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ABSTRACT

The Youth Environmental Service (YES) aims to rehabilitate adjudicated delinquents and to prevent at-risk youth from entering the juvenile justice system by engaging them in environmental work and education programs on federally owned land. YES is a joint program of the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Partnerships are formed among federal, state, local, and private agencies to develop these environmental work programs. States and localities have broad flexibility to design programs suitable to their communities. Six pilot programs are described: two each in Washington D.C., Utah, and Florida. They range from weekend volunteer activities for at-risk preteens to a long-term residential program for serious juvenile offenders. Two programs are nonresidential and four are residential. For each program, information is given on the partners involved, program profile, target population, organizational structure, work or volunteer experience, program results, program costs, and program outlook. A table lists key characteristics of each program. Six factors contributing to successful program implementation are: a mutually beneficial partnership, team effort by partners in planning and implementation, prior experience in youth work programs, assignment of primary supervisory responsibilities to the youth service provider, ability of youth service agencies to absorb some program costs, and meaningful projects. Seven other issues to consider in planning a YES program are given, as are sources for additional information. (TD)

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE *in Action*

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) was established by the President and Congress through the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act of 1974, Public Law 93–415, as amended. Located within the Office of Justice Programs of the U.S. Department of Justice, OJJDP's goal is to provide national leadership in addressing the issues of juvenile delinquency and improving juvenile justice.

OJJDP sponsors a broad array of research, program, and training initiatives to improve the juvenile justice system as a whole, as well as to benefit individual youth-serving agencies. These initiatives are carried out by seven components within OJJDP, described below.

Research and Program Development Division develops knowledge on national trends in juvenile delinquency; supports a program for data collection and information sharing that incorporates elements of statistical and systems development; identifies how delinquency develops and the best methods for its prevention, intervention, and treatment; and analyzes practices and trends in the juvenile justice system.

Training and Technical Assistance Division provides juvenile justice training and technical assistance to Federal, State, and local governments; law enforcement, judiciary, and corrections personnel; and private agencies, educational institutions, and community organizations.

Special Emphasis Division provides discretionary funds to public and private agencies, organizations, and individuals to replicate tested approaches to delinquency prevention, treatment, and control in such pertinent areas as chronic juvenile offenders, community-based sanctions, and the disproportionate representation of minorities in the juvenile justice system.

State Relations and Assistance Division supports collaborative efforts by States to carry out the mandates of the JJDP Act by providing formula grant funds to States; furnishing technical assistance to States, local governments, and private agencies; and monitoring State compliance with the JJDP Act.

Information Dissemination Unit informs individuals and organizations of OJJDP initiatives; disseminates information on juvenile justice, delinquency prevention, and missing children; and coordinates program planning efforts within OJJDP. The unit's activities include publishing research and statistical reports, bulletins, and other documents, as well as overseeing the operations of the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse.

Concentration of Federal Efforts Program promotes interagency cooperation and coordination among Federal agencies with responsibilities in the area of juvenile justice. The program primarily carries out this responsibility through the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, an independent body within the executive branch that was established by Congress through the JJDP Act.

Missing and Exploited Children's Program seeks to promote effective policies and procedures for addressing the problem of missing and exploited children. Established by the Missing Children's Assistance Act of 1984, the program provides funds for a variety of activities to support and coordinate a network of resources such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; training and technical assistance to a network of 47 State clearinghouses, nonprofit organizations, law enforcement personnel, and attorneys; and research and demonstration programs.

The mission of OJJDP is to provide national leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent juvenile victimization and respond appropriately to juvenile delinquency. This is accomplished through developing and implementing prevention programs and a juvenile justice system that protects the public safety, holds juvenile offenders accountable, and provides treatment and rehabilitative services based on the needs of each individual juvenile.

YES in Action

Program Summary

Shay Bilchik, Administrator
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

June 1996

This document was prepared by Roberta C. Cronin for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Ms. Cronin serves as a consultant with the American Institutes for Research and has extensive experience in criminal and juvenile justice research, program development, and program evaluation.

Points of view or opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of OJJDP or the U.S. Department of Justice.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

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Foreword

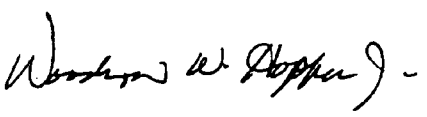
The juvenile justice system is being taxed. With institutions increasingly burdened by the growing number of serious, violent, and chronic offenders, we must provide alternatives for youth involved in delinquent activity—alternatives that incorporate appropriate sanctions while providing youth with necessary services, skills, and opportunities.

The Youth Environmental Service (YES) initiative is one such alternative. Created through a partnership between the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of the Interior (DOI), YES enhances youth's skills through work and education programs on Federal land. A YES program can be designed to intervene at various stages of youth involvement with the system and to prevent at-risk youth from engaging in delinquent acts. Thus, YES offers a considerable degree of flexibility in creating a program suited to the needs of the local community and its youth. Local Federal land managers also benefit from YES enrollees' participation in projects and land maintenance that might not otherwise be completed due to limited staff and resources.

This Program Summary has been prepared to provide you background on the YES initiative as well as indepth descriptions of the development and operation of the six YES pilot sites. Additionally, the summary offers the experience of the six sites in terms of lessons learned and of the factors key to their success. We believe *YES in Action* will demonstrate the versatility and flexibility of options under YES and will help you to explore the YES initiative as a possible alternative for your community.

Through partnerships, we often find the most rewarding and mutually beneficial solutions. This has been our experience in the YES partnership between DOJ and DOI. We hope YES offers you the same rewards.

Shay Bilchik
Administrator
Office of Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention
U.S. Department of Justice



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Finally, we wish to express our appreciation to Roberta Cronin and the staff of the Juvenile Justice Resource Center, who prepared the manuscript and assisted with editing.

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Introduction

This program summary is intended for policymakers and practitioners who would like to learn more about the Youth Environmental Service (YES) Program. YES is a joint program between the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

The purpose of the YES initiative is to increase the capacity of States and communities to correct, treat, and rehabilitate adjudicated delinquents and to prevent at-risk youth from entering the juvenile justice system by implementing environmental work and education programs on federally owned land. Partnerships are formed among Federal, State, local, and private agencies to develop these environmental work programs. States and localities have broad flexibility to design programs suitable to the specific needs of their communities.

Funding for YES programs is provided by States and localities. For those areas that have identified funds for a YES program, DOJ and DOI work with them to identify Federal land and facilities that can support the program.

A positive tradition

The YES initiative builds on a tradition of putting young people to work on Federal land that dates from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) of the 1930's. Developed in response to widespread unemployment during the Great Depression, CCC employed young men nationwide in conservation and restoration projects involving parks, dams, bridges, and roads, among others. The concept was reactivated in the 1970's, first as the federally sponsored Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), a summer program operated by the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, and later as the Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC), a year-round work and educational program.

Although funding for YCC and YACC programs disappeared in the 1980's, faith in the value of productive, meaningful work for young people did not. Many States continued to fund conservation corps. At the Federal level, support for community service programs has been reinstituted through the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, the AmeriCorps Program, and the YES initiative. YES adds a timely new dimension to these Federal efforts by focusing Federal environmental work and education opportunities on at-risk and delinquent youth.

Search for new approaches

In 1993, Senator Bob Graham of Florida introduced legislation for the development

of a nationwide network of local programs to provide youth with environmental work and education opportunities on Federal land. His proposal responded to growing concern about increases in serious and violent juvenile crime. States and localities nationwide had begun searching for new approaches to working with young people at risk for delinquency as well as those who had already broken the law. Although Senator Graham's proposed legislation did not become law, it refocused attention on environmental work programs as a valuable tool for working with delinquent and at-risk youth.

Among policymakers and practitioners, support has been growing for work and service programs that help disadvantaged or troubled youth develop their skills and make meaningful contributions to the community. Such programs not only help youth to succeed in law-abiding pursuits and to create important bonds with responsible adults, they also provide positive recognition for young people who greatly need it. For delinquents, work and service programs also serve to hold participants accountable, enabling them to make amends to the community and their victims for the harm they have done.

Meanwhile, as juvenile justice practitioners are thinking about the value of work and service for delinquent and at-risk youth, Federal land management agencies are struggling to manage vast tracts nationwide on ever-diminishing budgets. Currently, many of these agencies have a large backlog of maintenance projects and are experiencing increasing difficulty in preserving and protecting the Nation's natural resources.

Landmark partnership agreement

Recognizing that States and localities, youth-serving agencies, and Federal land managers would all benefit from working together, the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Interior entered into a landmark partnership agreement in February 1994. This agreement incorporates the principles and much of the substance of Senator Graham's proposed legislation.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by Attorney General Janet Reno and Secretary Bruce Babbitt calls for the development of a nationwide network of local programs to provide youth with environmental work and education opportunities on Federal land. The MOU also expresses the sense that such programs can provide personal development for youth; protection and enhancement of environmental resources; public security from seriously delinquent youth (in programs in remote areas); and a solution to siting and zoning barriers commonly faced by programs serving neglected, abused, runaway, homeless, at-risk, and delinquent children and teenagers.

This landmark agreement commits DOJ and DOI to work with States and localities across the country to institute YES programs. Although no direct Federal funding for YES is available, both DOJ and DOI support program development by helping interested agencies locate Federal land for YES programs and identify environmental work projects, and by providing training and other technical assistance.

Creation of YES pilot programs

To ensure a quick start and generate prompt feedback on the YES concept, DOJ and DOI recruited three jurisdictions—the District of Columbia, Florida, and Utah—to try out the approach. DOJ and DOI staff met with key youth service officials and land managers in each location to offer guidance. To demonstrate the flexibility and diversity of the YES framework, programs were encouraged to tailor their approach to local conditions and needs. By September 1994, six programs (two in each jurisdiction) were under way. The key characteristics of these programs are shown in table 1.

Following the basic YES concept, all six partnerships involve a local branch of a DOI agency—the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—and a public or private youth service provider. In most locations, other partners participate as well. In Cedar City, Utah, two Federal partners are involved: BLM and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Forest Service. The Florida programs and the City Lights Park Program in Washington, D.C., involve two youth service partners: a public youth service agency and a private provider under contract to that agency.

The programs are extremely diverse as to style and target population, ranging from weekend volunteer activities for at-risk preteens to a long-term residential program for serious juvenile offenders. As shown in table 1, two of the programs are nonresidential, and four are residential. One residential program, developed specifically for YES, is planning to house participants on Federal land, and the others use an existing offsite facility as a home base.

The three residential offsite programs differ in duration and type of offenders served. At one extreme is Southwest Utah's program, where youth who have been sentenced to short-term detention spend an average of 8 to 10 days in YES. Florida's Loxahatchee program lies at the other extreme, serving nonviolent repeat offenders who have been committed to the State juvenile correctional system and who remain in the program for 4 to 6 months.

