



## Attachment D – Cover Letter

### Montana Commission on Community Service 2011 AmeriCorps State Grant Application

Proposed Project Title: **Montana Conservation Corps**

Contact Person: **Jono McKinney, President and CEO**

Name of Applicant Organization: **Montana Conservation Corps, Inc.**

Address: **206 N. Grand Avenue**

City/State/Zip: **Bozeman, MT 59715**

Telephone: **406/587-4475** Fax: **406/587-2606**

E-mail Address: **Jono@mtcorps.org**

Federal Employer Identification No (FEIN): **81-0467431**

---

Type of Applicant (nonprofit, government, etc.): **501(c)(3) nonprofit charity**

Geographic Area to be Served: **Montana (statewide), and Wyoming, Idaho, North Dakota**

Amount of Funds Requested and Total Project Budget: **\$1,872,000 of \$4,971,913 budget**

#### Question 1: Brief description and summary of program:

Here in Montana where our sense of community extends far beyond Main Street to encompass the public lands that surround our towns, Montana Conservation Corps delivers a program to meet needs in environmental stewardship, clean energy, veteran engagement, and volunteer mobilization. Members serve on crews to complete projects with community nonprofits and local, state, and federal public agencies, and gain skills and values to succeed as leaders, stewards of the land, and engaged citizens.

**Issue Areas** - Which federal key objective(s) and/or Montana Initiative(s) will this program address?

**Federal Key Objectives:** *Note: These key objectives have not yet been finalized by CNCS.*

- Education
- Healthy Futures
- ✓ Environment Stewardship
- ✓ Veterans Opportunity



## Disaster Services

### Montana Initiatives:

- ✓ The Governor's strategic initiative for clean energy
- ✓ The Governor and First Lady's strategic initiative for math and science education
- ✓ Expand and Promote Volunteerism in Montana

**Questions 2:** Describe how your program will address these issue areas as outlined in the Federal Key Objectives and Montana Initiatives.

MCC members, youth corps participants, Veterans crews, and 1000+ volunteers serve on environmental projects to address locally identified needs, including trail work to promote resource conservation, non-motorized transportation, reduce consumption of fossil fuels, and increase opportunities for outdoor recreation and fitness. In addition, diverse wildlife habitat and stream restoration activities like weed management, tree planting, wildfire fuels reduction, improve at-risk ecosystems.

In 2011, MCC is piloting a Veterans Conservation Corps program to help transition veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars into domestic service and productive civilian lives. With a focus on wildfire mitigation and removal of beetle killed trees, two crews of younger-aged veterans will receive training and professional certifications to pursue careers as wildlands firefighters.

During their term of service, members provide low cost weatherization assistance in 1500 homes in communities across the state through the Governor's Warm Hearts Warm Homes Initiative.

MCC's hands-on, service-based learning promotes interest in natural science and math studies. MCC members commonly pursue education and careers in the natural resources after completion of their term of service. For youth volunteers, their participation in hands-on conservation activities under the direction of MCC members provides a tangible and stimulating experience of career opportunities related to natural resource conservation.

---

The Montana Commission on Community Service also has the following expectations of all AmeriCorps Programs:

### Montana Expectations of All Programs:

- ✓ Disability inclusion in the design and delivery of the program
- ✓ A collaborative approach to program planning, design and delivery
- ✓ Demonstrated ability to successfully administer an AmeriCorps or other federal grant



- ✓ Addressing rural, underserved or areas of extreme poverty that are not currently served by AmeriCorps programs

**Questions 3:** Describe how your program will address these expectations (max 300 words):

MCC's team-based program model and experiential learning environment remains highly accessible to people with disabilities. Our participants have included deaf members participants with epilepsy, Tourette's syndrome, asthma, and multiple learning disabilities. In 2010, 30% of members self-reported a disability on the OCS Disability Survey. MCC is committed to providing all members who are able to perform the basic requirements of the position with a reasonable accommodation. MCC crews also complete numerous projects to increase access, including building ADA compliant trails and campgrounds, and building wheelchair accessible community gardens.

