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Executive Summary

The Watershed Stewards Program (WSP) proposes to have 46 AmeriCorps members who will conduct vital watershed recovery and protection activities, recruit local volunteers to assist with salmonid habitat restoration, and educate students and the public about coastal watersheds throughout California. At the end of this program year, the WSP AmeriCorps members will be responsible for improving 57 miles of waterways for endangered and threatened salmonids by at least 20%. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an extra 1,380 volunteers who will be engaged in hands-on watershed restoration projects. This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Environmental Stewardship. The CNCS investment of \$426,950 will be matched with \$1,028,520: \$958,520 in public funding and \$70,000 in private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

a. PROBLEM/NEED

The Watershed Stewards Program has been actively involved in watershed recovery and education in California since 1994. The primary focus of WSP is to assist communities and organizations with habitat restoration for salmonids (Chinook salmon, Coho salmon and steelhead trout) in order to rehabilitate these threatened and endangered species to healthy and historic populations. An additional focus of WSP is to provide watershed education and outreach in high-needs communities throughout the state, and to engage WSP members in volunteer recruitment efforts to increase the capacity and reach of partner organizations. Several native salmonid species have been listed under the Federal and State Endangered Species Acts since the late 1990s and were reaffirmed in 2005. Less than half of the historic spawning streams in the state can currently support salmonids. In Northern California, approximately 90% of salmonid stocks have vanished from historic abundance levels and Southern California steelhead populations, historically numbered around 45,000, have declined to 500. The presence and distribution of native salmonids is one of the key indicators of watershed health and signals that today's watersheds suffer from pollution, water diversions, sedimentation and other human-induced factors.

WSP defines salmonids as a high-need population because they act as the canary in the coalmine; they are the key indicator of overall watershed health. Salmonids require clean water flows that connect to the ocean, and a spawning ground that is shaded, free of silt, and guarded from predators. Without human intervention to rehabilitate and monitor California's disturbed watersheds, salmonids will become extinct and the contamination of California's sparse waterways will continue to increase.

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In the past 20 years, WSP members have inventoried, assessed, and treated thousands of miles of unique waterways. The need for such surveys is exemplified in a 2010 EPA report titled California Water Quality Assessment. At the time of the report, "33,370 of the 211,513 miles of rivers and streams had been assessed"; this means 84% of CA's waterways still need assessment. Without the efforts of WSP members, it is likely that many of the State and Federal priority watershed recovery actions and needed assessments for saving endangered and threatened salmonids will not occur. WSP's placement site partners report they are currently confronted by a lack of organizational capacity to complete vital restoration projects and public outreach due to funding limitations, shortage of properly trained individuals, and lack of reach beyond their local region and watershed. WSP helps bridge this gap by providing affordable, well-trained members who are ready to recruit and manage a solid volunteer base. Over the past 20 years, WSP has recruited more than 6,400 volunteers in ongoing restoration projects and more than 12,000 volunteers in one-time restoration projects. WSP also provides a state-wide network for organizations doing similar watershed recovery work and provides a platform for these partners to collaborate on trainings, data collection and data sharing. State and Federal watershed recovery plans have identified the education of future generations as a key component to ensure significant long-term watershed improvements. Most California Title I schools are unable to offer environmental education due to time and funding constraints. During a 2012 survey conducted by RTA, residents in areas where WSP members serve indicated that environmental education is an important need in their communities (ranked 8.3 out of 10; 10 being most important). WSP members fulfill this need by offering watershed education and outreach opportunities in their local communities and Title I classrooms. Over the past 20 years, WSP members have educated 40,573 students in Title I classrooms. WSP recognizes that without watershed education and outreach available to California communities, there is no way to ensure significant long-term change in these threatened watersheds.

The mission of WSP, to "conserve, restore, and enhance anadromous watersheds for future generations" is quite ambitious and will require the support of ALL Californians. The need for community, governmental and commercial support is imperative for the survival of California's salmonids. The recovery, conservation and protection of California watersheds will only be successful if addressed through a diversity of interventions, including increased protection and recovery efforts, comprehensive educational outreach, volunteer recruitment, and professional training of the next generation of natural resource specialists.

b. THEORY OF CHANGE

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WSP will engage 44 fulltime (1700 hour) members in watershed restoration projects throughout California's most high-need watersheds by implementing a four-part strategy which includes: (1) watershed recovery and protection; (2) watershed education and outreach; (3) volunteer recruitment; and (4) member development. Members arrive at their sites trained and ready to complete watershed protection projects in the field, organize community restoration projects, lead classroom lessons, and facilitate outreach events. Two members are placed at each of WSP's 22 diverse sites, ranging from large state and federal agencies to small non-profits.

Each year WSP enrolls 4 Team Leaders to assist staff in member guidance and overall program support. Each Team Leader is assigned a region and mentors (not supervises) the members on completing program requirements such as education, outreach, and volunteer project preparation. Team Leaders report directly to the Program Coordinators and receive a slightly higher stipend than traditional members because of their mentoring role and specialized knowledge in education and outreach. They assist Program Coordinators on creating member trainings, mandatory outreach events, and maintaining communication via social media.