Program summary organization

In the next three sections, readers will find the following information:

- Descriptions of the six pilot programs, based on the first few months of operation.
- Lessons learned from the pilot programs.
- Resources for obtaining additional information about YES.

Table 1. Key Characteristics of YES Programs

Program	Program Partners	Target Group	Type of Program
Washington, D.C.			
Greater Washington Boys & Girls Clubs Student Volunteer Program	• National Park Service • Boys & Girls Clubs	At-risk youth ages 8–14	Nonresidential
City Lights Park Program	• National Park Service • City Lights School • District of Columbia Youth Services Administration	Adjudicated youth ages 16 and older	Nonresidential
Utah			
Genesis Youth Center, Salt Lake City	• Bureau of Land Management • Utah Division of Youth Corrections • Genesis Youth Center	Adjudicated males ages 14–18	Residential (offsite)
Southwest Youth Center Work Release Program, Cedar City	• Bureau of Land Management • USDA's Forest Service • Southwest Youth Center	Adjudicated youth ages 12–17	Residential (offsite)
Florida			
Loxahatchee Environmental Project, Palm Beach County	• Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, District Office • Juvenile Services Program, Inc. • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Adjudicated males ages 16–18	Residential (offsite)
Big Cypress Wilderness Institute, Ochopee	• Florida Department of Juvenile Justice • Florida Environmental Institute (affiliate of Associated Marine Institutes) • National Park Service	Adjudicated males ages 15–17	Residential (onsite)

Typical Duration	Number Participating	Work Schedule	Activities/Features
6-week cycles (Youth may participate in multiple cycles.)	2 crews of 4–5, alternating	Saturdays, 3–4 hours	Cleanup, vegetation control, light maintenance.
Depends on aftercare term; may be a year or more.	Up to 10	2 weekdays, 9 a.m.–3:15 p.m.	• Placement in clerical office, carpentry shop, or metal craft shop. • Students earn minimum wage after 30 days.
30–120 days	Crew of 6–7 (Program fields 6–7 crews.)	Monday–Saturday, 5 hours per day	• Clearing sites, display preparation, trailbuilding. • Will help maintain and operate Wild Horse and Burro Center, now under construction. • Youth earn restitution credits.
8–10 days	Crew of 5–7	Monday–Thursday, 9:30 a.m.–4 p.m.	• Trailbuilding, maintenance of equipment, seedmixing. • Youth earn restitution credits.
4–6 months	Crew of 5	Tuesday–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–2 p.m.	• Exotic vegetation control, beach cleanup, maintenance. • 3-day orientation at worksite. • Youth earn minimum wage.
12–13 months	Crew of 6, with rotating membership	Sunday afternoon through Thursday. Work hours: 9 a.m.–3 p.m. weekdays.	• Maintenance, restoration, vegetation control. • Crew resides at site during rotation.

YES Pilot Programs in Action

This section describes the six YES pilot programs—two in the District of Columbia, two in Utah, and two in Florida. The discussion is organized by State and the District of Columbia to provide some brief background on each jurisdiction's involvement in the YES Program and point out any statewide (or, in the District, citywide) issues or circumstances that facilitated the development of pilot programs there. Within each geographic section, profiles of the two individual programs provide more detailed information about their unique histories.

YES in Washington, D.C.

When the YES initiative was conceived, the Nation's Capital seemed like a natural home for the program. A popular destination for tourists, with many of the best-known attractions located on Federal land, Washington, D.C., would offer a chance to try out an urban variation of the YES approach.

As it turned out, the District of Columbia would also diversify the YES pilot experience in other ways. In contrast to Utah and Florida, the youth-serving organizations that responded to the YES outreach in the District of Columbia were interested in piloting nonresidential versions of YES. One of the two programs would also become the only pilot site to work with younger at-risk children, rather than youth who were already involved in the juvenile justice system. Both Washington programs involve the National Park Service as their Federal land management partner, but they differ considerably in other respects.

Greater Washington Boys & Girls Clubs Student Volunteer Program

The Greater Washington Boys & Girls Clubs (GWBGC) Student Volunteer Program is a nonresidential program providing weekend volunteer opportunities to public housing residents ages 8 to 14. Two YES partners participate:

- **The National Capital Area Regional Office of the National Park Service,** which is responsible for 11 national parks in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia.
- **The Greater Washington Boys & Girls Clubs,** a nonprofit agency serving at-risk youth in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia.

GWBGC has been providing youth programs in the Washington metropolitan area for more than a century. The agency focuses on young people ages 6 to 18 and maintains 13 clubs, of which 5 are based in public housing projects in the District of Columbia. The clubs offer programs in six core areas,

including leadership development, education, sports and recreation, personal development, cultural enrichment, and environmental education. In addition, some clubs participate in special programs such as SMART Moves, a nationally recognized program designed to prevent drug and alcohol use and premature sexual activity.

GWBGC learned about YES through the National Office of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. An initial meeting with Federal officials convinced staff to become involved with YES, although they would have to do so without new resources. Feeling that the initiative would benefit inner-city children most, the GWBGC director selected three clubs in District public housing areas to participate.

With help from the Office of Youth Programs in the Park Service Regional Office, GWBGC staff chose three volunteer sites in the District, each with a building and grounds open to visitors. Two sites were located in Rock Creek Park, a large wooded area containing miles of walking, bicycle, and horse trails. The third was at a historic stone house in Georgetown, a popular urban restaurant and shopping area. From time to time, rangers at these locations had set up daylong community service projects for schools or other youth groups. The YES Program would involve a longer term commitment on both sides, with GWBGC offering its services on an ongoing basis and rangers routinely planning community service activities.

The program began with its first group of participants in April 1994. By September, the program had completed two 6- to 8-week cycles of activity, each followed by a 3-week break. A third cycle began in October 1994.

Program profile

GWBGC staff look to the YES initiative to provide inner-city children a valuable set of opportunities—a chance to contribute something to their communities, to develop a work ethic, and to learn about nature and the environment. Not surprisingly, many urban club members have little experience with woodlands and wildlife, and are unaware of the work required to protect and maintain them. The staff also hope that youth, through learning about nature, will develop a greater appreciation of all life that will counteract the negative examples they find daily in the media and in their neighborhoods.

Target population. Although Boys & Girls Clubs serve youth from ages 6 to 18, the YES partners believed that the YES activities would be most suitable for preteens and young teenagers. Thus, the initial program was designed to serve a total of 15 boys and girls, ages 8 to 14, from 3 clubs. Two of these clubs, Montana Terrace and Langston-Carver Terrace, are located in public housing space. The third club, Eastern, is close to public housing but has its own building. All three clubs serve African-American children primarily, reflecting the ethnic makeup of the public housing projects and their surrounding neighborhoods. The clubs typically have approximately 200 members who pay a yearly membership fee of $2 to $3—an

important element in giving members a sense of ownership in their club, according to staff. Most members are from low-income families with limited educational and occupational horizons. The youth often are disadvantaged in other ways, struggling in school and coping with substance-abusing parents or neighbors and sometimes with neglect or abuse as well.

Selecting and recruiting youth for the volunteer program is left to the discretion of each club. One club began by involving its peer leaders and is now branching out to other members. Another club selected youth who had been active in club programs. In general, staff are cautious in their selections, seeking youth who can be expected to behave well outside the club setting. They also use the program to reward good behavior, so that the chance to participate in YES becomes an incentive for improved performance in other areas.

Some new members are introduced at the start of each cycle so that overlap exists between old and new participants. Because volunteer work on Saturday can conflict with extracurricular school activities or other activities, the clubs have learned to maintain an active roster of about 10 participants each to fill out their respective crews of 5. As staff had hoped, recruiting volunteers has become easier now that the early participants have shared their experiences with other club members.

Organizational structure and staffing. A senior staff member, either the club director or the program director, is in charge of the program at each participating club. He or she is responsible for recruiting the participants, driving them to the worksites, and participating in the volunteer activities. Another staff member often accompanies the group; therefore, one or two adults are always present onsite in addition to Park Service staff. Park Service rangers at the sites are responsible for producing work projects for the participants and providing any necessary instruction.

Volunteer experience. The volunteer program was set up to operate in cycles. According to the original plan, after an orientation by the Park Service and GWBGC staff, participants would go to a Park Service site for 4 hours each Saturday for 6 consecutive weeks. Groups of five participants from the three clubs would rotate among the three sites, and each group would spend 2 weeks at each site. The cycle would conclude with an event for the whole group, where awards such as T-shirts could be presented, and would be followed by a 3-week break. This schedule was intended to ensure that the program did not place an unreasonable burden on any participating clubs or Park Service sites, because all function with limited staff. The beginning of the first cycle was timed to coincide with the nationwide March for Parks during April 1994, in which other club members also participated.

During the first cycle, the program operated according to this plan, and youth from the three clubs rotated among the various sites. An educational specialist with the Park Service helped the rangers plan suitable projects. During their period at Pierce Mill, a restored gristmill in Rock Creek Park, participants toured the

facility, worked in the herb garden, and handed out information to visitors. At the historic stone house in Georgetown, the youth participated in a cooking demonstration and helped with yardwork. At the Nature Center, they watched educational videotapes, took nature walks along woodland trails, and helped set up displays. The cycle concluded with a picnic for all involved.

At the end of this first cycle, Park Service and GWBGC staff were pleased with their experiences, but identified some problems needing attention. Logistically, the original plan had been too ambitious. Transporting three groups to three sites several miles apart in a single van (the only one available) required too much time. Also, the plan took too many staff members away from the clubs on Saturdays, their busiest program day. More important, the Park Service projects, while interesting and educational for club members, had not involved enough actual volunteer *work*. GWBGC staff felt strongly that work opportunities were essential if youth were to learn responsibility and the proper way to do a job.

As a result, significant changes were made in the next program cycles. To minimize the logistical problems, the program was reduced from three clubs to two (the two in public housing), which alternate participation—2 weeks on and 2 weeks off—for 8 weeks. Each week a group of about five participants now reports to just one site, the Nature Center, although they sometimes move on to other park areas to carry out their tasks. Rangers focus on providing work projects rather than on activities that are mostly educational.

Since these changes have been made, participants have built animal cages and painted a room inside the Nature Center. Outdoors, they have cleaned up trails (cutting back vegetation and removing debris), helped control exotic vegetation, cleared a meadow, and picked up trash. Tasks require only simple equipment, such as gloves, pruning shears, or paint brushes, which are provided by the Park Service. According to Park Service staff, many of these volunteer tasks would normally be the responsibility of the maintenance personnel but are likely to receive low priority from them. Clearing the meadow, for example, would not have been done without the YES participants.

