

# WATER WAYS

**Creek Geeks Newsletter**

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# WSP Members present to Fort Bragg City Council

FORT BRAGG, Calif. – California Conservation Corps Watershed Stewards Project members Josh Karnowski, Nicholas Tedesco and Michele Dow presented about the WSP program to the Fort Bragg City Council at its meeting on Monday, November 14.



Michelle Dow, Nick Tedesco and Josh Karnowski at the Fort Bragg City Council meeting, November 14.

The group talked about the WSP program, its mission as a special project of the CCC, and past work by members in the Fort Bragg area.

They offered their time as a resource to the community and their assistance with service projects around town.

The offer was well-received by the Council and community members in attendance. "Fort Bragg has a number of restoration projects that are going on," said City Manager Linda Ruffing. "We'd be very excited to work with you on completing these projects."

In 2010 the city began working on enhancement and habitat restoration projects in Otis R. Johnson Park, according to the city's website. WSP's own Ben Schleifer led an Individual Service Project earlier in 2011 to remove non-native invasive plant species and replant a section of the park. "We had 45 community members come out to volunteer over a two-day period," said Schleifer. "It was a great show of support in the Fort Bragg community and helped to enhance a

beautiful natural area right in town".

Karnowski, Tedesco and Dow are all first-year WSP members and each is excited about the potential to help improve the Fort Bragg environment and community! Karnowski and Tedesco are placed with the CA Department of Fish and Game office in Fort Bragg, and Dow is serving with United States Forest Service Redwood Sciences Lab.



If you'd like to watch the presentation, the video is available on Mendocino Coast Public Television at <http://mendocoasttv.org/FortBraggCityCouncilMeeting111411.html#featured>.



## Dear Creek Geeks, Watershed Stewards, Alumni and Friends,

Water Ways is the official newsletter of "Creek Geeks," the Watershed Stewards Projects volunteer program. WSP initiated the Creek Geeks program to track the growing number of people committed to restoring California's coastal watersheds and habitat.

I am proud and honored to be a part of both Creek Geeks and the Watershed Stewards Project. I look forward to working with you on protecting California's coastal watersheds throughout this service year.

**All the best,**

**Emily Hirschman**

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## UPCOMING WSP EVENTS

**January 21:** Bay Area Environmental Education Resource Fair. 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 PM.  
Marin Civic Center in San Rafael.

## UPCOMING EVENTS BY FRIENDS OF WSP

**Saturdays in December:** Salmon Protection and Watershed Network's (SPAWN) Creekside Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Events, San Geronimo Valley.  
<http://www.spawnusa.org/upcomingevents/>

**December 10th:** Mendocino Land Trust Hare Creek Beach Stewards Work Day. 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM.  
<http://www.mendocinolandtrust.org/>

**December 17th:** Marin Municipal Water District's Phoenix Lake Habitat Restoration Event. 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. Ross, CA.  
<http://www.marinwater.org/>

**December 17th:** California Native Plant Society, Santa Cruz Chapter Habitat Restoration Team Event. 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM. Quail Hollow Ranch County Park.  
<http://www.cruzcnps.org/>

# Welcome new and returning members to WSP's service year 18!



WSP members and staff at the Year 18 Member Orientation, October 7th at the CCC Fortuna Campus.

FORTUNA, Calif. -- California Conservation Corps' Watershed Stewards Project (WSP) welcomed 54 new and returning members to its 18<sup>th</sup> year with a week-long orientation and training from October 3<sup>rd</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> at the CCC Campus in Fortuna.

Members gathered to learn about their term of service with AmeriCorps, WSP and the CCC, receive Wilderness First-Aid, CPR and Swift Water Safety certifications, and to participate in tool trainings and team-building exercises. Twenty-two of the Year 18 members have returned for a second term of service after serving with WSP in prior years.

"WSP is an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I'm thrilled to be able to spend another 10 ½ months in the program," said Molly Schnur, a second year member currently serving as the program's Outreach Team Leader. "It has been a great chance to expand my professional and personal skill sets. I feel like I'm constantly learning new things."

This year WSP also has three members that are alumni of the CCC's traditional program. The three former CCC corpsmembers, Andrea Garcia, Tim Anderson and Alexa Andis all see a natural transition between their previous service with the CCC service and what they will be accomplishing this year as WSP members.

Andrea Garcia is a first-year member of WSP, but a 3-year veteran of the CCC. During her service as a corpsmember,

Andrea served at both the Pomona and Fortuna centers, as well as a three-month internship performing trail maintenance with the US Forest Service through the CCC.

