2013 PLSC EVALUATION REPORT

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Contents

# Tables and Figures

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The evaluation strategy was developed collaboratively by leaders from the involved corps organizations and researchers at Brigham Young University and North Carolina State University. The purpose of the evaluation was to build upon previous corps-related evaluation efforts by assessing the impact of the corps experience on participants in terms of targeted outcomes (e.g., civic engagement, leadership, etc.), their intentions to pursue additional education, and their confidence to obtain employment. The evaluation also looked at the association between demographic and program characteristics with the experience on participants.

Statistically significant increases were observed across all outcome measures in contrast to the general population comparison group (see Figure 1). The greatest growth occurred on the Teamwork, Community Engagement, Leadership, and Environmental Engagement measures. Results also indicated younger participants (under 18) experienced significantly more growth in Environmental Engagement, Teamwork, Self-Responsibility, Critical Thinking, and Communication than older participants.

Participants were also asked about the overall importance they ascribed to various program components. On average, opportunities to gain new knowledge and skills were most important to corps participants. Opportunities to gain more education and the quality of provided equipment were perceived as less important.

FIGURE 1. OUTCOME CHANGE SCORES
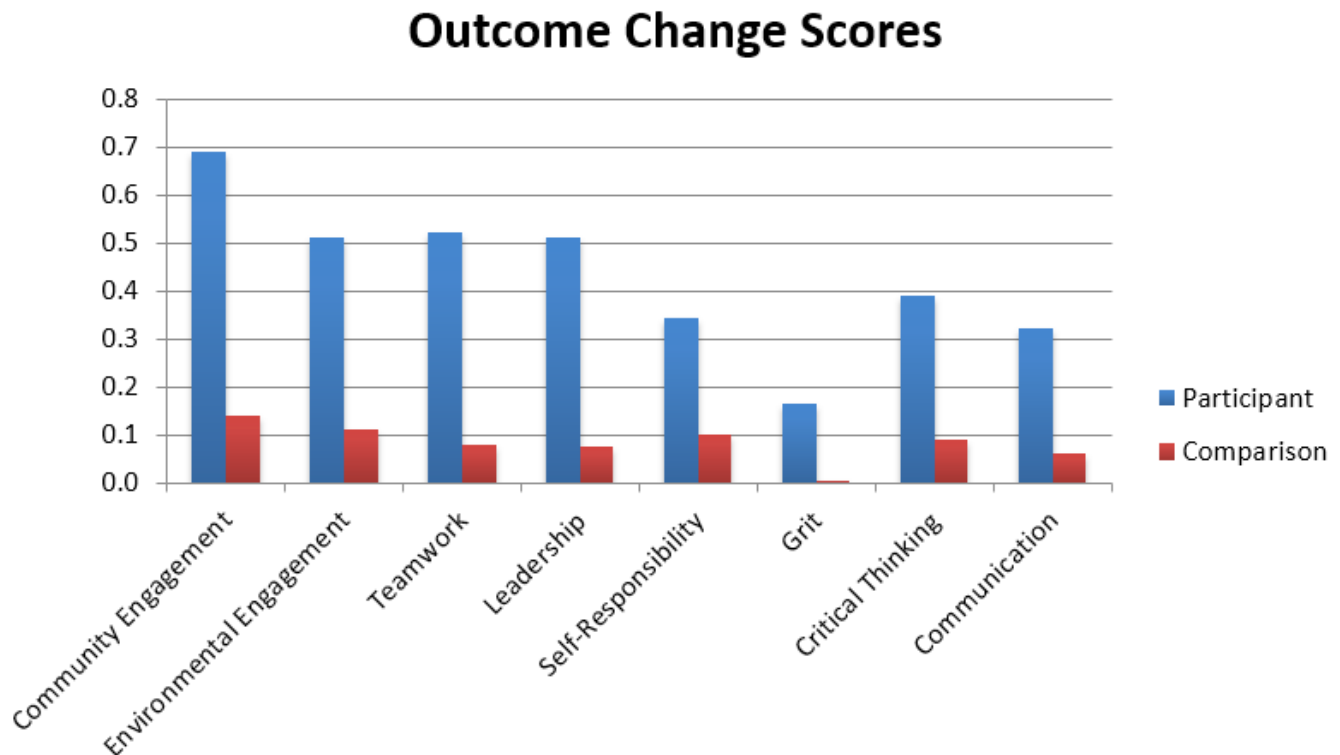
ACKNOLWEDGEMENTS

EVALUATION OVERVIEW & RATIONALE

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the impact of participating in a conservation corps program on intentions to gain additional education, confidence to gain employment and key targeted program outcomes (e.g., teamwork, leadership, etc.). Efforts were also made to assess the perceived quality of importance of core program components and processes.

FINDINGS

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

Data were collected from 1334 corps participants and 984 comparison group members. Table 1 provides a summary of sample demographics for both participants and comparisons. Overall, both participant and comparison groups were similar in average age. The comparison group had a higher percentage of females than the participant group, but both were representative of the proportion of males to females in their respective populations. The geographic distribution among participants and comparison was also similar. An examination of effect sizes (See information box below) indicated the magnitude of any statistically significant differences among the two groups of respondents was low.

TABLE 1. SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS*

Group	Mean Age	Gender		Community of Origin			
		Male	Female	Urban	Suburban	Rural Fringe	Distant Fringe
Participant	20.74	741 (55.8%)	586 (44.2%)	415 (31.3%)	473 (35.6%)	195 (14.7%)	244 (18.4%)
Comparison	21.70	434 (44.2%)	549 (55.8%)	339 (34.6%)	437 (44.5%)	100 (10.2%)	105 (10.7%)

*Note: Totals may be different due to missing items from respondents.

Statistical significance means the results indicate with 95% certainty that differences between groups genuinely exist. Measures of **effect size** are standardized measures (generally between .0 and 1.0) that assess the magnitude of this difference. Effect size is often used to determine whether a statistically significant difference is meaningful in practice with larger effect sizes suggesting greater practical importance.

Table 2 provides an overview of the current educational status and overall educational attainment of both groups. Educational attainment was similar among the groups of respondents, although the comparison group contained a higher percentage of individuals with advanced degrees and members of the participant group were more likely to be continuing in high school.

TABLE 2. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Group	Current Educational Status		Highest Level of Educational Attainment				
	No Longer in School	Continuing in School	Less than High School	High School Graduate	Some College	College Graduate	Post-College/ Graduate School
Participant	547 (40.9%)	764 (57.1%)	399 (29.8%)	226 (16.9%)	330 (24.7%)	353 (26.4%)	17 (1.3%)
Comparison	439 (44.9%)	538 (55.1%)	206 (21.0%)	208 (21.2%)	305 (31.1%)	203 (20.7%)	60 (6.1%)

Table 3 presents a breakdown of race and ethnicity for the two sample groups. Corps participants had a higher percentage of White, non-Hispanic and Hispanic respondents and fewer African-American respondents. There was significant variation with small effect sizes in race and ethnicity based on corps types. Non-residential corps respondents were more diverse, with 59.5% non-White participants (41.1% Hispanic). Conversely, spike and residential corps respondents were predominantly white, non-Hispanic (81.3% and 73.0% respectively). (See note about program types on page 6).