At the start of each task, the rangers explain the rationale for the work and the necessary techniques. For example, when the youth helped with the control of exotic vegetation in the park, rangers described how exotic vegetation—vegetation not native to the area, such as English ivy—gets into parkland and encroaches on indigenous species. Participants also learned proper removal techniques and how to avoid noxious plants such as poison ivy. Once the participants have been trained, GWBGC staff provide on-the-job supervision, although rangers may be present too. Club staff believe that their informal contact with participants in these settings helps them identify and address the individual developmental needs of each child.

Program results

During the first 7 months of the program, 18 girls and 24 boys participated, contributing a total of 260 hours of volunteer labor. Although the program accepts 8- to 14-year-olds, all participants thus far have been age 10 or older. Youth seem to like the activities, and the program has not been troubled by dropouts. Other activities often claim participants' time on Saturdays, however, so the makeup of the volunteer teams changes from week to week.

With the changes introduced after the initial cycle, Park Service and GWBGC staff feel they have arrived at a workable schedule and have identified tasks that satisfy their respective goals. GWBGC staff also report that, as expected, the experience has been an enlightening one for the youth, many of whom did not even realize that the parks they visited were part of Washington, D.C. There is some anecdotal evidence that they are absorbing other lessons as well. After a session in which rangers had emphasized the importance of respecting and preserving animal life, a young participant was overheard intervening when other club members were about to kill a bug. The participant convinced them to take the bug outside the club and release it.

The program has led to spinoff projects that will benefit the wider membership of the two participating clubs. For example, in the summer of 1995, program participants conducted a cleanup effort in a local public housing development. This idea was initiated by the participants themselves, who, in the midst of one cleanup project, wondered why they could not be doing something to improve their own community environment. With the help of Park Service personnel, GWBGC staff also hope to arrange an overnight camping trip for club members to the Chincoteague Wildlife Refuge in eastern Virginia. As a preliminary move to bridge the gap between the parks and the participants' neighborhoods, park rangers will go to the clubs to make educational presentations to members. Over the longer term, GWBGC staff hope to enlist club members in developing beautification projects for their areas, using the rangers as a resource to review and offer feedback on their plans.

Program costs

All program costs, which consist primarily of staff time, are absorbed by the participating agencies. A GWBGC van, one of two available to the District clubs, transports youth to and from the worksite. Staff and van time are reallocated from other activities to support the YES effort.

Program outlook

Both partners feel that the program has been worthwhile and plan to continue it. Park Service staff hope to identify new and different work projects and introduce youth to new worksites from time to time. The GWBGC director would like to extend the volunteer program to more clubs if additional resources can be found.

City Lights Park Program

The City Lights Park Program is one component of a nonresidential vocational program for court-involved youth ages 16 and older from the District of Columbia. Three YES partners participate:

- **The National Capital Area Regional Office of the National Park Service,** which is responsible for 11 national parks in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia.
- **City Lights School,** a private, nonprofit alternative school based in the District of Columbia.
- **The District of Columbia Youth Services Administration (YSA),** the agency that operates the District's juvenile corrections system.

The City Lights School serves troubled youth ages 12 to 22 who have been referred by the District of Columbia Public Schools or the District of Columbia Department of Human Services, the umbrella agency for child, family, mental health, and juvenile corrections services. Founded in 1982 with help from the Children's Defense Fund, the school now has a capacity of 100. The typical student at the school is a 16½-year-old African-American male who reads at the third- or fourth-grade level. Some students are adjudicated delinquents, and others have a history of truancy. Many show signs of emotional disturbance, and a substantial minority have been victims of physical or sexual abuse. Ninety percent are not expected to return to a regular school setting.

City Lights School offers three year-round nonresidential programs, each with a distinctive focus and target group. The Psycho-Educational Program focuses on remediating academic deficits and strengthening the social-psychological competencies of students referred by schools, children and family services, and mental health workers. The other two programs serve youth referred by YSA. One is the Extended Day Program, which provides an 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. alternative to secure detention. The other is the Vocational Program, which serves youth ages 16 and older and provides a home for YES. The Vocational Program offers general equivalency diploma (GED) preparation, vocational counseling, and training to youth under aftercare (parole) supervised by YSA.

City Lights was recruited to the YES effort by YSA officials, who recognized that YES activities would be compatible with the school's existing YSA contract for the Vocational Program. For its part, City Lights saw YES as a welcome opportunity to add offsite work experience to its vocational curriculum.

After meeting with senior officials from YSA, DOJ, and DOI, staff from the Park Service and City Lights met several times early in 1994 to work out the details. City Lights toured several potential worksites identified by the Park Service Regional Office. Staff quickly decided to work with the Brentwood maintenance facility, located just 5 minutes from the school. This facility has carpentry, metal craft, and paint shops, as well as administrative offices. It maintains Federal park areas in downtown Washington, D.C., where many of the area's best-known tourist attractions are located.

Brentwood's facility manager welcomed the partnership, because Federal budget cuts and hiring freezes in recent years had left the facility shorthanded. Also, the

Brentwood facility was familiar with youth programs and supportive of them, having hosted several over the years, including the Youth Conservation Corps, the District of Columbia's Summer Youth Employment Program, and a training program sponsored by the public schools.

Plans for a 6-month pilot program were formalized in a Memorandum of Agreement signed by YSA, City Lights, and the National Park Service. As part of this understanding, YSA authorized City Lights to carry out YES activities under its existing contract for vocational training. The first youth started work in May 1994. By fall 1994, the program was reaching the end of its pilot phase.

Program profile

For City Lights and for YSA, the YES initiative provided an opportunity to significantly enhance the vocational program for delinquent youth, which had begun the year before. The core program has two components—an academic component, designed to help students earn a GED, and a vocational component, which offers training in carpentry or business education as well as individual and group vocational counseling. Students spend half the school day on academics and half on vocational training at the school.

Under the YES initiative, the program has added a third component, known as the park program, which involves bringing selected students to the Park Service worksite 2 days a week. Students spend the school day working under Park Service supervisors at the Brentwood maintenance facility. The remainder of the week they participate in the regular Vocational Program, dividing their time between academics and vocational training.

Target population. The Vocational Program is open to males and females ages 16 and older who have been referred to City Lights by their YSA aftercare worker. Youth are assigned to the program until their commitment expires (typically a year or two), but may move on to another placement if they meet their educational goals sooner.

At any one time, the Vocational Program serves 16 to 17 youth. Any student may volunteer for the YES park program, which has room for up to 10 participants. A youth can begin work in the program after completing a 2-week assessment and testing period at City Lights, during which his or her individual education plan is developed. Eleven youth—eight males and three females—have been involved during the pilot phase of the program. Their average age is 16, and academically, they are performing at about the sixth-grade level. All participants have spent time in youth correctional institutions for offenses ranging from first-degree murder to unauthorized use of a vehicle. Drug offenders predominate.

Organizational structure and staffing. Youth in the park program are assigned to a YSA Vocational Program counselor who also serves as the worksite monitor. The monitor accompanies youth to the worksite, stays there all day, and remains available to meet with work supervisors and students and

troubleshoot as needed. The monitor also obtains daily evaluations from the supervisor of each youth on a simple two-page form and tracks the students' work hours. Upon returning to City Lights, the monitor participates in a daily staff meeting where he or she can raise issues concerning an individual's performance at the job site or discuss more generic problems, such as the need for teachers to work on job-related mathematics.

Work experience. Students participate in the work program throughout the year, except during school holidays and vacations. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, youth are required to report to City Lights shortly before 9 a.m. to catch the school van, which transports them to the Park Service facility. Students must be punctual because the van does not make a second trip. Latecomers remain at the school and follow their usual routine.

Upon arrival, students go to their assigned lockers and then report to their individual supervisors. They work from 9 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., with periodic 15-minute breaks and a half-hour lunch period. Students can bring their own lunch or eat a lunch provided by the school. Approximately every 2 weeks, the counselor holds a brief class meeting during lunch to discuss issues related to the work program.

At the outset, youth volunteer for either office or shop placements. Following labor laws, students under age 18 are not permitted to work in the metal craft shop or to operate power tools in the carpentry shop. Thus far, youth have served as clerical, carpentry, and metal craft assistants. (The facility also contains paint and locksmith shops, but students have not yet been placed there.) Students sometimes leave the facility to assist crews with maintenance tasks in the parks, such as installing benches constructed in the carpentry shop.

While jobs are relatively unskilled, indoor jobs require some familiarity with office machines, and shop jobs typically require some knowledge of mathematics (such as fractions and measurement). First-line supervisors provide any additional job training and orientation needed. Supervisors have been instructed to mainstream the students into the work environment and to treat them as regular workers.

The City Lights onsite monitor supports the supervisors by counseling students individually and in class meetings about attendance and appropriate workplace behavior. The monitor tries to avert problems by recognizing when friction is developing between a student and supervisor and addressing it early. Usually, this means counseling the student. Occasionally, it may also mean alerting a supervisor that a student's performance is being affected by personal problems unrelated to the workplace.

A unique element of the park program is that students can earn wages after completing a probationary period. The probationary period involves the equivalent of 8 days of work experience, which takes at least 30 days to complete. Thereafter, students are paid minimum wage for their work hours. Although the program encourages students to set up a checking or savings account for their wages, they are not required to do so.

Program results

During the park program's first 6 months, 11 youth participated, 3 of whom are still active. One participant left City Lights after attaining his GED and is now enrolled in college. Seven participants were terminated from YES for a pattern of poor attendance, a problem that is not unique to the YES participants but common among the youth served by City Lights programs. Terminations occur at the discretion of the worksite monitor, who reports that dealing with erratic attendance requires continual counseling and education. Youth who have been terminated from the park program can petition to reenter after a 10-day waiting period. The largest daily enrollment in the program has been 7 students, although the program can accept up to 10. Staff expect to fill the program to capacity as the school year progresses and the program becomes better known to YSA aftercare workers.

Although attendance has been disappointing, there have been no significant problems with student behavior at the worksite. Most students appear to like the program and receive good evaluations from their supervisors. City Lights staff believe the program offers the real-world learning experiences that students need and will eventually provide some students with a job reference that will help them toward other employment. Ideally, the program might even offer an entry to Park Service employment, but job openings are limited right now.

Park Service personnel at the Brentwood facility also view the program as beneficial both to the students and to the Park Service. The program does require some extra time from supervisors, and students cannot be used as flexibly as regular employees because of their shorter work day and the age restrictions on the use of tools. Nonetheless, staff believe the investment pays off, as there is plenty of work to do, and the students are helping to do it.

Park Service supervisors do not find it onerous to complete the daily performance evaluations distributed by the City Lights monitor. In fact, Park Service staff were unanimously enthusiastic about having an onsite monitor, an element that has been missing from other job programs in which the facility has participated.

Program costs

Most costs of the park program have been absorbed by the participating agencies through reallocation of current personnel time. YSA, which funds the City Lights Vocational Program, has approved the assignment of one vocational counselor to monitor the park program students. The program also uses the school van to transport students to and from the worksite. The Park Service provides transportation when students leave the site during the day to work in Federal parks.