All WSP members, with the exception of Team Leaders, engage in the full range of service activities. **WATERSHED RECOVERY AND PROTECTION (72%):** In an effort to maintain and restore the complexity of salmonid habitat throughout California, WSP members assist in the coordination and implementation of many restoration projects which are determined by the need of their community. Working cooperatively with natural resource agencies, landowners, and community-based organizations, members survey and rehabilitate watersheds using state and federal protocols. Members engage in a variety of interventions, including: invasive species removal to reduce water temperatures for fish, fish passage barrier removal to increase salmonid habitat, and fence installation to limit stream bank erosion. Many members in Southern California help combat the effects of the state's current drought by assisting in the installation and maintenance of water catchment devices, rainwater gardens, and grey water plumbing, which increase water availability for fish in dry stream beds. All members participate in scientifically-based surveys to assess current fish populations, stream flow, water temperature, habitat conditions, and threats such as sediment and other pollutants. The data collected in field surveys helps determine where and when to focus future restoration efforts. Upon completion of projects, members help maintain restoration sites to ensure success and to report outcomes. 2015 marks the second year the WSP has used a Pre/Post assessment method to measure the percentage of watersheds improvement. To ensure the WSP meets its performance measure, an attainable metric of 20% was chosen. Each year members will help to improve watershed conditions

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by a minimum of 20% by completing vital watershed restoration projects throughout California. If this metric is continually met, WSP will increase the outcome accordingly.

WATERSHED EDUCATION AND OUTREACH (13%): Members collaborate with teachers in California K-12 Title I schools to educate students in watershed and salmonid science, utilizing WSP's Wonders of Watersheds (WOW!) curriculum, which is aligned with California State Education Standards. WOW! consists of a series of six, one-hour lessons pertaining to watershed ecology, the water cycle, water conservation, and the salmonid life cycle, habitat, and anatomy. Members also organize additional activities and service-learning restoration projects. By engaging students in local schools, WSP reaches a diverse and under-served population of California's youth to expand their awareness and interest in local watersheds.

During their service year, members participate in at least one community outreach event, where they present activities and teach conservation methods to community members, natural resource professionals, and students. WSP's involvement in these events builds cooperative relationships between teachers, students, community members, and private landowners.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT (10%): WSP members engage their local community and provide valuable knowledge about watersheds by hosting two hands-on restoration volunteer opportunities a year, known as Watershed Awareness Projects (WAP). All members recruit, train, and manage at least 30 volunteers in a hands-on restoration project, which offers an effective platform to educate the community about watershed health and ecology, and water conservation. The WAPs enhance WSP's efforts for building capacity when volunteers take ownership over restoration projects in their communities beyond a member's term of service.

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT (5%): All WSP members attend two core program trainings: Program Orientation and Regional Training. In addition, members receive a variety of site-specific trainings from their Site Supervisor, Mentor, or Co-Mentors pertaining to their specific site's needs and procedures for watershed restoration and survey techniques. All sites must submit proof of safety and site-specific training to WSP each month. Members also participate in four National Service Days (NSD) throughout their term of service.

According to a 2009 program evaluation by Arroyo Associates, Inc, "[a] critical feature of the WSP program is that it provides a professional development and training opportunity for individuals wishing to enter the natural resources field, while simultaneously augmenting the programmatic capacity of organizations whose purpose is to protect, enhance, and restore anadromous watersheds". By providing members with industry-recognized trainings and development opportunities, WSP is

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providing them with the skills and knowledge needed to continue serving their communities beyond their term.

c. EVIDENCE BASE

WSP uses the recovery actions outlined by State and Federal recovery plans to ensure the program is serving the highest need watersheds in the most effective ways. These recovery plans have all outlined the need for: focused and prioritized restoration actions in critical areas, implementing standardized salmonid monitoring efforts, educating the community about watershed stressors and conservation techniques, and building strong partnerships with communities, organizations and agencies to improve salmonid habitat and community activism. These actions have been the primary components of the Watershed Stewards Program for over 20 years. In addition to these recovery plans, WSP has hired three outside evaluators in the last six years to assess the program. These evaluations and reports present a strong evidence base that WSP is meeting the community's need with its' research-based interventions.

The Endangered Species Act requires state and federal governing agencies to write and implement recovery plans for all species listed as either "endangered" or "threatened". With the listing of steelhead trout, Coho salmon and Chinook salmon species in the early 1990s and reaffirmed in 2005, plans were developed to identify critical areas for recovery and outline effective means for restoring these populations. The National Marine Fisheries Service's 2014 plan, FINAL RECOVERY PLAN FOR THE SOUTHERN OREGON/NORTHERN CALIFORNIA COAST (SONCC) EVOLUTIONILY SIGNIFICANT UNIT OF COHO SALMON outlines reasons why salmonids are in sharp decline, stating they are suffering from "disease, limited habitat access, insufficient in-stream flows, impaired water quality, and insufficient amount and quality of habitat".