TABLE 3. RACE AND ETHNICITY

Group	Self-Reported Race/Ethnicity			
	White, non-Hispanic	Black, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic or Latino	Other race or ethnicity
Participant	911 (68.1%)	33 (2.5%)	262 (19.6%)	95 (7.1%)
Comparison	611 (62.2%)	103 (10.5%)	158 (16.1%)	110 (11.2%)

Table 4 provides a breakdown of corps participants involved in the evaluation by organization.

TABLE 4. PARTICIPANTS BY PROGRAM

Group	#	%
Montana Conservation Corps	400	30%
Northwest Youth Corps	216	16%
Southwest Conservation Corps	176	13%
Student Conservation Association	95	7%
Rocky Mountain Youth Corps	78	6%
Utah Conservation Corps	75	6%
California Conservation Corps	55	4%
Conservation Corps North Bay	47	4%
Coconino Rural Environmental Corps	45	3%
American Youth Works	43	3%
Los Angeles Conservation Corps	31	2%
Western Colorado Conservation Corps	29	2%
Canyon Country Youth Corps	28	2%
Colorado Youth Corps Association	20	1%

PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND PROCESSES

Understanding program components and processes was a key evaluation objective. Therefore, efforts were made to assess participants' perceptions of important program components as well as interpersonal dynamics within the program.

IMPORTANCE/PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Participants were asked to indicate the importance they ascribed to corps program components (Table 4) using a 0 to 100 scale. The analysis of this data allows for the identification of how important program characteristics are to participants.

TABLE 5. IMPORTANCE OF PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

Program Importance Items	Mean Scores
Opportunities to gain new knowledge	88.37
Opportunities to learn new skills	87.33
Having a meaningful work project	83.93
Opportunities to make a difference	83.45
Interactions with crew leaders/staff	82.24
The work project setting	81.77
Opportunities for career development	80.90
The provided training	79.44
Learning more about conservation	79.36
Leadership opportunities	79.26
Quality of the provided equipment	73.58
Opportunities to gain more education	67.08

As indicated by the table, opportunities to gain new knowledge and skills were most important to corps participants. Opportunities to gain more education and the quality of provided equipment were perceived as less important.

Some differences were found in the importance of program characteristics based on different groups of corps members. Older corps members (18 and older) perceived the work project setting as more important than younger corps members. Not surprisingly, younger corps members placed more importance on opportunities to gain more education than older corps members. There were also differences between white and non-white corps members. Leadership opportunities, the quality of equipment, and opportunities for more education were all significantly more important to non-white corps members.

Because characteristics may differ based on type of corps program, Figure 2 below compares the importance ratings based on corps type (Spike, Non-residential and Residential).

> Three types of corps programs were identified for this evaluation. **Spike** programs include field crews that camp together at a project site on 1-3 week "hitches". In **Non-residential** programs, Corpsmembers live at home and are dispatched from the Corps program office daily. Crew members and program staff live and eat in Corps dorm facilities in **Residential** programs.

FIGURE 2. IMPORTANCE RATING BY CORPS TYPE

In comparison to the other types, urban corps placed higher importance on leadership opportunities, training, quality of equipment, opportunities to make a difference, opportunities for education, and learning more about conservation. Backcountry corps participants placed higher importance on the project work setting. Finally, participants in residential corps programs placed significantly lower importance on opportunities to learn new skills and knowledge and learning more about conservation.

CREW DYNAMICS

All items on the crew dynamic scale employed a 1 (very untrue) to 5 (very true) response scale. The mean score for the seven-item scale was 4.25 out of 5.0 indicating a high level of perceived positive group functioning. Table 6 provides the mean scores for each individual item on the crew dynamic scale.

TABLE 6. CREW DYNAMIC SCORES

Crew Dynamic Scale Items	Mean Scores
Our crew keeps working to reach our goals	4.42
Our crew does not give up easily	4.38
Our crew is committed to its objectives	4.30
Our crew members work well together	4.23
Our crew can resolve problems	4.16
Our crew is united	4.15
Our crew members like to spend time together	4.14

Comparisons of different corps types indicated that participants in Spike corps perceived higher levels of crew unity (Mean = 4.33) than participants in Non-residential (Mean = 4.16) and Residential (Mean = 4.13) corps. However, effect sizes (d = .28 – .33) were small.

PROGRAM IMPACTS

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT INTENTIONS

As seen in Table 7, Corps participants demonstrated growth in their interests in obtaining additional education and confidence in their abilities to gain employment following their corps experience.

TABLE 7. EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT INTENTIONS OF CORPS PARTICIPANTS

	Pre	Post
I am interested in obtaining additional education	3.89	4.36
I am confident in my ability to get a job	3.63	4.27

KEY TALKING POINTS	• PLSC participants' interest in obtaining additional education increased by 12.7% • PLSC participants' confidence in their own ability to get a job increased 18.3%

Targeted Program Outcomes

Working with PLSC Corps Administrators, six constructs were identified as targeted outcomes across all participating organizations. Table 8 provides an overview of the constructs and their associated definitions. Previously validated survey scales were selected to measure each construct.

TABLE 8. EVALUATION MEASURES AND DEFINITIONS

Measure	# of Items	Definition
Community Engagement	4	Community engagement focuses on local and community involvement rather than on political activism.
Environmental Engagement	6	Attitude towards the environment and pro-environmental behavior
Teamwork	8	Beliefs that one can be an effective and productive group member
Leadership	6	Beliefs that the respondent can be assertive, can organize a group or team, and can be action oriented.
Self-Responsibility	6	Habit of owning and accepting consequences of personal actions
Grit	7	Perseverance and passion for long-term goals
Critical Thinking	5	Thinking that evaluates reasons and brings thought and actions in line with evaluations
Communication	6	Interpersonal communication skills

All items on each measure employed a 1 (very untrue) to 5 (very true) response scale. Mean scores were calculated for each scale. To assess the changes on outcome measures from pre- to post-corps participation, participant scores across the two periods were compared with comparison scores measured across a similar time-period.

Results indicated that participants saw statistically significant increases across all measures in contrast to comparison group members who experienced no significant changes across a similar period of time. The results indicated that corps participation was associated with significant positive change in participants across all measured outcomes. Based on measures of effect size, the magnitude of differences were all moderate to large effects. The greatest differences in growth were seen in Teamwork, Community Engagement, Leadership, and Environmental Engagement. Figure 3 provides a summary of participant and comparison change scores (post-corps minus pre-corps score) across all measures. Effect sizes of differences in change were all moderate to high, ranging from .45 (Grit) to .78 (Teamwork).