New funding was required, however, for one key element of the program: paying wages to students who complete their 30-day probationary period. The program had hoped to obtain support from the local Department of Employment Services, but budget cuts made this impossible. Instead, wages have been reimbursed from a special fund established under the terms of a court order governing YSA institutions. The

special fund contains fines paid by YSA when its institutions exceed their court-approved capacity. A court-appointed monitor is authorized to disburse the fines to deserving youth programs.

Program outlook

YSA, City Lights, and the National Park Service are happy with their collaboration and expect to continue the park program beyond the pilot phase. The court fund will continue to reimburse student wages.

YES in Utah

The State of Utah is home to two YES projects, the Genesis Youth Center near Salt Lake City and the Southwest Youth Center Work Release Program in Cedar City, in the southwestern part of the State. Both are residential programs for adjudicated juvenile offenders and use work projects as the primary mode of intervention.

Two circumstances made Utah especially fertile ground for the YES initiative. First, Utah contains large tracts of land—more than 70 percent of its total area—managed by DOI, the USDA's Forest Service, and other Federal agencies. In recent years, all these agencies have been carrying out their responsibilities with shrinking resources.

Second, the juvenile corrections system of Utah has undergone enormous changes in the past 15 years. In 1980, the State closed the 600-bed facility that had been the cornerstone of the previous system, turning to private community-based programs and small (10 to 40 beds) secure facilities to meet its correctional needs. While the deinstitutionalization effort was lauded by many observers, recent developments have strained the new system. High birth rates and in-migration have brought a youth population explosion and along with it more juvenile crime and gang violence. Secure facilities and detention centers are overcrowded. As a result, public officials, law enforcement agencies, and the community have been demanding new, preferably tougher, solutions for young offenders.

The YES initiative came along just as Utah's Department of Youth Corrections was searching for innovative alternatives. The two YES programs evolved independently, however, with some distinct features.

Genesis Youth Center

The Genesis Youth Center, a residential program for adjudicated offenders, involves a partnership of the following organizations:

- **The Salt Lake City District Office of the Bureau of Land Management,** the DOI agency that manages 2.5 million acres of Federal land in southern Utah.
- **The Division of Youth Corrections (DYC),** the State agency responsible for providing residential and nonresidential supervision and rehabilitation programs for juvenile offenders.
- **The Genesis Youth Center,** a 72-bed, community-based facility operated by DYC.

The YES initiative in Salt Lake City began when a juvenile court judge in Utah's Salt Lake City District heard about YES from a

Florida colleague. Intrigued by the concept, she contacted the State Division of Youth Corrections just as staff were gearing up to open a new residential facility. Coincidentally, DYC officials had already been exploring the idea of basing a work program at this new facility, so the YES program struck a responsive chord.

Given the initial interest, DOJ and DOI officials in Washington, D.C., came to Utah for a preliminary meeting. DOI enlisted the aid of BLM's State office, which appointed a program coordinator for BLM. After the meeting, the program coordinator took the lead in contacting the Salt Lake City District to solicit work projects and informed other BLM Districts of the program in case opportunities for expansion were identified. BLM's Salt Lake City office had often worked with volunteer groups, although the projects did not typically involve teenagers.

By the end of December 1993, the partners had agreed in principle to work together, with BLM becoming one of several public agencies that would provide work for facility residents. However, the facility, which had been inherited from the adult correctional system and renamed Genesis Youth Center, needed to be renovated and staffed. Although the facility was nearly twice the size of any other DYC residential program, this task was accomplished rapidly and Genesis opened in April 1994.

DYC and BLM celebrated the YES partnership at a kickoff ceremony attended by Federal, State, and local officials in June 1994. Several Genesis YES participants helped clear the site before the ceremony. The ceremony was held about 9 miles from Genesis at the site of BLM's planned Salt Lake Regional Wild Horse and Burro Center, which is slated to be the linchpin of the BLM program to manage Utah's large population of wild horses and prepare them for adoption. Kennecott Copper, a mining company, owns the land and has leased it to BLM for 30 years for $1.

Program profile

The Genesis Youth Center is a residential work program designed to hold youth accountable for their actions and enable them to make restitution to their victims. In contrast to programs emphasizing traditional education and psychotherapy, this program emphasizes learning work ethics, values, self-discipline, and other life skills through participation in rigorous community service. The YES partnership with BLM is one of several sources of work projects for residents. The community-based, nonsecure facility is on the outskirts of Salt Lake City.

Target population. The 72-bed program is designed for males ages 14 to 18 who are serving 30- to 120-day sentences. It is available to three distinct pools of offenders who sleep in separate wings of the facility but share common areas and programs:

- **Juvenile probationers,** who have been sentenced by the juvenile court to the temporary custody of DYC for placement in a forestry or work camp. The court determines their length of stay.
- **Youth who have received regular commitments to DYC** and

have been assessed by DYC as appropriate for this type of community-based placement. Their DYC case manager determines their length of stay.

- **Youth in transition from DYC secure care to the community.** Their stay is determined by their case manager and the parole board.

The program screens out youth with a history of predatory violent behavior, most sex offenders, and those with mental or physical problems requiring regular medication. The youth's typical offenses range from minor theft to auto theft to robbery. Most have at least one or two felony convictions but, with the exception of those in transition from secure care, have not spent time in secure facilities. Although the ethnic makeup of the resident population fluctuates, usually most of the residents are white non-Hispanic; Hispanics are the second most common ethnic group; and African Americans are the third.

Organizational structure and staffing. The 24-hour Genesis program has 38 staff, 31 of whom are youth counselors. Some key services are brought in from outside, including education, which is provided by the local school district, and meals.

An assistant director of Genesis specializes in coordinating and lining up work projects with public agencies. Five program counselors serve as work crew supervisors, transporting youth to the work projects and acting as foremen. To provide the cost-effective programming mandated by the legislature, the program began by assigning a single counselor to each work crew of 15 but quickly found this staff ratio to be unworkable. Now, the usual ratio is one staff member to seven youth. On a typical day, the facility fields six or seven crews of six to seven workers.

To arrange YES projects, the program works with BLM's public information officer for the Salt Lake City District. He has taken charge of selling the program internally, identifying BLM supervisors with appropriate projects, and orienting youth to BLM jobs. BLM supervisors help with the job site orientation and provide tools and oversight to Genesis work crews.

Work experience. Upon entering Genesis, youth undergo an intake and orientation process lasting 10 to 14 days. During that time, they receive a job skills orientation, which covers job safety and work rules. Then they begin going out to work 6 days a week.

A typical day in the program involves work from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., followed by lunch and a recreation break. On weekdays, youth then attend school from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The program is split between morning and afternoon work crews, so that those who work in the afternoon go to school in the morning and the morning workers go to school in the afternoon. Youth who temporarily lose their privilege to work offsite are restricted to cleanup and maintenance tasks in and around the facility.

Youth wear Genesis-provided uniforms consisting of a maroon shirt, gray pants, and work shoes. Staff believe that donning the uniform—dressing for work—is an important part of the work experience.

The facility has arrangements with a variety of worksites, each formalized with a written contract that describes how many youth Genesis will provide and the obligations of each party for supervision, provision of tools, and other related responsibilities. Utah's Division of State Parks and Recreation has been the program's biggest client thus far, providing work ranging from lawnmowing to trailbuilding to re-creating a pioneer site for visitors. The program also provides yardwork and helps maintain the residential campus of the State Developmental Center.

For BLM, the Genesis program's YES partner, work crews have helped prepare the site for the Wild Horse and Burro Center, clearing trash, removing old fencing, and putting down fertilizer. They returned to the site again in spring 1995 after some heavy construction had been completed. Eventually, the center will provide holding areas where horses and burros captured in the wild can become accustomed to human contact and can be prepared for adoption. The area will contain a visitor center and picnic areas as well. BLM staff plan to involve Genesis youth regularly in caring for the horses, maintaining the site, and providing information to visitors.

Genesis youth have also participated in other BLM projects. At one location, youth helped place a memorial plaque, cleared the surrounding area, and built buck-and-post fencing. Youth crews also helped construct mountain bicycle trails on an island in the Great Salt Lake. To add an element of fun, BLM incorporates cookouts and barbecues into the work projects.

A key feature of the Genesis program is that youth can complete their restitution requirements by working at BLM and other sites. The participants' work time is valued at minimum wage, or at an alternative rate set by the sentencing judge, and their "earnings" are disbursed to victims from State restitution funds. (A percentage of fines collected statewide is allocated to DYC and to the juvenile courts for use in paying victim restitution.)

On average, youth stay in the facility for 2½ months. Upon release, youth who were referred to the program directly by the court are returned to the supervision of a probation officer. The responsibility for aftercare of youth who entered the program through DYC rests with the youth's DYC case manager, who also was responsible for his initial referral to Genesis.

Program results

In the first 6 months, 178 youth participating in the Genesis program earned a total of $103,789 in victim restitution. From DYC's standpoint, the program is still in its developmental stages. Although the program has 72 beds, it is not staffed for full capacity and its population averages about 45.

BLM views the YES program as a cost-effective experience, and youth accomplish work of real value to the Federal Government and to the public. Genesis and DYC report that BLM work projects have particularly desirable features that differentiate them from most other Genesis assignments. First, BLM staff orient youth to the historical and land management context of each project. Before the crew

went to the Wild Horse and Burro Center, for example, BLM's public information officer visited Genesis and showed a videotape about the wild horse management program. Second, BLM staff provide the necessary tools. Finally, they stay and work with the youth crews, providing juvenile offenders with much needed exposure to positive role models.

In general, BLM projects are viewed as providing meaningful work and lasting benefits to the community, in contrast to assignments like yardwork performed for some other agencies. BLM's Salt Lake City District reports that the young offenders have been some of the best workers they have had on natural resource projects—a much more positive outcome than originally anticipated. DYC officials report that the work release program also has been well received by judges and by the legislators who appropriated funds for the new venture, although initially there had been considerable sentiment in favor of establishing a juvenile boot camp.

Program costs

Funds for the Genesis program, including facility renovation, were appropriated by the legislature in November 1993. DYC officials estimate that Genesis costs $82 per day per bed as compared with about $111 for the average transition program, $120 per day for secure detention, and $137 for secure facilities.[1]

BLM staff donate their time to the Genesis effort and provide whatever equipment and supplies are necessary. Kennecott Copper subsidizes the Wild Horse and Burro Center by providing the low-cost lease and assistance with heavy construction tasks such as roadbuilding.

Program outlook

The Genesis work program is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. BLM will become a routine source of work placements for participants. DYC and Genesis staff also hope to expand the range of Federal and other public work placements but acknowledge that this will demand some creativity from the partners. For instance, there is work to be done at many sites in Utah, but the locations are remote from the facility, and no local housing is available. Such projects might be feasible if DYC were to enlist the National Guard in setting up temporary campsites and providing transportation.

