

Summer Green Force Conservation Crews Improve San Mateo County Parks

A whirlwind of activity took place at five San Mateo County Parks this summer. Three crews of eight to ten hard-working high school-aged youth performed many important improvements to the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, Flood, Huddart, San Bruno Mountain, and San Pedro Valley County Parks. These crews, supervised by trained crew leaders and County park rangers energetically brushed, raked and rocked trails, prepped and painted baseball field bleachers, reduced fuel load and increased safety by thinning and pruning dead tree branches, readied a long-closed day camp site for fall use, and eliminated social trails to allow for habitat restoration.



Four enthusiastic partners made the Green Force Conservation Crew possible. The San Mateo County Parks Foundation (www.supportparks.org) provided critical funding for the planning and implementation of the program. Job Train (www.jobtrainworks.org), using ARRA funding, hired the youth and served as their employer. The Student Conservation Association (www.thesca.org) recruited and trained the crew leaders and crew members. And San Mateo County Parks provided the venue, project logistics and was the beneficiary of the fine work done by the crews.



This partnership resulted in multiple benefits for the crew members. They were provided an out-of-doors adventure while performing important park maintenance work. They were engaged in nature while learning the importance of being good land stewards. They learned to work as a team which will help them in any career they ultimately chose. This experience will remain part of their lives whether or not they choose this to be their career track.

These experiences help develop the next generation of park professionals. Often County Parks hires park rangers who have been seasonal workers or volunteers. And as many park professionals are reaching retirement age, we need to expose more young people to the rewards of working for County Parks. It's very likely that we'll see more of these impressive youth. Several have already applied to continue with the County Park system as Park Aides.

For summer 2010, we'd like to continue this very worthwhile program. We would like to offer more green entry level jobs for another group of teenagers and young adults from San Mateo County. We also want to continue to rehabilitate trails and improve facilities for park users.

Please join us as a Sponsor of the Green Force Conservation Crew Program!

If you would like to learn more about the program, contact Cecily Harris, Financial Services Manager, at (650) 363-4027 or charris@co.sanmateo.ca.us.

If you would like to make a donation, please click here www.supportparks.org for the San Mateo County Parks Foundation.

Media: http://www.insidebayarea.com/sanmateocountytimes/localnews/ci_12763631
<http://baynature.org/articles/web-only-articles/the-san-bruno-mountain-green-force>