AmeriCorps

- A national service initiative started in 1993.
- “Domestic Peace Corps”
- Programs overseen by the Corporation for Community and National Service
  - AmeriCorps State and National Programs
  - AmeriCorps VISTA
  - AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps)
AmeriCorps

- Tutor and mentor disadvantaged youth
- Fight illiteracy
- Improve health services
- Build affordable housing
- Teach computer skills
- Clean parks and streams
- Manage or operate after-school programs
- Help communities respond to disasters
- Build organizational capacity

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AmeriCorps is

- A TERM OF SERVICE
- A COMMITMENT to hours of service
- A program of service not longer than one year that has LOTS of regulations that MUST be followed by organizations and members

NJ Department of Environmental Protection – May 2010
AmeriCorps is NOT

- A job
- A job’s program
- An internship
- Free labor
- A staff builder

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AmeriCorps Member Requirements

- Must be 17 years of age or older.
- Must have a High School Diploma or Equivalency, or must be working towards the GED.
- Must be a US Citizen or Permanent Resident of the US.
- Must complete Term of Service.

1700 hours (full-time) or 900 hours (half-time).

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AmeriCorps Member Incentives

- AmeriCorps members work full time (1700 hours) for one year while receiving a living allowance of $11,700.
- Upon completion of service, members receive an educational award totaling $4,725.
- Members are eligible for a health insurance plan, student loan deferment, child care, and numerous training opportunities.
AmeriCorps + NJDEP = NJ Watershed Ambassador Program

Creating a ripple effect for nine years…and counting!

NJ Department of Environmental Protection – May 2010
AmeriCorps NJ Watershed Ambassador Program

Hosted by NJ Department of Environmental Protection since 2000

20 members serve 20 watershed management areas at host agencies

Members are college graduates with interest in environment and community service

Members focus on community education, outreach & stewardship
Watershed Ambassadors

- Creating a sense of watershed stewardship in New Jersey
- Assessing rivers and streams
- Encouraging the next generation of environmental professionals
Watershed Ambassadors

- Watershed Stewardship
- Volunteer Monitoring Training
- Educational Presentations

NJ Department of Environmental Protection – May 2010
Watershed Presentations

- **Target:** Each member will make 30 presentations to a minimum of 750 participants
- **600 presentations to 15,000 participants**
- **Target:** For school and non-school groups, 50% of participants at watershed presentations will indicate an increased knowledge of watershed issues as indicated by evaluation forms.
- **Target:** For school and non-school groups, 25% of participants will indicate an increased likelihood of performing watershed stewardship activities as indicated by evaluation forms.
Watershed Presentations

- **Last year:** 973 to 23,954 people
- **Cumulative total:** 8116 to 175,000 people

NJ Department of Environmental Protection – May 2010
Watershed Presentations

- Over 90% of teachers rated presentations as excellent.

- “The hands on activities were very valuable in teaching about the watershed and pollution…”
- “Eric was able to relate the information to the children and show them how it affects their lives.”
- “Susan was a dynamic presenter. Her use of the 3-D model helped the students to really understand the importance of reducing pollution”
- “The entire presentation was relevant to exactly what we are learning in the classroom.”
- “The presenters did an excellent job. The students were engaged the entire time and really enjoyed the presentation.”
- “Fantastic presentation! Very hands on. Students love this! Very well prepared.”

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Watershed Presentations

activities
watershed stewardship
of performing
an increased likelihood
participants indicated
Last Year: 66% of
watershed issues
increased knowledge of
participants indicated
Last Year: 97% of
Watershed Presentations

- “Students came to understand that People are the biggest polluters.”

- “Presentation was concise and interesting. Follow up discussion enabled youth to share their insights and express concerns.”

