



Corpsmember Handbook

January 2012

Dear Corpsmembers:

Welcome to an exciting, challenging, and rewarding position and life experience at Southwest Conservation Corps. SCC is a learning organization that exists to serve the environment, the community, and most importantly to empower young adults.

You are one of Southwest Conservation Corps' most important resources—you give life to the mission and purpose of the organization. It will not always be easy, but I hope that you will learn new skills, make new friends, be challenged and have fun!

I have found my work at Southwest Conservation Corps to be an incredible opportunity to serve, learn, be challenged and create opportunities. It is precisely this—the opportunity for concurrent service and learning—that makes SCC a rewarding job and life experience. Thus, it is with great enthusiasm that I welcome you to SCC and look forward to getting to know you and the many talents you bring to SCC.

Welcome,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harry Bruell".

Harry Bruell, President & C.E.O



1

What This is All About

Why? – All of us at SCC are passionate about our mission and the work we do. We are excited to have you join us in that.

1.1 – ABOUT SCC AND ITS HISTORY

The Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC), a nonprofit founded in 1998, provides young women and men with structured, safe and challenging work and educational opportunities through service projects that promote personal growth, the development of social skills, and an ethic of natural resource stewardship. The SCC program model, built upon the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s, incorporates guiding principles of experiential learning, respect, openness and willingness, commitment, responsibility, pride, excellence, health and safety, and fun.

SCC has grown from a small nonprofit, based in Durango, CO to a larger, organization operating throughout the Southwest. SCC offers programs year-round throughout the Southwest from offices in Durango, CO, Salida, CO, Acoma, NM and Tucson, AZ.

1.2 – SCC MISSION

It is the Mission of the Southwest Conservation Corps to empower individuals to positively impact their lives, their communities, and their environment.

1.3 – SCC VISION

Empowered individuals leading the way to stronger communities and a healthy planet

1.4 – STANDARD OF SERVICE

In the time since SCC began, a high quality standard of service has been set and the reputation of each of our programs is very strong. High expectations prevail and they are deserved. The character, experiences, and skills of the participants of these programs have succeeded in making a real impact on public lands and in the communities of the region, and many people have invested a great deal of effort and resources in building the program. As a Corpsmember you will be following in these footsteps. Your own personal standard of service must be set high and maintained. You are expected to carry out the duties prescribed to you in all the various elements of your program, to provide the highest quality of service possible, and perform at the peak of your capabilities. It is a lot of hard work, but the rewards are tremendous.

2

The Basic Ground Rules

Why? – The thousands of SCC members before you have taken pride in their work and being part of SCC. They expect you to follow in the same tradition.

2.1 – EXPECTATIONS

In your agreement to participate in a SCC Program, you have made a choice that requires you to take on added responsibilities which affect you and your crew community. These policies and guidelines were written with the consideration of your safety and well being. It is important that you know and respect these policies, and adhere to them. Infractions can lead to disciplinary action and may mean the possible dismissal from the program as outlined in this handbook. You are encouraged to ask questions about these policies so that you may understand their justifications.

Being a member of an SCC Program requires a degree of sacrifice on the part of all participants and staff. You will not be able to think solely of yourself during the course of the session. Your actions will affect everyone else on the crew as well as the future standing of the organization and the organization's reputation in the community. The following policies have been developed to maintain the integrity of the program and many of the policies are non-negotiable. If, after reading through these policies, you feel that you will be unable to abide by the policies set forth, perhaps you may want to reconsider being a member of an SCC Program. Please inform the staff if you think that this program may not be a good match for you.

Remember: It is your goals, values, and beliefs that brought you to this program and it is those same goals, values, and beliefs that are reflected in what we do as a project and how we do it. It is a much more appropriate and healthy response to say, "We don't..." rather than "We can't..."

2.2 – SCC CODE OF CONDUCT

Each crew will discuss and agree upon acceptable behavioral guidelines or community standards. In addition to these standards, SCC has adopted a "Code of Conduct" that is outlined below. Please read and carefully consider the following code, it represents the minimum level of expected behavior while serving in SCC and violation of any of these will be considered grounds for immediate termination. You will initial your commitment to this code in your member agreement.

