

Agency Purpose

The Minnesota Conservation Corps, an entrepreneurial 501(c)(3), engages young people in community service, natural-resource restoration and emergency-response work. Affiliated with AmeriCorps, MCC continues the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s.

Core Functions

- ◆ **Skills development** – MCC provides youth and young adults with the technical and personal skills necessary to not only complete hands-on conservation and community-service projects, but to be successful in their future education, careers and civic involvement.
- ◆ **Positive learning experiences** – MCC provides service-learning experiences that result in personal responsibility, a strong service ethic and changed lives.
- ◆ **Social and environmental impact** — MCC fosters positive improvements to our environment, communities, and young people's lives through a commitment to natural-resource service.
- ◆ **Youth and young adult service** — MCC maximizes the enthusiasm and energy of young people to create positive outcomes for Minnesota communities.

Operations

- ◆ Summer Youth Residential Program operates for eight weeks from a base camp at St. Croix State Park. Youth crews work and camp throughout the state to restore and improve natural resources on public lands.
- ◆ Young Adult Program operates Feb – Dec. Corps members work throughout the state, performing labor-intensive, highly-technical natural resource work on public land and responding to natural disasters.
- ◆ Youth Outdoors, a new after-school program, was launched in the fall 2008 with a pilot program; the full program starts in February 2009. YO participants complete service learning projects in their neighborhoods.

Key Goals

The Minnesota Conservation Corps mission is to provide hands-on environmental stewardship and service-learning opportunities for youth and young adults while accomplishing priority cost-effective conservation, natural resource management and emergency-response work. In 2006, MCC initiated a three-year strategic plan with 12 initiatives in three key areas:

- ◆ **Programs:** Grow existing programs while sustaining a quality corps member experience and project results.
- ◆ **Funding:** Execute our development plan to provide sustainable and alternative sources of funding.
- ◆ **Organization:** Strengthen MCC organization, staff, processes and capabilities to further develop effective and efficient operations.

MCC is currently designing strategic initiatives for 2010-13 through data gathering, analysis and working sessions with the executive team, staff, alumni, stakeholders and board of directors.

Glance

Minnesota Conservation Corps programs:

- ◆ **Young Adult AmeriCorps:** ages 18-25; ten months of service; nonresidential; participants receive education award after completing term.
- ◆ **Summer Youth:** ages 15-18; teens live and work outdoors for eight weeks, unplugged from technology and modern conveniences.
- ◆ **Youth Outdoors:** after-school program, ages 15-18; pilot launched in fall 2008; emphasizes STEM curriculum, service and civic engagement.

MCC restores resources and changes lives by:

- ◆ Annually engaging more than 200 young people in service, working outdoors.
- ◆ Serving more than 125 project sponsors, including nonprofits, community organizations, local governments, and state and federal agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- ◆ Completing more than 160,000 hours of work such as restoring native habitats, building and maintaining trails and other natural-resource infrastructure, leading volunteers, collecting data, protecting water resources and more.
- ◆ Providing work-skill and personal-development training during 20% of participants' service term.
- ◆ Offering emergency-response work to Minnesota communities and other regions plagued by floods, fire and other disasters.
- ◆ Preparing young people for work in natural resource agencies that will lose 50% of staff in next five years as baby boomers retire.

Key Measures

Outcomes are documented by evaluations and project-tracking procedures tied to performance measures.

Key Measures - changing lives, restoring resources

Project sponsor satisfaction:

89% of project sponsors rated their overall satisfaction with MCC crews as “excellent” or “outstanding”

Member workplace behavior and skills development:

20% of corps members’ time was spent in personal-development and technical-skills training (*in classroom*)

Member post-service path:

- ◆ 33% received employment in related field
- ◆ 26% returned to program in a leadership capacity
- ◆ 21% began or returned to post-secondary education
- ◆ 11% enlisted in voluntary community service or other AmeriCorps programs

Key Measures - YOUTH PROGRAM

Engaging diverse youth:

- ◆ 40% of participants are youth of color; 20% are deaf or hard-of-hearing,
- ◆ Program enrolls equal numbers of male and female, and rural and metro participants

Personal and work-skills development outcomes of 3,484 educational hours:

- ◆ 94% of youth demonstrated increased understanding of the natural environment
- ◆ 77% reported increased interest in new career and vocational pursuits
- ◆ 16% returned to program in positions with higher levels of responsibility
- ◆ 91% demonstrated increased skills with hand tools
- ◆ 82% reported increased confidence interacting with peers and adults.

During the past year, youth and young adult participants contributed more than 160,000 hours of conservation service.

MCC also participates in the national **Corps Network’s Excellence in Corps Operations evaluation**, ranking high in both internal and external reviews.

Budget

MCC spends more than 85% of its funds directly for youth and young adult programs. MCC generates almost half its operating funds from conservation services. State funds are used for priority projects, leveraging resources from other organizations and providing match for the federal AmeriCorps grants.

FY 2010-11 Projected Revenue Summary:

Fee for service (47%)	1,500,000
Natural Resources Fund (15%)	490,000
State General Fund (15%)	475,000
Federal AmeriCorps grant (11%)	265,000
ServeMinnesota grant (7%)	252,000
Contributions and foundation grants (4%)	150,000
Total	3,132,000

Future Opportunities

- ◆ Working with partners on the Clean Water Legacy Initiative in conjunction with BWSR
- ◆ Receiving additional funds from DEED for deaf and hard of hearing participants
- ◆ Expanding service opportunities for youth.

- ◆ Preparing program participants for green jobs and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) related careers.

Contact

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Dollars in Thousands

	Current		Forecast Base		Biennium 2010-11
	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	
<u>Direct Appropriations by Fund</u>					
General					
Current Appropriation	525	475	475	475	950
Forecast Base	525	475	475	475	950
Change		0	0	0	0
% Biennial Change from 2008-09					-5%
Natural Resources					
Current Appropriation	490	490	490	490	980
Forecast Base	490	490	490	490	980
Change		0	0	0	0
% Biennial Change from 2008-09					0%
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>					
Direct Appropriations					
General	525	475	475	475	950
Natural Resources	490	490	490	490	980
Total	1,015	965	965	965	1,930
<u>Expenditures by Category</u>					
Local Assistance	1,015	965	965	965	1,930
Total	1,015	965	965	965	1,930
<u>Expenditures by Program</u>					
Minn Conservation Corps	1,015	965	965	965	1,930
Total	1,015	965	965	965	1,930