- “Making students understand their personal water usage and how easily they can help preserve it by making little changes.”
Volunteer Monitoring Training

- **Target**: Members will conduct 5 trainings in watershed assessment techniques to train a minimum of 25 people.
- **100 trainings to 500 people**
- **Target**: 75% of volunteers and teachers will be satisfied with the training they received as indicated by evaluation forms.
- **Target**: 35% of volunteers at watershed assessment training will show an increased likelihood of performing watershed stewardship activities as indicated by evaluation forms.
Volunteer Monitoring Training

- **Last Year:**
  197 trainings for 2890 people

- **Cumulative Total:**
  966 trainings for 15,855 people
Volunteer Monitoring Training

Last Year:

- 99% of trainees were satisfied with the training

- 81% of trainees were more likely to change personal behavior or participate in a project

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Volunteer Monitoring Training

- “It has made me more aware of the environment around me.”
- “It has given me a greater appreciation of the quality and value of the local stream resource.”
- “Jason was very well prepared and interacted with the 8th grade students as if he had been teaching for years.”
- “I wasn’t aware there were so many critters in streams.”
- “I realized how important it is to protect and conserve our environment, for our future usage.”
- “I didn’t know that bugs were affected by pollution. I found the class very fun and interesting.”
- “I have realized that we need to better care for our watershed.”

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Partnership Projects

- Target: Each member will recruit 2 partners to participate in watershed stewardship partnership projects as indicated by a partnership list.

- Target: For each member, watershed partnerships will improve the quality of the environment as described by 2 partnership letters that indicate the environmental benefit of the project.
Partnership Projects

- Last year: 40 Partnership Projects
- Cumulative Total: 273 Partnership Projects
Partnership Projects

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Partnership Projects

- Stream Clean-ups
- Earth Day Events
- Bio-blitz
- Storm Drain Stenciling
- Fishing Derbies
- Canoe & Kayak Races
- Rain Barrels & Rain Gardens

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Watershed Assessments

- **Target:** Each member will conduct 50 watershed assessments as measured by the number of completed watershed assessment forms.

- **1000 visual or biological assessments of river segments**
Watershed Assessments

- Last year: 1007 assessments
- Cumulative Total: 7609 assessments

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Watershed Assessments

- Members conducted visual assessments in TMDL segments to assist the Department in identifying of Nonpoint Sources of Pollution

- Members performed assessments along stream segments where stormwater BMPs and stream restoration projects were completed to assist in evaluating how well BMPs are functioning

- Members assessed Priority Stream Segments as determined by the Department and local stakeholders

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Volunteer Service

- **Target:** Volunteers will perform 200 hours of community service conducting watershed assessments with each member.

- **Target:** Volunteers will perform 200 volunteer service hours through watershed stewardship partnership projects for each member.

- **8000 hours of volunteer service**
Volunteer Service

- **Last year:**
  14,676 hours of volunteer service

- **Cumulative Total:**
  96,992 hours of volunteer service

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Member Development

- **Target**: Members will receive training in watershed assessment protocols as indicated by training sign-in sheets.

- **Target**: Members will learn watershed assessment techniques to assess NJ watersheds as indicated by initial and final evaluation scores of at least 75%.
Member Development

- Two weeks of intensive orientation at beginning of program year
- Additional trainings throughout the year
- Opportunities for professional experience and networking
- Feedback and evaluation of their progress
Member Development

- Each AmeriCorps member serves 1700 hours
- Last year: 31,779 hours
- Total: 315,950 hours
Watershed Ambassadors

- Assessments
- Watershed Stewardship
- Member Development
  - Educational Presentations
  - Volunteer Monitoring Training
  - Watershed Partnership Projects

NJ Department of Environmental Protection – May 2010
Accomplishments

- Over 9+ years, 196 Watershed Ambassadors have:
  - Conducted over 8100 watershed presentations for 175,000 people
  - Completed 7600 visual and biological assessments on local waterways
  - Trained 15,800 volunteer monitors
  - Organized 273 partnership projects
  - Generated volunteerism with 97,000 hours of community participation
  - Served over 300,000 hours of community service

NJ Department of Environmental Protection – May 2010
CONTACT INFORMATION

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