



# *Crew Journal*



*Oregon Conservation Corps  
Blue, Session 1, 2006*



Dear NYC Graduates,

It is human nature that as time goes by, memories fade and our perception of history changes. Tall tales grow taller, and in the retelling details are lost and added. In your hands is a written record of your crew's trials and tribulations during the summer of 2006. It is testimony of your successes, challenges, experiences both good and bad as well as some weird and wacky. As you sit back in the comfort of your home and relive some of those memories I encourage you to add your own notes on how you felt, what you saw and what you did.

As you embark on your next adventure, whatever it may be, remember the things you did here. Remember the challenges you faced and that nothing is impossible. All you need is a fistful of gorp, a PB&J, and some good friends. Make it happen!!!

A few of the amazing things accomplished during the 2006 field season at NYC; over 17 miles of new trail constructed, over 328 miles of existing trail maintained, 2,237 drainage structures installed, 3,400 ft. of retaining wall built, 1,222 ft. of turnpike constructed, 323 ft. of bridge built, 208 acres of trees pruned, 381 logs bucked out, and 1,513 acres of noxious weeds eradicated.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Waksmundski". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. It is positioned over a light blue rectangular background.

Joe Waksmundski  
NYC Field Director



**National Forest or area that the work took place: Rogue River  
Ranger District: Ashland Ranger District  
Project Name- Brown Mountain Horse Trail**

Week 1: Date June 19-June 23

Monday: Our crew met up this weekend at Elijah Bristow State Park for the first time. Did our orientation. After orientation we headed out to our first work site/campsite near Brown Mt. Set up our tents, did SEED and went to bed. During the weekend we played oh so ko and birdie on a perch which was crazy. We did training through rotations as well. –Joe D.

Tuesday: This week we are maintaining eight miles of trail at Brown Mountain east of Medford. We are duffing, widening, removing rocks, trimming trees and re-naturalizing. The trail is used by equestrians during the warm months and snowmobiles during winter. Among the more difficult sections of trail was a steep uphill that needed switchbacks to be dug in. Not only has the trail been untouched by maintenance workers but it has also been torn up by ATV's thus it is important for us to clear up the trail. –David L.

Wednesday: Our crew goals for the week are to put in new signs and do a few re-routes that we are doing. Both of them are through heavy rocky areas. Also we are digging post holes for new trail head signs. Also we

are striving to have good PMA and to build everlasting companionship and friendship. –Sam P.S.

Thursday: This week our crew is learning the basics. We're just now figuring out how to create a quality trail. So far we seem to have a hard time keeping our blood circles clear of humans! I think that as we get better, we will be able to pick up the pace and still produce good trail which is nice. An interesting thing that happened today is as we were driving on a dirt road we came upon a doe and her two fawns. It's really rare for a doe to have two fawns. One was really wobbly and it fell down on the road so our rover had to go and pick it up at least he had gloves on. –Ryan M.

Friday: On Monday the crew experienced their first work day. We survived. On Tuesday we faced our first real challenge in the form of a switchback. We plowed through it and our new trail is definitely something to be proud of. On Wednesday we celebrated "hump day" with awesome pancakes for breakfast. We also split up for the first time, three people went with Matt to put signs in and seven of us went with Cole to bust out trail. On Thursday we split up for the second time, but this time only Joe went with Matt and the rest of us fixed up one of Steve's favorite trails, all 2.5 miles of it. Today we continued Wednesday's work because we were back on the old trail. It was all 12 of us together again, so we did quite a bit of work including ripping a few massive stones out of the ground. (we guessed that one of the biggest was 400 pounds, big effort on that one.) So that was our first week. –Austin B.

**National Forest or area that the work took place: Rogue River  
Ranger District: Ashland  
Project Name- Brown Mountain**

Week 2: Date June 26<sup>th</sup>-June 30<sup>th</sup>

Monday: Blue crew faced a lot of drama this weekend. Saturday morning was relaxed and easy going. The first stop was Fred Meyer's for the store stop. Then we went to the local YMCA poorer in money but richer in sugary snacks. After our free showers we went to the dry cleaners and phoned our family and friends while our clothes were being washed. (I called my mom.) The real drama started after we got back to camp. There was a lot of talk about leaving all week from Nate and Sam was getting fed up, so when Greg got hit by a football and threatened to punch Sam, Sam and Nate decided to take any excuse they could and left. So the rest of the day was spent attempting to convince them not to and when that failed, saying our goodbyes and discussing how this would affect the rest of the crew in the afternoon. Sunday was spent with nine of us in camp. (Matt broke his day off on Saturday so he could drive Sam and Nate to the bus on Sunday.) Mostly we just moped around but eventually we went swimming, did chores, had SEED, and talked about the week to come. As it turned out we weren't as messed up hours wise as we thought. Good Times. –Austin B.