"Working in the CCC gave me the confidence to do physically-demanding work in the field," said Garcia. "I have been challenged more than I ever thought possible and I know now that I can do whatever I need to get the job done."

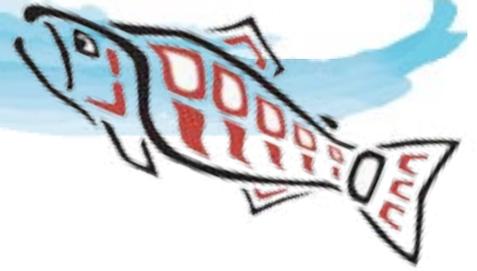
These former corpsmembers also see the CCC as a necessary stepping stone to success in work and life. Responsibility, professionalism and a good work ethic are core values of the CCC and the WSP. These crucial life skills are keys to success once they leave the Corps.

Now in its 18th year of service, the Watershed Stewards Project has expanded to place members with 26 sites throughout California from the Oregon border south to Ventura County with non-profit, state, federal, tribal, and municipal agencies. Members spread the mission of WSP through watershed recovery efforts, which include data collection, monitoring, on-the-ground restoration of anadromous fish habitat, environmental education and outreach events.

WSP looks forward to all the wonderful things that its members will accomplish during this coming year! For information about upcoming volunteer opportunities with Creek Geeks and WSP, visit [www.ccc.ca.gov/go/wsp](http://www.ccc.ca.gov/go/wsp) or the Watershed Stewards Project Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/watershedstewardsproject](http://www.facebook.com/watershedstewardsproject).

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## Erica Warren and Rietta Hohman



**Placement Year:** 17 (2010 - 2011)

**Placement Site:** Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association, San Francisco, CA

**Q: What was the best part of your WSP service term?**

**Rietta Hohman (RH):** It was the perfect mix of outreach, education and fieldwork. I gained valuable leadership and classroom management skills, as well as working knowledge of restoration and monitoring techniques. One of the best things was making connections through WSP and the sanctuary, two amazing organizations with so many wonderful people to meet!

**Erica Warren (EW):**

Last year we forged friendships and researched new locations for fieldwork, collaborated with the Golden Gate Recreation Area and National Parks Service and organized work days with local volunteer groups. We had the ability to learn from great mentors and the leeway to take the educational programs and make them our own.

**Q: Was there one experience that was especially memorable? Why?**

**RH:** Attending research conferences gave me a fantastic amount of knowledge that I could apply to both the field and in the classroom. I loved being fully informed on the real-world research happening in both the coastal watershed world and the marine sanctuary.

**Q: Why did you decide to accept a staff position with FMSA?**

**RH:** I've always imagined that I would have a job that I love and I've achieved that goal sooner than I could've guessed. I look forward to coming to work every day because I know I'm going to be doing great work with wonderful people.



Rietta Hohman and Erica Warren on a whale-watching trip in San Francisco.

**Q: What is your title and responsibilities in your job now?**

**EW:** We are both *Marine Science Educators* and *Co-Mentors* to WSP members. We deliver an 8-series program to students in San Francisco that highlights the ecology and mega-fauna of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary. We teach, develop and create new teaching materials, and put on events in classrooms and with the public to educate about the Gulf of the Farallones Marine Sanctuary.

**Q: What is different from when you were in WSP?**

**RH:** I have more responsibilities now and an official sanctuary title, not to mention I make a little more income! I like that I'm still very much involved in the WSP/AmeriCorps side of things by being a co-mentor.

**Q: How do you like being a co-mentor to AMC/WSP members now?**

**RH:** I love it! It's wonderful to be able to share my recent experiences with our members and to help them settle into their position, though they are doing that quite well on their own! I help manage their watershed assessment and recovery hours, which is great because I have a passion for working in the field and being involved in watershed restoration.

**EW:** It's wonderful to share from my past experience and to provide materials for the development of new educational materials.



**The mission of the AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project (WSP) is to conserve, restore, and enhance anadromous watersheds for future generations by linking education with high quality scientific practices.**

*A special project of the California Conservation Corps, WSP is administered by California Volunteers and sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service.*

## **WHO IS WSP?**

**Project Director: Carrie Gergits**  
**Northern Project Manager: Kristin Kovacs**  
**Southern Project Manager: Jody Weseman**  
**Office Manager: Sarah Judd**  
**Member Coordinator: Stephanie Hedt**  
**Education Team Leader: Bonnie Stewart**  
**Outreach Team Leader: Molly Schnur**  
**Southern Region Team Leader: Aristotle Ou**  
**Volunteer and Media Team Leader: Emily Hirschman**

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Watershed Stewards  
Project

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