Inventory of the California Conservation Corps Records

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Inventory of the California Conservation Corps Records

Collection number: R117

California State Archives
Office of the Secretary of State
Sacramento, California

Processed by:
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Descriptive Summary
Title: California Conservation Corps Records
Dates: 1978-1980
Collection number: R117
Creator: California Conservation Corps
Collection Size: 4 cubic feet of textual records
Repository: California State Archives
Sacramento, California

Abstract: The California Conservation Corps was created in 1976, in order to further the development and maintenance of the natural resources and environment of the State, and to provide the young men and women of the State meaningful, productive employment. The records of the California Conservation Corps consist of 4 cubic feet of work project files that cover the years 1978-1980.

Physical location: California State Archives
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access

While the majority of the records are open for research, any access restrictions are noted in the record series descriptions.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], California Conservation Corps Records, R117.[Series Number], [box and folder number], California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California.

Acquisition and Custodial History

The California State Archives acquired the California Conservation Corps Records according to state law.

Administrative History

On July 7, 1976, Governor Jerry Brown signed the enabling legislation for the California Conservation Corps (Chapter 342 of Statutes 1976). This bill created the Corps as a department within the Resources Agency and included a sunset clause. The program was set to expire on January 1, 1981, unless reauthorized. The first director of the California Conservation Corps was Boyd "Buck" Horner (1976-1977), who set out to accomplish the two main goals of the Corps: (1) to further the development and maintenance of the natural resources and environment of the State, and (2) to provide the young men and women of the State meaningful, productive employment, training in employable skills, and educational opportunities. Under the direction of Director Leroy Chatfield (1977-1979) the program began to expand. In the spring of 1977, the first Corps center opened in San Luis Obispo with many more soon to follow. The 1978-1979 Governor's Budget noted that the
Corps employed more than 1,600 people and had completed more than 1 million hours of public service conservation work (typically emergency assistance during fires and floods) on 115 projects in 44 counties. This was in addition to their many and varied projects throughout the state that focused primarily on the areas of forestry, renovation/preservation, and trails maintenance. A separate category of projects was known as the Appropriate Technology Program. Rather than being sponsored by another agency, the A-T Program was structured to promote the development and renovation of each center by corpsmembers and staff.

When B. T. Collins (1979-1981) became director, he coined the motto: "hard work, low pay, and miserable conditions," which is still in use today. Under his leadership the Corps gained international recognition. A significant event occurring under Collins' tenure was the reauthorization of the California Conservation Corps. On March 27, 1980, Governor Brown extended the life of the program through January 1, 1986 (Chapter 50 of Statutes 1980). The ambitious proposals listed in the 1980-1981 Governor's Budget reflect the energetic spirit that reauthorization injected into the Conservation Corps. These proposals include the expansion of the Training and Work Program to include a Disabled Corpsmember Program and a Solar and Energy Conservation Program, as well as the establishment of a Fire Fighter Trainee Program consisting of 240 corpsmembers.

Governor George Deukmejian removed the sunset clause to make the California Conservation Corps a permanent state agency on September 29, 1983 (Chapter 1241 of Statutes 1983).

Scope and Content
The records of the California Conservation Corps consist of 4 cubic feet of work project files that cover the years 1978-1980. Project files typically include project evaluations, completion reports, and maps or drawings. The Corps completed their work for cities, counties, federal and state agencies. These sponsors vary widely, and the United States Forest Service, the California Department of Forestry, the California Department of Fish and Game, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the National Park Service were the major sponsors of projects in this collection. The majority of projects took place in Los Angeles County. The counties of Siskiyou, San Diego, Calaveras, and Riverside also hosted numerous projects. The Appropriate Technology Program was a means of training corpsmembers in basic skills while improving their center. The A-T work files have been given numbers in the 9000 series and can be found at the end of the 1978 and 1979 files. One of the most significant projects in 1978 was the California Native Plants Project (projects 78-739 thru 78-754) whose purpose was to produce a nursery stock of native plants for use on lands owned by public agencies. A key project of 1979 was Project Access (projects 79-424 thru 79-431). The County of Santa Barbara was chosen to participate in this federally funded pilot program for the removal of architectural barriers that prevented access to the disabled or senior citizens. The most noteworthy project of 1980 was the Preservation of Bidwell Park in the City of Chico (projects 80-617 thru 80-622). The work included improvements to the horse arena, running trails, shed construction, trail signs, and erosion control.

Accruals
Further accruals are expected.

Related Collections at the California State Archives
Additional files relating to the work of the California Conservation Corps may be found in the records of the Department of Conservation under Resource Agency Files, 1973-1978.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
California Conservation Corps
Public service employment
Disaster relief
ID R117.1, Box 1-4, Folders 1-18

Series 1 Work Project Files 1978-1980

Physical Description: 73 file folders

Arrangement
Arranged chronologically and within year numerically by file number.

Scope and Content Note
These files may include maps, photographs, brochures, blueprints, correspondence, contract agreements, and memorandas, and forms used include project proposals, evaluations, approvals, and completion reports. These forms generally include the following information: sponsoring agency, project title and description, estimated start and completion dates, county location of project, physical location, and the corps center providing the labor. The researcher should be aware that several project descriptions in 1980 are written in shorthand. The Corps completed their work for cities, counties, federal and state agencies. These sponsors vary widely, and the United States Forest Service, the California Department of Forestry, the California Department of Fish and Game, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the National Park Service were the major sponsors of projects in this collection. The majority of projects took place in Los Angeles County. The counties of Siskiyou, San Diego, Calaveras, and Riverside also hosted numerous projects. The Appropriate Technology Program was a means of training corpsmembers in basic skills while improving their center. The A-T work files have been given numbers in the 9000 series and can be found at the end of the 1978 and 1979 files. One of the most significant projects in 1978 was the California Native Plants Project (projects 78-739 thru 78-754) whose purpose was to produce a nursery stock of native plants for use on lands owned by public agencies. A key project of 1979 was Project Access (projects 79-424 thru 79-431). The County of Santa Barbara was chosen to participate in this federally funded pilot program for the removal of architectural barriers that prevented access to the disabled or senior citizens. The most noteworthy project of 1980 was the Preservation of Bidwell Park in the City of Chico (projects 80-617 thru 80-622). The work included improvements to the horse arena, running trails, shed construction, trail signs, and erosion control.