FIGURE 3. OUTCOME CHANGE SCORES

Outcome Change Scores
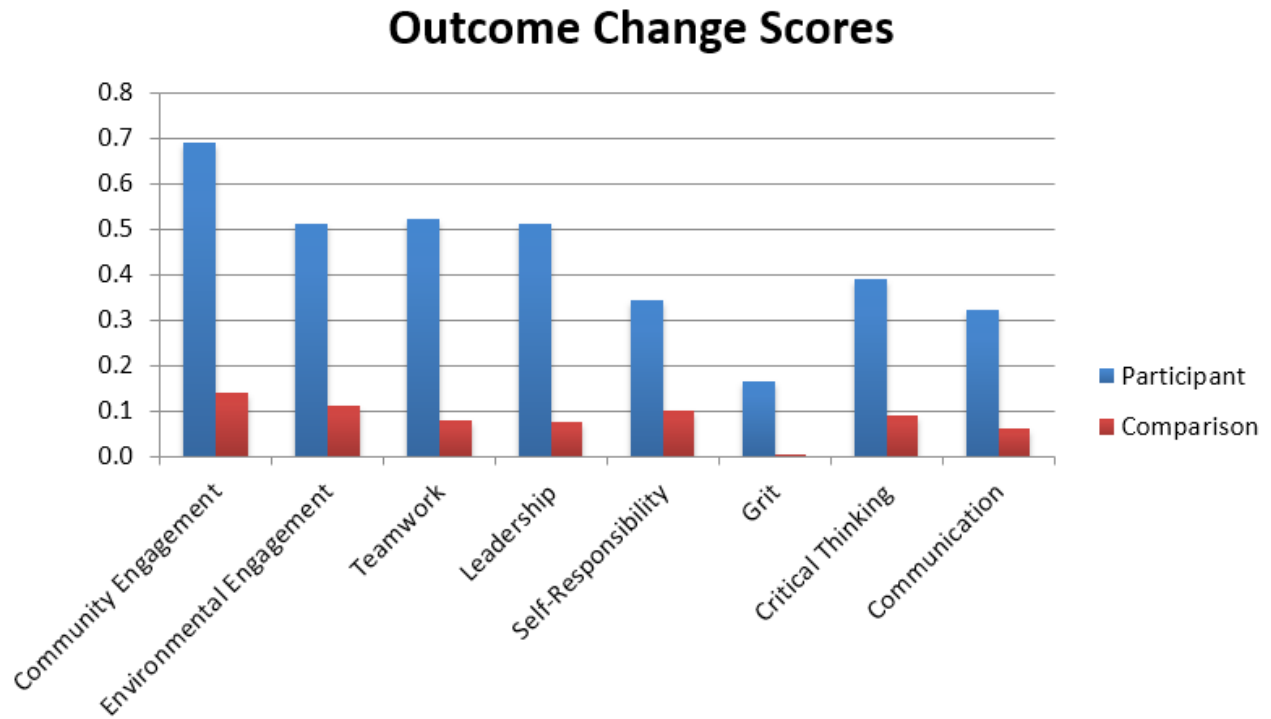
KEY TALKING POINTS	• PLSC participants' growth in Community engagement was 369% more than members of the comparison group • PLSC particpants' growth in Environmental engagement was 386% higher than members of the comparison group • PLSC participants' growth in Teamwork was 566% higher than members of the comparison group • PLSC participants' growth in Leadership was 569% higher than members of the comparison group • PLSC participants' growth in Self-responsibility was 248% higher than members of the comparison group • PLSC participants' growth in Grit was 7,842% higher than members of the comparison group • PLSC participants' growth in Communication was 408% higher than members of the comparison group • PLSC participants' growth in Critical Thinking was 336% higher than members of the comparison group

As another means of examining the different outcomes for corps participants, Figure 6 below compares the pre and post scores across all outcomes for corps participants. This figure clearly illustrates the variation of baseline scores across the measures with Self-Responsibility having the highest baseline scores and Grit having the lowest. Figure 4 also allows for a comparison of growth trajectories across measures. For example, Grit has the flattest growth trajectory while Community Engagement and Teamwork have the steepest.

FIGURE 4. PRE AND POST CORPS EXPERIENCE OUTCOME COMPARISONS
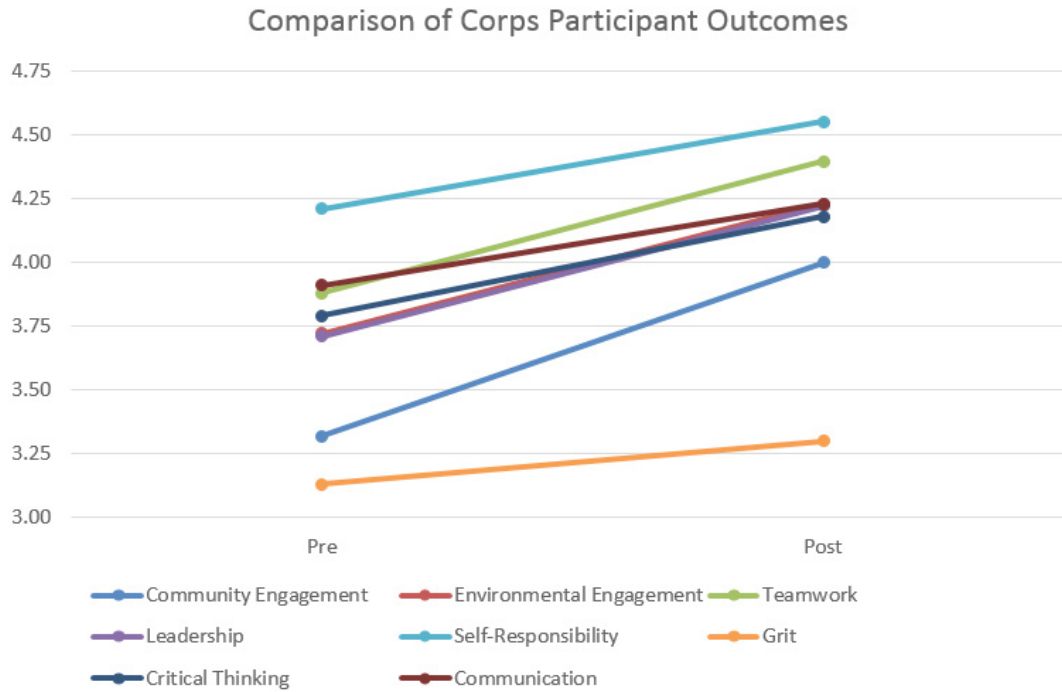
ADDITIONAL INFLUENCES ON PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Analyses revealed a number of differences related to the impact of corps involvement across participants based upon factors like age, education levels, and a variety of other factors.

Participants were divided into two age groups, Under 18 and 18 and Older.

Results indicated the younger age group experienced significantly more growth in Environmental Engagement, Teamwork, Self-Responsibility, Critical Thinking, and Communication (see Figure 5). Based on measures of effect size, the largest differences in growth were found in Communication and Self-Responsibility.

