

103^D CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2328

To establish a Public Lands Corps, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 27, 1993

Mr. VENTO (for himself, Mr. MILLER of California, and Mr. WILLIAMS) introduced the following bill; which was referred jointly to the Committees on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Education and Labor

A BILL

To establish a Public Lands Corps, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Public Lands Corps
5 Act of 1993”.

6 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that—

8 (1) conserving or developing natural and cul-
9 tural resources and enhancing and maintaining envi-
10 ronmentally important lands and waters through the
11 use of the Nation’s young men and women in a Pub-

1 lic Lands Corps can benefit those men and women
2 by providing them with education and work opportu-
3 nities, furthering their understanding and apprecia-
4 tion of the natural and cultural resources, and pro-
5 viding a means to pay for higher education or to
6 repay indebtedness they have incurred to obtain
7 higher education while at the same time benefiting
8 the Nation's economy and its environment;

9 (2) many facilities and natural resources lo-
10 cated on public lands and on Indian reservations are
11 in disrepair or degraded and in need of labor inten-
12 sive rehabilitation, restoration, and enhancement
13 work which cannot be carried out by Federal agen-
14 cies at existing personnel levels; and.

15 (3) youth conservation corps have established a
16 good record of restoring and maintaining these kinds
17 of facilities and resources in a cost effective and effi-
18 cient manner, especially when they have worked in
19 partnership arrangements with government land
20 management agencies.

21 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to—

22 (1) perform, in a cost-effective manner, con-
23 servation, rehabilitation, restoration, and improve-
24 ment work on public lands and Indian lands where
25 that work will not be performed by existing employ-

1 ees, and to assist government and tribal land man-
2 aging agencies in performing research and public
3 education tasks associated with natural and cultural
4 resources on public lands;

5 (2) expose young men and women to public
6 service while furthering their understanding and ap-
7 preciation of the nation’s natural and cultural re-
8 sources;

9 (3) expand educational opportunity by reward-
10 ing individuals who participate in national service
11 with an increased ability to pursue higher education
12 or job training; and

13 (4) stimulate interest among the nation’s young
14 men and women in conservation careers by exposing
15 them to conservation professionals in land managing
16 agencies.

17 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

18 For purposes of this Act:

19 (1) The term “Corps” means the Public Lands
20 Corps established under section 4.

21 (2) The term “public lands” means any lands
22 or waters (or interest therein) owned or adminis-
23 tered by the United States other than Indian lands.

24 (3) The term “qualified youth or conservation
25 corps” means any program established by a State or

1 local government, by the governing body of any
2 Indian tribe, or by a nonprofit organization that—

3 (A) is capable of offering meaningful, full-
4 time, productive work for individuals between
5 16 and 25 years of age in a natural or cultural
6 resource setting;

7 (B) gives participants a mix of work expe-
8 rience, basic and life skills, education, training,
9 and support services; and

10 (C) provides participants with the oppor-
11 tunity to develop citizenship values and skills
12 through service to their community and the
13 United States.

14 (4) The term “Indian tribe” means any Indian
15 tribe, band, nation, or other group which is recog-
16 nized as an Indian tribe by the Secretary of the In-
17 terior. Such term also includes any Native village
18 corporation, regional corporation, and Native group
19 established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims
20 Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.).

21 (5) The term “Indian” means a person who is
22 a member of an Indian tribe.

23 (6) The term “Indian lands” means any real
24 property owned by an Indian tribe, any real property
25 held in trust by the United States for Indian tribes,

1 and any real property held by Indian tribes which is
2 subject to restrictions on alienation imposed by the
3 United States.

4 (7) The term “State” means any State of the
5 United States, the District of Columbia, the Com-
6 monwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Is-
7 lands, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of
8 the Northern Mariana Islands.

9 (8) The term “conservation, restoration, or re-
10 habilitation project” means any project for the con-
11 servation, restoration, or rehabilitation of natural,
12 cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or
13 scenic resources.

14 **SEC. 4. PUBLIC LANDS CORPS PROGRAM.**

15 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS CORPS.—
16 There is hereby established in the Department of the Inte-
17 rior and the Department of Agriculture a Public Lands
18 Corps. The Corps shall consist of young men and women
19 between the ages of 16 and 25 who are enrolled in the
20 Corps by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary
21 of Agriculture under this Act. Persons enrolled in the
22 Corps shall be citizens or permanent residents of the Unit-
23 ed States, or of any territory or possession of the United
24 States or of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico who have
25 received a high school diploma or its equivalent or who

1 agree to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent and
2 who did not drop out of an elementary or secondary school
3 to enroll in the program. Such persons shall be enrolled
4 in the Corps without regard to the civil service and classi-
5 fication laws, rules, or regulations of the United States.