The Southwest Youth Center Work Release Program

The Southwest Youth Center program involves a partnership of the following agencies:

- **The Cedar City District Office of the Bureau of Land Management.**
- **The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service,** which manages the Dixie National Forest in the Cedar City area.
- **The Southwest Youth Center,** a regional residential facility under the Utah Division of Youth Corrections, which contains a 10-bed

[1] Comparison figures are drawn from the Utah Department of Human Services *Division of Youth Corrections: Annual Report 1993.*

secure wing for youth sentenced to DYC and a detention center.

Like other juvenile detention centers nationwide, the Southwest Youth Center's detention wing holds youth awaiting court hearings and sentenced youth awaiting transfer to other facilities. In addition, it houses the group of primary concern to YES—youth sentenced to DYC's temporary custody for up to 30 days.

In 1993, the Youth Center's Advisory Board began looking for solutions to chronic overcrowding in the detention center. The group began exploring work release options and contacted the Cedar City BLM, the Cedar Ranger District of the Dixie National Forest, and other public agencies in the area. Efforts were proceeding to establish a local cooperative work program when the Cedar City BLM director discovered the developing YES initiative through BLM channels. Convinced of the value of work for young people and of building on BLM and Forest Service experience with earlier programs such as the Youth Conservation Corps, the Board was happy to formalize a YES partnership. With the approval of the Utah BLM and the Forest Service, the partnership began.

BLM, the Forest Service, and the Board quickly reached an understanding: BLM and the Forest Service could provide work projects and training for detention center residents if the center could provide transportation and supervision at the job sites. Provision of transportation and supervision became a major stumbling block, however, since neither could be supported through the center's existing budget. The funding problem was solved in spring 1994 when the State legislature passed a new appropriation to support work release programs for juveniles statewide. Drawing on this appropriation, the work release program began in August 1994.

Program profile

The Southwest Youth Center Work Release Program is conceived as an alternative to secure detention that gives youth an opportunity to avoid the negative effects of confinement, learn valuable work skills and teamwork, work off court-ordered debts in a meaningful and responsible way, and give something back to the community.

Target population. The program is open to males and females ages 12 to 17 who have been sentenced by the court for up to 30 days in detention. Most of the youth involved have been adjudicated for felony-level offenses or are probation violators. Typically they have committed property offenses such as theft, auto theft, or burglary, but some have been involved in crimes against persons, such as an assault on a family member. The pool of eligible youth also includes offenders who have been cited for contempt, which under Utah law constitutes a misdemeanor punishable by 1 to 10 days in detention.

Within this pool of offenders, center staff screen out youth who might pose an escape risk or might be too violent for work release. However, the center director estimates that only 5 percent of those who are eligible are eliminated on these grounds. At the time of sentencing, the juvenile judge occasionally suggests that an

offender be considered for work release but generally leaves selection of participants to the detention center staff.

Youth who live in Iron County, where the center is located, are released home for the duration of their work release sentence and report to the detention center each weekday for work followed by academic classes. Because of the distances involved, those who live in the two other counties served by the facility remain in detention when they are not at work.

Youth can earn 1 day off their sentence for every 3 days of good behavior. Because of good time earned plus the variation in original sentences, the average youth participates in the program for about 8 to 10 workdays.

Organizational structure and staffing. The work release program is run by a staff member who has experience and training in youth work as well as land management. He or she is responsible for supervising the work crew, transporting them to worksites, and maintaining records of their participation and behavior while on work release.

Staff of BLM, the Forest Service, and other client agencies identify the jobs and provide the training, safety instruction, and tools needed. Because turnover is frequent among the youth assigned to work release, the work crew supervisor must train participants who join the crew after the initial orientation.

Work experience. The program currently involves five client agencies—BLM, the Forest Service, Southern Utah University, Cedar City Corporation, and Iron County. These organizations have agreed to rotate responsibility for providing work projects at 2-month intervals. In addition, the program will shovel snow for elderly residents, remove graffiti, and perform other odd jobs in the community as the need arises.

As of November 1994, the program had already completed its first rotation with the Forest Service and had switched to BLM projects. During the Forest Service tour, the work releasees were primarily involved in trailbuilding, although they helped with some sign placement and bridge work as well. The Forest Service coordinator prefers to involve youth crews in work of lasting value rather than routine maintenance. Plenty of work is always available, although child labor laws place some limits on assignments. Typically, youth from the detention center simply join the agency's regular crews and work alongside them.

BLM projects have included building trails, moving heavy metal panels used to corral and manage the area's wild horse population, maintaining campgrounds and other recreational sites, and mixing seeds used to replant burned areas. The seedmixing project involved loading heavy bags of seed, transporting them to a local mill, mixing seeds according to a specified formula, rebagging the mixed seed, and returning the seed to BLM's warehouse. BLM also hopes to involve the youth crew in repainting horse panels if it can find suitable indoor space for the project. Although BLM's Cedar City District manages more than 2 million recreational acres, BLM has selected small jobs relatively close to the detention center for the work release

program. BLM supervisors prepare job descriptions for each assignment, train the work crew supervisor and the youth, and provide tools. Typically, BLM does not provide ongoing work supervision.

Although the work release van can accommodate seven passengers, the crew size has varied from one to seven on any given day and averages around five. Usually the group leaves the center at about 9:30 a.m. with bag lunches. Local youth who have been released to home detention must report in time to leave with them. (Although the center had hoped that crews would depart by 8 a.m., early departures did not coordinate well with the detention center's morning school schedule.) Youth in the detention center wear uniforms, but they are permitted to dress in their own clothing when they report for work release, so that they will not be conspicuous on the job.

The crew returns by 4 p.m. to spend the remainder of the day in school at the detention center. In addition to the formal educational program taught by instructors from the local school district, when orienting crews, both BLM and Forest Service staff give participants information about the purpose of each new project and the resource management issues involved. The rapid turnover of program participants has tended to discourage development of a more substantial environmental education component.

As in the Salt Lake City program, work release participants earn restitution credit for the hours they work. Staff report their hours to the court clerk, and victims are reimbursed an equivalent amount from the State's restitution fund. Youth released from detention and the YES program remain under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court to complete their terms of probation or other court-ordered obligations.

Program results

By early February 1995, 76 youth, including 12 females, had participated in the work release program, each averaging 48 hours of work. Youth appear to like the work, finding it preferable to sitting in the detention center. No runaways from the worksite and no significant behavioral problems have been reported.

The partners in the venture are quite satisfied with their experiences so far. Both BLM and the Forest Service feel that the help they receive more than justifies the time they invest in the program. The center, too, is pleased with the work projects but is disappointed that the program is not always full—primarily because the number of youth receiving 1- to 30-day sentences has dropped off in recent months. Although the reasons are not fully understood, the weather may be part of the explanation (delinquency in this area normally declines during the colder months).

The partners also report that despite some initial concerns, it has not been difficult to keep youth busy in winter. In place of the 2-month agency rotation adopted in the warmer months, however, the program schedules jobs from three to four different agencies as needed.

Program costs

The Southwest Youth Center obtained State DYC funds to cover the salary and benefits of

the work crew supervisor (approximately $34,000) and to purchase a van. Unlike the Genesis program in Salt Lake City, this program chose not to buy tools and relies on the client agencies to provide them. If additional tools or equipment are needed, staff will ask local merchants for donations. Both BLM and the Forest Service support their YES activities out of their regular budgets.

Program outlook

The current partners anticipate continuing the program for the foreseeable future. The BLM Cedar City District has requested additional funds for the work release program to cover supplies and materials that will help support a broader range of projects.

YES in Florida

Juvenile justice officials in Florida have long recognized the important role that work and outdoor activity can play in rehabilitating juvenile offenders. Associated Marine Institutes, one of the State's private contractors, has become nationally known for its wilderness- and marine-based programming for juveniles. For several years, the State also has been operating short-term offender programs that place youth in conservation work.

When DOJ and DOI formally endorsed the siting of juvenile programs on Federal land, prospects for expanding conservation-oriented programs were opened to an even broader spectrum of offenders. Florida contains large tracts of land under Federal management, including many wetland areas where preservation and restoration are accorded high priority. Juvenile justice officials felt that many of these tracts would be sufficiently large and remote to provide work and acceptable security even for serious offenders. Considering the often bitter community opposition to new facilities, the size and location of these lands would be a particular advantage. While State appropriations for juvenile residential beds have been rising in recent years, finding sites for them is a continual problem.

Two YES programs have opened in Florida thus far—the Loxahatchee Environmental Project near West Palm Beach and the Big Cypress Wilderness Institute based in the Big Cypress National Preserve in south Florida. Both are residential programs that make work the cornerstone of treatment. Each involves a partnership of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ),[2] DOI, and a private provider of services to juvenile offenders. DJJ officials hope to initiate a third program in the Miami area involving the same type of partnership.

Loxahatchee Environmental Project

In the West Palm Beach area, the YES partners are the following agencies:

- **The District Office of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice,** which is responsible for treatment and supervision of juvenile offenders in Palm Beach County.

[2] When the YES initiative was begun, responsibility for juvenile corrections in Florida rested with the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS). As of October 1, 1994, those responsibilities (and the staff involved) were transferred to the newly formed Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). In the interest of simplicity, this document disregards the switch from HRS to DJJ and refers to "DJJ" in this context.

- **Juvenile Services Program, Inc.,** a nonprofit provider of counseling, education, and vocational programs for youth, which operates Banyan Halfway House, a residence for juvenile offenders.
- **The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,** which manages the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, containing 220 square miles of the northern Everglades, and Hobe Sound, a coastal refuge for sea turtles.

When the YES initiative started, the DJJ district manager in West Palm Beach immediately expressed interest in involving Palm Beach County. He had already engaged in discussions with State officials about developing a conservation corps-style program for longer term offenders. Well-designed work programs seemed to offer a way to achieve "balanced and restorative justice," simultaneously protecting the community, holding young offenders accountable for their actions, and building the competencies that youth need to become productive and responsible citizens.[3] The YES initiative was particularly attractive to Palm Beach County officials because the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge was located within its boundaries.

To explore the possibilities, State DJJ officials, a DOI representative from Washington, D.C., and the district manager met with the manager of Loxahatchee Refuge in December 1993. Refuge staff were enthusiastic about YES, based on previous experience with the Youth Conservation Corps. However, the other attendees were disappointed to learn that the land in the refuge was too marshy to support any building. Thus, the State could not put a residential facility there, as it intended to do in Big Cypress. Instead, the meeting ended with an agreement to pursue an alternative—linking YES with one of DJJ's existing providers of residential services.

Fortunately, the district manager had a provider in mind—the Juvenile Services Program's Banyan House, a new halfway house for moderate-risk juvenile offenders. This program, in a small community outside West Palm Beach, was still in the process of developing a vocational and work experience program for its 24 residents. Although some time was required to work out the details, Banyan House agreed to absorb YES into its existing program. The district agreed to contribute funds available from a lapsed contract to pay for equipment and uniforms.