FIGURE 5. OUTCOME COMPARISONS BY AGE GROUP
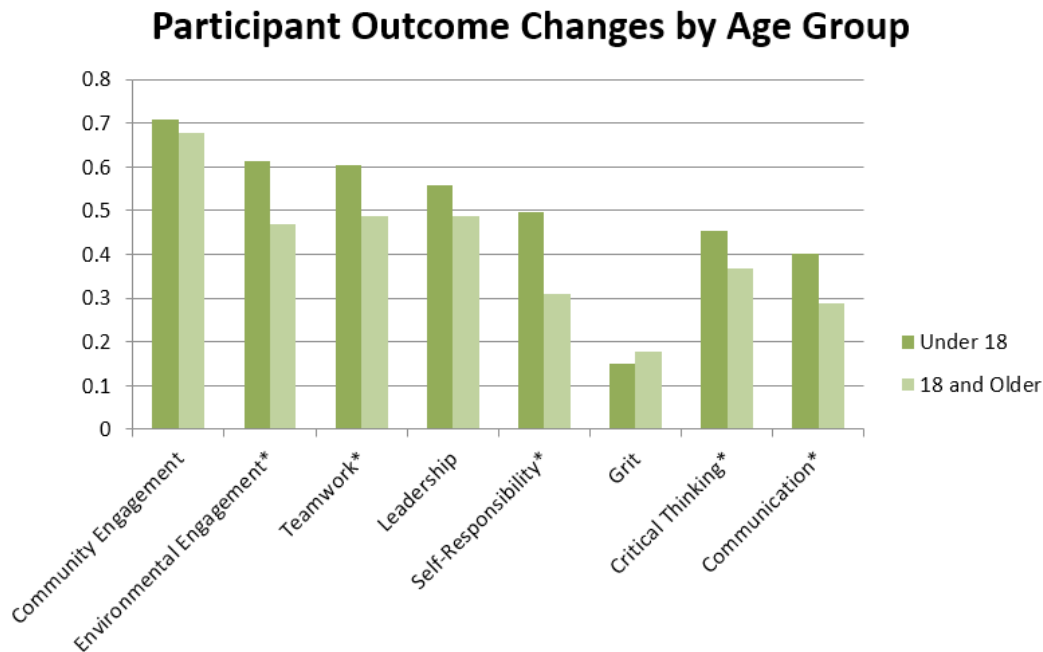
p < .05

Results indicated that corps participation had a greater impact on participants with less education on all outcomes except Grit. The strongest relationship between level of education and outcomes was related to Environmental Engagement. Comparisons based on race and ethnicity indicated that corps participation had a greater impact for participants who identified as racial and ethnic minorities, with the strongest growth in Communication. There were no significant differences in outcomes between male and female corps participants with the exception of males reporting more growth in Self-Responsibility.

ASSOCIATION OF PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND PROCESSES ON OUTCOMES

Analyses were conducted to determine whether or not any program processes were associated with differences the amount of growth participants experienced on the outcome measures. The components/processes considered in the analyses included the length of the program, overall mean crew dynamic score, and the type of program (e.g., Spike, Non-residential, and Residential). It is important to note that participants in all types of Corps programs experienced significantly higher changes in outcome scores than non-participants. Thus, this section is not designed as a comparison of program types. However, different programmatic elements may have unique associations with different outcomes.

Correlations between crew dynamic scores and outcome change scores were generally low (range from .029 - .105). The highest correlation was between positive crew dynamics and growth in Grit.

An interesting pattern emerged in the relationship between program length and outcomes. Based on distribution of responses, programs were broken down in three categories (2 months or less, 3-5 months, and 6 months or more). Participating in a program running at least six months was associated with higher growth in Community Engagement, Leadership, and Critical Thinking than shorter programs. However, growth in Environmental

Engagement, Teamwork, Leadership, Self-Responsibility, and Communication was lower for participants in programs lasting 3-5 months when compared to programs lasting 2 months or less and 6 months or more.

Participants were asked to indicate if they participated in a Spike program, Non-Residential program, or Residential program. There were no differences based on program type and growth in Community Engagement. Participants in Non-residential and Residential programs reported higher levels of growth than participants in Spike programs in nearly every other outcome except Grit. Participants in Spike and Residential programs reported higher growth in Grit than Non-residential program participants. Figure 6 shows differences in change scores based on program type.

It is important to remember that significant and meaningful growth was experienced by corps participants regardless of program length or program type. However, we identified an inter-related characteristic of program length and program type that was associated with observed differences in outcomes related to program processes. Corpsmembers in Spike programs were more likely to participate in programs for 3-5 months than Non-residential or Residential program participants. Spike program participants reported higher baseline levels on outcome measures than participants in other program types and thus had less room to grow through program participation. Figure 7 below shows the comparatively high growth in combined outcomes across all three program types and comparison sample.

FIGURE 6. PROGRAM TYPE COMPARISONS

Participant Outcome Changes by Program Type
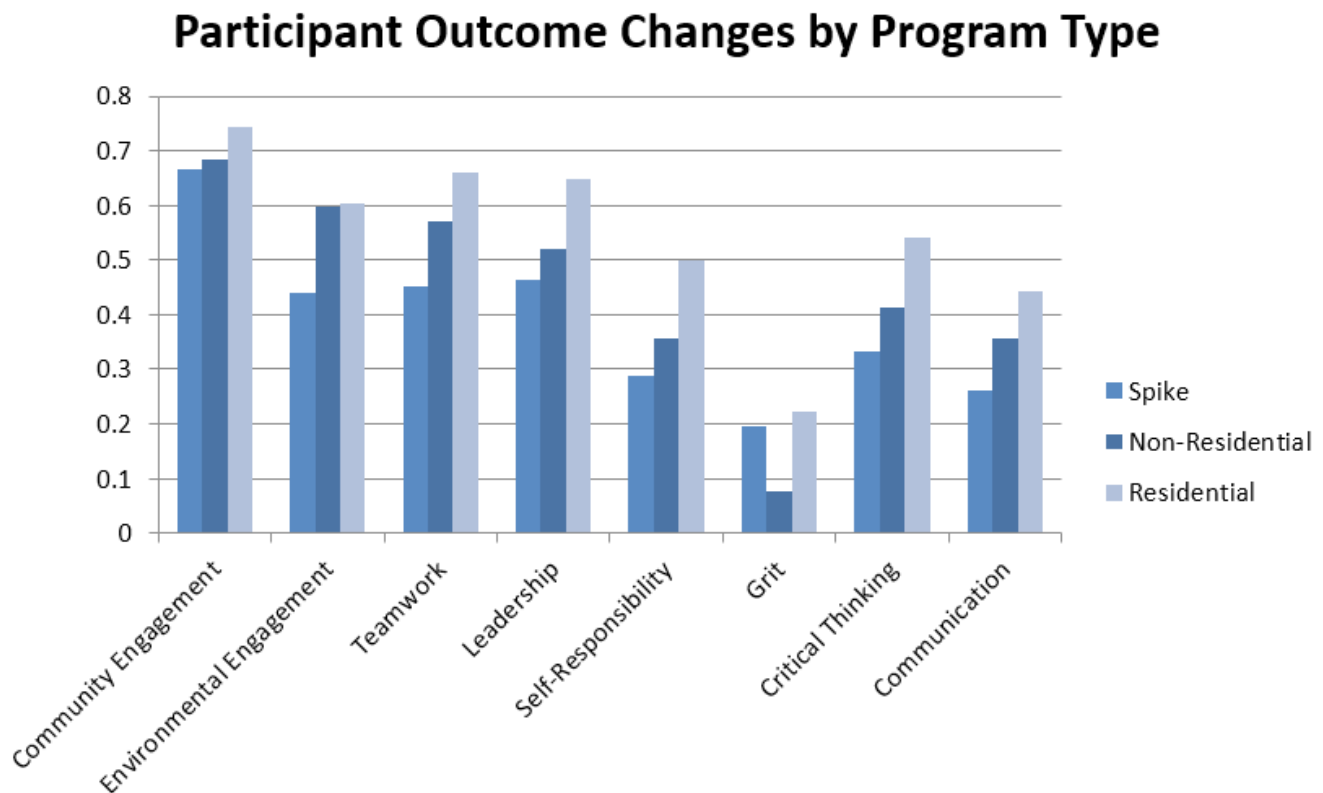
FIGURE 7. CHANGE IN OVERALL OUTCOMES BY PROGRAM TYPE

