

## Bob Nixon



There are not too many Hollywood filmmakers or even individuals willing to give up a house on Malibu 's sunny shores to move to the polluted banks of the Anacostia, but Bob Nixon did. In 1992, Nixon moved to Washington to focus on the endangered lives and habitat of Anacostia by launching the Earth Conservation Corps ([www.earthconcorps.org](http://www.earthconcorps.org)). The goal was to connect two of the country's most threatened resources: our environment and disadvantaged young people, in the hope that both would benefit.

When Nixon arrived in D.C., the Anacostia river was so polluted and its banks piled so high with trash that you couldn't see the water from many sections of shoreline (experts estimate that each year more than a billion gallons of raw sewage have ended up in the Anacostia River .) Bob Nixon has helped to change that by collaborating with inner-city youth from Anacostia's public housing communities, (many of whom have criminal records and are high school dropouts) to volunteer for a year of AmeriCorps, the federally funded national service program in the Earth Conservation Corps. One of the many things recruits are trained to do is look for illegal dumping while they work to restore the Anacostia River and the surrounding communities.

Learning valuable life and job skills, Earth Conservation Corps members have devoted 1700 hours to restoring the Anacostia River , helping to reintroduce endangered wildlife including the Bald Eagle, owl and Sturgeon, and providing community service to neighbors and peers. For their hard work, members earn a \$9,800 stipend, health insurance, childcare benefits, and a \$4,700 education award. Since 1992, over 800 graduates have provided over a half million hours of community service while earning over \$2.5 million in AmeriCorps education awards.

Inspiring pride and pride of place, as well as setting an example for other kids, the graduates of the Earth Conservation Corps have been leaders in the restoration of the Anacostia River . The Earth Conservation Corps' most recent class lays claim to having removed over 16 tons of trash and 1,200 lbs. of invasive plants, trees, and weeds from in or along the Anacostia. They developed, planned, and got permits for the first three sections of the Anacostia Riverwalk, with the purpose of creating an enjoyable walking experience, providing an outdoor environmental education classroom, while helping to improve the river's ecosystem. In the process, they planted 2,000 trees, 30 hedges, 1,200 annuals, and numerous patches of wild grasses along the Anacostia. The corps also built stone walkways for the physically challenged, redesigned perches and cages for injured raptors, introduced 3,000 children to environmental education programs, served thousands of meals at area shelters, and so much more.

Nixon, who has worked as a conservationist for over 25 years used his talents as a film director to bring the messages of tribal peoples and field biologists from the far corners of the earth to feature film and network television audiences. His work has brought worldwide attention to crucial environmental issues and, in the process, won five Emmys and an Academy Award nomination. Currently Nixon is working with the Corps members on a documentary called **◆Endangered Species◆**, about the Earth Conservation Corps member's struggle for survival in Anacostia.

Nixon has seen many Corps members flourish through the Earth Conservation Corps program but soon learned that his role also meant dealing with tough losses. Since the program began, an average of one Earth Conservation Corps

member per year has been murdered. ♦Endangered Species♦ is dedicated to their memory. Diamond Teague is the latest victim. Teague had finished the program and planned to go to college with the scholarship he had earned. Tragically, he was shot and killed on his family's front porch in Anacostia on October 9, 2003.

Bob lives with his wife Sarah, and their three children; Bobby, Maggie, and Jack.

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