According to SONCC (2014), vital recovery actions include: "reducing unpermitted diversions; ensuring sufficient water quantity and quality; restoring in-channel habitat and upslope ecological function; and creating suitable estuarine nurseries...[and] decreasing disease and non-native predator species. [M]onitoring is also necessary to assess the recovery of salmon by determining if specific recovery criteria are met, and to evaluate whether changes in the recovery strategy are necessary". These actions are designed to improve watershed-wide processes which benefit many native and protected species by restoring ecosystem functions.

WSP ensures each placement site determines member actions based on the restoration priorities designated in their region's State and Federal recovery plans. When placement sites annually apply for members, they must outline the specific activities members will engage in and how those activities are

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directly aligned with recent recovery plans. This ensures each member is effectively serving in critical watersheds and implementing vital recovery interventions.

Ross Taylor and Associates (RTA), a fisheries consulting firm in northern California, was contracted by WSP to complete the 2012 evaluation for Program Years 16 and 17. RTA was asked to gather data on three main areas: (1) the scope of monitoring and restoration projects completed by WSP members, (2) the level of capacity building generated by WSP members in local communities, and (3) the career path of WSP alumni, to better evaluate if WSP is producing the next generation of trained watershed restoration professionals. One of the tools used to illustrate WSP's scope was a PLACEMENT SITE MENTOR/LAND MANAGER SURVEY which demonstrated that over its 17-year history, "WSP has: (1) generated large amounts of monitoring data and completed hundreds of watershed restoration projects, (2) lead to measured improvements in watershed health and in-stream habitat quality, (3) increased the productivity of most organizations where WSP members have been placed, and (4) resulted in capacity building in some local communities beyond the service terms of WSP members". RTA concluded that WSP "provides valuable and needed support to mentor organizations for watershed restoration, monitoring, public outreach, and education. [WSP is] successfully producing the next generation of watershed professionals and educators". In that same survey 91% of respondents said "having WSP members work with their organization has increased the productivity of their organization in ways that staff cannot".

The presence of WSP members, coupled with their volunteer recruiting efforts, has been proven to increase capacity for the organizations that partner with WSP. A 2012 survey of current and former placement sites indicated the information members gather on the status of high-risk watersheds would not be collected without WSP; and as a result, projects would be developed without critical data, thereby reducing their effectiveness.

Overall, a program evaluation conducted by Arroyo Associates, Inc. in 2009 found that "WSP has consistently met or exceeded its performance targets that were established to meet the organization's mission to conserve, restore, and sustain anadromous watersheds for future generations by linking education with high quality scientific practices".

d. NOTICE PRIORITY

The California Conservation Corps (CCC), WSP's legal applicant, is a member organization of the 21st Century Service Corps. With this designation, the Watershed Stewards Program, a project of the CCC, is within the 2015 Environment AmeriCorps Funding Priority.

e. MEMBER TRAINING

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All WSP Members complete approximately 85 hours of training throughout their term of service, in large part through the three WSP-sponsored trainings: Program Orientation, Regional Training, and Spring Training. These trainings provide Members with increased skills in natural resource sciences and professional development, as well as provide an esprit de corps to WSP at large.

WSP members are oriented to AmeriCorps, the community they are serving, their placement site, and the service they will perform through a Program Orientation held during their first week of service in October, followed by a site-specific orientation at their placement site. The WSP Orientation is facilitated by WSP staff and includes: the AmeriCorps pledge, WSP mission and objectives, WSP and AmeriCorps policies, procedures and requirements, prohibited activities, and safety (which includes a comprehensive two-day professional Wilderness First Aid, CPR and Swift Water Rescue certification course, driver safety certification, and tool safety training). Upon arrival at their placement site, mentors provide a site-specific orientation which includes a tour, introduction to their community, review of member and mentor duties and responsibilities, and a site safety orientation.

WSP staff ensures training provided to members will prepare them to perform all of the activities they will engage in during their term of service by bringing in qualified trainers, reviewing and implementing feedback from past training evaluations, discussing site-specific trainings during annual site visits, routinely checking-in with members, and reviewing member and mentor evaluations. Program evaluations over the last two years show 82% of members were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with WSP's trainings and site-specific training.

During November, Members attend a four-day Regional Training hosted in their region. This training focuses on implementing WSP's WOW! education program, Watershed Awareness Projects, and community outreach events. During this training, members are taught how to ensure all volunteers are aware of the Prohibited Activities of AmeriCorps, the CCC and WSP. Each region's training also addresses local ecology and watershed challenges and includes fieldtrips highlighting local watershed issues and solutions. These trainings are lead in the north by the Region I Program Coordinator and Team Leaders, and in the south by the Region II Program Coordinator and Team Leaders.