Tuesday: This week we continued our work from last week; trail work, which we finished the trail today. The rest of the week we will be working on specialty projects our contacts gave us. Mosquitoes stink a lot. –Joe D.

Wednesday: We went to find two wheel barrels up in the woods and we did some trail work and cut down some trees. We had a lot of fun because we did a lot of different projects so we were very very happy we did all that work. We even rode around in the car a lot. Dwight was a really cool guy. We made a drainage system and we had to dig through the trail. We went to get rocks to put in the draining systems. –Greg

Thursday: This week we learned about the water and rock cycles in SEED, when working we learned about historical figures, animals, how messed up Matt's brain is and we learned about all of these things through guessing games that we played while working on our project. –Grant

Friday: Ahh...the end of the week is always so nice! On Monday we did our first day of work as a 10 person crew. We had planned on working 9 hours but one of our members got really sick and was taken off the clock and we ran out of water so the clock stopped at 8 hours of work. By Tuesday we finished our 8 mile contract which was great so for the rest of the week we got to look forward to doing little projects to make our trail that much better. Our first project was to fix a bridge that had been built poorly so we fixed it by collecting large stones from a nearby lava field and creating a new embankment with them. On Wednesday we put in signs, laid bark on some rocky trail and learned how to make drainage dips. On Thursday we had to go back and fix the drainage dips because the contact wanted a different style but it was still fun. We also did some trail but mostly a lot of limbing! We also finished a re-route by adding drainage dips on Friday (Yes!) We only worked 4 hours but it was all limbing the trail looked great and all afterwards its just looking up for 4 hours your neck hurts! So once we got back we actually broke down camp for the first time and headed out on the road which places me here in the laundry mat washing some clothes that will be moderately clean for about 1 day all the while surrounded by my 7 other smelly crew members and two leaders. All things considered I'm looking forward to week 3, the up coming weekend site and in a couple more weeks home. –Ryan M.

**National Forest or area that the work took place: Umpqua  
Ranger District: Diamond Lake  
Project Name: Diamond Lake Hazardous Fuel Planning**

Week 3: Date July 3<sup>rd</sup>-July 7<sup>th</sup>

Monday: This weekend our crew went on rec. trips one van went to a Lost Creek Reservoir and the other went to Crater Lake. Most of us split up during free time because we are getting irritated with each other. To finish off Saturday we had a parents weekend for when we returned from our rec. trips. On Saturday night we had our Saturday circle. Sunday we all cleaned and took down camp, then went to our new locations. –Joe D.

Tuesday: This week Blue crew is making slash piles. We are camped near Diamond Lake but I don't know what city we are closest to. Our work here is really important because it restores a part of the natural fire cycle that has been disrupted by modern fire fighting laws and regulations. I hope we do a good job because it could cause serious repercussions if we screw up. –Austin B.

Wednesday: (Our crew's goals for the week) Make more slash piles than yellow crew, don't die, complete our contract. Have nobody quit, peace and harmony throughout the group and the world.

Because we're all guys and extremely competitive

Because dying is bad and scary

With a completed contract you get sodas and more money, and it makes Joe not mad.

Because we don't want to lose anyone again and we wouldn't be able to finish our contract.

Because we work better that way.

Thursday: The blue crew has learned how to build a really good slash pile. The slash piles are 4 feet wide by 6 feet long and about 5 and a half feet high. Another thing that our crew learned is how to make the tarps. The length of the tarp we cut were 8 feet long and about six feet wide. The contact told us how they burn the slash piles. They burn every third pile, after that every second pile and of course every first pile. That is what we learned for the week. –Jessie F.

Friday: This week we had a slash piling contract in the Diamond Lake area. After two weeks of trail maintenance, switching to slash piling was more of a mental challenge than a physical one. Unlike our previous assignment working on burn piles meant that we would be covering little ground, staying in the same area all week, focusing on a specific aspect of forest work and of course battling mosquitoes. On top of this we were a nine-man crew, working the hours of ten. However in true Blue crew fashion we came out swinging, got the job done, and finished in style. The switch over from trail to burn piles proved to be a refreshing change. Looking back on our finished product at the end of the week was quite gratifying, as we had had a profound effect on the forest. Mosquitoes were thwarted with a little bit of slapping, a little bit of (balaclava?) wearing, and a large amount of bug spray. Despite working a man down we finished all of our hours, and completed 153 burn piles.