Our program approach is by nature collaborative in developing projects with 120+ partner agencies every year, including community nonprofits, and local, state, and federal governmental agencies. In working with partners, MCC provides members to meet unmet needs, while the project partners provide meaningful work, education and skills development for members, and financial support for projects.

MCC has a demonstrated record of expertly administering the AmeriCorps grant since 1994. MCC's compliance is verified through an annual A-133 audit. MCC has a deeply experienced staff with extensive experience in nonprofit management, government grant administration, program design, and member supervision. MCC is regarded by the CNCS and our program peers as one of the premier conservation corps programs in the nation.

During their terms of service, MCC members serve extensively in rural, underserved areas, providing services in nearly every county of the state, including Montana's 7 Indian Reservations. The MCC program is unique in its crew based approach of deploying members to address environmental stewardship in communities and public lands across our region.

---

#### Indirect Cost Rate:

Applicants that include a federally-approved indirect cost rate amount in their budget must submit the approved indirect cost rate agreement to the Governor's Office of Community Service.

MCC does not utilize a federally-approved indirect cost rate.



AmeriCorps Members

How many Members will be recruited under the proposed program?

Time	__54__ Full Time (1700 hrs)	__180__ Half Time (900 hrs)	_____ Reduced Half (675 hrs)
	_____ Quarter Time (450 hrs)	_____ Minimum Time (300 hours)	__234__ Total

Continuation Applicants Only:

Give a summary of the successes and highlights of you program in the last year. Please consider using information from your progress reports. (max 600 words)

In 2010, Montana Conservation Corps excelled in meeting unmet needs with our 120+ project partners. MCC achieved outstanding results in environmental stewardship, including improvements to 767 miles of trails , protection of 3278 acres of at-risk ecosystems, including treatment of invasive weeds across 2300 acres of wildlife habitat, planting of 43,000 trees, and protection of 732 acres of natural and cultural sites from wildfires through fuels reduction activities. MCC members participated for the 5<sup>th</sup> year in the Governor’s Warm Hearts Warm Homes initiative, providing low cost weatherization assistance in 1500 homes across the state.

This year, our AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Recovery members mobilized over 1400 volunteers – a majority of them youth under age 18 - in over 27,000 hours of service members to improve their communities and lands. Shared one young volunteer on a project evaluation: *“I went from sitting around trying to get out of work to becoming involved and loving what I’m doing.”*

Our AmeriCorps members and youth corps participants reflect profound and positive experiences. In a blog posting, a Youth Service Expedition participant shared: *“People talk about that one experience in life that changes them forever. My MCC experience would defiantly qualify as one of these life altering moments. At times I didn’t know if I’d make it but I persevered and will never forget my experience. This program has given me so many life lessons that I can hopefully someday teach to future generations.”*

*MCC enrolled all of our members slots in 2010, and exceeded 90% retention of members, the highest level ever recorded for MCC. These results reflect the high interest in MCC and effective management of our program.*

The link between the CNCS’s goals and strategic plan, and MCC’s mission to “inspire young people through hands-on conservation service to be leaders, stewards of the land, and engaged citizens who improve their communities” grows stronger every year. Reflected a participant: *“When I first started I didn't even think of doing volunteer work because I thought I am just one person. But now I realize that even if I do just a little I can contribute a lot.”* Montana Conservation Corps looks forward to “contributing a lot” to our members and in our communities, and to strengthening the spirit of service in Montana.



---

*Thank you for your interest and we look forward to reviewing your proposal!*

Please submit a completed cover letter (attachment D) to the Governor's Office of Community Service by November 3, 2010 at 5pm in order to be eligible for a 2011 AmeriCorps Grant. This is in conjunction to the full application submitted in eGrants by November 3, 2010 at 5pm.