Overall change in outcomes by program type

	Pre-Corps	Post-Corps
Spike	3.87	4.29
Non-residential	3.69	4.19
Residential	3.66	4.25
Comparison	3.74	3.84
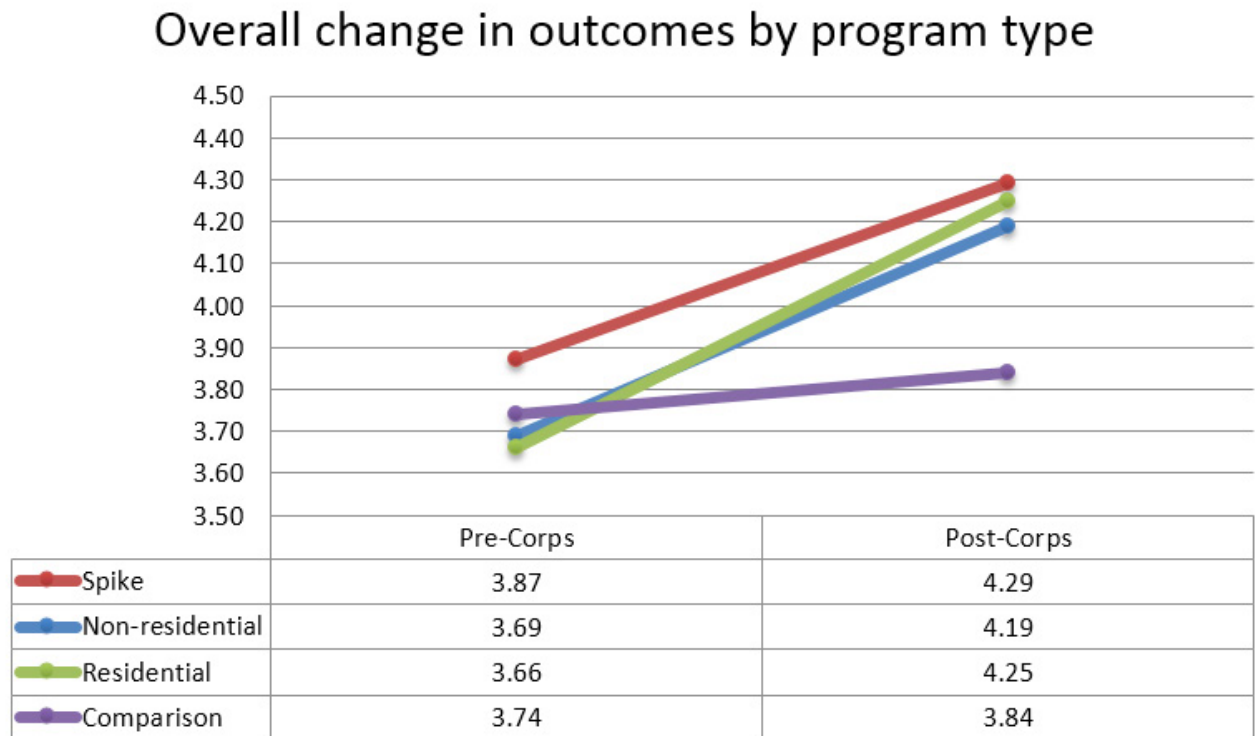
CONCLUSIONS

Participating in one of the conversation corps program included in this evaluation appears to have produced a variety of benefits from increases in targeted outcomes (e.g., leadership, self-responsibility, etc.) to intentions to pursue additional education. Participants also reported high levels of satisfaction with interpersonal aspects of the experience. Significant growth was experienced for all participants, regardless of specific demographic or program characteristics across all targeted outcomes.

The data from this evaluation provide participating corps organizations with a good baseline from which to assess the impact of future programming innovations or management changes. Continued evaluation work will facilitate the ongoing assessment of program impacts and the identification of key programming processes.

FOLLOW-UP RESULTS

Participants were sent an email approximately 90 days after completing their respective corps program inviting them to complete an online follow-up survey. Through the provided survey link in the email, 348 surveys were opened, and 290 of those were submitted. Of the submitted surveys, 226 were useable for data analysis. This is attributable to individuals starting the survey but only completing small portions and individuals completing the follow-up survey who did not complete the initial end of program survey. The following data is the result of those 226 useable surveys. Table 7 provides a breakdown of follow-up respondents with useable data by corps.

TABLE 9. FOLLOW-UP RESPONDENTS BY CORPS

Group	#
Montana Conservation Corps	80
Northwest Youth Corps	39
Rocky Mountain Youth Corps	35
Los Angeles Corps	26
Student Conservation Association	21
American Youth Works	9
Coconino Rural Environmental Corps	6
Southwest Conservation Corps	6
California Conservation Corps	3
Colorado Youth Corps Association	1

Analyses were conducted to compare pre-program, post-program and follow-up data across different measures. First, we examined changes in participants' intentions to pursue further education. Intention to pursue further education declined significantly between post-program and follow up. However, follow up scores remained significantly higher than pre-program scores.

INTEREST IN PURSUING EDUCATION
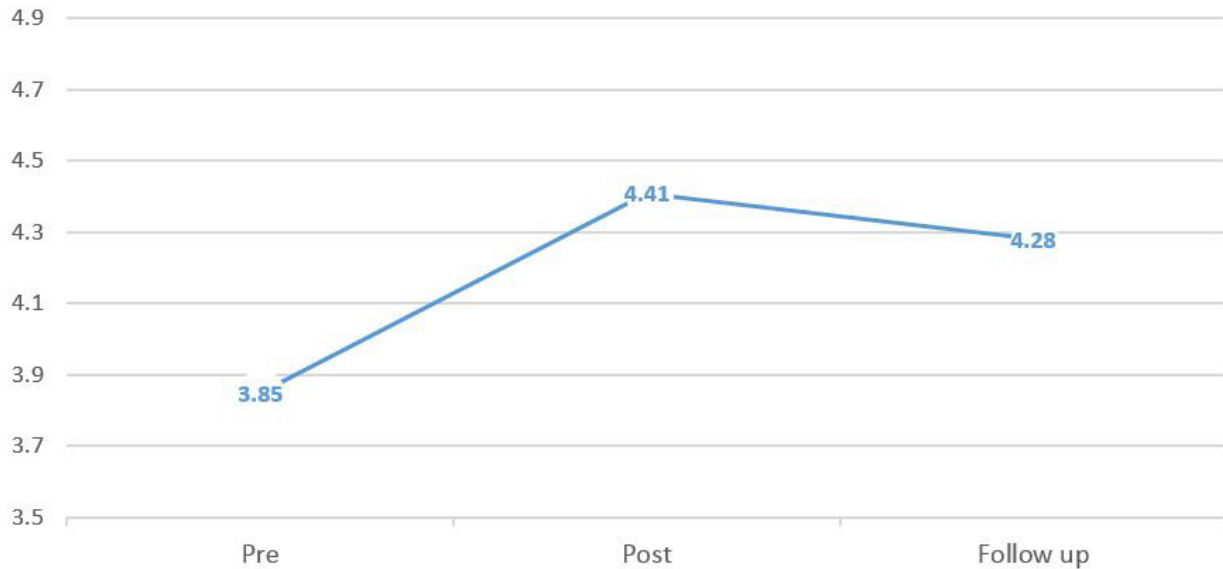
Since completing their corps experience, 47.8% of respondents indicated that they had enrolled in a school or program to gain additional education. Of this group, 20.4% were pursuing undergraduate education at a four-year university, 8.8% were enrolled in a community or junior college, and 7.5% were either in high school or pursuing a GED.