- Possession or use of drugs or alcohol including tobacco products.
- Possession and use of weapons, firearms, or fireworks.
- Unauthorized leave of absence
- Fighting, insubordination, threatening behavior, threats of violence, or verbal abuse
- Stealing, vandalism, or damage to property
- Sexual harassment or racism.
- Inappropriate sexual activity and exclusive relationships.
- Willful disregard for individual or group safety

2.3 – DRUG FREE WORKPLACE

Pursuant to the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance in the workplace is prohibited by SCC. Conviction of any criminal drug statute must be reported to the Corps immediately. The Member's participation is conditioned upon compliance with these requirements; and certain actions will be taken against the Member for violations of this policy.

2.4 – MEDICAL MARIJUANA USE

As stated in SCC’s Drug Free Workplace policy the use or possession of any controlled substance is prohibited. This includes medical marijuana use, whether the participant holds a valid medical marijuana use card or not. No Corpsmember or staff person may possess or consume marijuana in any form during the entire length of a hitch, including any recreation days. In addition, Corpsmembers or staff may not be under the influence of controlled substances during this same period.

2.5 – DRUG TESTING

SCC maintains the right to perform drug testing of any participant at any time for purposes of upholding policy and ensuring the safety of crews and participants. In addition, SCC’s workers compensation insurer may require a drug test when a claim is filed with them.

3

Keeping You and Your Crew Safe

Why? – Safety is #1. If you or your crewmates are injured, the gig may be up - no job, no outdoor living, no fun times.

3.1 – GENERAL SAFETY POLICY

NO activity is entirely free of risk or completely safe. SCC’s number one priority is the safety of our crews. Below are some general requirements that will reduce you and your crew’s exposure to risk.

- Be aware of the conditions and people around you.
- Identify hazards and address them as a crew before beginning project work. All unsafe conditions must be corrected before commencing work.
- Stretch and Safety circle must occur every day.
- Report any injury or illness immediately to your supervisor. Pay attention to your body and take good care of it! What feels like a “sore” wrist today, could be a repetitive stress injury tomorrow.
- Clean up after yourself at the worksite and campsite.
- Shoes must be worn at all times, except for bathing and while in tents. Closed toed shoes must be worn in the kitchen area.
- No horseplay is allowed at the worksite or in the field in general.
- Tools and equipment should only be operated by individuals who have been trained in how to use the specific tool or equipment. Individuals under the age of 18 cannot use any motorized equipment or apply herbicides.
- If you have taken medication that affects your alertness, responsiveness, or mental/physical abilities you should inform your Crew Leaders and not operate any motorized equipment or drive an SCC vehicle.
- Familiarize yourself with the crew’s Emergency Response Plan, which will provide details on evacuation and incident response procedures as well as the location of the nearest hospital. Your Crew Leader will review this information with you.
- Sanitation is very important for the health and well-being of a crew; you must wash their hands before entering the kitchen area and after using the bathroom. It is to your benefit if you remind others on your crew to do the same.
- Inspect vehicles on a regular basis, wear seatbelts in the vehicle at all times and no horseplay. Vocalize your concerns if you feel like a driver is being unsafe.
- Use proper posture when working; for example, when lifting, use your legs – not your back!

3.2 – TOOLS, VEHICLES AND FACILITIES

All Corpsmembers and Crew Leaders are responsible for the care, maintenance, and responsible use of tools, vehicles and facilities. Replacement and/or repair costs of these items may be deducted from a member's living allowance if damage results from intentional misuse or neglect. Accidental damage is understood and will not result in any penalty.

3.3 – PERSONAL WORK GEAR

SCC will provide 1 or 2 SCC shirts appropriate for the project and one pair of gloves. You must provide your own work pants (free of rips and not baggy) and leather boots that cover the ankle.

