

CSC Project Synopsis — 2013

Project Title: Rhode Island Youth Conservation League (YCL): 2013 Youth Crews

Goals:

YCL Outcomes:

- provide summer employment for high school aged youth and job experience for those interested in careers in landscaping and environmental management.
- provide substantial labor and other inputs towards stewardship needs of cons. land holders
- draw public attention to stewardship needs of conservation land and portray those activities as personally, socially, and economically valuable and make stewardship activities attractive to a public seeking new forms of outdoor recreation and new ways to re-engage with Nature.
- broaden community support for land conservation generally.



Brief Description: The Rhode Island Youth Conservation League is an innovative approach to meeting important needs of the local land conservation movement through: 1) greater capacity for stewarding conservation land, 2) sustained, broadened public support for land conservation generally, 3) renewed, strengthened connections between people and nature. It is being developed by Rhode Island chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society of Rhode Island, and the Rhode Island Natural History Survey with the hope that it will become a permanent conservation stewardship program for the state, beginning in 2013.

While the U.S. conservation movement has seen great success in open space protection, resources for stewardship of this land (which includes estuarine and coastal areas) have not kept pace. New England states protected 1.11 million acres from 1998 to 2005, increasing total conservation land by 30% in just 7 years but funding for stewardship is tighter than ever. Even the availability of volunteers with interests in or skills for outdoor tasks has been threatened as time spent by American children in unstructured outdoor play declined 50% from 1997 to 2003.

The YCL meets this challenge by making conservation land stewardship a community activity. The YCL model includes: 1) crews of high school-aged youth, with college-aged leaders/mentors, hired to tackle diverse stewardship tasks during one or more 5-week sessions, 2) more complicated projects that bring together youth crews, adult land trust volunteers, and professional stewardship staff, 3) a schedule with built-in educational components and opportunities for YCL members to communicate their learning and growth to the community. YCL consists of one or more crews of up to 8 high school aged employees, each crew with a college-age leader and assistant leader. The program focuses on diverse stewardship tasks from invasive plant removal and habitat restoration to signage, trail building, and facility maintenance, but additional regular activities include job training, leadership and teambuilding exercises, natural history lessons, and publicity/public outreach.

The partners committed to this project to date are Audubon Society of Rhode Island (ASRI), The Nature Conservancy of Rhode Island (TNC), and Rhode Island Natural History Survey. The stewardship tasks will take place on land conserved by ASRI and TNC and would include things such as invasives removal and general vegetation clearing, trail work, or fencing. Precise details and a day-by-day schedule would be planned by staff of the partners and finalized by the crew leader and assistant before the crew starts.

Hiring for crew leader and crew assistant leader would be done jointly by ASRI and TNC as part of their existing search for seasonal hires. Planning for projects would be done by RINHS, ASRI, and TNC, with the crew leader commencing 3 weeks, and the assistant leader 2 weeks in advance of the crew to finish planning, prep equipment, and undergo their own orientation and training. Crew leader and assistant would finish one week after the crew to plan a public celebration, write evaluations and reports, clean and store equipment, and finish up loose ends. Student crew positions would be publicized in communities based on the partner organizations' needs and/or the priorities of funders, for instance urban areas. Power tools, chemicals, construction materials, permits, and additional field labor for projects would be the responsibility of the land owner.

The YCL model was developed by the Rhode Island Natural History Survey to provide labor and a youth component for a project to improve the health of high-priority forests in Rhode Island. It is based loosely on other models for student conservation crews such as the Student Conservation Association and Vermont Youth Conservation Corps. RINHS operated one YCL crew in 2010 and one in 2011 and the current plan draws heavily on this experience.

Deliverables:

1. Employment of 8 youth crew, one crew assistant leader, and one crew leader
2. Two days of crew training/team building
3. Eighteen days of crew work on partner lands (1,260 hours + partner time)
4. Public celebration with parents, org. partners, teachers, community leaders
5. Web journal such as on Facebook
6. Financial and written reports

Timeline and Benchmarks:

Feb 2013 Advertise crew leader and assistant positions
Mar 2013 Advertise crew positions
Mar-June Planning by partners
June 17 Crew leader starts
June 24 Crew assistant starts
July 8 Crew starts
August 9 Crew finishes
August 15 Public celebration
August 16 Crew leader and assistant finish

Budget:

The budget requested from RICSC covers primarily crew wages and miscellaneous out of pocket costs. Substantial input from partners is anticipated including: staff time for the hiring process and time to plan the stewardship projects, a van and fuel for most of 5 weeks, any other costs (materials, heavy equipment, specialized labor) for stewardship projects. The hiring for YCL would piggyback on ASRI's regular seasonal hiring process and benefit from the pool of applicants they generate for other seasonal jobs but RINHS would be the employer of the crew and leaders. RINHS would handle payroll and expenditure of other funds and collect 13.06% of the direct costs in compensation (13.06% is RINHS's federal indirect rate).

EXPENSES				
item	basis	5 week program	2 X 5 week programs	
crew wages	8 crew x \$8.75/hr x 5 wks x 32 hrs	\$ 11,200.00	8 x \$8.75 x 10 wks x 32 hrs	\$ 22,400.00
crew leader wages	\$12.50/hr x 9 wks x 39 hrs	\$ 4,387.50	\$12.50/hr x 14 wks x 39 hrs	\$ 6,825.00
crew assistant leader wages	\$10.00/hr x 8 wks x 39 hrs	\$ 3,120.00	\$10.00/hr x 13 wks x 39 hrs	\$ 5,070.00
TOTAL WAGES		\$ 18,707.50	total wages	\$ 34,295.00
fringe	12%	\$ 2,244.90	fringe	\$ 4,115.40
TOTAL PERSONNEL		\$ 20,952.40	total personel	\$ 38,410.40
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mileage for planning	~320 miles @ .555	\$ 170.00	no change	\$ 170.00
printing (manuals, t-shirts, hats, maps, announcements, invites)		\$ 600.00	printing	\$ 1,000.00
postage (misc., mailing re: final event)		\$ 250.00	postage	\$ 300.00
supplies (first aid kit, tick repel., tool replace/repair, expendibles)		\$ 200.00	Supplies	\$ 250.00
food (orientation, public openhouse)		\$ 150.00	food etc	\$ 250.00
TOTAL MISC		\$ 1,370.00	Total Misc	\$ 1,970.00
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TOTAL out of pocket (does not count inkind by partners)		\$ 22,322.40	total out of pocket	\$ 40,380.40
5% contingency (breakdown, insurance rider, unknown issues)		\$ 1,116.12	5% contingency	\$ 2,019.02
Indirect (to RINHS)	13.06%	\$ 3,061.07	Indirect	\$ 5,537.36
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TOTAL (does not count inkind by partners)		\$ 26,499.59	Total	\$ 47,936.78
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INCOME + SUPPORT				
RICSC grant		\$ 20,000.00		
Other foundation support	(Merck?, Bafflin?, other ideas?)	\$ 6,500.00		
van (with fuel)	ASRI			
advertizing jobs, interviews	ASRI, TNC, RINHS			
project expenses	landowner			
TOTAL		\$ 26,500.00		

Total CSC Request: \$20,000

Payments will be made to RINHS

Project oversight will be by David Gregg, Executive Director, RINHS