

A call for action-A National Biosecurity Corps

General

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Establish a National Biodiversity Corps: Advertise a position for a biologist and you will receive hundreds of applications. As the government invests in putting people back to work, let's not limit job creation to efforts focused on rebuilding our physical infrastructure. Build a corps of biologists working within State and Federal Departments, or with private firms focused on enhancing our basic understanding of our ecosystems. Put these biologists to work, inventorying, measuring, and mapping our natural resources. Less than 50% of the species of bacteria we detect when doing microbial work in streams have previously been characterized. We could be missing the opportunity to identify an organism (like many) that thrives on CO₂, has a by-product that is a cure for cancer, is the elixir for longevity, or the stimulus for cold-fusion. While we are working out there let's rebuild our eroded streams, halt sedimentation, and work to ensure the protection of what may become the most limiting resource, water. Let's replant stream banks, enhance buffers, and expand open space. In the process let's learn what is needed to enhance our knowledge of the relationship between our natural ecosystems, wildlife and human health. Without a thorough understanding of something as basic as the diversity of the microbial community in a stream, or the microbial population in the recesses of a cave, we may miss a harbinger of change, or the key to a better future for our children, and grand-children.