



DATE: Aug 25, 2010

News: KMUD Local News, 6:00 pm edition

Visitors and avid hikers to the Six Rivers National Forest have more to enjoy, thanks to a group of youth ages 16-19 from the Northwest Youth Corps (NYC) whom have been working in the area for the last two weeks. Wearing bright red hard hats, swinging a variety of hand tools, and sweating away in their blue work shirts; the crew is in the Smith River National Recreation Area repairing and maintaining trails.

The Kelsey Trail, built in the 1850s, is a scenic trail that was once a mule train trail that ran from Crescent City and ended at Fort Jones. Now this trail is being maintained by the 10 person Northwest Youth Corps crew. The youth are clearing out logs and removing unwanted vegetation to improve the trail system

Joe Waksmundski is the director of the Youth Corps program. He said now is the time to get involved.

Joe Waksmundski. The Northwest Youth Corps has been in existence since 1984. We are the largest conservation corps in the Pacific Northwest. We run programs in Northern California, throughout Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. As well as we run Fall and Winter programs in Arizona. Folks who are eligible for our programs, specifically the youth corps aspect of it, are youth between 14-19 years old as corps members, and then staff are 20 years and above are eligible to be staff.

Terri Klemetson: You told me that when people enter the program they live outside for of 4-6 weeks. They can participate in a whole range of activities. What happens when you join the youth corps?

Joe Waksmundski So there is going to be an orientation where we bring together 40 young men and women from around the region and throughout the United States. They are divided into 4 crews of 10. Those crews go out and camp out again for 4-6 weeks at a time. They are going to participate in projects such as trail construction, trail maintenance, building bridges, fence building, the eradication of obnoxious weeds, habitat management, fire reduction, those sorts of projects. Basically they are going to

be camping and living in the outdoors the entire time, they are going to be making their own food, moving projects 1 or 2 weeks, and then go to another project. After the 4-6 session is over, they have a big graduation and then they move onto the next challenge in life.

Terri Klemetson: Can you talk about people who participated previously, how does this help them with their career or gain skills to go onto some other path.

Joe Waksmundski. A lot of the folks who completed our participated programs continue in the natural resources realm. They are eligible for jobs with the forest service, the BLM, state parks and Rec. This is a really good recommendation because since we are working with these contacts everyday, they can see the hard work that these youth put in the program. So that helps them get a leg up on other folks. It's also a very good reference because folks have shown that commitment and they have been out there for four to six weeks.

As well for a lot of younger folks, it's a first time work experience so it gives them the opportunity to get them skills on their resume when they may not have had many job opportunities available at such a young age. So its basically not just a great opportunity to stay in the natural resources realm, but if they choose other areas, they can get a great recommendation and show that they have the commitment to stick through such a program.

Terri Klemetson:That was Joe Waksmundski he's the director of the Youth Corps program. He said they are hiring for their fall conservation corps, to apply or learn more about the Northwest Youth Corps visit www.northwestyouthcorps.org.