- Uniforms must be worn at ALL times while working on SCC projects.
- Uniform must be professional in appearance with no large rips and washed AT LEAST **once** between each hitch.
- SCC uniforms MUST NOT be worn into an establishment whose primary purpose involves serving alcohol. Nor shall it be worn while drinking alcoholic beverages.
- All Corpsmembers shall be conscious of personal hygiene and professional appearance.
- Clothes for inclement weather must be brought every day.
- Two personal water bottles, holding a minimum of 2 quarts of water, must also be brought every day.

3.4 – PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

SCC will issue you a hard hat, eye protection, ear protection, one pair of gloves and (to those crews using chainsaws) chainsaw chaps. PPE is necessary for individual safety and are required as part of your participation with SCC. Refusal to wear PPE can result in suspension or loss of Worker's Compensation benefits.

- *Hard hat, gloves, boots, long pants and eye protection* must be worn AT ALL TIMES on SCC projects unless the Program Coordinator or Program Director allows otherwise.
- *Ear protection* must be worn while using impact tools (rock hammers, etc.), using chainsaws, working around or using machinery or power tools.
- *Chaps and a saw shirt* must be worn whenever using a chainsaw or swamping for a sawyer.

3.5 – POLICIES ON CHAINSAW USE

All Corpsmembers running a chainsaw must be at least 18 years of age and have passed the SCC Wildland Powersaw S-212 class. All 'close calls', damage to chaps, or impact with falling debris must be reported to your Crew Leader IMMEDIATELY!

4

Respect – for you, for others, for nature

Why? – You work and live together every day with your crew. You depend on them and they depend on you – be fully there for them.

4.1 – EXCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

An exclusive relationship can be defined as any relationship that excludes other members of a crew. No doubt you will form a different relationship with each of your fellow crew members – many possibly becoming lifelong friends. But if a relationship becomes cliquey or intimate it most certainly will exclude others. The program provides an incredible opportunity to learn about yourself and others through active participation in all components and there are many things to take advantage of. Being in an exclusive relationship can deny you these opportunities. For these reasons exclusive, intimate or sexual relationships are not allowed in SCC programs.

4.2 – VISITORS

Each day on an SCC program is very full and highly structured – that's how we manage to accomplish so much! Visits are not allowed as they disrupt the flow of the program and can be hard on a small crew community. Only in cases of emergency or special pre-arranged circumstances will SCC consider allowing a Corpsmember to leave with a parent or guardian. SCC strongly discourages planning for a Corpsmember to leave her/his crew, even if only for a day or evening. You should plan to use your scheduled time off every other week to share your experiences and catch up with friends and family.

4.3 – TECHNOLOGY

We believe in the ethic of respecting nature and respecting each other. Certain technology can conflict with this depending on where we are and what we are doing. Therefore, we have in place the following practices:

Cell Phones

Camping Crews:

1. The use of cell phones is prohibited during all work, chore, group and meal times as well as during de-rigs and rig-up. Use of cell phones should not interfere with preparing for the work day, with expected “lights out” times, or any other expected group norms set by the crew and Crew Leaders.
2. Crew Leaders have the discretion to put a more stringent policy in place at anytime depending on project/place needs, crew dynamics, or abuse of the policy.
3. Crew Leaders can carry phones during the workday for communication purposes with the project partners or SCC staff. Otherwise, they are expected to follow all policies listed above.

Day Crews:

1. The use of cell phones is prohibited at ALL times during the workday. Corps members can use phones before the workday starts or after they return back to the office of meeting place at the finish of their workday.
2. Crew Leaders can carry phones during the workday for communication purposes with the project partners or SCC staff. Otherwise, they are expected to follow all policies listed above.

Portable music and video players

1. For safety reasons all electronic music and videos players are prohibited from use during any workday activities and hours including de-rig and re-rig days. This includes camp duties such as cooking, dishes, cleaning and tool care.
2. They are also prohibited during any group activities, including education sessions, hiking, and other recreational activities.