Next, we examined participants' confidence in their abilities to secure jobs. Similarly, scores on job confidence declined significantly between the time immediately following the corps experience and the follow up survey. However, follow up scores remained significantly higher than pre-corps experience.

CONFIDENCE IN GETTING A JOB
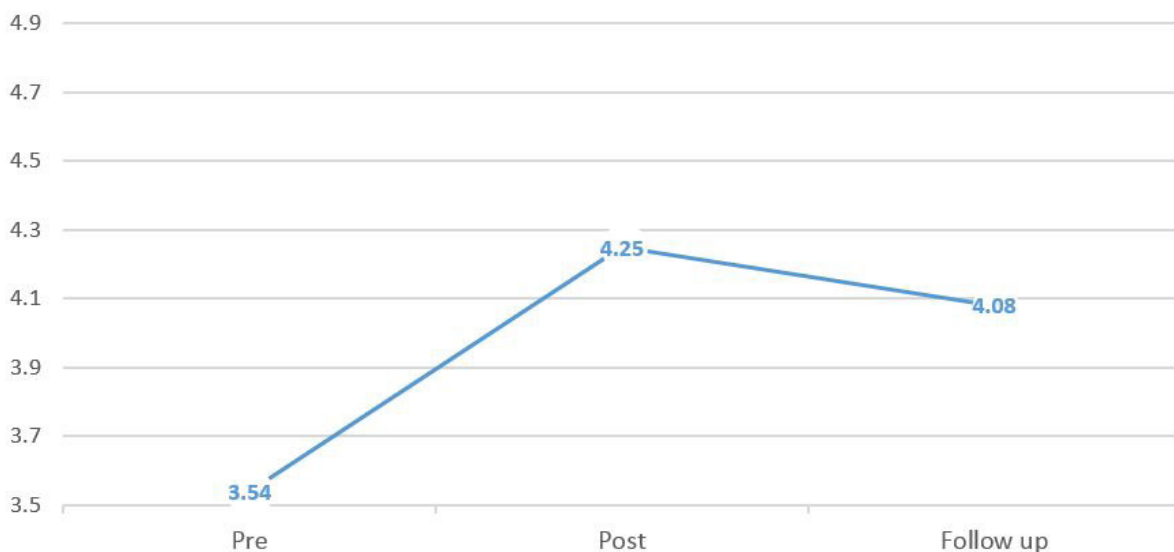
Since the conclusion of their corps experiences, 51.8% of respondents indicated they had successfully obtained employment, 25.2% were not seeking employment, and 23.0% were still seeking employment at the time of the follow up survey.

Analyses were conducted to compare pre-program, post-program and follow-up data across all the outcome measures. No significant changes occurred from post-program to follow-up on community engagement, environmental engagement, teamwork, grit, or critical thinking. Follow-up scores decreased significantly from post-program scores but were still higher than pre-program scores for the leadership, self-responsibility, and communication measures. Table 8 includes mean scores for all measures across a time periods.

TABLE 10. FOLLOW-UP DATA COMPARISON

Measure	Pre-Corps	Post-Corps	Follow-Up
Community Engagement	3.13	4.01	3.95
Environmental Engagement	3.68	4.25	4.31
Teamwork	3.83	4.40	4.35
Leadership	3.61	4.21	4.11
Self-Responsibility	4.19	4.56	4.43
Grit	3.16	3.36	3.30
Critical Thinking	3.74	4.18	4.14
Communication	3.92	4.29	4.15

The follow-up results were interesting because it is not uncommon to detect an end of program peak in self-reported outcome data. Participants are usually especially excited about the program at its conclusion and some of this excitement can wear off after they return home. That scores in five of the eight outcome measures remained at post-corps levels 90 days following the conclusion of corps experiences was encouraging. Additionally, even though scores in leadership, self-responsibility, and communication declined from post-corps scores; they remained significantly higher than reported pre-corps scores.

APPENDIX A: EVALUATION PROCEDURES

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

ACTION-ORIENTED RESEARCH

Our approach followed many of the tenets of action-oriented research where the population under study contributes to the production of the research. Action-oriented approaches to research emerge from the realization that complete objectivity is unattainable in the social sciences. However, it provides significant potential to bridge the divide between theory and practice. For this evaluation, researchers and PLSC organizations collaborated in identifying relevant outcomes to be evaluated as well as developing practical approaches to data collection and analysis. PLSC organizations were engaged as partners in the research process, rather than simply subjects of or settings for the research being conducted. By using this approach, we sought to reduce barriers to participating in research previously identified by PLSC organizations and to build PLSC's capacity to develop and sustain evaluation and research systems in order to improve programs and services in the future.

CITATIONS TO SUPPORT ACTION-ORIENTED RESEARCH APPROACH
•Lewin, K. (1946). Action research and minority problems. Journal of Social Issues, 2, 34-46.
•Rodríguez, L. F., & Brown, T. M. (2009). From voice to agency: Guiding principles for participatory action research with youth. [Article]. New Directions for Youth Development, 2009(123), 19-34.
•Small, S. A. (2005). Bridging research and practice in the family and human sciences. Family Relations, 54(2), 320-334.

RESEARCH DESIGN

For the purposes of this study, we used a quasi-experimental design using a general public sample comparison group. The use of a comparison group allows researchers to compare experiences of PLSC participants with the general public. The comparison group was recruited from a national sample of Survey Monkey online panel members between the ages of 14 and 26 that were pre-screened to match demographic profiles (e.g., age, education level) as the participant group. This population was chosen for recruitment because we wanted a sample that represented the general public as much as possible in the same demographic as the participants in the experimental group. The use of online panels as a nationally reflective sample have demonstrated many of the same properties and limitations as other methods of collecting self-report data from household surveys or phone interviews. While the use of a randomized control group is often idealized as the gold standard in evaluation designs, our approach has proved to be a viable alternative. Additionally, randomized control studies are not without

inherent disadvantages. For example, randomized control studies often require narrowing comparable traits to the extent they have limited external validity, and conducting randomized control trials can be very expensive and take much longer to complete; limiting the applicability and usability to organizations. It is also important to note that, according to The New England Journal of Medicine, using randomized control designs instead of other acceptable methods does not always guarantee higher quality evidence. Randomized control is especially problematic when using waitlists for random assignment as it is difficult to monitor the behaviors of the control sample that does not enroll in the treatment program.

