

## Waders in the Water: Aquatic Restoration Training and certification

A public-private partnership preparing the next generation of conservation stewards

### Background

The Waders in the Water (WitW) program was specifically designed under a public-private partnership between [The Corps Network](#) and [Trout Headwaters Inc.](#) to support the goals of the [21st Century Conservation Service Corps](#) to enable youth and veterans to enter conservation careers by learning how to improve the health, productivity, and climate-resiliency of our public and private streams, rivers, and wetlands.

WitW was launched in May of 2014 with in-person trainings and in November of 2014, an online version delivered by live webinar was introduced making training more convenient, less expensive, and better for the environment. Students and instructor no longer need to travel to a training facility and the state-of-the-art instructional environment enables students to learn on a computer, tablet, or a smart phone.

### What the Training Covers

WitW Waders in the Water Level I training is an introduction to the world of aquatic restoration concepts and projects.



New Jersey Youth Corps Phillipsburg corpsmembers take WitW training

Students have the opportunity to earn the only aquatic restoration industry-recognized credential and gain additional pathways to a conservation career in the \$10B/year restoration industry by learning how to improve the climate-resiliency of our streams, rivers, and wetlands.

The class uses pertinent videos, industry articles, and the course-specific EcoBlu Analyst Waders in the Water interactive website to train the next generation of land stewards in sustainable aquatic restoration including:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Use Impacts</li> <li>• What Restoration is Not</li> <li>• Common Tools, Materials, &amp; Techniques for Restoration</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proven, Practical, &amp; Innovative Habitat Enhancement Restorative Activities</li> <li>• Safely Working in and Around Water</li> <li>• Green Jobs Market and Eco-Terminology</li> </ul> |
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### WitW Facts

- To date more than 32 Corps nationwide have participated
- Hundreds of students have been trained - with almost 40% being AmeriCorps students
- 83% who participated in the training said it exceeded their expectations.
- 100% of participants who said they had previous ecological training said they were likely to refer the WitW training to other corpsmembers and leaders.
- 100% of those responding said they saw value in the WitW online resources available to all certified students.
- The WitW third party certification reassures project partners by eliminating the uncertainty of conservation corps self-certification
- Participating corps have reported new partnerships, projects, and employment opportunities with private restoration firms based specifically on Waders in the Water certification.

Learn more or register at <https://attendee.gototraining.com/9c48h/catalog/7908854571205475072>

For more information contact Trout Headwaters [info@troutheadwaters.com](mailto:info@troutheadwaters.com) or tel. 800-218-8107, or Marie Walker, Chief Operating Officer, The Corps Network [mwalker@corpsnetwork.org](mailto:mwalker@corpsnetwork.org) or (202) 737-6272

## Waders in the Water Corps – Trainee Feedback:

*“Real world, practical advice was given. It gave me the baseline knowledge and certification I need to be successful as a young professional.”* - Christopher Gomon, American YouthWorks

*“I think the training/certification gives our partners and potential partners more confidence that we're serious about restoration work and that we can be a trusted source for their restoration implementation plans.”*  
- Michael Gaffney, White Mountain Youth Corps

*“It's a necessity if you want to move forward in this profession.”* - Kejuan Williams, American YouthWorks

*“The online training is a cost effective training to Conservation Corps that provides great background of the industry, important safety protocol knowledge and a basic understanding of effective methods in biostabilization.”* - Willie Bittner, WisCorps

*“It opened my eyes to the expansion of job opportunities in this area.”* - Rick Magee, SEEDS

*“I think this training will help further my education and training in the future of restoration and outdoor field work. I think the principles learned here will be valuable for any future jobs.”*  
- James Fried, Wyoming Conservation Corps

## Waders in the Water - Industry Feedback

*“Employing youth conservation corps members who took the Waders in the Water course to work on our mitigation bank projects has been a great success. They have always been punctual, enthusiastic, and arrived with an understanding of the fundamentals of aquatic restoration and what is needed on project specific sites. We also found them very adaptive to current site conditions and what Mother Nature brings us from day to day. They have helped us restore some severely degraded aquatic resources so those resources can do their job of filtering and storing precious water while providing much-needed habitat to a wide-range of wildlife. At the same time, we are providing valuable training and hands on experience to a part of our society where opportunities need to be provided. The rewards on both sides make this source of skilled labor something we feel comfortable using time and time again.”*  
Brian P. Cramer, Senior Biologist, GreenVest, LLC

*“New Jersey Audubon recently worked with a youth group that were graduates of the Waders in the Water program. I cannot express how impressed we were of the group's knowledge of riparian systems and their immediate understanding of how and why the project would benefit that system. It was an absolutely pleasure to have trained personnel come to a work site that already understood how to do the job and do the job right the first time. Their enthusiasm, professionalism, work ethic and passion for helping to restore and protect natural resources was a breath of fresh air that made the project move along in an efficient and productive manner. To see the pride on their faces after the job was complete, knowing that they helped improve the ecosystem with the hard work they performed, is something that I will never forget and a big reason why we would certainly reach out to students of the Waders in the Water program again. Based on my experience, the Waders in the Water program is an invaluable resource for conservation.”* John Parke, Stewardship Project Director, New Jersey Audubon