Members are brought together again for Spring Training, an opportunity to come together as a full program and to talk about Life After AmeriCorps, reflect on the service term, and complete a large restoration service project.

Throughout their term of service, members have many opportunities to attend additional mission-related trainings, such as the Salmonid Restoration Federation Conference and the Environmental and Outdoor Education Conference, which provide space for members to share ideas and learn

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restoration and education techniques alongside natural resource professionals.

Members and mentors are educated about the rules regarding prohibited activities during orientation and train all volunteers before leading any volunteer events. WSP's Member and Mentor Handbooks outline AmeriCorps and WSP Policies, Standards and Guidelines. The WSP verifies understanding of rules and prohibited service activities through quizzes and discussion scenarios based on policies and procedures. The program ensures compliance by maintaining a policy of open and regular communication through periodic site visits, member/mentor calls, and check-ins at trainings and events. Staff monitors member activities for compliance through a pre-approval process for attendance at outreach events and volunteer restoration events, monthly review of member's database entries for accuracy, and staff attendance at events.

f. MEMBER SUPERVISION

WSP ensures that members will receive adequate support and guidance throughout their term by selecting qualified natural resource professionals to serve as site supervisors and mentors and providing them with thorough training. Site supervisors are responsible for mentor compliance and member oversight; they meet monthly with both members and mentors to discuss project progress and needs. Mentors must have a minimum of three years of experience in the natural resource field and recent supervision experience. Mentors must be available to members for DAILY questions, clarifications, and to facilitate weekly safety meetings. All site supervisors and mentors must be approved by the WSP Advisory Committee and staff. All mentors attend an annual Mentor Training where they receive information on how to best adhere to AmeriCorps regulations/provisions, supervise and support members. Mentors support their members by conducting monthly check-in meetings to discuss upcoming projects, program compliance, and provide feedback to one another about their experience and expectations. WSP staff assesses member performance reviews, conducts annual site visits, and facilitates monthly contact with members and mentors to ensure everyone has adequate support.

g. MEMBER EXPERIENCE

WSP has been fostering the next generation of natural resource professionals since 1994 and 80% of WSP's placement sites are currently employing WSP alumni. In program year 20, WSP received 400 applications to fill 41 slots, due to the fact that WSP is revered as a career launch pad that provides its' members with unrivaled hands-on experience and a professional foot-in to the natural resource industry to help them find employment. The experience gained while in WSP such as, completing

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scientific field surveys, training on various scientific databases, and exposure to great mentorship has assisted alumni in procuring gainful employment in the field of natural resources.

WSP also enables members to have powerful service experiences that produce community impact and lead to continued civic participation and connectivity with other AmeriCorps participants through National Service Days (NSD), reflective activities, civic engagement training, and service projects with other national service programs. The WSP's NSD guidelines allow members to provide direct service to individuals located in their community who are not normally reached through WSP activities. NSDs are an opportunity to participate in rewarding experiences that promote long-term community involvement and civic engagement. In addition, WSP staff invites prominent and inspirational speakers to present at trainings (i.e. Cesar Chavez's grandson) and facilitates discussions about the importance of long-term national service and civic engagement. WSP's social media accounts provide alumni with links to volunteer events to encourage continued engagement and volunteerism.

WSP staff recruits applicants using various methods: contacting professors in the field of natural resources, attending career fairs, sending recruitment packets to CCC centers, and advertising on social media and job boards. WSP placement sites are also part of the recruitment process; they help by hanging fliers on local job boards, sending targeted emails to volunteer organizations and using localized social media to recruit members from the communities they serve.

h. COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION

WSP is committed to branding national service through effective member training, by providing experiences that promote the AmeriCorps mission and identity, and by ensuring that members and site partners use the AmeriCorps name and logo at all times. In addition to putting the AmeriCorps logo on WSP uniforms, media, and outreach materials, WSP manages the website and member emails to ensure AmeriCorps logos and taglines are adequately displayed and requires placement sites to publicly display the AmeriCorps logo.

WSP staff ensures members are aware they are AmeriCorps members and identify as such to community members, partners, and the general public. Members are required to wear provided uniforms (with AmeriCorps, CCC, and WSP logos) whenever serving.

Organizational Capability

2. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

a. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING

For the past 21 years, WSP has been engaged in comprehensive, community-based, watershed restoration and education throughout coastal California. WSP was created in 1994 by California

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Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) biologists, educators, and the California Conservation Corps to fill critical gaps in scientific data collection, in-stream restoration, and watershed education. WSP operates as a special project of the CCC, a workforce development program that offers young men and women the chance to serve their State and become employable citizens. Created by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. in 1976, today the CCC is the oldest and largest conservation corps in operation.

