

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION: In order to evaluate the impact of Conservation Corps trail improvement projects, the Public Lands Service Coalition (PLSC) and North Carolina State University developed and implemented standard protocols for assessing the value of corps work for indicators related to three overall management goals (see box). This evaluation involved pre- and post-work assessment measures of short-term outcomes using a comprehensive and standard approach for documenting environmental conditions.

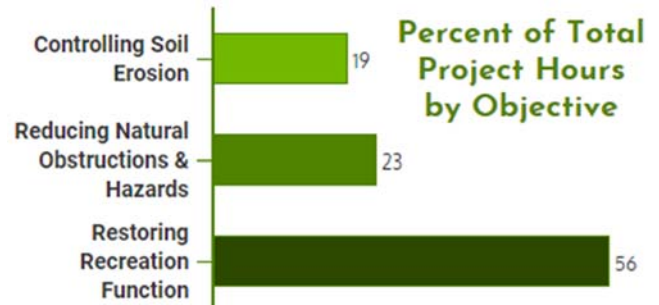
Purposes of trail improvement projects



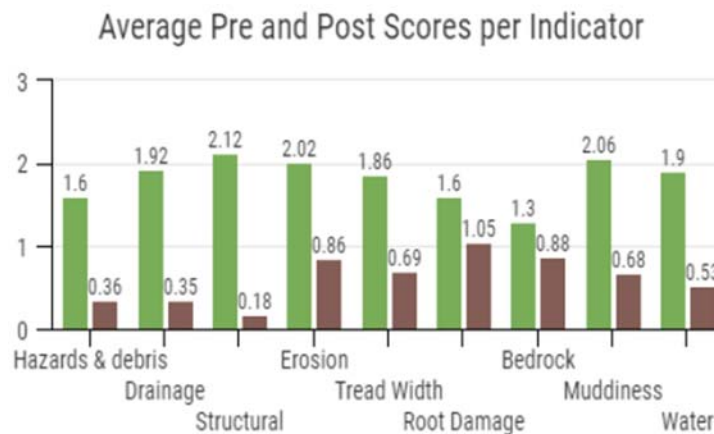
PROCEDURES: Trail improvement projects focused on three objectives: 1. Restoring recreation function, 2. Reducing natural obstructions and hazards, and 3. Controlling soil erosion. Trained crew members established plots and systematically evaluated conditions linked to nine indicators using rapid, visual assessments. Indicators were ranked in one of five categories: NA (not applicable), NLE (no longer exists), minimal, moderate, and major. Analysis evaluated changes in condition from pre- to post-work.

Project-Level Findings

Project-level findings are based on 75 projects, incorporating 471 crew members from 4 corps, almost 20,000 hours, and 160 miles of trail work. Projects were located in 8 states across the country, and nearly 60% took place in State Parks and Nationals Forests.



Plot-Level Findings



At the **plot level, average conditions improved across all nine indicators.** Eight of nine indicators were found to have statistically significant changes between pre-and post-work scores, with six of those eight exhibiting large effect sizes, meaning the difference is meaningful in practice. **Results indicate that corps contributed positively to trail improvement objectives.**