Once the funds became available, the program was put in place in a matter of weeks. Banyan, DJJ, and refuge staff met in June 1994 to draw up a list of equipment and work out other procedures. Youth from Banyan House began working at Loxahatchee in July 1994. A formal dedication ceremony was held in October 1994.

Program profile

Banyan Halfway House, a 4- to 6-month nonsecure residential program for juvenile

[3] Criminologists at Florida Atlantic University have incorporated these principles into a conceptual framework for community supervision of juvenile offenders. See Gordon Bazemore, *Balanced and Restorative Justice: Program Summary,* Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, September 1994.

offenders, is designed to put the principles of balanced and restorative justice into action. Work is the backbone of the program, providing an opportunity for youth to learn a work ethic and work skills, meet their financial obligations to victims and others, and develop a sense of competence. After residents complete a 10-day orientation, they are assigned to a "vocation" at which they work for pay 4 days a week. From 50 to 75 percent of a resident's earnings must be allocated to meet restitution, child support, or other financial obligations, if any. The remainder is set aside in a savings account to cover immediate necessities and expenses that may arise when the youth graduates to aftercare.

The program currently provides five vocational placements that the U.S. Department of Labor expects to be in demand: horticultural worker, building maintenance/groundskeeper, cooking/dietary aide, painter, and landscape laborer. The YES initiative, known as the Loxahatchee Environmental Project, provides the landscape laborer experience and is one of just two placements that involve off-campus work.

Residents attend school on campus 1 day each week. Teachers are provided by the local Board of Education. Residents also have access to a computer lab. Recently, the program has been trying to integrate classroom education and worksite activities more closely by having work supervisors develop learning plans to share with teachers. Youth also receive educational credit for their work experience. Youth participate in organized activities on weekends or can use day or weekend passes that they have earned.

Program staff continuously monitor the residents' behavior and participation, communicating observations to the staff clinical social worker and case manager. Most staff counseling is one on one. Many other services, including mental health treatment, drug and alcohol counseling, mentoring, and tutoring, are arranged through outside sources for individuals who need them. The program also provides aftercare for a period of 6 to 9 months. Individual aftercare planning begins at the time of intake into the residential component. This allows for followthrough on the vocational goals established.

Target population. Banyan Halfway House contracts to serve 24 male offenders, ages 16 to 18, who are considered a moderate risk. Most youth are multiple offenders. Typically, they have committed property offenses such as grand theft auto, but some have been convicted of personal crimes like assault and battery. Many youth come directly to Banyan House after commitment to DJJ, but others arrive having already failed in another moderate-risk placement. About 60 percent are African American, 30 percent are white non-Hispanic, and 10 percent are Hispanic. The majority live in Palm Beach County, and the remainder are from adjoining counties.

At Banyan, youth apply for preferred vocations, but program staff make the final decisions. Five residents are assigned to the Loxahatchee Environmental Project. For this placement, staff screen out offenders who tend to be violent and those with asthma or other medical problems that

might be adversely affected by doing manual labor in swampy areas.

Organizational structure and staffing. Banyan House has 26 full- and part-time staff, including a superintendent, clinical social worker, case manager, cook, maintenance chief, horticulturalist, and 6 full-time group treatment leaders. One of the group treatment leaders is assigned to supervise and work with the Loxahatchee crew and transport them to the site. A second staff member is a standby who can fill in on sick days. In addition, the Juvenile Services Program's director of operations for a two-district area is based at Banyan House and assists with program development for YES.

An assistant supervisor at the Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge is responsible for identifying work projects, providing orientation and safety instruction, and monitoring job quality.

Work experience. The Loxahatchee crew report to the refuge Tuesday through Friday. They leave for the 20-minute trip at about 7:30 a.m., bringing lunches, water jugs, and tools. The Refuge Center staff try to plan their jobs about 1 week in advance, training the supervisor in what is needed so that he, in turn, can train the crew. Thus, when the crew arrive, they usually begin work immediately without supervision from refuge staff. The workday is 6 hours. During summer, the temperature and humidity are extremely high.

The crew's primary job is to help carry out the refuge's exotic plant control program, which involves eradicating melaleuca and Brazilian pepper trees that are taking over and destroying the natural habitat. After the trees are cut down and uprooted, youth help chip and mulch the remains and apply them to grounds around the facilities. Youth usually work near the refuge headquarters, removing unwanted plants and doing some groundskeeping. Twice each month they also travel in airboats to more remote locations with the refuge staff crews to develop a sense of belonging to the refuge team. They also go to Hobe Sound about twice each month, where they have helped remove Australian pine trees, dismantle abandoned buildings, and clean up wreckage from Cuban rafts washed up on the beach.

Most work requires tools such as hand saws, axes, and pruning shears. Following child labor laws, the crew members, except the supervisor, do not operate power tools, although they can disassemble and clean them. The youth wear workboots, uniforms, and often, coverall-style waders.

During their time off from work, the youth participate in the regular Banyan House routine and attend class on Mondays. In addition, Refuge Center and Banyan House personnel together have developed a 3-day orientation program presented at Loxahatchee before the crew goes to work. This program combines lectures with walks through the marshes and covers refuge management and chain of command, environmental law, refuge ecology, safety, tool use, and proper behavior around indigenous wildlife.

Program results

The first crew has completed a 4- to 5-month period in the Loxahatchee program and has

left Banyan House. These youth liked the program, despite some initial apprehension about working around snakes and alligators. According to staff, Loxahatchee is a high-status assignment: It is off campus, youth get to wear special gear such as waders, and the snakes and alligators now contribute an alluring air of risk. No runaways and no significant behavioral problems at the worksite have been reported. The first work crew did demand an earlier bedtime, however, and staff readily agreed.

A new work crew is now at work at Loxahatchee. DJJ and program staff believe that the YES initiative is fulfilling their expectations. It builds a work ethic, helps youth earn money to repay victims and meet personal needs, and instills pride in accomplishing something useful. One youth, home on a weekend pass, brought his mother out to the refuge to show her where he had been working. Another worker, nearing the end of his placement, asked to stay at the facility and pay rent so that he could continue in the program. (The request was turned down.) Although the Loxahatchee placement may not impart as many transferable skills as would an alternative placement like painting, staff feel the hard, dirty work may encourage some youth to consider the advantages of jobs that require a longer term commitment to educational or vocational training.

Refuge staff are equally pleased with the YES experience. Although they admit that the program required more time initially than they had expected, the demands have diminished considerably now that they have established a routine. YES also compares favorably with the old Youth Conservation Corps, according to refuge staff, because the Banyan youth work harder and the program supplies its own supervisor, transportation, and tools.

Program costs

The YES initiative has been absorbed by the Banyan House program under its existing contract from DJJ, which pays $75 per bed per day. During the initial year, DJJ also provided $50,000 in unexpended DJJ funds to pay for uniforms, workboots, nonpower tools, and other equipment used by workers at Loxahatchee. The biggest single investment was a wood chipper, a machine that grinds up unwanted vegetation and turns it into mulch that can be returned to the site.

The refuge staff allocate time to YES as part of their regular responsibilities. They believe the investment is worthwhile, noting that otherwise, they would have assigned the jobs done by the Banyan youth to paid crews or deferred them until funds became available.

Wages paid to Banyan House residents, including the youth working at Loxahatchee, come from Title II–C of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and are channeled through the local Private Industry Council. This section of JTPA covers employment training programs for older youth, including school dropouts and juvenile offenders. Before the JTPA application was approved, the program received temporary funding for wages from the Office of the Mayor of West Palm Beach, under the National and Community Service Act of 1990.

Program outlook

No immediate changes in the program at the refuge are planned, except that refuge staff expect to involve the youth in additional projects, such as clearing survey lines, posting boundary signs, painting, and making minor repairs.

Since the Loxahatchee Refuge is large enough to provide work for additional crews, DJJ and Banyan would like to add one or two more crews eventually. Banyan House can accommodate up to 30 residents but currently is funded for 24, so residential expansion is possible. Another idea is to create a "reentry" crew of youth who no longer reside at the facility but continue to report there for work at Loxahatchee. Either alternative would require additional funding if Banyan is to preserve the current spectrum of five vocations.

Aside from that, YES participants will be affected by ongoing efforts to refine the Banyan program. For instance, the Juvenile Services Program is striving to introduce more structure into the assessment of resident performance and to encourage more integration between work and classroom activities. Staff have been reviewing environmental curriculum materials that might be adapted by the teachers. One alternative being considered is to deliver an environmental curriculum right at Loxahatchee, providing lectures, videos, and other education in the headquarters auditorium and following up with experiential assignments in the "outdoor classroom."

Big Cypress Wilderness Institute

At Big Cypress Wilderness Institute (BCWI), the key partners in developing and carrying out the program are as follows:

- **The State Office of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice,** which administers residential and nonresidential treatment and supervision of juvenile offenders.
- **The Florida Environmental Institute (FEI),** a local affiliate of **Associated Marine Institutes** and operator of Last Chance Ranch, a residential program for serious offenders.
- **The Department of the Interior's National Park Service,** which manages the Big Cypress National Preserve, a 729,000-acre tract containing about 45 percent of the Big Cypress Swamp.

This was the first YES partnership to be formed. DOJ and DOI officials met to discuss the concept with DJJ, Park Service, Associated Marine Institutes, and FEI at Big Cypress Preserve in October 1993. Park Service officials say they were initially hesitant to sign on, but a visit to FEI's Last Chance Ranch convinced them of the program's potential. DJJ and Park Service officials began to search for a suitable site for a residential facility in the preserve, eventually locating a spot that was sufficiently remote for placement of serious offenders but without environmental obstacles to construction. The new facility would be designed for up to 30 serious offenders.

Because construction would be time consuming, DJJ and the Park Service agreed to implement a small interim program in collaboration with Last Chance Ranch, which is located 2 hours from Big Cypress. Because the distance would be too great for daily commuting, the Park Service agreed to let DJJ renovate an unused home in the preserve for the program's temporary use. DJJ supplemented FEI's existing contract to cover the extra staff and other resources that they would need to maintain six youth at Big Cypress.

A kickoff ceremony for YES, attended by Federal officials and YES representatives from Utah and the District of Columbia, was held at Big Cypress in February 1994. Youth then began making occasional day trips to the preserve, switching to a full-time schedule in July 1994, when the renovation of their temporary housing was complete.

Program profile

Currently, BCWI is a satellite of FEI's Last Chance Ranch, a residential program for serious juvenile offenders. The ranch is a working farm in south-central Florida where residents participate in an educational program and work projects on alternate days. The ranch itself provides much of the work, including caring for horses and other farm animals, gardening, woodworking, and automotive repair. Youth also participate in community service projects like cleaning up the nearby city's baseball and football fields and selling Christmas trees. They take on paid work, such as picking fruit and vegetables for nearby farmers, when it is available. All staff work alongside youth and serve as role models. Counseling is inseparable from the daily routine of living, studying, and working.

