

Written Testimony for House Legacy Funding Finance Committee H.F.1800

Laura Leppink, Alumni & Vice-Chair
Northern Bedrock Historic Preservation Corps

When I joined Northern Bedrock as a Corps Member in the summer of 2017 I wasn't sure what I had signed up for. I knew I was going to learn many new skills, and spend time with other corps members, and camp at more than a few wonderful locations. What I didn't expect was that those six months would end up helping me to find my passion for historic-preservation on many different levels. I was introduced to a number of hands-on preservation skills like log restoration at the Murray County Historical Society, rehabilitating a historic school house at the Pope county Museum in Glenwood, and how to lay field stones at Semer's Beach Park in Ely.

I love hands-on work, especially wood window restoration, but it turned out that connecting with the site hosts and technical specialists was what solidified my dedication to heritage studies and historic preservation. Time spent talking with them impressed upon me the importance of place, and the impact saving these sites can have. They are more than just dots on a map, they are places that provide a sense of community and collect the stories of the many people that have passed through their walls, lie in the cemeteries, and that have made Minnesota.

After my time in the corps both the hard skills and soft skills I had learned are what enabled me to continue exploring a career in historic preservation. Because I had received such a wide introduction to trades skills, as well as skills like Inez mentioned: OSHA, Led renovator, and leave no trace training I had the opportunity to do window restoration at Point Reyes National Seashore in California and join the Western Center For Historic Preservation in Grand Teton National Park. At both locations I used the teamwork skills I had fostered alongside my fellow corps members, as well as the confidence that Northern Bedrock helped me build personally.

After spending time outside of Minnesota, I ultimately found my way back due to my love for Minnesota heritage, history, and people which was fostered during my time in the corps. I joined the Northern Bedrock Board in 2018 because I knew the great impact service-based learning had on me and I could see the impact it could have on more young people, and in Minnesota Communities. I wanted to continue to be a part of a program that fosters a love of history in many forms, connect us to the world around us as well as to the people who make these places important.

Today I work on a number of fronts teaching preservation trades classes for Rethos on things like wood window restoration and rot, completing my own restoration projects, as well as currently working at the intersection of Disability Justice and historic preservation, exploring how to make our histories and places available to everyone.

As the Vice-Chair of Northern Bedrock, my goal is to expand opportunities for our current and future corps members by reaching new places in Minnesota, meeting new hosts and technical specialists, and ensuring the opportunity to do service-based learning is available in the future. This bill will help us reach this goal, enabling us to more fully serve our corps members and Minnesota communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Laura Leppink

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