

**RCW 43.220.020 Conservation corps created—Puget Sound corps**

**created.** (1) The Washington conservation corps is created. The department of ecology must administer the corps as a partnership with the departments of natural resources and fish and wildlife, the state parks and recreation commission, and when appropriate, other agencies and nonprofit organizations to advance the program goals outlined in RCW 43.220.045.

(2) The Puget Sound corps is created as a distinct program within the Washington conservation corps focused on the implementation of the specific program goals outlined in RCW 43.220.045. [2011 c 20 s 2; 1999 c 280 s 1; 1994 c 264 s 32; 1988 c 36 s 23; 1983 1st ex.s. c 40 s 1.]

**Findings—Intent—2011 c 20:** "(1) The legislature finds that the Washington conservation corps, the veterans conservation corps, and other state and nonprofit service corps contribute significantly to the priorities of state government to protect natural resources, including Puget Sound, while providing meaningful work experience for the state's youth, veterans, unemployed, and underemployed workforces.

(2) The legislature further finds that the long-term health of the economy of Washington depends on the sustainable management of its natural resources and that the livelihoods and revenues produced by Washington's forests, agricultural lands, estuaries, waterways, and watersheds would be enhanced by targeted, streamlined, and prioritized investments in clean water and habitat restoration.

(3) The legislature further finds that it is important to stretch limited public resources to advance the state's natural resource management priorities. Transformation of natural resource management and service delivery, including the creation of strategic partnerships among agencies and nongovernmental partners, will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the expenditure of federal, state, and local funds for clean water and habitat rehabilitation projects.

(4) The legislature further finds that there are efficiencies to be gained by streamlining how the various conservation corps are administered, managed, funded, and deployed by the natural resources agencies. There are further efficiencies to be gained through coordinating the conservation corps with other state service corps programs, recruitment activities, and through public-private partnerships.

(5) The legislature further finds that the state should seek to expand the conservation corps in all areas of the state, deploying the corps to work on projects that advance established priorities including, but not limited to, the cleanup and rehabilitation of the Puget Sound ecosystem, oil spill response and cleanup, salmon recovery, and the reduction of wildfire and forest health hazards statewide.

(6) The legislature further finds that individuals with developmental disabilities would benefit from experiencing a meaningful work experience, and learning the value of labor and of membership in a productive society. As such, the legislature urges state agencies that are participating in the Washington conservation corps program to consider for enrollment in the program individuals with developmental disabilities, as defined in RCW 71A.10.020.

(7) (a) Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to maintain the conservation corps statewide, to collaborate with the veterans conservation corps, to establish the Puget Sound corps, to streamline

how government administers and manages the state's conservation corps to more efficiently expend the state's resources toward priority outcomes, including the recovery of the Puget Sound ecosystem to health by 2020, to increase opportunities for meaningful work experience, and to authorize public-private partnerships as a key element of corps activities.

(b) It is also the intent of the legislature to integrate into the Puget Sound corps the therapeutic and reintegration intent of the veterans conservation corps for veterans involved in the Puget Sound corps." [2011 c 20 s 1.]