CITATIONS TO SUPPORT QUASI-EXPERIMENTTAL EVALUATION DESIGN AND USE OF ON-LINE PANELS AS GENERAL POPULATION COMPARISON GROUPS

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- Vining, J. (1992). Environmental Emotions and Decisions. Environment and Behavior, 24(1), 3-34.
- Taylor, S. M., Ward, P., Zabriskie, R., Hill, B., & Hanson, C. (2012). Influences on Active Family Leisure and a Healthy Lifestyle Among Adolescents. Leisure Sciences, 34(4), 332-349.
- Ward, P., & Buswell, L. (2009). Review of online data collection techiques in leisure research. Paper presented at the National Recreation and Parks Association National Congress: Leisure Research Symposium, Salt Lake City, UT.

RETROSPECTIVE PRE-POST INSTRUMENT

Survey items used a retrospective pre-test design that asked participants to report their attitudes and knowledge following the program as well as before they began the program (e.g., Before participating in the conservation corps, how would you have responded to this statement?). Compared to traditional pre-post designs, this approach allows participants to more accurately report changes in conditions because they have a better understanding of their baseline condition. This is particularly true in the case for measures of perceptions, motivations, and intentions. For members of the comparison group, a standard time was chosen to represent a similar elapsed time to length of PLSC programs (e.g., How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?). Like a true control group, it is assumed that the comparison group would receive no treatment (i.e., corps participation) and therefore would expect no changes in perceptions and attitudes other than those that might occur naturally over a similar period of time. A qualifying question was asked of comparison group members to filter out individuals that may have participated in a similar experience to corps members during the time period.

CITATIONS TO SUPPORT RETROSPECTIVE PRE-POST INSTRUMENT

- Pratt, C. C., McGuigan, W. M., & Katzev, A. R. (2000). Measuring program outcomes: Using retrospective pretest methodology. American Journal of Evaluation, 21(3), 341-350.
- Davis, G. A. (2003). Using a retrospective pre-post questionnaire to determine program impact. Journal of Extension, 41(4).
- Hill, L. G., & Betz, D. L. (2005). Revisiting the Retrospective Pretest. American Journal of Evaluation, 26(4),

APPENDIX B: OPEN ENDED RESPONSES

OPEN ENDED RESPONSES

Please share with us one or two sentences that best summarize your conservation corps experience. - Open-Ended Response

Categories:

I had a Positive Impact:

- *Was great. I made a big difference.*
- *18 MONTHS OD SHARED DIRT AND SWEAT, LAUGHTER AND TEARS. We left positive mark on the world and ourselves.This crew was the most inspiring, amazing experience of my life. I enjoyed every bit of it, from the people to the work to the lifestyle, and I fully intend to participate again.*
- *Participating in the [corps] has confirmed my love of nature, conservation, and environmental work. My life has been changed for the better. I now know that I have the strength and ability to achieve anything I set my mind to. This program has opened my world to the impact I can have and what can be done. Thank you!*
- *I like knowing the impact I was making on the environment. It makes me feel good helping rather than doing nothing this summer.*

Experience and Knowledge:

- *A wonderful, beautiful, eye opening and life changing experience.*
- *I loved my time with [the corps]. Spending time with my crew and working with my crew was an amazing experience. I would like to work for [the corps] or a similar program in the future.*
- *While working with the conservation crew I was provided experiences working in the outdoors which allowed me to further my interest in this field.*
- *My conservation corps experience was amazing. I feel like I have more knowledge now compared to when I first started working.*
- *My experience with [the corps] was not what I expected. The experience was much better than I was expecting.*

Fun and Friendship:

- *My experience was AMAZING. I made many new friends and meet great people along the way.*
- *It was fun, exciting, and hard. It gave me a good chance to meet new people*
- *Enjoyed everything and everyone. I learned a lot from this program and hope to retain it forever.*
- *I met some amazing people and learned a lot about camping and conservation. This opened my eyes to an entirely new and incredible outdoor culture.*

Well-roundedness:

- *My experience allowed me to learn hard work, build character and greater understand community.*
- *I learned a whole lot about myself and my own priorities and goals. I saw and did a lot of cool things.*
- *I gained valuable skills and training for a future career in the forest or public lands management.*

I also made valuable contacts and was able to network with valuable project partners and potential employers.

- *My experience [in the corps] was one of the best. Not only did I learn about the place I live in, I also learned about leadership, work ethic, and so much more. I would definitely come back!*
- *I really enjoyed it because it really improved my outlook on groups similar to this. It really has improved most of my leadership skills and others such in that genera of leadership.*
- *I felt that the conservation corps experience was very beneficial to me in multiple ways. I learned new skills in communication, self-confidence, and teamwork that will be used throughout my life.*
- *My experience was a lot of fun and it taught me many skills that I will be able to apply in my daily life.*
- *I learned a lot more to be a team player, and how to become a better leader. I now know how to be a better nature-outdoors person*
- *I gained valuable social skills and education in conservation work and the environment.*
- *I learned a lot about work ethic, responsibility, and how to work at a faster pace. This has been a good work experience to help prepare me for future jobs and getting into a good college.*
- *The corps world has helped me to gain confidence in myself and gain valuable skills*

Work Ethic:
- *It was a definite learning experience and I took a lot away from the program that I feel I will be able to apply to everyday life. In particular my work ethic has drastically improved.*
- *It was really helpful for me because my work ethic got a lot better and that is really important for me!*
- *I worked hard with other kids and got to know them well. I also learned a lot of work ethics not previously established.*
- *It was a great way to improve my leadership skills as well as my overall work ethic.*
- *My conservation experience has opened many new opportunities to me as well as knowledge. I have become a strong leader and my work ethic is outstanding.*
- *My work ethic has increased dramatically. I suggest working for the corps to everyone.*
- *Honestly, it was another great experience. I feel that it has benefitted my work ethic and philosophy yet again. However, the crew (although I love them) was not united and talked about me behind my back as well as others.*
- *Great way to learn skills and work ethics. Helps you prepare for the real world.*
- *This experience has changed me in my group work and in my work ethic. It had been very 1un and hard and I would like to come back soon.*

Well-rounded experience:
- *My conservation corps experience was well rounded in many aspects of professionalism, educations, leadership and group work. I learned valuable skills and developed important qualities for myself being a part of the corp.*
- *My conservation corps experience was an experience of a lifetime. I learned to live with a group of people that I have never met before and became a family at the end. I have learned to communicate much better than I did before I started. I learned to work and clean a chainsaw. I have learned about myself and grown as an individual through this program than I ever have before. I have grown mentally, physically and emotionally stronger and healthier through this experience and knowing how much my body and mind are capable of doing.*
- *My conservation corps experience was literally the time of my life. I loved the landscape, the*

people both on my crew and the locals or tourists of the area, the wildlife and nature experiences, as well as the work.