3. At other times (vehicle riding, in tents at night, days off, etc.) the crew as a community needs to develop standards that are agreed by all and do not impinge on others.

4.4 – RESPONSIBILITY TO YOUR ROLE

Corpsmembers are responsible for their own food and lodging and transportation during time off.

You must be sure to know the schedule and make plans **before** the beginning of the session for transportation, lodging etc. during days off. Promptness is key on rig-up days – crews often have a substantial drive ahead of them, and do not want to wait for stragglers. **UNEXCUSED LATENESS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**

Corpsmembers under the age of 18 **MUST** have arrangements made for parents or legal guardians to pick them up at SCC headquarters after each hitch. SCC does not provide supervision or housing for days off so it is very important that transportation and housing arrangements are made for time off.

On camping crews everyday each Corpsmember is assigned a chore, e.g., preparing a meal, cleaning the food coolers, filling water jugs, etc. These chores are your responsibilities to your crew and are necessary for maintaining a healthy, clean camp.

5

What Happens When?

Why? – Things don't always go as planned. Be ready to take the right action when that happens.

5.1 – WORKERS COMPENSATION

Workers compensation insurance is for the protection of workers who receive injury or disease as a direct result of their occupation.

Workers compensation does not cover non-work related illness or injury. If you hurt yourself during time off workers compensation does not cover you and SCC is not obligated to do anything to help with your injury. The same applies if your injury or illness in the field is not directly related to work, or denied by our insurance provider. The time lost from work is not compensated and you could be subject to suspension or termination from Southwest Conservation Corps.

Basic Policies

- Nearest medical facilities are listed on your crew's Emergency Response Plan (ERP)
- Non emergency injuries should be taken to a medical clinic. Use the ER only for more severe emergencies, or if no clinic is available.
- SCC employees/participants need to be taken to a "preferred provider" when possible. Information on these providers can be gotten from Program Support Staff in each regional office.
- If transporting crew members to medical facilities for any reason, crew leaders must contact the office, via the on-call number, as soon as possible.

****Workers Comp injuries must be reported within 24 hours to the office or on-call phone.***

Responsibilities of Injured Worker

- Injured workers are responsible for going to follow-up visits in order to return to full duty. Worker should follow up on claim with the designated workers comp insurance company and provide any needed paperwork and documentation to them. Worker should stick to prescribed light duty restrictions and not re-injure themselves.
- Worker should bring copies of medical paperwork to the office after each follow-up visit. Worker should notify office of your status and restrictions after each follow up visit. Copies of medical clearance need to be given to the office before an injured worker can return to the field.

Office Contact

- This is only a brief overview of workers comp. For more detailed explanations or any questions contact the program support staff.

5.2 – EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SCC CMs should also be aware of our Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which is also available to Corpsmembers. This benefit provides a free confidential service to Corpsmembers whose personal issues are affecting their work performance, family, or other aspects of their lives. A personal issue may be any situation or condition that interferes with your quality of life or your level of coping. Issues may include chemical dependency, emotional difficulties, family, marital, parent-child or other stressful conditions. The EAP also offers a huge array of other free services to you. To access these resources, or to find out more about the EAP, consult the Recruitment Coordinator. You can contact the EAP directly at 800-873-7138. Someone will be available to answer your call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Confidentiality is one of the most important aspects of the EAP program. If you contact EAP directly, no one in at SCC will know about it – unless you tell them.

5.3 – DISCIPLINARY ACTION PROCEDURES

Southwest Conservation Corps philosophy is to modify inappropriate behavior through a developmental learning process. When action is necessary it will be guided by a series of formal progressive steps. However, at any time program support staff or Crew Leaders may accelerate the process based on the action of the individual. Infraction of the Code of Conduct will usually result in immediate termination.

The formal progressive steps resulting from inappropriate behavior are:

1. Informal verbal warning (documented in the Daily Log)
2. Formal Verbal Warning (also documented in the daily log)
3. Performance Improvement Contract
4. Suspension from work without pay
5. Termination

5.4 – CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict is a normal part of life and learning how to handle it properly is an important life skill. SCC's conflict resolution process is to help staff and participants resolve concerns about unfair treatment or dissatisfaction that is related to work or the program.

