



**Ecological Restoration**  
**U.S. Department of Agriculture**  
**Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region**

## **AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards-Partners in Ecological Restoration**

The AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project was created in 1994 by a partnership of California Conservation Corps, California Department of Fish and Game, Humboldt State University, Proposition 70, US Forest Service, and other members of the fisheries, watershed, and science community in northwest California. These partners developed the Watershed Stewards Project (WSP) as an effective strategy to address the comprehensive need of restoring the major coastal watersheds in communities from the San Francisco area north to the Oregon border.

AmeriCorps members, working according to the WSP mission to conserve, restore, and enhance anadromous watersheds by linking education with high quality scientific practices, have provided the combination of unique services needed to promote and facilitate watershed stewardship beyond the capacity of professionals and volunteers. WSP members address watershed and fish habitat restoration needs through a four-part strategy: Watershed Assessment, *Real Science* Watershed Education, Community Outreach, and Volunteer Recruitment, with the end result being overall improvement of watershed ecology conditions. These components compliment the Forest Service Mission including the Northwest Forest Plan's Aquatic Conservation Strategy.

Since 1994, Six Rivers National Forest has been a placement site for two to six members annually. In 2011, the Forest had six members serve a ten month service. Six Rivers National Forest staff is an active member of the WSP Advisory Committee that provides oversight and community input to the WSP program leaders on a quarterly basis.

Over 300 miles a year of habitat and fisheries surveys are accomplished due to the efforts of WSP members stationed on Six Rivers National Forest. Members also run downstream migrant trapping to track coho and chinook salmon spawning and rearing success. Road inventories to identify sediment sources are conducted by WSP members under the guidance of forest hydrologists.

The Individual Service Projects occurring at the direction of Forest Service WSP members, bring community volunteers out to the Forest to work on Forest restoration activities. In 2011, WSP members on Lower Trinity Ranger District outreached to community members to assist in the Horse Linto Trail and Stream Restoration Project. This project can be viewed in the 2011 WFRP Report ([http://wodata02.fs.fed.us/fsfiles/unit/wo/wfrp/usforest\\_2011.nsf/\(Report\)?OpenAgent&UNID=1FD9F5B1E7D1C7BD852579190070B3E3](http://wodata02.fs.fed.us/fsfiles/unit/wo/wfrp/usforest_2011.nsf/(Report)?OpenAgent&UNID=1FD9F5B1E7D1C7BD852579190070B3E3)).

This focus on member development and training has benefited the Forest Service not only by the accomplishments of the over 100 members while they were stationed on Six Rivers, but also by the members who have been hired as Forest Service geologist, hydrologists, and fish biologists, both temporary and permanent additions to the workforce.

The AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Program was a recipient of the 2011 Rise To The Future, National Hydrology, and Soil Science Awards.