

Recovery Conservation Corps Initiative

Goal: The goal of the Recovery Conservation Corps Initiative is to establish a “green” summer youth program that will create summer work experience opportunities for young Ohioans and allow work to be performed in the state parks, forests, metropolitan parks and natural areas which would otherwise be neglected due to lack of funding.

Total Funds: The initiative will set aside **\$2 million** in statewide American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Workforce funds. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) will contract with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) for provision of transportation of crews to specific work sites within the state parks and will also assist with transportation needs to sites within the metropolitan park systems. Transportation will be provided for urban and rural youth alike. Local Workforce Investment Boards will use local workforce stimulus funds for the wages of the youth workers and will support the cost of tools, transportation, and other needs.

Target Population: The program targets low-income youth who are ages 16 through 24. The job and training activity will be geared toward out-of-school youth; however, a limited number of in-school youth may participate as well. Each local workforce investment area will recruit eligible participants for the program.

Eligible Activities: ODNR is currently prioritizing projects needed throughout the state park system and identifying work sites for the program. A wide variety of work experiences will be available to participants, including trail maintenance, invasive species removal, facility maintenance and repair, and landscaping.

Participants may link the work experience to training opportunities offered through ODNR and obtain certification that will improve their opportunities for permanent careers. Examples of training and certification opportunities include:

- A variety of eco-management techniques to control invasive plant species and protect bio-diversity are used throughout Ohio's state nature preserves. Some participants will be trained in invasive species removal. The certification resulting from this training, combined with demonstrated work readiness, will enhance participants' opportunities for permanent employment upon completion of the program.
- Participants may also take advantage of ODNR's Wildfire Management training, which consists of a 40-hour course combining classroom and hands-on training in the art of wild land fire suppression for the line firefighter. This course meets the training requirement for the “Red Card” needed for interagency firefighting in accordance with the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, which allows certified individuals to be a paid responder to national wildfires.

Program Start Date: May, 2009