We strongly encourage all crew members to follow the steps below:

1. Talk directly to the person you are in conflict with or discuss it during a crew meeting. If this is not effective proceed to step number two.
2. Use a Crew Leader or one of the Program Staff to act as a mediator. If this is not effective go to step number three.
3. Schedule an appointment to discuss the matter with the Recruiting Coordinator or Program Director.

5.5 – NON-DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

SCC is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each

individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that prohibits discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, SCC requires that all relationships among persons in the workplace will be respectful, business-like and free of prejudice and harassment.

It is SCC's policy that employees and participants work without discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, sexual expression, military expression or any other characteristic protected by law. SCC prohibits and will not tolerate any such discrimination or harassment.

Definitions of Harassment

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is defined, as in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines, as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example: (i) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; ii) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (iii) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. SCC fully intends to comply with all EEO guidelines.

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not so subtle behaviors between individuals of the same or different gender. These behaviors may include, but are not limited to: unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, catcalls or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display or circulation in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures (including through e-mail); and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature. Sex-based harassment is harassment not involving sexual activity or language (e.g., male manager yells only at female employees and not males), but may also constitute discrimination if it is severe or pervasive and directed at employees because of their sex.

Other harassment: Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows aversion toward an individual because of a person's race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability or any other characteristic protected by law, and that: (i) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; (ii) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or (iii) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes and display or circulation in the workplace of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows aversion toward an individual or group, including through e-mail.

These policies apply to all applicants, members and employees, and prohibit harassment, discrimination and retaliation by fellow employees or a supervisor or manager. Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as during business trips, business meetings and business-related social events.

Retaliation Is Prohibited

SCC prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment, or one who participates in an investigation of such reports. Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Complaint Procedures

SCC requires the reporting of all incidents of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassing conduct must file all complaints with the Executive Director before the conduct becomes severe or pervasive. If you believe you have been harassed by

the Executive Director, you should report the complaint to the Program Director, who will report the complaint to the Board Chair and the Executive Director. Employees or members who have experienced conduct they believe is contrary to this policy have an obligation to take advantage of this complaint procedure.

Early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment. Therefore, please promptly report any complaints or concerns so that rapid and constructive action can be taken. SCC will conduct an investigation concerning the alleged harassment, and if confirmed, it will take every effort to stop it before it becomes severe or pervasive. This is only possible with the cooperation of its staff.

Investigation Procedures

Any reported allegations of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be investigated. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge. Confidentiality will be attempted to be maintained through the investigation process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

Discipline

Discipline for conduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be handled appropriately. Discipline will include any steps to assure the conduct will not be repeated, such as training, referral to counseling, monitoring of the offender and/or other disciplinary action such as warning, reprimand, withholding of a promotion or pay increase, reduction of wages, demotion, reassignment, temporary suspension without pay or termination, as SCC believes appropriate under the circumstances.

6

Other Important Things

Why? – Because it's not all just policy and consequences

6.1 - EDUCATION AND SERVICE LEARNING

The activities of SCC all involve service – service to the land and/or service to communities. You are giving in a major way and that is much appreciated. But within that activity of service that each of you takes part in, we believe the benefits to you may equal or exceed the benefits to the land or communities. Your whole experience with SCC is one of opportunity. You may learn many things while participating, but only if you fully embrace those opportunities. Seek out new job skills, knowledge about the ecosystems where you work, answers to why we are doing what we are doing, or even better ways to interact with your fellow crew members.

Corpsmember development begins during the application process and, ideally, continues well after a Corpsmember completes their time with SCC. Corpsmember development happens through four primary processes:

- 1) Group living: learning how to navigate an intense social environment wherein Corpsmembers live and work with each other 24 hours/day, 12 days at a time is a skill that can be carried into all areas of an individual's life.
- 2) Hard work and other physical challenges: rising to meet the challenge of living and working in the out-of-doors is fundamentally challenging and immeasurably rewarding.