WSP is a program within Region One of the CCC. WSP operates out of the Fortuna and San Luis Obispo Centers, is overseen by Fortuna's Center Director, and receives in-kind administrative and fiscal support from centers. The Fortuna Center has 21 years of experience managing AmeriCorps programs and received operational funding for six AmeriCorps programs in the last five years. The following describes the roles and experience of key WSP staff:

CCC Fortuna Center Director (Larry Notheis) -- [In-kind Match Undeclared on Budget] is the direct supervisor of the WSP Program Manager and the liaison between WSP and CCC Headquarters. Mr. Notheis has over twenty years of experience with the CCC and is responsible for monitoring to ensure grant compliance and for providing fiscal control.

Program Manager (Jennifer Catsos) -- [100%] is responsible for overall program reporting, guidance and compliance, staff supervision, monitoring member and mentor success, and fiscal management. She holds a M.E.D. in Curriculum and Instruction and has over ten years of experience in creating, teaching, and managing environmental programs.

Region I Program Coordinator (Zia Schatz) - [100%] oversees WSP's Region I members, mentors and team leaders. She is responsible for member and placement site recruitment, and assisting the Program Manager with reporting, administration and development. She holds a B.A. in Art and has seven years of experience in employee management and training.

Region II Program Coordinator (Jody Weseman) - [100%] oversees WSP's Region II members, mentors, and team leaders. She is responsible for member and site recruitment, training development, and media outreach, as well as assisting the Program Manager with grant writing, reporting and program evaluation. Jody holds a B.S. in Recreation, Parks, and Tourism and has twelve years working with the CCC, and three years in her current position with WSP.

Member Coordinator/Office Manager (Stephanie Birmingham) -- [100%] is responsible for member paperwork and managing the day-to-day operations of the WSP office, as well as providing fiscal support including purchasing gear and office supplies and coding invoices. She assists the Program Manager in maintaining all program files in accordance with funder's expectations. Stephanie holds a

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M.S. in Social Science, Environment and Community and has a diverse background in management, office administration, and conservation.

Program Assistant (Sarah Jones) -- [50%] is responsible for tracking member evaluation and provides support through the processing of timesheets, payroll, expense reimbursement, and workers compensation. Sarah holds a BS in Geology and has five years of experience with the CCC Fortuna Center.

New staff are trained by the WSP team and provided a position description, desk handbook describing essential duties and job functions, and both WSP and CCC staff handbooks outlining policies and procedures. To maintain clear guidelines and expectations, the Program Manager holds regular check-ins and performance reviews with staff. WSP provides quality training and skills development to members by hiring staff with experience in supervision, program development, education, and event coordination.

WSP has a strong reputation for successfully engaging community members and partner organizations in planning and implementing the program. Over the last 20 years, WSP has partnered with 67 unique placement sites and served in 39 communities. The program was founded by CA Department of Fish and Wildlife employees in partnership with the CCC and has grown into collaborations between many organizations across all sectors. The Advisory Committee, which provides program guidance in placement site selections and geographic additions, is made up of over 20 community members, business owners, natural resource professionals, and educators with a vested interest in WSP's work in California communities.

WSP receives additional administrative and fiscal support from CCC Headquarters. The CCC has extensive experience managing many federal, state, and local grants in its 39 years. WSP's established administrative and fiscal procedures come from the CCC operations manual, which is governed by the state administrative manual. As the legal applicant for WSP since its inception, the CCC continues to provide high quality program and fiscal oversight.

b. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The CCC and WSP will ensure compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations at the grantee and placement site locations through the collective oversight provided by CCC and WSP leadership and through continual self-assessment. As the fiscal agent for multiple AmeriCorps programs, the CCC is continually reviewing and refining its administrative processes to ensure compliance with changing regulations. CCC and WSP staff participate in all California State AmeriCorps conferences to ensure awareness of programmatic and policy changes.

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The CCC and WSP are able to prevent, detect and solve compliance issues by ensuring staff are in good communication with one another, via weekly conference calls; and with members, via bi-monthly conference calls. Staff review all Member Performance Reviews and Placement Site Evaluations to guide conversation during site visits and to ensure all sites and members are in compliance with AmeriCorps standards. WSP staff maintain communications with partners throughout the year, via bi-monthly email updates, annual site visits, and annual Mentor Trainings. Site visit reports are provided to all sites, annually, after site visits have occurred. If issues arise with a site, WSP staff maintain bi-weekly check-in calls/email to seek solutions with Site Supervisors until the issue is resolved.

The CCC holds the WSP, its partners, and placement sites accountable for instances or risk of noncompliance by immediately addressing the issue and identifying corrective actions. Depending on the issue's severity, negligence to comply can result in termination of current and future member involvement with the partner. WSP's Program Manager informs their CV Program Officer of any compliance issues.

c. PAST PERFORMANCE FOR CURRENT GRANTEEES AND FORMER GRANTEEES ONLY

WSP has met most performance measurement targets in the past three years, with a few exceptions. In Year 18 (2011-2012), due to major program expansion and hiring staff to oversee the new region, the program fell short in meeting the following targets: Ed/Outreach by 3,567 hours, Team Leader's Member Support by 244 hours, Volunteers Recruited by 32 volunteers, and Member Training by 9 hours. In Year 19 (2012-2013), due to challenges associated with implementing a new database where members logged their hours electronically, the program fell short in reaching the following targets: Ed/Outreach by 5,641 hours, and Member Development by 30 hours. In Year 20 (2013-2014) the program discontinued Ed/Outreach and focused on Watershed Recovery and Protection targets, per funder's requests. All targets were met in Year 20.

