



Case Clinic: Dave Bastian on Incorporating Social Goals into Restoration

Attendees: Dave Bastian (presenter), Deborah Campbell (facilitator), Daniel Oppenheimer (note-taker), Lisa Clark, Kathy Davis, Bill Brandau, Sparky Taber, Jim Cagney, Carianne Campbell, Rachel Frost, Skip Seisel, Elysa Ducharme, Sam Wheeler, Colleen Carmody, Cinzia Ballantyne, Dan Emmett, Mark Ahlijanian, Anna Schrenk

Overview: Conservation Corps are driven by the need to further integrate social objectives into ecological restoration work. Unlike traditional contractors, crews bring in veterans and underserved youth to work to provide employment and experiential opportunities for underserved communities. Two constant struggles among Conservation Corps are (1) *finding ways to attract local youth to working on projects in their own communities* and (2) *to bring in Corps members that represent the diversity of the communities they serve.*

What are some tools to get local youth & communities involved with restoration projects?

Tool	Discussion
Communicate the ecological importance of restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispel restoration misconceptions (e.g. the aesthetic value of ornamentals) and educate about the benefits of restoration activities • See confrontation as an opportunity; answer questions when approached in the field • Use crews as translators to make science accessible
Showcase demonstration projects to the community	Help community members grow comfortable with the short and long-term impacts of restoration projects
Market personal impacts of working with conservation corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to explore careers (e.g., natural resource management, STEM, gov't, non-profit) • Character-building • Tool-wielding, technical experience • Advances physical ability to achieve health goals • Resume builder with meaningful recommendations • Travel (e.g. urban-rural; east-west; coastal-inland)

Partner with local schools (K-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapters (ex. Borderlands Earth Care Youth Institute pilot in Patagonia, AZ) • Connect with students at multiple points in their education (ex. Career pathways program in Verde Valley, AZ tracks students throughout their education to keep them integrated with River projects)
Work with Federal Partners	Federal partners can assist in expanding pilot efforts (Ex. USFS and Borderlands Earth Care Youth Institute pilot in Douglas, AZ)
Utilize peer-to-peer outreach model (K-college)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal testimonials about field experience • Utilize the alumni network, potentially through an outreach intern/liaison to high schools and universities
Engage decision makers in local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build support among large land owners and other key community members • Personal relationships should be seen as investments
Be deliberate with language / know your audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Youth” is federally defined as 18-25 (potentially as high as 32 for veteran groups), though this does not mean young adults self-identify as “youth” • Use titles that look good on a resume (e.g., “technicians”>“Interns”)
Use momentum of environmental education groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instill young persons with stewardship values • Conservation corps provide a means to act on these values
Construct low-commitment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may be a challenge for conservation corps • Create <i>exposure programs</i> to introduce people to corps work • Existing volunteer projects can act as feeders to corps groups

What are some strategies to diversify the groups with whom we work?

Attendees saw a need to define diversity goals in advance of the discussion. These include:

- Diversity of race, socioeconomic background, culture, age, level of exposure to natural spaces, & gender.
- Diversity of managers should replicate the diversity that we hope to achieve in the riparian ecosystem (age class & species).
- Federal lands managers need to reflect the demographics they serve.

Strategy	Discussion
Integrate diversity into multiple levels of leadership	Conscious effort to increase the number of women in Utah Conservation Corps has brought women into leadership positions which encourages further recruitment
Provide entry level jobs that further experience and/or further education opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal and state agencies lack (accessible) entry level positions for young people • Integrate education and experience, create a “complete package” job seeker • Corps alumni should highlight communication skills/experience when going through federal hiring processes
Increase exposure to NR management and STEM careers to underserved communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase visibility of STEM careers as an option (e.g. South Eastern Arizona Science Initiative Camp, STEM festival showcasing careers, Sci-Tech festival in Verde Valley, AZ) • Consider the role of the guardian(s) in introducing STEM careers, which are dependent on their exposure
Create a culture of safety and value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero tolerance policies for harassment • Value “other-ness”
Address privilege by mitigating start-up costs of joining Conservation Corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to internet, travel, lodging, & gear • Provide stipends to mitigate start-up costs
Work with local partners to create advancement opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for youth to test out careers (e.g. Individual Placements that pair AmeriCorps members with federal agencies) • BLM could partner with CD’s and other local partners to increase access to federal careers