- 3) An integrated education program: This provides opportunities for learning through lessons from Crew Leaders, guest speakers from out partner agencies or communities, books and resources on hand in the field, and specific trainings in job skills, life skills, or outdoor living skills.
- 4) Mentorship and supervision from Crew Leaders and the SCC Program Support Staff. This includes check-ins after each hitch and help with thinking through what to do after the SCC Program.

You will have the opportunity to complete evaluations on your experience mid way through and at the end of the program. You will also be able to provide feedback on your Crew Leaders' performance. These evaluations in addition to opportunities to debrief with your Crew Leaders and Recruiting Coordinator help us improve our program and ensure you have a positive experience while serving through SCC.

If at any time during your service you wish us to address a particular issue or would like additional support to make your experience more positive, please seek out your Crew Leaders, Recruiting Coordinator or other program support staff. We expect a lot out of you, you should expect a lot out of us as well.

6.2 - SCHOOL CREDIT, INTERNSHIPS, SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Corpsmembers may be able to receive high-school or college credit for participation in SCC programs. For high-school credits, the Corpsmember's school makes the determination about what type and quantity of credits that can be received. SCC can provide documentation about the program itself, what subjects may be covered and the amount of time spent on any given area. Historically, Corpsmembers received science, history, sociology, physical education and elective credits through service with SCC.

College students are often able to receive credits from their college or university through internships or independent study. These must be arranged by the Corpsmember through their college or university.

SCC is not an accredited educational institution; all such arrangements must be made through the Corpsmember's school. SCC will be happy to work with Corpsmembers and with schools in order to obtain credit.

In some cases, Corpsmembers may be able to work toward their GED while working on an SCC crew. This can only be done through special arrangement with a GED center and individual plans created by Corpsmembers and Crew Leaders.

Qualifying individuals have the opportunity to earn an AmeriCorps Education Award. Any individual interested in this opportunity should speak with the regional Recruiting Coordinator BEFORE starting the program.

6.3 - AMERICORPS

Some of you have enrolled as AmeriCorps members along with being a Corpsmember of SCC. AmeriCorps members are Americans of all ages who have made a commitment to serve their communities and country. Since 1994, more than 250,000 people have served in AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps members range in age from seventeen to older than ninety. Some have college degrees; others have completed high school or are earning a GED. They reflect the diversity of America in age, ethnicity, education, race, gender, and religion.

AmeriCorps has four main goals:

1. Getting Things Done. AmeriCorps members help communities solve problems in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, and other human needs (like health and housing) by serving directly and by getting other people to serve as volunteers.
2. Strengthening Communities. AmeriCorps members help unite individuals from all different backgrounds—and organizations of all kinds—in a common effort to improve communities.
3. Encouraging Responsibility. AmeriCorps members explore and exercise their responsibilities to their communities, their families, and themselves—during their service experience and throughout their lives.
4. Expanding Opportunity. AmeriCorps helps those who help America. AmeriCorps members receive awards to further their education or to pay back student loans. They also gain valuable job experience, specialized training, and other skills.

As an AmeriCorps member you have certain additional responsibilities and policies you must be aware of and

follow. These are listed in your AmeriCorps agreement that you will sign. Depending on your length of service you will also receive an education award. Details of your award are also listed in your agreement. For questions about your participation, the expectations of being an AmeriCorps member or about your education award, speak to your regional recruiting coordinator or check the AmeriCorps website.

6.4 - LIVING ALLOWANCE AND PAYMENT

Refer to your Corpsmember Agreement for details on your living allowance or stipend. Payment is distributed when available at the end of hitches. After your departure from SCC you can make arrangements for your final payment to be mailed to a forwarding address. **Please note**, however, that if a mailed check does not arrive and you would like to have the check cancelled so that a new one can be sent, you (not SCC) will be responsible for paying the associated charge from the bank for a “stop payment” order – this can be as high as \$40.