Environmental stewardship and attitudes:

- *I have worked and learned to be a better steward of the environment.*
- *[The corps] was such a great opportunity, I loved the chance to meet new people and become great friends with all of them. I loved the opportunity to learn about ways we can help the community and the environment.*
- *Joining [the corps] has changed my views on leadership and how much we, as young people, can make a difference*
- *I learned to appreciate the trails and land taken advantage of. I met a lot of awesome new people.*
- *I get an opportunity to work outside and improve the areas around my home.*
- *My experience with [the corps] was really great. It gave me a new outlook on the environment.*
- *During my experience with the conservation corps program, I would say that this program is very educational and focuses on restoring the environment and the habitat, the community, and also focuses on the main problem and what can be done for the conflict to be solved and gives you the experience that also gives you new skills after the program has been completed by the individual.*
- *I learned a lot, in various aspects. How to be a better leader, understand my leadership style. I had a lot of fun learning about new ways to protect the environment and I will keep doing so for hopefully the rest of my life.*
- *I had a lot of fun doing [the corps] and I learned a lot about the environment and how to conserve it.*
- *I've learned how to take care of the environment.*

Suggestions for Improvement:

- *My [corps] experience was loud, irratating, and no one says sorry or thank you. I liked it, but every weekend should be taken off to go home.*
- *To feel like you're making a difference, the work has to be important, and you have to be appreciated.*
- *I enjoyed the work and loved many of the sights. In the future I wish to be a crew leader. There was some conflict with my crwe members in understanding each other and there was some favoritism. Other than that, it was great!*

APPENDIX C: PLSC SURVEY

2013 Conservation Corps Comparison Survey

The survey should only take about 15-20 minutes to complete. Your responses are voluntary and will be kept confidential.

Section 1: Reflective Statements

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS: The following items ask you to respond to statements about your *current* and *past* attitudes, knowledge, and behavior towards a variety of topics. Each item has two parts:

- The first part is about your current attitudes, knowledge, intentions, etc..
- The second part asks you about your attitudes, knowledge, intentions, etc. before participating in a conservation corps program.

Please use the following scale to respond to each statement. Circle the number that best describes how true each statement is for you. Only circle one number

1	2	3	4	5
Very Untrue	**Untrue**	**Some-what True**	**True**	**Very True**

Section 1a – Future Plans

1	I am interested in obtaining additional education.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
2	I am confident in my ability to get a job.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5

Section 1b - Community

1	I am very interested in being a part of my community.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
2	I feel I have the ability to make a difference in my community.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
3	I try to find the time to make a positive difference in my community.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
4	I am very interested in joining local groups, projects or clubs.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5

Section 1c – The Environment

Please use the following scale to respond to each statement. Circle the number that best describes how true each statement is for you. Only circle one number

1	2	3	4	5
Very Untrue	Untrue	Some-what True	True	Very True

1	I like to learn about the environment	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
2	I think it is important to recycle	1 2 3 4 5
	1 2 3 4 5	
3	I would spend time working to fix problems in nature	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
4	I am interested in learning new ways to help protect the environment	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
5	I would give some of my own money to help protect the environment	1 2 3 4 5
	1 2 3 4 5	
6	I like to spend time outside	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
7	I would help to clean up green areas in my neighborhood	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5

Section 1d – Personal Attributes

Please use the following scale to respond to each statement. Circle the number that best describes how true each statement is for you. Only circle one number

1	2	3	4	5
Very Untrue	Untrue	Some-what True	True	Very True

1	I can be a good group leader	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
2	I can help a group be successful	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
3	I can be happy even when my group has decided to do something I don't want to do	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
4	I can appreciate opinions that are different from my own	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
5	I can place group goals above the things that I want	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
6	I can cooperate with others	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
7	I can be a team-player in a small group	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
8	I know I can get along with other people in a small group	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5

Section 1e - Personal Attributes cont.

Please use the following scale to respond to each statement. Circle the number that best describes how true each statement is for you. Only circle one number

1	2	3	4	5
Very Untrue	Untrue	Some-what True	True	Very True

1	Once I know what needs to be done, I am good at planning how to do it.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
2	When I see something that needs to be done, I try to get my friends to work on it with me.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
3	I am pretty good at organizing a team of people to do a project.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
4	If I'm the leader of a group, I make sure that everyone in the group feels important.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
5	I feel like I can stand up for what I think is right, even if my friends disagree.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
6	When I see something that is wrong, I try to change it.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5

Section 3f - Personal Attributes cont.
Please use the following scale to respond to each statement. Circle the number that best describes how true each statement is for you. Only circle one number

1	2	3	4	5
Very Untrue	Untrue	Some-what True	True	Very True

1	I accept responsibility for my actions	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
2	I own up to my mistakes	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
3	I don't blame others for my mistakes	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
4	If I mess something up, I try to make things right	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
5	If I make a mistake, I try to fix it	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
6	If I hurt someone's feelings, I apologize	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5

Section 3g -Personal Attributes cont.

Please use the following scale to respond to each statement. Circle the number that best describes how true each statement is for you. Only circle one number

1	2	3	4	5
Very Untrue	Untrue	Some-what True	True	Very True

1	I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
2	New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
3	I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
4	I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
5	I finish whatever I begin.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
6	Setbacks don't discourage me.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
7	I am diligent.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
8	I am a hard worker.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5

Section 3h – Personal Attributes cont.

Please use the following scale to respond to each statement. Circle the number that best describes how true each statement is for you. Only circle one number.

1	I can easily express my thoughts on a problem	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
2	I usually have more than one source of information before making a decision	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
3	I compare ideas when thinking about a topic	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
4	I keep my mind open to different ideas when planning to make a decision.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
5	I am able to tell the best way of handling a problem	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5

Section 3i – When I communicate with others. . .

Please use the following scale to respond to each statement. Circle the number that best describes how true each statement is for you. Only circle one number.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Untrue	**Untrue**	**Some-what True**	**True**	**Very True**

When I communicate with others:

1	I try to keep eye contact	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
2	I recognize when two people are trying to say the same thing, but in different ways.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
3	I try to see the other person's point of view.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
4	I change the way I talk to someone based on my relationship with them (i.e., friend, parent, teacher, other adult, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
5	I organize thoughts in my head before speaking.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5
6	I make sure I understand what another person is saying before I respond.	1 2 3 4 5
	How would you have responded to this statement two months ago?	1 2 3 4 5

Section 2

1. How involved have you been **over the last year** in similar programs where you work in the outdoors or learn about the environment?

    a. Not at all involved
    b. Minimally involved
    c. Somewhat involved
    d. Very involved
    e. Heavily involved

6. What is your home residence **ZIP code**? _____

7. Which of the following best describes the community in which you grew up?

    a. Urban (generally inside a city or urbanized area with a population greater than 100,000)

    b. Small Urban/Suburban (generally a city or urban area outside a principal city with a population less than 100,000)

    c. Rural Fringe (Generally inside a town or rural area that is within 10 miles from an urban area)

    d. Rural Distant (Inside a town or rural area more than 10 miles from the nearest urban area)

8. Sex? Female_____ Male_____

9. How old are you? _____

10. What is your date of birth? ____/____/____

12. Please indicate your current education status.

    a. No longer in school
    b. Continuing in school

13. Please indicate the highest level of school you have completed.
    a. Less than high school
    b. High school graduate
    c. Some college
    d. College graduate
    e. Post-college/Graduate School

14. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

    a. No   b. Yes

15. What is your race? (Circle all that apply).
    a. White
    b. Black or African American
    c. American Indian or Alaska Native
    d. Asian
    e. Pacific Islander
    f. Other race

16. What is the highest grade your mother completed in school?
    a. Less than high school
    b. High school graduate
    c. Some college
    d. College graduate
    e. Post-college/Graduate School

17. What is the highest grade your father completed in school?
    a. Less than high school
    b. High school graduate
    c. Some college
    d. College graduate
    e. Post-college/Graduate School

Thank you for your willingness to help with this evaluation!