-month extension for the project. Scheduling of the regional training sessions proved more difficult than originally anticipated, pushing the date of the final session beyond the original project period, for two reasons:

- 1) Biology imposed certain limitations — the preferred tree-planting seasons varied in the respective regions; and
- 2) NASCC scheduled training sessions so as to avoid conflicts with other key events on schedules of host corps and partner agencies and organizations at each training site.

**How would you evaluate the grant process? What changes, if any, would you recommend?**

The grant application and reporting process was fair and straightforward.

**Comments considered of importance but not covered above:**

In addition to match funding received from The Ittleson Foundation, NASCC successfully raised matching funds from Wisconsin Electric, United Water, and the Henry M. Jackson Foundation in the course of the project.

Also, Tina Yin of the NASCC staff attended the national urban forestry conference in Seattle, which proved an invaluable opportunity to: 1) Continue identifying resource materials; 2) Build connections with potential sources of in-kind training assistance; 3) Help conduct a tour of Seattle-area sites where youth corps have been active in urban and community forestry, and 4) Carry out advance planning for the Northwest training session.

**This report prepared by:**

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