6.5 - LEAVES OF ABSENCE

All leaves of absence require prior approval from the direct supervisor and the Program Director or the Executive Director. All requests must be documented on the Leave of Absence Form and turned into the office at least one month in advance. In the case of a medical or family emergency, special accommodations can be made.

6.6 - MAIL AND CONTACTING CORPSMEMBERS

SCC is a field-based program, and Corpsmembers do not usually have access to telephones. We can generally get a message to the field within 48 hours. Should you need to relay **emergency** information to a Corpsmember, call the emergency contact number for the appropriate region. Please use these numbers **ONLY** in an emergency. If you have non-urgent messages or information for a Corpsmember please call during regular business hours.

Regional Phone Numbers:

SCC Four Corners – Durango, CO

Office: 970-259-8607 Emergency: 970-403-0139

SCC Los Valles – Salida, CO

Office: 719-539-2438 Emergency: 970-749-4459

SCC Sonoran Desert – Tucson, AZ

Office: 520-884-5550 Emergency: 520-954-4127

Regional Mailing Addresses:

Writing to Corpsmembers is an excellent way to support them during their SCC experience!

This address should not be used as your personal permanent place of residence for any purposes, including driver’s licenses, resident applications, etc. Do not fill out an official USPS change of address form to have your mail forwarded to us. Once the session is over, your mail will be returned to the sender.

SCC Four Corners - Durango, CO

"Corpsmember's name"
Southwest Conservation Corps
P.O. Box 2203
Durango, CO 81302

SCC Los Valles – Salida, CO

"Corpsmember's name"
Southwest Conservation Corps
701 Rainbow

Salida, CO 81201

SCC Sonoran Desert – Tucson, AZ

"Corpsmember's name"

Southwest Conservation Corps

1376 W St Mary's Rd

Tucson, AZ 85745

7

And Finally

Why? – The best is always last

7.1 - SERIOUS POINTS TO PONDER

The following are things we want you to consider carefully before participating in our program. (Read it slowly and several times over.) What we do and what we represent are important to the communities and partners we serve. There are lots of people interested and involved, high expectations, and limited resources – it can be extremely rewarding, but sometimes difficult to always be “on” as a member of the program. **If you do not agree with any of the following please consider another program - this one is not for you!**

- ✓ You will be serving in a team environment; you will need to practice and experience compromise, the ability and willingness to listen, open-mindedness, sensitivity and patience.
- ✓ Our project partners, the land management agencies helping to support our program, depend highly on our completing our work and doing a good job. For this reason we need your full commitment to serve the entire term of your agreement with SCC. Corpsmember who depart early severely impact the rest of the crew's ability to meet these obligations.
- ✓ Many of the project sites are in rural areas, and could be hours away from a major city. You will likely spend a good portion of your time outdoors in various weather and environmental conditions, including extreme heat and/or cold, humidity, rain, wind, snow and tremendous amounts of biting insects. Additionally, there may be occasions when you will camp overnight for up to 12 days at a time. During the duration of your service, you may be without many of the conveniences of modern society, such as services and social venues.
- ✓ Your ability to use alcohol and tobacco will be prohibited. We feel strongly that these prohibitions ensure the safety, health and opportunity to have the best experience for you, your fellow Corpsmembers, and all of us involved in supporting you.
- ✓ At many of our project sites, we live simply and earth friendly. We share our home with each other and the natural environment around us and attempt to be responsible to our community. We strive to limit our resource use (water, energy, materials) and live without many of the luxuries of typical American life. Often that means extra work and effort, frustration, and compromise. It is a way of life that must come from values and attitudes, not simply an agreement to policies – you must believe in it to make it happen.

7.2 - FINAL MESSAGE

Your experience at SCC may challenge you and push your limits. At times you may want to quit or you will question your decision to participate in our program. At other times you may be having the time of your life. When you leave you will have made new friends, discovered new places and learned more about yourself. We are happy to hear that you are up for the challenge!