Now in program Year 21, WSP is well established in Region II, familiar with the online database, and reincorporating the Ed/Outreach components of the program. To ensure members are entering their hours correctly into the database and are on course to reach their service goal, staff reviews the online database for accuracy on a quarterly basis and produced a detailed Database User Manual. WSP is currently on track to meet all targets.

WSP has achieved 100% member enrollment over the past three program years. Last year, one member resigned from WSP to support their spouse who was offered permanent employment in Oregon, which impacted WSP's retention rate by 2.5%. To avoid early member exits, WSP informs

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applicants during recruitment of the 10.5 month commitment and the negative impact on the program if they exit early.

During the last three years of program operations, WSP has had no compliance issues.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

3. COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY

a. COST EFFECTIVENESS

WSP's budget is cost effective and sufficient to carry out the program successfully. Over the years, WSP has steadily decreased the corporation cost per member service year (MSY) from \$13,380 (2004-07) to \$11,520 (2007-10) to \$9,844 (2010-13). The cost per MSY for 2015-2016 is \$9,282. The consistent decline in cost per MSY is achieved by increasing placement site match, seeking continuous contributions from the CCC and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and through the development of new partnerships and funding sources.

WSP has successfully secured non-corporation funds for the last 21 years and will continue to do so. WSP is comprised of a large group of financial and in-kind partners who provide diverse resources for program implementation. WSP has secured in-kind and cash commitment from the CCC and CDFW (\$552,390) and is working toward securing funding from the State and Regional Water Boards in addition to current match listed. Placement site match from the following agencies has been secured: the US Forest Service, Resource Conservation Districts, Water Districts, Yurok Tribe, State and National Parks, and non-profit organizations. WSP partners provide various types of in-kind support which include: vehicles and fuel, equipment, safety gear, computers, office space and supplies, training, supervision, meeting locations, and scientific instruments.

WSP's program design and budget maximize a return on CNCS's investment by achieving greater results with less federal funding. WSP provides a 71% match which exceeds the 2015-16 CNCS match requirement by more than 20%. CNCS contributions total less than 30% of the annual WSP budget and allow members to perform watershed recovery projects and engage the community in locally-based education and outreach. By providing AmeriCorps funding to WSP, CNCS ensures that vital watershed recovery actions, community engagement, and volunteer efforts continue in California's coastal watersheds.

b. BUDGET ADEQUACY

Budget line items support program design and sufficiently support program activities and desired outputs and outcomes by providing adequate funding essential to support member and personnel

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wages and benefits. The funding allocated for operations provides a solid infrastructure, including travel for site visits and field work, office lease, utilities, pre-employment physicals, criminal history and FBI checks, CNCS meetings, communication, and vehicle maintenance.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

PROGRAM EVALUATION PLAN

PROGRAM NAME: Watershed Stewards Program

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION NAME: California Conservation Corps

INTRODUCTION: The Watershed Stewards Program (WSP) has a full-time internal evaluation team that will lead the development and execution of a comprehensive AmeriCorps Program Evaluation. The team consists of the Program Manager and two Regional Program Coordinators. Based on the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) regulations, because WSP is applying for less than \$500,000 annually in CNCS funds, it may elect to complete a process or impact evaluation using an internal evaluator.

THEORY OF CHANGE: The WSP has paired youth with natural resource professionals to install restoration projects and collect data in high need watersheds for the past 20 years; however, once WSP members complete their term of service, their career paths are not documented. WSP has been working over the course of five years to rebuild its alumni network and would benefit from using this evaluation as an opportunity to update alumni contacts and collect data on the long-term influences of the program on alumni's lives.

PURPOSE: This evaluation will focus on the impact WSP has had on the career paths and altruistic spirit of its alumni. The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure WSP is providing sufficient training and guidance to members during their term of service and to pin-point the strengths and weaknesses of the program through the eyes of alumni. This evaluation will build on the data collected by Ross Taylor and Associates during their 2012 external evaluation.

AUDIENCES AND DECISIONS: The progression of this evaluation will be reported annually to CNCS. Final results of the evaluation will be shared at the end of the three-year grant period, during WSP's 24th program year (2017-2018). Results will also be shared with WSP staff, the California

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Conservation Corps and WSP partners and funders. The interim and final report will be presented at WSP's Advisory Committee meeting to guide conversations for future planning.

QUESTIONS: The evaluation will address the following key questions:

1. Does the experience provided by WSP improve someone's chances of being gainfully employed in the field of natural resources?
2. Does the experience provided by WSP improve the likelihood of someone volunteering in their community?

