



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240



JAN 31 2011

## **Personnel Bulletin No. 11-02**

### **Subject: Departmental Policy on Public Land Corps Hiring Authority**

**1. Purpose.** The purpose of this Bulletin is to change the number of hours of satisfactory service required on an appropriate conservation project from 960 hours to 640 hours to be eligible for special Public Land Corps (PLC) non-competitive hiring status. The requirement that at least 120 hours of this time be served with the PLC remains the same. This change to the total number of hours is made to provide greater opportunity to candidates who work for the PLC.

Since this bulletin will be distributed widely, we are including the entire Departmental policy in this Personnel Bulletin to increase clarity, and we are also cancelling Personnel Bulletin 09-17.

The Bulletin establishes the policy and procedures for providing former members of the PLC non-competitive hiring status for competitive positions in the DOI and for granting them credit for time served that may be used toward future federal hiring. The primary focus of this issuance is to provide guidance and instructions for utilizing the hiring authority outlined in the Public Land Corps Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2005, P.L. 109-154.

The Public Land Corps (PLC) program expands youth services opportunities and serves important conservation and societal objectives. The PLC allows the Department of the Interior (DOI) to provide education and Federal career opportunities for young U.S. citizens, while conserving and developing the Federal public lands.

**2. Scope.** The policy in this Bulletin applies to all bureaus and offices of the Department.

**3. Authority.** Title 16 USC Sec 1721-1726; Public Law 109-154, Public Lands Corps Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2005 (amends the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993).

The law states:

“The Secretary may—

- 1) grant to a member of the Public Lands Corps credit for time served with the Public Lands Corps, which may be used toward future Federal hiring; and

- 2) provide to a former member of the Public Lands Corps noncompetitive hiring status for a period of not more than 120 days after the date on which the member's service with the Public Lands Corps is complete."

#### **4. Definitions.**

**a. Corps and Public Lands Corps** means the Public Lands Corps established under section 1723 of title 16, United States Code. The Corps consists of individuals between the ages of 16 and 25. To be eligible for enrollment in the Corps, an individual shall satisfy the criteria specified in section 12591 (b) of title 42, United States Code. The Secretary may enroll such individuals in the Corps without regard to the civil service and classification laws, rules, or regulations of the United States. Corps members are not considered Federal employees during the time of their service in the Corps.

**b. Qualified Youth or Conservation Corps** means any program established by a State or local government, by the governing body of any Indian tribe, or a nonprofit organization that –

- (1) is capable of offering meaningful, full-time, productive work for individuals between the ages of 16 and 25, inclusive, in a natural or cultural resource setting;
- (2) gives participants a mix of work experience, basic and life skills, education, training, and support services; and
- (3) provides participants with the opportunity to develop citizenship values and skills through service to their community and the United States.

**c. Appropriate Conservation Project** means any project for the conservation, restoration, construction or rehabilitation of natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational or scenic resource. For purposes of this bulletin, for an appropriate conservation project to be creditable, it must have been satisfactorily completed by the participant while serving as a member of a qualified youth or conservation corp.

**d. Secretary** means the Secretary of the Interior.

**e. Noncompetitive Hiring Status** under the hiring authority means ability to apply and be considered for posted federal vacancy announcements without competing in a competitive examination or competing with career and career-conditional employees under internal merit staffing procedures for any positions for which eligible. Veteran's preference does not apply. Candidates applying under this authority will be considered with other noncompetitive candidates.

#### **5. Policy**

##### **a. Bureau Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of every bureau that has a Public Lands Corp program to determine which qualified youth or conservation corps and appropriate conservation projects are

creditable for meeting service requirements. Documentation of service must include all information stated on the attached PLC Participant Work Hours Verification form (attached), including satisfactory service, dates of projects, date of completion of the candidate's most recent PLC service project, and verification signatures.

Each bureau PLC program office will provide a Certificate of Non-Competitive Hiring Eligibility (attached) to participants who have demonstrated satisfactory service and have met the service requirements for non-competitive hiring.