6 (b) QUALIFIED YOUTH OR CONSERVATION CORPS.—
7 The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agri-
8 culture are authorized to enter into contracts and coopera-
9 tive agreements with any qualified youth or conservation
10 corps to perform projects referred to in subsection (c).

11 (c) PROJECTS TO BE CARRIED OUT.—The Secretary
12 of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture may each
13 utilize the Public Lands Corps or any qualified youth or
14 conservation corps to carry out any conservation, restora-
15 tion, or rehabilitation project which such Secretary is au-
16 thorized to carry out under other authority of law on pub-
17 lic lands or Indian lands.

18 (d) PREFERENCE FOR CERTAIN PROJECTS.—In se-
19 lecting projects to be carried out under this Act, a pref-
20 erence shall be provided for those projects which—

21 (1) will provide long-term benefits to the public;

22 (2) will instill in the enrollee involved a work
23 ethic and a sense of public service;

24 (3) will be labor intensive;

25 (4) can be planned and initiated promptly; and

1 (5) will provide academic, experiential, and en-
2 vironmental education opportunities.

3 (e) CONSISTENCY.—All projects carried out under
4 this Act on any public lands or Indian lands shall be con-
5 sistent with the provisions of law and policies relating to
6 the management and administration of such lands, with
7 all other applicable provisions of law, and with all manage-
8 ment, operational, and other plans and documents which
9 govern the administration of the area.

10 (f) CONSERVATION CENTERS.—The Secretary of the
11 Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture are each author-
12 ized to provide such quarters, board, medical care, trans-
13 portation, and other services, facilities, supplies, and
14 equipment as such Secretary deems necessary in connec-
15 tion with the programs carried out under this section and
16 to establish and use conservation centers owned and oper-
17 ated by such Secretary for purposes of such programs.
18 Each such Secretary may make arrangements with the
19 Secretary of Defense to have logistical support provided
20 by a military installation near any conservation center,
21 where feasible, including the provision of temporary tent
22 shelters where needed, transportation, and residential su-
23 pervision. Such Secretaries shall establish basic standards
24 of health, nutrition, sanitation, and safety for all conserva-
25 tion centers and shall assure that such standards are en-

1 forced. Where necessary or appropriate, such Secretaries
2 may enter into contracts and other appropriate arrange-
3 ments with State and local government agencies and pri-
4 vate organizations for the management of such conserva-
5 tion centers.

6 **SEC. 5. RESOURCE ASSISTANTS.**

7 (a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of the Interior
8 and the Secretary of Agriculture are each authorized to
9 provide for the placement of qualified college students or
10 recent college graduates in any Federal land managing
11 agency under the jurisdiction of such Secretary as re-
12 source assistants to carry out such research or other tech-
13 nical functions on behalf of such agency as such Secretary
14 deems appropriate. Such persons shall be placed in the
15 agency without regard to the civil service and classification
16 laws, rules, or regulations of the United States. Resource
17 assistants participating in the program established under
18 this section shall be recruited from colleges and univer-
19 sities throughout the United States, with particular atten-
20 tion given to ensure full representation of women and par-
21 ticipants from historically black, Hispanic, and Native
22 American schools.

23 (b) PURPOSES.—The dual purposes of the Resource
24 Assistant Program established under this section are to—

1 (1) augment the work force of the Federal land
2 managing agencies through more extensive use of
3 college students and recent college graduates, and

4 (2) to enhance the college student or college
5 graduate's exposure to the conservation agency work
6 place as a potential career.

7 (c) EXISTING NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.—When-
8 ever 1 or more existing nonprofit organizations can, in the
9 judgment of the agency, provide an appropriate level and
10 quality of program to fulfill the requirements of this sec-
11 tion, the agency is authorized and directed to implement
12 this section through such existing organizations.