METHODS: Due to the large geographic area where alumni reside, the best method for data collection is an online survey. The evaluation will take on a Systems Approach to determine to which degree WSP realizes its goals according to its current program model. WSP's professional trainings, volunteer recruitment requirements, hands-on restoration projects and education/outreach components of the program act as the inputs, and the evaluation findings will be the outcomes and provide a means for feedback.

TIMELINE AND LOGISTICS:

Alumni Survey Creation and Contact Collection: 2015-2016, WSP Staff with at least two years' experience in conducting evaluations

Alumni Survey Data Collection: 2016-2017, WSP Staff with at least two years' experience in conducting evaluations

Alumni Survey Data Analysis & Reporting: 2017-2018, WSP Staff with at least two years' experience in conducting evaluations

BUDGET: Since the evaluation will be conducted internally by WSP staff, no extra costs will be necessary.

Amendment Justification

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Clarification Summary

A. Programmatic Clarification Items:

1. Please describe how individual placement members are in compliance with non-supplantation, non-duplication and non-displacement restrictions.

Each year WSP has a few individual placement Members due to placement site and program needs. WSP ensures these Members are in compliance with non-supplantation, non-duplication and non-displacement restrictions by vetting placement sites to guarantee the work being done by the Member is work that would not otherwise happen. This is reported by sites in their Placement Site Application and verified by staff during Site Visits.

2. Please describe the roles and activities of team leaders as it relates to the intervention.

WSP Team Leaders support the training and coordination of member's participation in the Watershed Stewards Program. Under the direct supervision of the Regional Program Coordinators, Team Leaders are responsible for many roles and activities that relate to WSP's four part intervention (watershed recovery and protection, watershed education and outreach, volunteer recruitment, and member development).

Watershed Recovery & Protection: Team Leaders spend time supporting and completing watershed recovery and protection interventions. They attend all Watershed Awareness Projects (WAP) organized by members in their district, and create/coordinate their own volunteer restoration events. Team Leaders are given opportunities throughout the year to conduct watershed recovery and protection field work with WSP's other placement sites and members, and attend relevant trainings (spawning survey training, snorkel survey training, etc...).

Watershed Education & Outreach: Team Leaders are instrumental in the coordination of the watershed education and outreach portion of WSP's intervention, and spend a large portion of their time working on these activities. They are responsible for preparing members for their education and outreach commitments by managing community education requests, and helping members schedule classroom visits.

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During the busy education season, Team Leaders support members while they implement the WOW! curriculum by assisting them with classroom management, conducting in-class observations and providing feedback to members. They also manage education materials and distribute them to members for use in the classroom. Team Leaders are also responsible for teaching at least one six-session series of the WOW! curriculum themselves, and usually end up teaching many more to meet the needs of the community. They also present an educational series for CCC corpsmembers at the Fortuna and Los Padres centers.

Team Leaders assist staff in coordinating outreach events, environmental education fairs and classroom outreach outside of the WOW! curriculum. They also actively seek out and coordinate new community outreach opportunities throughout the program year, with special emphasis on targeting underserved populations. Team Leaders are responsible for collecting and organizing all members outreach paperwork and maintaining the outreach tracking log.

Volunteer Recruitment: Team Leaders spend time working on WSP's volunteer recruitment intervention. They assist members in development of their Watershed Awareness Project (WAP), including volunteer recruitment, media outreach, and completion of necessary paperwork. They also participate in local service and volunteer networks as a WSP representative, attend committee meetings, and collaborate with regional programs to coordinate National Service Day events (Make a Difference Day, MLK Jr. Day, Cesar Chavez Day, and National Service Week).

Member Development: Team Leaders are in a unique position: they help WSP staff to coordinate WSP member trainings, while simultaneously benefitting from the experiences themselves. For their own development, Team Leaders complete the same core training as all other members, as well as attending environmental education and watershed restoration trainings and conferences.

3. Please confirm that Team Leaders will not supervise other members. Please describe the processes by which members and team members will know and understand policies related to prohibited supervision.

Team Leaders are in no way supervisors of other WSP Members. The Member Handbook outlines the

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duties and responsibilities of both Members and Team Leaders and these roles are reviewed during Orientation for everyone's understanding. Team Leaders are mentored by the regional Program Coordinators, who help Team Leaders understand their roles through weekly meetings and regular check-ins and trainings.

4. Please describe the roles and activities of volunteers that will be recruited by members.

During their term of service, WSP members create, plan, and run hands-on watershed restoration projects and recruit volunteers to help complete these projects. Typical volunteer activities include sheet-mulching lawns, planting native plants, removing invasive plant species, and installing rainwater gardens. The role of volunteers varies depending on project needs and volunteer skills, but they are generally engaged in manual labor.

B. Budget Clarification

Responses have been made in the budget section of Egrants.