#### **b. Crediting Time Served**

In accordance with Public Law 109-154, a former member of the PLC may use time satisfactorily served under an appropriate conservation project to count towards meeting qualification requirements for federal employment. Former PLC members who use time served to meet job qualifications requirements need to clearly state the duties performed under the PLC in their application(s) for federal employment, so that they may be afforded credit at the appropriate grade level. Although time served in the PLC is creditable experience for qualification purposes, it is not creditable for purposes of computations for retirement, time in grade, leave or TSP. Time served does not count towards probationary period or career tenure. Former PLC members do not accrue adverse action appeal rights based on PLC service.

#### **c. Implementing Non-Competitive Hiring Status**

##### **(1) Eligibility**

In order to be eligible for the special PLC non-competitive hiring status, the candidate must be a former member of the PLC and meet the following criteria:

- (A) Have served a minimum of 640 hours of satisfactory service on an appropriate conservation project, that included at least 120 hours through the PLC, and
- (B) Meet OPM qualification standards and any other qualification requirement(s) stated in the vacancy announcement for the position for which they are applying.

An individual's eligibility for non-competitive hiring status under this authority extends until 120 days after completion of PLC service; the 120 day timeframe cannot be extended. The appointment must be effected within this 120 day timeframe.

Positions to which candidates may be appointed are General Schedule and Federal Wage Schedule positions.

Selectees will be subject to a probationary period consistent with other competitive service positions.

##### **(2) Application and Competition**

Eligible candidates must apply to a specific vacancy announcement in order to be non-competitively considered for a competitive service position. The candidate must provide the Certificate of Eligibility for Noncompetitive Hiring Status Based on Public Land Corps Service with the application in order to be considered under this hiring authority.

A candidate is not required to compete in a competitive examination, nor is the candidate required to compete with career and career-conditional employees under internal merit staffing procedures for any positions for which eligible for non-competitive placement. Accordingly, the candidate's application is not subject to rating and ranking.

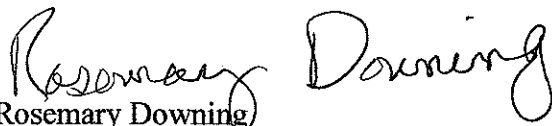
### **(3) Appointment**

Appointments under this authority must be effective within 120 days of the candidates' completion of PLC Service. Candidates selected under this PLC appointing authority will be appointed under the authority of P.L. 109-154. Such appointment will be a noncompetitive appointment and will be in accordance with all other requirements governing appointment to the competitive service.

All appointments will be subject to DOI Reemployment Priority List, Career Transition Assistance Plan and Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan provisions.

Appointments under this authority can be made for temporary, term, or permanent positions in the competitive service.

**6. Contact.** The Department point of contact on this hiring authority policy for bureau human resources headquarters is Rosemary Downing, (202) 208-4231, or [Rosemary\\_Downing@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Rosemary_Downing@ios.doi.gov). Human resources specialists in the field who have questions concerning this policy should contact their bureau headquarters.

  
Rosemary Downing  
Acting Director, Office of Human Resources

Attachments

# Public Land Corps Participant Work Hours Verification

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Four SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Start and End Dates of Project	Organization	Organization Phone Number	PLC? Yes/No	Location of Project	Project Type	Project Duties	Performance Satisfactory? Yes/No (notes)	Total Hours	Supervisor's Signature

I certify that these hours accurately represent the work I conducted on the listed projects.

I certify that these hours accurately represent the work the participant conducted on the listed projects

Participant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Certifier Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Bureau Letterhead

**Certificate of Eligibility for Noncompetitive Hiring Based on  
Public Lands Corp Service**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Individual

has satisfactorily served a minimum of 640 hours on an appropriate  
conservation project, that included at least 120 hours through the Public  
Lands Corp as of

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

and I certify he/she is eligible for non-competitive hiring until 120 days  
after the date shown above as provided by the Public Land Corps  
Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2005, P. L. 109-154.

Certified by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name  
Title  
Phone Number  
Bureau  
Department of the Interior