Last Chance Ranch emphasizes the consequences of behavior with a structure that rewards hard work and good performance. Youth may spend from 18 months to 3 years working their way through the program's three phases. In Phase I, they live in an austere bunk house. In Phase II, they progress to an apartment-style building. The average youth spends 14 or 15 months in Phases I and II. In Phase III, residents are released to 6 months of intensive aftercare, knowing that failure in aftercare means a return to Phase I. Typically, the program has 20 to 21 youth in residence and another 8 to 14 in aftercare.

Six youth from Last Chance Ranch participate in the BCWI program each week on a rotating basis. FEI rotates participants rather than sending a permanent crew of six, because the temporary facility at Big Cypress lacks the range of programs available at Last Chance Ranch and is inconvenient for family visits. Because paid work is sometimes available at the ranch but not at Big Cypress, rotating participants also ensures that no one is denied a chance to earn money.

Target population. Last Chance Ranch serves serious male offenders, ages 15 to 17, who have been referred by the criminal court.[4] These youth have been prosecuted and convicted as adults, but the judge has withheld their adult sentence to give them a "last chance" in the juvenile system. Typically they have a long history of minor offenses capped by a more serious offense that earned them prosecution as an adult.

Less frequently, a youth enters with a very serious current offense but little or no previous record. Youth may come from anywhere in Florida, but most have urban backgrounds. They have volunteered for the program knowing that it may last longer than the jail time they would otherwise have served.

To be eligible for BCWI, residents must complete the first stage of the FEI program and meet a certain standard of performance. As a result, residents have usually been at Last Chance Ranch for at least 2 months before they begin work at Big Cypress.

Organizational structure and staffing. FEI has 33 staff members with widely varied skills. They are responsible for all aspects of Last Chance Ranch, including the educational program.[5] Four staff members, including a team leader and a teacher, are responsible for delivering the program at Big Cypress. They accompany the six-man work crew there and supervise the youth during their stay. Two staff members go out to work with the crew each day. The teacher maintains the educational program at the worksite. National Park Service staff at BCWI headquarters are responsible for providing work assignments for the crew and any necessary instruction.

Work experience. Youth and staff travel to Big Cypress by van each Sunday and return to the ranch Thursday evening. They stay in the renovated house, which has a large kitchen/dining/living room area, bedrooms equipped with bunk beds, bathroom and laundry facilities, a yard, and some outbuildings where FEI plans to put a volleyball court and a weight room.

On Sundays, youth and staff generally work around the temporary facility. On weekdays, they awaken at 7 a.m. and follow a structured routine adapted from the routine at the ranch. In contrast to life at the ranch, however, they prepare their own meals, and instead of alternating between work and education, they work daily from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and do their schoolwork afterward. The teacher comes equipped with lesson plans so that the youth keep up with their peers at the ranch. While there is no special curriculum for the BCWI workers, FEI's academic coordinator has added some pertinent materials to the science lessons at the ranch.

The work crew's team leader checks in at preserve headquarters each Monday to obtain new work assignments. To date, the crew has been involved primarily in maintaining the grounds at the headquarters and two visitor centers. They have also helped with some restoration work, including removing tires from an illegal dump site. The crew works independently most of the time, although Park Service staff may provide some instruction about safety and proper techniques. For example, all youth

[4] In Florida, youth are assigned a risk classification based on their current offense and their offense history. The system has just added a "maximum risk" category for youth ages 15 and older whose current offense or offense history is sufficiently serious to warrant prison-like confinement. Capital offenses carrying a life sentence and other first-degree felonies earn this classification. "Serious" offenders make up the second highest risk category, and "moderate-risk" offenders are the third category.

[5] Juvenile programs in Florida may obtain funds from the local school district to hire their own teachers. At FEI, two teachers are hired by the program and a third is provided directly by the school district.

are trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid as part of the regular program at Last Chance Ranch. Currently FEI and the Park Service share responsibility for providing tools, but FEI plans to buy more of its own tools as time goes on.

While at work, youth and FEI staff wear green T-shirts and matching hats bearing a BCWI logo. This follows Park Service tradition. National Park Service employees themselves wear uniforms and customarily give other park volunteers identifying T-shirts.

Program results

About 20 youth, all of whom have completed the first phase of the Last Chance Ranch program, have been involved in the program so far. Each has had at least 2 weeks at Big Cypress, and some have had 6 weeks or more. Most youth appear to like going to Big Cypress. The trip is an excursion of sorts, providing a departure from the usual routine. Youth can fish during the lunch hour and enjoy some evening excursions (for example, going bowling).

FEI and Park Service staff have indicated enthusiasm about the YES experience and indicate that it has paid off for both partners. They concede, however, that they deliberately have been "going slow" and keeping the program small until the permanent facility is in place.

Program costs

DJJ pays FEI $130 a day for each of the six program slots in the BCWI program. Slots in the permanent program are expected to cost about $95, primarily because of economies of scale.

The State is funding the estimated $1.2 million construction cost for the new 24- to 30-bed facility—a complex of several small buildings. In accordance with the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement between DJJ and the National Park Service, the new facility will be owned by the State. However, at the conclusion of the agreement (which is currently renewable every 5 years), the structure will become the property of the National Park Service.

The Florida DJJ contributed the $70,000 required to renovate the temporary facility, which the Park Service will use when the new facility is complete. The Park Service absorbs the cost of fuel, tools, and staff time needed to plan and carry out projects from its existing budget. DJJ will also buy tools and fuel eventually. Park Service staff note that the demands on their time have steadily diminished. All in all, they believe that the program has involved a fair tradeoff and will provide even greater returns when fully implemented.

Program outlook

This program is scheduled for dramatic expansion. The partners have settled on an architect for the permanent facility, which should be ready in summer 1996, assuming that State permits are obtained expeditiously.[6] A newly formed affiliate of

[6] State officials and Associated Marine Institutes are discussing the possibility of accelerating the transition to a full-blown program. One idea is to house participants in portable modular buildings pending completion of the permanent facility, provided that a feasible temporary site can be found for the modular structures.

Associated Marine Institutes, to be called Big Cypress Wilderness Institute, will take over the permanent program. FEI, BCWI, and Park Service staff will work together during the transition period to develop the new program.

Although plans for the permanent program are incomplete, a working outline includes the following:

- In many respects, the program will be similar to that of FEI, although the work projects will differ. BCWI will become totally independent of FEI, with a full complement of staff and its own classroom and cafeteria facilities. The core staff will include an executive director, a program director, four team leaders, and two or three teachers. Ideally, the staff will include people with special expertise in marine science, environmental instruction, and aquatics or boating.
- BCWI will serve male youth who have been committed to DJJ and rated as moderate- to serious-risk offenders. The permanent site, at some distance from the main highway, was chosen with this population in mind. Youth will be screened to eliminate certain categories of offenders, including arsonists and others with a history of violence or aggression who might pose a risk to themselves or others.
- Residents will be divided into four or more work crews, with half the crews working each day. On their days off from work, youth will go to class, as they do at Last Chance Ranch.
- Work assignments will go beyond the routine maintenance and cleanup tasks that are the focus of the interim program. Park Service officials hope to identify an array of short- and long-term projects, including efforts of lasting value such as rehabilitating boardwalks, refurbishing historic sites, and eradicating the exotic plants that are destroying Florida's natural habitats. On some projects, BCWI team leaders will be able to schedule and deploy work crews as they wish, with Park Service staff involved only as inspectors. BCWI will own most of the tools needed.
- Program activities will not necessarily be limited to the boundaries of the Big Cypress Preserve. Additional work opportunities may be available in nearby fish and wildlife refuges and in the community of Everglades City.
- The partners hope to develop opportunities for program youth to make a transition to paid work or apprenticeship programs. Park Service officials note that although their ability to hire is very limited, they may be able to assist in some individual cases.
- The program will have an aftercare component, although it has not yet been determined whether BCWI will operate it directly.

Lessons Learned From the YES Experience

The pilot programs have shown that YES offers a promising approach to expanding developmental opportunities for at-risk and delinquent youth while meeting the needs of Federal land managers and benefiting communities. Although the program is still quite new, the experiences of the pilot sites provide some important insights into program design and implementation.

Factors contributing to successful program implementation

The YES pilot programs were implemented in a matter of months and encountered few obstacles. The partners remain enthusiastic about the concept and plan to continue their relationships. Several elements appear to have contributed to smooth implementation. Jurisdictions contemplating YES initiatives should consider how to incorporate such factors into their own program development process. Key elements include the following:

- **A mutually beneficial partnership arrangement.** YES programs must benefit both Federal land managers and the youth service agencies participating in the program. While programs should help youth service agencies meet their programming goals and the needs of the youth they serve, land managers need to gain something from the arrangement as well.
- **Team effort in establishing mutual expectations, planning the program, and making key decisions.** Pilot participants emphasized that program design has to be a joint effort between land managers and youth service agencies. To develop a mutually beneficial program, the partners should develop an understanding of each other's perspective and mission and reach consensus on key program elements. After the program is in place, frequent communication—formal or informal—can help fine tune the arrangements.
- **Experience with work programs for youth.** It is helpful if the participating agencies have operated work programs for youth before. Fortunately, all of the land management agencies at the pilot sites had experience with projects for juveniles or young adults. This made it easier to introduce YES to staff and to identify suitable work projects. Several youth service partners also had been involved in work programs, or they hired YES staff who brought that experience.

- **Assignment of primary supervision responsibilities to the youth service provider.** Because their budgets have been shrinking in recent years, Federal land managers rarely have the staff to supervise youth workers continually. Therefore, service providers should plan to provide the primary supervision at the job site. Among the pilot sites, the only exception to this rule is the City Lights Park Program, where youth work directly for Park Service shop supervisors. Even there, however, the youth service provider always has a counselor available on site. Land managers emphasize that such arrangements minimize the burden on their own staff and reduce any misgivings about the safety and security of programs involving court-involved youth.

- **Ability of youth service agencies to absorb some other costs of work projects.** Because of staff and budget limitations at land management agencies, youth service providers should also plan to take responsibility for transporting YES workers to and from the worksite. At the pilot sites, this task usually falls to the provider's "crew supervisor" and means that the crew's van remains available for storage and emergency transport during the day. Some youth service agencies also purchased some of the tools needed by their workers because the land manager did not have sufficient quantities or the program preferred to have its own tools.

- **Meaningful projects.** YES programs are expected to teach participants new skills and instill a sense of accomplishment. Partners at the pilot programs unanimously emphasized the importance of identifying work projects of enduring value. While YES participants sometimes help with tasks like cleaning up trash or raking leaves, this is never the sole focus. Nor do the pilot sites use work projects simply to punish offenders or fill time.