The blue crew was undaunted by the challenges presented in the third week, and is proud of its numerous accomplishments as it looks forward to the thrilling adventures of the next week. –David L. (while driving in the very bumpy van #31 somewhere out on the highway)

Week 4 Date July 10<sup>th</sup>-July 15<sup>th</sup>

**National Forest or area that the work took place: Rogue  
Ranger District: Prospect  
Project Name- Rogue Umpqua Divide Wilderness**

Monday: On Friday, blue crew did 4 hours of slash piling. When we got back, we broke camp, and headed for the weekend site. We stopped in Medford for about two hours to stock up on personal items, do our laundry, call friends and family and take our weekly shower. We got to the weekend site and went through the normal set up routine on Saturday, we did chores and went on various rec. trips. Upon return some kids visited with their parents while preparing dinner for all crew and their guest. After dishes, we strutted our stuff for the guests in the NYC fashion show. After the show, and many goodbyes, we circled up for Saturday circle in which every NYC employee shared their most difficult moment with everyone else. Saturday circle was the last of the days activities. On Sunday we broke camp, packed up, gave our outgoing mail to Scotty and then found out where we were going. We ended up in the Rogue National Forest, where we set up camp and prepared ourselves for the week ahead. –Joe W.

Tuesday: This week blue crew is doing some trail maintenance duffing, brushing, limbing and creating all sorts of drainage. For the first part of the trail we had a ditch paralleling the trail. We've done a few drainage dips and we've made log checks which we've never done before! For the log checks we have to cut down trees. Strip them of their bark then drive wooden stakes in on the down hill side of the logs with the back of a hazel hoe. The trail is all the way uphill but we have a nice relaxing drive to and from the trail and at least the trail is short and really scenic. I think tomorrow I will bring my camera. –Ryan

Wednesday: This week we are working on a section of trail in the Umpqua area. Our top priority is to make as much of the trail look as beautiful as we can. This includes hiking up to over 5,500 feet where we can nearly touch the clouds; duffing amongst the mosquitos which we repel by lathering our bodies in pure DEET; and building check dams all the way. Although the Blue crew has it's group goals, each member is striving towards the realization of their own dreams; Joseph would like to kill every tree in the forest, Matt would like to be written up by MAD magazine and Scotty would just like to figure out what item he should bring around the world...-David L

Thursday: This week I learned what item I would like to bring around the world... I also learned not to mess with Cole!! The group also learned that mosquitoes are just as hard core as us. Another thing that I learned is living with ten guys for four weeks isn't that bad. I thought that it was going to be horrible. It has its advantages and disadvantages. So sometime before this session is over he's going to mess with me and he's going to get paid back hard core. Well this week is about over and so is this journal. –Jessie F.

Friday: This week we worked on serious trail. We put in millions of water dams. Our challenges included dealing with new physical challenges and even harder mental challenges. Sometimes the crew doesn't get along and we fight, however I think on the whole we are doing pretty well. Another challenge is our weird crew leaders. Once they went to check the trail really quickly and when they came back they had a surprise. They hit us with snow balls! I guess that there was snow up in them hills; that or they met a snow cone vendor and bought swell of snow flakes. And they hit us. Oh those crew leaders are sure some cords. –Austin B.

**National Forest or area that the work took place: Umpqua  
Ranger District: Diamond Lake  
Project Name- Diamond Lake Hazardous Fuel Reduction**

Week 5: Date July 17<sup>th</sup>-July 21<sup>st</sup>.

Monday: We arrived at Jim Creek industrial camp and set up our tents; after that we did chores. Then we had free time after dinner then we went to bed. Cole did wake up call with a chain saw we then did chores and then went on rec. trips, then we came back and yellow crew made dinner, after dinner we did the crew Olympics and Saturday circle, then we did the Sunday morning stuff. –Grant S.

Tuesday: We have returned to Diamond Lake where we are continuing to slash pile. As we did week 3, we are clearing the forest of excess brush and over crowded trees. This provides for a healthy forest that isn't over crowded or sickly. The area we are working in consists of rolling hills as well as beautiful views of both Diamond Lake and the local sewage plant. So as we strive to top Orange crew's record of 105 slash piles, we work hard, breathe deep, drink water, and enjoy our final week of NYC. –David L.

Wednesday: Blue crew's goal for the week is to shatter all previous crew records for slash piling and to blow Orange crew out of the water. Last week Orange crew made 205 slash piles, destroying our previous week's record of 153. This week we hope to make at least 254 and we are well on our way with an average pace of 60 piles per day and astounding 182 piles at the end of Wednesday. We hope to beat 205 tomorrow and eat Orange Crew's record for breakfast on Friday. (Or just pack it in the shotgun and have it for lunch.) –Austin B.

Thursday: Our crew learned how to make an insane amount of slash piles in a week. We have made 238 in 4 days. We have learned to make slash piles faster and more efficiently. This week has been rather easy because we have already done this before. We also learned how to deal with the people in our crew a lot better. –Joe D.

