Corps Field Notes
Webinar Series

The CorpsNetwork



Welcome!

- Thank you for joining us today
- Future webinars will be listed on website + shared in *The Crewleader* and on social media



Friendly Reminders

- **Please stay on mute** until Q&A
- If you have questions during the session, **drop them in the chat**
- **Captioning is enabled**
- Session will be **recorded**
- Stay for important **reminders at the end**
- Don’t forget to take our post-event **survey**

Field Notes Series

Purpose: create space for Corps to discuss and share their experiences with specific service focus areas.



Goals:

- Build community around Corps' niche areas of service.
- Corps who engage is this type of service work can identify and collaborate with other experienced programs.
- Corps who do not currently engage in this type of service work gain new perspective on the opportunities to do so.



Field Notes Series

Template Agenda:

- Overview of Corps Engagement
- Case Studies
- Discussion
  - What is your programming doing in this area of work that you see as exciting or noteworthy?
  - What would you like to learn from others in this area of work? Whether it be solutions to challenges, how to get started, etc.?

Service Focus Areas

- Accessibility
- Agriculture/Farming
- Capacity Building
- Coastal Restoration
- Community Outreach
- Construction
- Disaster Response
- Energy Efficiency
- Environmental Education
- GIS/Mapping
- Habitat Restoration
- Health Care
- Historic Preservation
- Landscaping
- Ocean Restoration
- Public Park Development/Maintenance
- Recreation
- Recycling
- Scientific Monitoring
- Solar Installation/Maintenance
- Stormwater Management
- Trail Work
- Urban Forestry
- Volunteer Engagement
- Water Efficiency
- Waterway/Riparian Restoration
- Wildfire Response/Mitigation
- Youth Engagement & Outreach
- Others?


Wildfire Mitigation
& Response

Today's Agenda

- Overview of Programming Type
  - Definition – the why, the work, and the training
  - Corps by the Numbers
- Case Studies
  - California Conservation Corps – Nick Johnson, Statewide Partnerships Director
  - Los Angeles Conservation Corps – Alex Lopez, Senior Program Director
  - Maryland Conservation Corps – Mark Akers, State Park Ranger
- Discussion

Overview



Wildfire Mitigation & Response

- Over time, wildfires have become a growing concern across the United States.
  - In 2025, the National Interagency Fire Center reported 77,850 wildfires, 1,115 large fires, 5,131,474 acres burned, and 18,385 structures were destroyed
- Corps, working in partnership with government agencies, utilities, and landowners, are contributing to the mitigation, response, and resiliency efforts related to wildfire.
  - United States Forest Service, Department of the Interior, State Departments of Forestry/Fire Protection, State Offices of Emergency Management, Public and Private Utility companies, etc.

The Work

Before

- Hazardous fuels reduction
- Defensible space
- Forest thinning
- Brush clearing
- Prescribed fire
- Community education

During fire

- Fire line support
- Hose lays
- Mop-up
- Camp crew support
- Dispatchable hand crew assignments where qualified

After fire

- Burn Area Emergency Response support
- Erosion control
- Trail and access repair
- Revegetation
- Debris removal
- Long-term restoration

Training

Type 2 (Crew Member)