Many other factors were considered important to successful program implementation at one or two of the sites. For example, both of the pilot programs in Utah do work projects for multiple agencies, including non-Federal agencies. The program staff feel that this gives them more flexibility and spreads the responsibility for providing suitable work among several agencies. Also, although compensation of youth workers is not a necessary part of YES, staff at several of the programs feel that it has been beneficial to pay youth through wages or restitution credits. Besides serving as a performance incentive, compensation can provide some direct benefit for victims or others to whom the youth has financial obligations.

Other issues to consider in planning a YES program

The experience of the pilot programs highlights several other issues to be considered in planning a YES program. Different approaches to coping with these issues may

make sense, depending on the particular program design adopted and a jurisdiction's unique circumstances. The pilot sites themselves illustrate a range of responses.

Availability of appropriate worksites
Worksites must be located within a reasonable distance of the facility or neighborhood where youth workers reside and must have enough appropriate projects to meet their needs. For some programs, there may be an obvious match between a target population needing work and a nearby land management agency. In other instances, more creative solutions may be required. For instance, Florida's Big Cypress program has placed a YES facility on relatively remote Federal land where the work possibilities are virtually unlimited. In Utah, where no single agency could promise enough suitable, accessible work, both service providers are involving multiple partners. The Southwest Youth Center Program, foreseeing that heavy winter snows will sometimes shut down conventional projects, also plans to fill in by shoveling snow for elderly citizens.

Facility siting
Residences for troubled youth often face community resistance and zoning battles. Federal land sometimes may offer alternative sites sufficiently remote to minimize opposition. Some may even have existing structures that could be converted to program use. Even so, BCWI, the only YES program to involve a new facility and to site it on Federal property, employed a carefully coordinated strategy for informing the community about YES and involving them in the early stages. Based on the experience of the two Florida programs, jurisdictions should also keep in mind that while facilities on Federal land may avoid zoning problems, they will have to meet other guidelines—particularly environmental ones. As the Loxahatchee program discovered, new construction may not be feasible in some Federal areas.

Staffing level and supervision
YES programs need to tailor their supervision level to the type of work and the nature of the target population. In general, the pilot programs emphasize the critical importance of small work crews and close supervision. None of the programs assigns more than seven workers to a single supervisor; four to five is about average. The Big Cypress program serves the most serious offenders and prefers even smaller crews. Several YES partners also emphasized that skilled supervisors have been crucial to the success of their programs. Others specifically commended supervisors who work side by side with the youth, personally serving as models of good work habits and demonstrating that work is not punishment.

Funding
Except for the GWBGC Student Volunteer Program, the pilot programs have relied primarily on State support for their facility and operating costs. Obviously, jurisdictions vary considerably in the availability of funding for new programs. Constructing a new facility for YES may be out of the question for most. Still, several pilot programs have been developed at relatively modest cost. Programs have kept costs down by incorporating YES in a residential

program already under development (as in Florida's Loxahatchee Environmental Project and Utah's Genesis Youth Center) or by using YES to enrich services provided by existing nonresidential programs (both Washington, D.C., sites).

Integration of education and work

The pilot programs are still grappling with the best way to integrate environmental work experience with classroom education. With the help of Federal land managers, all programs provide some orientation to the purpose of work assignments. Loxahatchee land managers provide a 3-day onsite orientation for new work crews. Teachers for the BCWI youth have developed some special science lessons. Most programs, especially longer term and facility-based programs, hope to go beyond this. YES programs also need to familiarize themselves with State educational regulations governing instructional content and hours of instruction. At some sites, youth are earning educational credit for time spent on work projects or worker orientation.

Aftercare

Aftercare, or postresidential supervision and services, is usually an issue for residential YES programs that are releasing delinquent youth back into the community. YES staff need to work with aftercare personnel to ensure a smooth transition and see that youth have the supports they need. It is especially important to provide continuity between the youth development goals and objectives in the residential and nonresidential settings. If youth have been working to develop concrete vocational skills, for example, there should be a plan to build on these skills and use them upon release from the facility. Florida authorized Loxahatchee's youth service provider to take on responsibility for providing aftercare for their own graduates to facilitate links between residential and nonresidential programming.

Formal agreements or understandings

The core partners of most of the pilot sites, including the Federal land management agency, the youth service provider operating the YES program, and the State agency providing the funding (if different from the youth service provider), developed a written agreement or a Memorandum of Understanding. The agreements vary in their level of detail but cover program objectives, roles of each partner, and other parameters (such as the type of youth who will participate). Some of the programs never formally signed their agreements, but the process of drafting an agreement served to clarify mutual expectations.

Summary

The pilot sites demonstrate that YES provides a flexible and unique approach for youth-serving organizations and States that are seeking innovative ways to address the needs of their youth effectively and for Federal land managers who are facing scarce resources and overburdened workloads. For these groups, YES can be a mutually beneficial solution. DOJ and DOI are seeking to expand the YES program throughout the country. Interested parties are encouraged to use the Sources for Additional Information provided in the next section.

Sources for Additional Information

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has compiled a technical assistance package describing how to develop a YES program and how to obtain Federal assistance in identifying suitable partners among land management or youth service agencies. The *YES Technical Assistance Package* is available from the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (see order form, next page).

For further information on the YES Program or for specific programmatic questions, contact either of the following Federal agency representatives:

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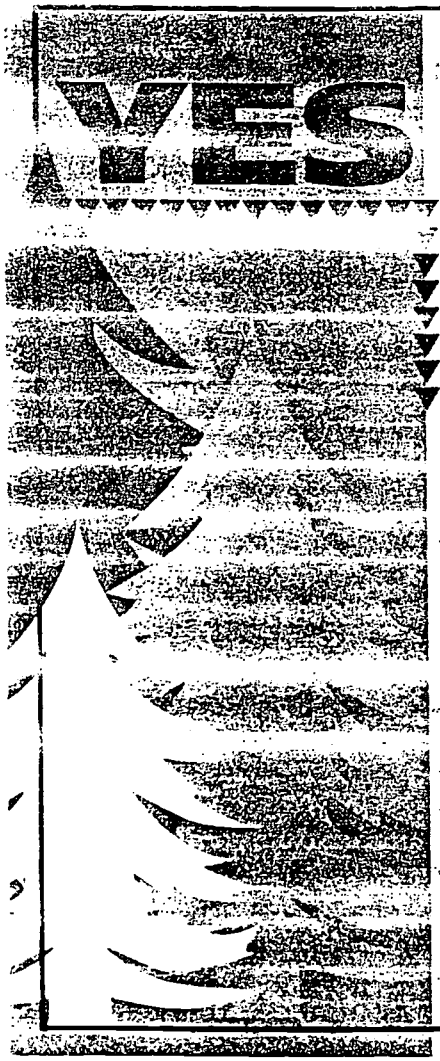

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PACKAGE

Find out how you can join forces to positively affect the lives of at-risk juveniles.

The *YES Technical Assistance Package* is designed to help youth service agencies and Federal land managers develop a YES program for their community. The package describes the steps involved in becoming a YES site and explains how to obtain Federal technical assistance during startup and implementation. The package shows you how to design environmental work programs targeted to both urban and rural at-risk and delinquent juveniles.

To order your free copy of the *YES Technical Assistance Package* (NCJ 159763), contact:

The Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849–6000
800–638–8736
Internet e-mail: askncjrs@ncjrs.org
Fax: 301–251–5212

or complete and send the following information to the address above:

Name _____

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Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone ( ) _____

Publications From OJJDP

Delinquency Prevention

Combating Violence and Delinquency: The National Juvenile Justice Action Plan. 1996, NCJ 157105 (36 pp.).

Combating Violence and Delinquency: The National Juvenile Justice Action Plan (Full Report). 1996, NCJ 157106 (200 pp.).

Delinquency Prevention Works. 1995, NCJ 155006 (74 pp.).

Family Life, Delinquency, and Crime: A Policymaker's Guide. 1994, NCJ 140517 (65 pp.).

Family Strengthening in Preventing Delinquency—A Literature Review. 1994, NCJ 150222 (76 pp.), $13.00.

Matrix of Community-Based Initiatives. 1995, NCJ 154816 (51 pp.).

Strengthening America's Families: Promising Parenting Strategies for Delinquency Prevention. 1993, NCJ 140781 (105 pp.), $9.15.

What Works: Promising Interventions in Juvenile Justice. 1994, NCJ 150858 (248 pp.), $19.00.

Missing and Exploited Children

Addressing Confidentiality of Records in Searches for Missing Children (Full Report). 1995, NCJ 155183 (284 pp.), $15.00.

The Compendium of the North American Symposium on International Child Abduction: How To Handle International Child Abduction Cases. 1993, NCJ 148137 (928 pp.), $17.50.

Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children in America, First Report: Numbers and Characteristics, National Incidence Studies (Full Report): 1990, NCJ 123668 (251 pp.), $14.40.

Obstacles to the Recovery and Return of Parentally Abducted Children. 1994, NCJ 143458 (21 pp.).

Obstacles to the Recovery and Return of Parentally Abducted Children (Full Report). 1993, NCJ 144535 (877 pp.), $22.80.

Parental Abductors: Four Interviews (Video). 1993, NCJ 147866 (43 min.), $12.50.

Using Agency Records to Find Missing Children: A Guide for Law Enforcement. 1995, NCJ 154633 (20 pp.).

Status Offenders

Curfew: An Answer to Juvenile Delinquency and Victimization? 1996, NCJ 159533 (11 pp.).

Unlocking the Doors for Status Offenders: The State of the States. 1995, NCJ 160803 (85 pp.), $16.50.

Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement Custody of Juveniles (Video). 1992, NCJ 137387 (31 min.), $13.50.

Law Enforcement Policies and Practices Regarding Missing Children and Homeless Youth. 1993, NCJ 145644 (25 pp.).

Law Enforcement Policies and Practices Regarding Missing Children and Homeless Youth (Full Report). 1993, NCJ 143397 (217 pp.), $13.00.

Courts

The Child Victim as a Witness, Research Report. 1994, NCJ 149172 (143 pp.).

Helping Victims and Witnesses in the Juvenile Justice System: A Program Handbook. 1991, NCJ 139731 (282 pp.), $15.00.

How Juveniles Get to Criminal Court. 1994, NCJ 150309 (5 pp.).

Juvenile Court Statistics 1993. 1996, NCJ 159535 (98 pp.).

Offenders in Juvenile Court, 1993. 1996, NCJ 160945 (12 pp.).

Gangs

Gang Suppression and Intervention: An Assessment (Full Report). 1994, NCJ 146494 (197 pp.), $15.00.

Gang Suppression and Intervention: Community Models. 1994, NCJ 148202 (26 pp.).

Gang Suppression and Intervention: Problem and Response. 1994, NCJ 149629 (21 pp.).

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