Friday: On the fifth week Blue crew made slash piles near Diamond Lake. Actually let me make a correction to that; we ATE through brush piles like a buffalo through CHEESECAKE!! We were an unstoppable slash piling force of NATURE! We had a total of 280 brush piles, beating Orange crew's record by 75 piles. Joe D. and Ryan "the machine" teamed up all week to stack over 100 pikes between themselves. The human blurrs that are blue crew, rocked the steep mountainside all week and had a great time doing it. But even in the rushed piling we managed to stay safe. Mostly. Greg slipped and hurt his ankle on Monday and his leg cramped so badly on Thursday morning that he was moving slug speed for the next day and a half (but we still love him.) and I got slapped by an angry tree branch but no serious injuries. All in all a pretty fun week. – Austin B.

### ***My Most Challenging Day At NYC Was...***

My most challenging day at NYC was during the 5<sup>th</sup> week on Tuesday when myself and Ryan set a goal of making 12 ½ slash piles each, a total of 25 piles in one day. We met our goal within the last 25 minutes and then exceeding it by making 13 piles each. To me that day was most challenging because slash piling is just about the most boring and tedious task in the world. One of the most challenging things for me during the day is seeing others slack while I work or keeping myself from slacking during the day. Another challenging day for me was taking out a 500lb. rock, we ended up having to pry out this massive rock with a rock bar and two bear bars. It took about 3 hours of the day with 4 people to remove it. I believe that the most challenging thing during an NYC day is to motivate yourself during the day. –Joe D.

### ***My Three Favorite NYC Experiences Were...***

My favorite experience of NYC is the second Saturday with my first rec trip and then coming into camp and seeing my parents and then hanging out with my parents for the rest of the night. My other two favorites are the talent show and going to the redwoods on a rec. trip. These are my three favorite moments because they all gave me a happy feeling inside. My favorite moment made me happy because that Saturday there was drama and I got to go swimming with my friends for a long time. Plus I got to see my parents for the first time in 2 weeks.

### ***One Thing I Will Always Remember...***

Throughout my time at NYC I have had many memorable moments but one that really sticks out is when I first got here and I realized that I had to chance to really find myself. I'll explain what I mean when I say "find myself." You see throughout your life you unfortunately to some degree are affected by your surrounding and you ultimately are changed and so you then miss represent who you really are. As you grow up you have your reputation represent you as someone else. Some of us are more or less affected than others but none the less it still has made it hard to make new friends, to try and have a perfectly fresh start because eventually your past will catch up with you. So in time you end up reverting to your old false self and you can never really gain a sense of who you really are. NYC I believe is one of the few chances we ever really get in our lives to truly have a clean slate!! So I decided to capitalize on the situation and go on a spiritual adventure to find out who the real me was. And throughout the past four weeks I believe I have discovered who I am and in the process I have made bonds with the unique individuals of my crew that are stronger than any others I have ever had. Oh in the end I believe it is those bonds, those true, genuine bonds I have made in this tiny fraction of my life that will prove to be the most lasting of my memories. Friends I made when I was the true me.

### ***From Now On I Will Always...***

There are many lessons that I will take home with me at the end of the five weeks. Among these are the more practical aspects of NYC; Always bomb proof your tent, don't leave the propane on, always do what your woods boss says. Etc. However aside from these my experience as a Northwest Youth Corps member has helped me to develop my sense of responsibility and that is something I will carry with me for the rest of my days. It hold true for life, as well as NYC, that if you want something done, you will most likely have to do it yourself. With each passing day at NW youth corps the principle of self motivation becomes engrained in one's mind. There is always work to be done, whether you are on the clock or not, and it is your willingness to accept the challenges at hand that defines both what the Youth Corps is to you and what you are to the Youth Corps.

Beyond NYC, similar responsibilities await each graduating corpsmember. Personally, with the knowledge NYC has given me, and the confidence it has built, I know that I will be ready for every challenge I will face. As I leave NYC I know that I will always accept the obstacles in my life. I also know that with an open mind and true dedication, I will never fall short of success.

### ***At NYC I Learned...***

I have learned many things at NYC these past 4 ½ weeks, (today is Wednesday) mostly about co-existence with nature and how to live comfortably in nature, and how to deal with people's nature, but I also learned about the nature of myself and the limits of my body. Before getting here I would have laughed at anyone who tried to get me to wake up at 4:30 in the morning in 35-40 degree weather and make pancakes for eleven people, but now I jump at the chance. Well, maybe not jump but at least a hop. I have also learned new skills, like how to cook food in a dutch oven, and how to light a burner with one match and without burning myself (something I am especially proud of.) But to accompany what I have learned about myself and all the skills I have acquired, I have also learned how to exist happily, or at least put up with situations where I might not be comfortable or are downright torturous. Like working a 9 hour day in 95 degree heat with clouds of mosquitoes waiting for you in the shade. Or simple comfort things like how to efficiently tie tarps and how to enjoy the great outdoors and what to use for nature wipes. But with all my new found skills and tempered body and ability to "rough it" I am still going to be very happy to go home. Nuff said.