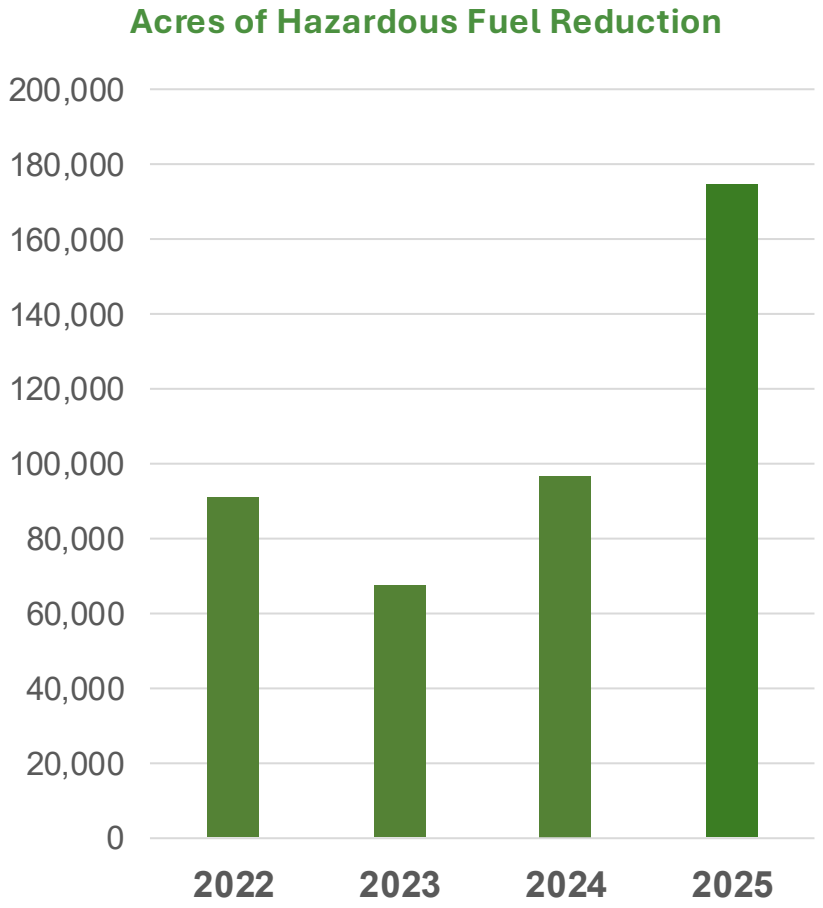
- NWCG S-130, Firefighter Training (Wildland) (Q0900 - S130)
- NWCG S-190: Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior
- Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS-100)
- National Incident Management System (NIMS) an Introduction (IS-700.B)

Red Card (Pack Test)

- 3-miles in 45 minutes, walking with 45lb backpack
- Medical exam
- Strictly a pass/fail evaluation
- Separate work capacity tests for moderate and light duty positions.

By the Numbers

- 22 Corps participate in wildfire mitigation and response as of 2026
  - Likely higher due to some work (habitat restoration or hazardous fuels reduction) not being thought of as mitigation or recovery.
- 11 Corps respond to wildfires
  - Supported 451 fire responses in 2026
- 35 Corps partake in hazardous fuels reduction
  - 174,868 acres in 20; pre-covid it was closer to 20,000



Corps Case Studies







California Conservation Corps

- Nick Johnson, Statewide Partnerships Director

Los Angeles Conservation Corps

- Alex Lopez, Senior Program Director

Maryland Conservation Corps

- Mark Akers, State Park Ranger

California Conservation Corps



Los Angeles Conservation Corps





LA CONSERVATION CORPS

Corps & Wildfire Response, Mitigation & Resiliency

Presented by:
Alex Lopez, Senior Director of Conservation Programs
LA Conservation Corps

A Legacy of Disaster Response

▶ Watch: LA Corps Wildfire Response Video

For nearly 40 years, disaster response and recovery have been part of the Corps' mission.

1992 Los Angeles Civil Unrest
1994 Northridge Earthquake
2016 Flood Response
COVID-19 Pandemic
Malibu Fires
2025 Eaton & Palisades Fires

Today: prevention • response • recovery • resiliency



January 2025 — Immediate Community Response

Our crews were activated in the first days after the fires.

- Delivered food and emergency supplies
- Supported food banks and distribution centers
- Joined Supervisor Hilda Solis' resource fair for residents affected by fires and power outages
- Delivered supplies with local partners
- Cleared fallen debris near the Eaton Fire impact zone to reduce future fire fuel

Our response started in the communities we serve.



