



Dolores River Restoration Corps Initial Social Outcomes Evaluation

Purpose

To help quantify outcomes beyond the work being done and wages earned.

Examples: Increased technical skills, desire to move into public land management, increased communication skills, environmental stewardship, self reliance, healthy lifestyle.



Methods: Three Conservation/Youth Corps

pre/post surveys, evaluations, video documentation, interviews, testimonials.

A person wearing a white protective suit and a dark cap is working in a field of dry brush and green shrubs. The person is positioned in the center-left of the frame, facing away from the camera. They appear to be using a tool, possibly a saw or a brush, to work on a large, dry, branching shrub. The background is filled with similar vegetation and some rocky terrain. The overall scene suggests a field study or a conservation project.

Background

**All corps had tools they were using to evaluate program quality, member impacts, and work/career goals, but were those tools effective?
More specifically, what are the program impacts?**

Program Quality

Overall program quality, leadership, and training were ranked high by members.

Areas of improvement included increased patience from crew leaders and more communication on project logistics.



Member Voice

The most challenging things about the program: hard work, working with others, education and the challenging outdoor environment, were also the most rewarding aspects of the program.



Through project work and education, members developed a connection with and understanding of issues and impacts on southwestern rivers.

A group of six firefighters in green shirts and yellow helmets are working on a hillside with brush and a fire hydrant. They are equipped with backpacks and tools, and are standing in a line, possibly demonstrating a technique or discussing a task. The background shows a dry, hilly landscape with sparse vegetation.

Career Focus

Goal Setting: Most members selected goals that were work related such as technical skills, work experience, ability to obtain a fulltime job or a position with a land management agency.

60% of corpsmembers hired since 2009 have shown interest in working in Public Land Management Agencies.

Data shows that the Corps experience provided information and skills that lead to increased confidence in regards to workforce options.



Success Stories

- 2010 DRRC Member in spring went on to lead the crew in fall after Crew Leader Development Program, continues to lead crews this year.
- 2010 DRRC leader hired on as trail crew leader for Dolores Public Lands Office.
- DRRC member recognized as Corpsmember of the Year at the state capitol, now pursuing wildlife/research assistant positions to compliment Conservation Biology degree.
- 2010 DRRC member earned their GED during the Program.
- 2010 DRRC leader moved up to Logistics Coordinator Position within Corps.
- Returning members and leaders hired for 2011 crews.

A photograph of two people rappelling down a rocky river. They are wearing helmets and gear, and are positioned on large, light-colored rocks in the foreground. The river flows through a canyon with steep, reddish-brown walls and sparse green vegetation. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Realizations

- 1) Our existing systems are not designed to measure all of the outcomes we see occurring in our members.
- 2) Qualitative data were more indicative of expected results than quantitative.
- 3) We need to re-evaluate how social change is measured. Perhaps pre and post tests are not the way to track how individuals change.
- 4) Increase post-program tracking of members to assess long term outcomes.

Accomplishments

Hired 72 individuals to fill 7 crews with 3 different corps.

Of these, 50% from Dolores Watershed, 30% Native American, 50% at-risk.

Over 291 acres of tamarisk treated along 60 river miles.

Over \$25,000 in AmeriCorps awards earned by 20 individuals for continuing education.

An Average of 99 hours of official training per participant.

Average of 65 hours of additional education per member.