C. Performance Measure Clarification

1. EN5 and EN5.1: Per the National Performance Measure requirements for EN5 and EN5.1, programs should count each mile that is treated only once during the program year and only count acres that are actually treated. Please explain how the program will ensure unduplicated counts of each mile treated.

WSP Members, Mentors, and Site Supervisors will be extensively trained in the use of the Restoration Analysis Log (RAL) and will receive specific instructions to ensure they do not duplicate miles reported. The RAL is the pre/post report of treated areas, and requests the location of the project. WSP staff will review all submissions and verify projects are unique and miles are not counted more than once. Members will work with placement site staff and the managing entity/land manager (generally a representative of the placement site) to report on the size of the area they intend to treat and assess only that area when determining miles treated. The RAL assessment will be completed and signed by the managing entity or the sponsoring agency.

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2. Please provide an explanation for how the program arrived at the output target for EN5 and EN5.1. Please describe how the target is ambitious.

The WSP staff feels 95 miles of waterways treated is an ambitious yet attainable performance measure. When members conduct restoration projects that reduce sediment load going into streams, they assume that project will also affect two miles downstream of that project. This is a widely accepted numeric used in restoration reporting. WSP arrived at this output target by figuring that each of the 46 Members would treat an average of two miles of waterway.

3. Revise the instrument for EN5.1. As described in the performance measure instructions, the waterways must be assessed by the managing entity/land manager as having been improved to an acceptable level as defined by the sponsoring agency or land manager in accordance with their natural resource plan.

The Post Evaluation RAL will be completed by a representative of the sponsoring agency (managing entity/land manager), which is generally the placement site.

4. EN3 and EN3.1: Per the National Performance Measure requirements for EN3 and EN3.1, programs should count the number of individuals receiving education or training in environmental stewardship and increase in knowledge based on participation only once. Please explain how the program will ensure that tracking will enable unduplicated count when possible.

The WSP Members ensure all students who receive the WOW! educational series add their first and last name on the Pre/Post tests. Members review all tests from their treated classrooms to ensure there are no duplicates, and WSP Team Leaders review all tests from all Members to ensure no students are double counted. If students failed to add their first and last names, those tests are not included in the outcome report.

5. The comment in the description of the intervention for Awareness & Stewardship exceeds the character limit. Please format the text as it is cut off.

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Edits have been made in the Performance Measure section of Egrants.

6. Since outcome EN3.1 only counts students receiving the WOW! curriculum, please remove references to other outreach activities from this performance measure and adjust the output target and MSY allocations for this measure accordingly.

Edits have been made in the Performance Measure section of Egrants.

D. Strategic Engagement Slots

1. What percentage of your slots will be targeted to recruiting members with disabilities? What is your program's plan, if any, for outreach and recruitment of members of the disability community?

Per our legal applicant's Legal Counsel interpretation of the CA Executive Order S-6-04 which reads, "All state agencies, departments, boards, and commissions shall recruit, appoint, train, evaluate and promote state personnel on the basis of merit and fitness, without regard to age, race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, disability or other non-job-related factors," the Watershed Stewards Program is prohibited from making member selection decisions based on the above protected characteristics.

This means we cannot dedicate specific member slots solely for those with disabilities. Therefore our efforts lie within trying to ensure WSP has a diverse applicant pool that includes members of the disability community. We will continue to do this through our recruitment outreach efforts which include distributing recruitment materials and giving recruitment presentations to organizations and communities who serve the disability community or who have members from this segment of the population.

E. MSY with No Program Funds Attached Clarification:

1. The number and type of slots requested. Please confirm that for the MSYs requested, the additional members will only engage in activities aligned with the proposed member activities outlined in the application narrative.

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WSP is requesting two additional full time, 1700 hour, no-cost MSY slots. These additional members will only engage in WSP's proposed member activities outlined in the application narrative.

2. A description of resources that will be provided to adequately support the additional members and how they are sufficient to; support the member support costs, management, oversight, program operations, and the program activities.

These additional members will be provided with the same resources as all other WSP members. The full cost of a WSP member is \$31,909, which includes the cost of their stipend, health insurance, workers' compensation insurance, travel expenses, uniform, training, member support costs, management, oversight, and program operation). Because of additional funding provided by the Fisheries Restoration Grant Program, and individual placement sites, WSP is able to cover the \$63,818 cost of these two additional members without using CNCS funds.

3. Source(s) of non-CNCS funds. Provide a brief description of the amount, classification (cash or in-kind), source(s) (State/Local, Federal, Private) for all resources secured to manage, monitor, and support these additional members.

SOURCE: State Water Board

TYPE: State

AMOUNT: \$66,000

4. The organization's capability and capacity to successfully implement, manage, and monitor the additional members.

WSP has a 21 year history of managing AmeriCorps members. In the current program year, WSP has 47 members, so it would not be a burden for the program to manage and monitor 46 members next program year.

Continuation Changes

NA

Grant Characteristics