

A VERMONT CONSERVATION CORPS

Exploring a Statewide Service, Conservation & Workforce Initiative

What if Vermont could put people to work addressing some of our biggest needs while helping them build skills and careers?

A **Vermont Conservation Corps** could expand Vermont's existing conservation-service infrastructure into a larger statewide initiative modeled partly on successful programs in **California and Oregon**.

The idea is straightforward:

PAID SERVICE → SKILLS & TRAINING → STRONGER COMMUNITIES → CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

WHAT COULD CORPS MEMBERS DO?

Paid Corps members could work alongside State agencies, municipalities, nonprofits and other qualified partners on projects such as:

Flood Resilience & Disaster Recovery — watershed restoration, erosion control, stormwater projects, flood mitigation and disaster cleanup.

Conservation & Forest Health — trail maintenance, habitat restoration, invasive-species removal, tree planting and stewardship of Vermont's forests and public lands.

Housing & Weatherization — supervised rehabilitation of vacant or deteriorating housing, weatherization, energy-efficiency improvements and accessibility projects.

Clean Energy — energy-efficiency projects, renewable-energy infrastructure and community energy improvements.

Community Infrastructure — parks, trails, community facilities, gardens and other projects that improve Vermont communities.

MORE THAN A CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The Corps could also function as a **workforce-development program**. Participants could receive paid work experience while earning credentials and training in areas such as construction, forestry, weatherization, conservation, emergency response and the skilled trades. The goal would be to create pathways such as:

CORPS → TRAINING → CREDENTIAL → APPRENTICESHIP/EDUCATION → VERMONT CAREER

California's Conservation Corps combines paid service with education and workforce training and deploys crews for natural-resource projects and emergency response. Oregon provides another approach, using public funding to support organizations that combine conservation projects with paid workforce opportunities for young people.

VERMONT ALREADY HAS A FOUNDATION

Vermont would not be starting from scratch. The **Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC)** has operated since 1985 and provides paid conservation and agricultural service opportunities. Vermont law also already provides a statutory framework for a Vermont Youth Conservation Corps program. A new initiative could build upon that experience rather than duplicate it—potentially bringing together VYCC, State agencies, municipalities, employers, labor organizations, schools and other community partners.

WOULD THIS REPLACE EXISTING WORKERS?

It shouldn't. A carefully designed program should include safeguards preventing Corps members from replacing existing employees or undermining collective bargaining agreements. The purpose would be to **expand Vermont's capacity while developing its future workforce**—not substitute lower-paid Corps members for permanent employees.

HOW COULD IT BE FUNDED?

A Vermont model could explore combining State appropriations with federal programs, AmeriCorps funding, project-partner contributions, grants and philanthropic resources. One important question would be: For every Vermont dollar invested, how much additional federal, local and private funding could the program leverage?

QUESTIONS WORTH EXPLORING

How large should the program be? Who should be eligible? What should Corps members earn? Which projects should qualify? Should Vermont operate crews directly or fund existing organizations? What credentials should participants earn? How can the program complement VYCC and existing workers? What would it cost—and what measurable value would Vermont receive? Could Vermont build a larger conservation and service corps that simultaneously invests in our people, our communities and our environment?

The experiences of the [California Conservation Corps](#), [Oregon Conservation Corps](#), and [Vermont Youth Conservation Corps](#) provide useful starting points for that conversation.

THE CANDIDATE

I'm Ben Bosley and I'm running for House of Representatives in Burlington's Chittenden -15 district to help make Vermont somewhere people can afford to live and build a future, by bringing public and private investment together to expand housing, good jobs, healthcare, clean energy and opportunity.

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Paid For By Ben Bosley For Vermont House