LA CONSERVATION CORPS

Watershed Protection Mission — Impact Snapshot



2026 PROJECT OF THE YEAR — FIRE RECOVERY RESPONSE

7 CREWS • TWO 15-DAY DEPLOYMENTS
Deployment 1: 53 Corpsmembers + 11 staff
Deployment 2: 23 Corpsmembers + 6 staff

Installed straw wattles, compost silt socks and silt fencing to keep hazardous material out of creeks, rivers and coastal waters.

Worked alongside Corps from across California in coordination with CCC, CAL FIRE, Cal OES and DWR.



Training Made Rapid Deployment Possible

80 Corpsmembers trained
20 Corps staff trained

HAZWOPER training prepared crews to safely work around hazardous waste and post-disaster conditions.

The workforce lesson:
TRAIN → CERTIFY → DEPLOY → BUILD EXPERIENCE → CREATE CAREER PATHWAYS

In a crisis, trained Corpsmembers can step up as skilled environmental professionals.

Recovery Became Long-Term Restoration

ALTADENA CREST TRAIL
93 burned trees removed • 69,393 sq ft trail reconstructed • 49 Corpsmembers trained

LOMA ALTA PARK
220 plants • 14 trees • 2,000 sq ft mulch • 5 Corpsmembers trained

PACIFIC PALISADES
Restoring beach access, trails and habitat while reducing fire fuel

SEPULVEDA BASIN
Removing dry logs, branches, litter and overgrown vegetation to reduce future wildfire risk



Corpsmember completing hazardous-tree / fire-fuel reduction field work.

“Corps do not have to be firefighting agencies to play a meaningful role in wildfire resilience.”

Mitigation • Preparedness • Community Response • Watershed Protection • Restoration • Career Pathways



Maryland Conservation Corps



Discussion



Discussion Structure

- The discussion will not be recorded to allow for genuine conversation.
- Topics are pulled from our registration questions, but feel free to post a new question or topic of discussion in the chat.
- You are welcome to contribute to any topic or question by raising your hand or posting in the chat. The more voices in the conversation the better!
- If you refer to specific resource, training, document, etc., please share a link in the chat so we can share in our follow-up materials.

Discussion: Challenges

Existing Programming

- Insurance coverage particularly for prescribed burns and wildfire response
- Training and retention of staff – lack of qualified trainers
- Fluctuating funding & difficulty funding the full program cost
- Finding and maintaining proper equipment and tools

Interested Programming

- The high-risk nature of the work – safety concerns and needed access to best practices
- Finding partners willing to take on a newer fire crew
- Lack of connection to local wildfire mitigation and response efforts; unsure where we would slot in

Discussion: Upcoming Opportunities

Existing Programming

- Moving from fuels reduction to prescribed burn/fire.
- Firescaping and frontline community preparedness
- Establishing winter programming for fuels reduction
- Utility partnerships
- Establishing training academies for inroads into federal or state fire jobs.

Interested Programming

- Exploring how to start up/create a fire crew.
- Seeing the impact of wildfire on community and wanting to help.
- Seeing the opportunity for additional contracts, funding, and partnerships.

Resources

- Wildfire learning portal
- FEMA: U.S. Fire Academy Courses
- Type 1 Firefighter Qualification Requirements (NWCG)
- Type 2 Firefighter Qualification Requirements (NWCG)
- Field Notes Blog Post
- CCC Wildland Firefighting program details
- LA wildfires published case study

CONTACT

Speaker Contact Info:

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Alex Lopez, Senior Programs Director, LA Conservation Corps, alopez@lacorps.org

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More sessions to be announced soon.

Find updates on our website: Events → Webinars

REMINDERS

Agriculture Workforce Development Webinar scheduled for August 25th from 1:00 - 2:00pm ET
More information

State and Local Projects Coalition scheduled for August 27th from 2:00 – 3:00pm ET
Contact Danielle Owen at dowen@corpsnetwork.org

Corps Rendezvous scheduled for November 16 – 19 at the New Jersey School of Conservation.
More information

Thoughts on the Field Notes series?
Contact Bobby Tillett at btillett@corpsnetwork.org

Please take our post-webinar survey.

More sessions to be announced soon.

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