

The background of the slide is a soft, teal-colored landscape. It features a calm body of water in the foreground, likely a lake or a wide river, which reflects the surrounding environment. In the middle ground, there are rolling hills and mountains covered in dense evergreen forests. The sky is a pale, hazy blue, suggesting a misty or overcast day. The overall mood is serene and natural.

Veterans and the Environment

The Use of Story and Metaphor to Connect with Veterans
and to Enhance Habitat Restoration in Washington State and
in Building Community.

Introductions

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The Veterans Conservation Corps

- “All veterans are like some veterans, are like no other veterans.”
- Ecotherapy became a progressive and dynamic concept that was adapted within a program tasked with connecting diverse veteran perspectives to nature-based connections and conservation efforts.
- As a result the VCC has built a network of connections that have engaged veterans in habitat restoration efforts, agriculture, wildlife monitoring and fire prevention as volunteers, interns and employees.

Veterans and the Use of Metaphor

- Veterans are often masters of their story through metaphor
 - Used to describe the details of service
 - Used to describe any traumas associated through service
 - Used to describe the transition from trauma and one's term of service
- Often use the stories of their service to make connections that matter
- In terms of environmental advocacy, veterans can bring with them the stories of tenacity and resilience of their service to any given project or goal. (John Beal as an example)
- Healing the planet and healing themselves.

A serene landscape with a calm lake reflecting misty mountains and a forested shoreline. The scene is hazy and atmospheric, with soft light filtering through the mist. The water is still, creating a clear reflection of the surrounding environment. The mountains in the background are partially obscured by the mist, adding to the sense of depth and tranquility. The overall color palette is muted and natural, dominated by blues, greys, and greens.

The Blackberry Metaphor

The Importance of Story

- Consider the components of a story:
 - Information
 - Knowledge
 - Wisdom
- Information – There is a lot of information in the world around us but, what do we do with this stuff? What about the information related to the work you do?
- Knowledge – Comes from piecing together the bits of information to make sense of the world around us or the work in which we endeavor.
- Wisdom – Through the realization of **symbol**, **metaphor** and **association** knowledge translates to wisdom.
 - Provides a moral compass of not only what matters but **WHY** it matters.
 - Finds relevance in the meaning of our lives.

The Importance of Story

- The stories that matter
 - Expand understanding
 - Promotes transcendence
- In our stories
 - We find ourselves
 - We find each other
 - We build bridges of understanding between communities
 - We find purpose and meaning
- It is in our shared stories in which we come together to create positive change in our communities, benefitting each other, the tree, the stream, the salmon and the unseen.

VCC Internships and Individual Placements

- How do we work together to provide the space for metaphor?
- How do we work together to provide the space for healing and growth?

VCC Internships and Individual Placements

Internship Model:

- Community Partner funded positions
- Full VCC Management (Recruiting, training, conflict mitigation, follow-through, etc.)
- Intended for Community Partners with larger budgets and easier access to grant or other sources of funding, such as Federal/State agencies and large non-profits groups.

VCC Internships and Individual Placements

Individual Placement Model:

- VCC funded positions
- Full VCC Management (Recruiting, training, conflict mitigation, follow-through, etc.)
- Intended for Community Partners with limited access to financial resources, such as small State program and other small non-profit groups.
- Individual Placements receive \$1250 living stipend.
- Small Community Partner Support fee: Negotiable but not to exceed \$500/year to help with training costs some supplies and materials.
- Individual Placement terms are variable to suit needs.

A misty, blue-toned landscape with mountains and water. The scene is hazy, with soft light filtering through the fog. The mountains are in the background, and the water is in the foreground, reflecting the light. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

We Are All, Storytellers

What Story Will We Share?