13 (d) PRIVATE SOURCES OF FUNDING.—Participating
14 nonprofit organizations shall contribute to the expenses of
15 providing and supporting the interns, through private
16 sources of funding, at a level equal to 25 percent of the
17 total costs of each participant in the Resource Assistant
18 program who has been recruited and placed through that
19 organization. Any such participating nonprofit conserva-
20 tion service organization shall be required, by the respec-
21 tive land managing agency, to submit an annual report
22 evaluating the scope, size, and quality of the program, in-
23 cluding the value of work contributed by the Resource
24 Assistants, to the mission of the agency.

1 **SEC. 6. LIVING ALLOWANCES AND TERMS OF SERVICE FOR**
2 **PARTICIPANTS.**

3 (a) LIVING ALLOWANCES.—The Secretary of the In-
4 terior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall provide each
5 participant in the Public Lands Corps and each Resource
6 Assistant participating in the program established under
7 section 5 a living allowance which shall not exceed the
8 maximum living allowance established for participants in
9 the national service program established under title I of
10 the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42
11 U.S.C. 12571 et seq.)

12 (b) TERMS OF SERVICE.—Each participant in the
13 Public Lands Corps and each Resource Assistant partici-
14 pating in the program established under section 5 shall
15 agree to participate in such program for a term of service
16 established by the Secretary of the Interior or the Sec-
17 retary of Agriculture, as the case may be, consistent with
18 the terms of service required in the case of participants
19 in the national service program established under the Na-
20 tional and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.
21 12571 et seq.)

22 **SEC. 7. EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS OR AWARDS FOR PARTICI-**
23 **PANTS.**

24 (a) EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS AND AWARDS.—Each
25 participant in the Public Lands Corps and each Resource
26 Assistant participating in the program established under

1 section 5 shall be eligible for national service awards under
2 title I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990
3 (42 U.S.C. 12571 et seq.) if such participant complies
4 with such requirements as may be established under this
5 Act by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of
6 Agriculture respecting eligibility for such benefits and
7 awards. The period during which such benefits or awards
8 may be used, the purposes for which such benefits or
9 awards may be used, and the amount of such benefits and
10 awards shall be determined as provided under such sub-
11 title D.

12 (b) FORBEARANCE IN THE COLLECTION OF STAF-
13 FORD LOANS.—For purposes of section 428 of the Higher
14 Education Act of 1965, in the case of borrowers who are
15 participants in the Public Lands Corps and Resource As-
16 sistants participating in the program established under
17 section 5, upon written request, a lender shall grant a bor-
18 rower forbearance on such terms as are otherwise consist-
19 ent with the regulations of the Secretary of Education,
20 during periods in which the borrower is serving as such
21 a participant or Resource Assistant and eligible for a post
22 service educational benefit or award under subsection (a).

23 **SEC. 8. NONDISPLACEMENT.**

24 The nondisplacement requirements of section 177 of
25 the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42

1 U.S.C. 12637) shall be applicable to all activities carried
2 out by the Public Lands Corps, to the program carried
3 out under section 6, and to all activities carried out under
4 this Act by a qualified youth or conservation corps.

5 **SEC. 9. FUNDING.**

6 (a) COST SHARING.—

7 (1) PROJECTS BY QUALIFIED YOUTH OR CON-
8 SERVATION CORPS.—The Secretary of the Interior
9 and the Secretary of Agriculture are each authorized
10 to pay not more than 75 percent of the costs of any
11 project carried out pursuant to this Act on public
12 lands by a qualified youth or conservation corps.
13 The remaining 25 percent of such costs may be pro-
14 vided from nonfederal sources in the form of funds,
15 services, facilities, materials, equipment, or any com-
16 bination of the foregoing. No cost sharing shall be
17 required in the case of any such project carried out
18 on Indian lands.

19 (2) PUBLIC LANDS CORPS.—A foundation asso-
20 ciated with a Federal land managing agency may
21 contribute to the costs of any project carried out by
22 the Public Lands Corps established under this Act,
23 but nothing in this Act shall be construed to require
24 any cost sharing for any such project.

1 (b) FUNDS AVAILABLE UNDER NATIONAL AND COM-
2 MUNITY SERVICE ACT.—For programs carried out under
3 this section (including the Resource Assistant Program),
4 the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agri-
5 culture shall be eligible to receive funds available to any
6 corps programs under the National and Community Serv-
7 ice Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12501 and following). Such
8 funds shall be provided to such Secretaries without regard
9 to any restriction under section 122(b)(4) of such Act, or
10 under any other provision of such Act, relating to the
11 failure of a State to establish a corps program.

12 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
13 are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be
14 necessary to carry out this Act.

○