



Allegheny Brambles

An informational article about the Allegheny National Forest

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Youth Conservation Corps – Working and Learning

Hikers Benefit from Trail Maintenance Performed by Young Workers on the Bradford Ranger District

Bradford, Pa. – “I need the rock bar up here,” said the young man. “I can’t move this rock at all,” he emphasized. The teen-aged girl grabbed the pry bar. Together the two carefully moved the rock to the side of the trail to an indentation in the ground so it wouldn’t roll down hill. They ‘high-fived’ each other, and then moved to another big rock. And such was the summer of 2006 for five young people from the Bradford area. Safe, fun, educational work.

The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) is an 8-week program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Forest Service to employ high school youth ages 14-18 in outdoor work programs. The Bradford crew this year consisted of **Kyle Meley**, **Tyler Sweet** and **Joe Papalia** from Warren, **Matt Hagg** from Smethport, and **Samantha Mays** from Westline. The crew completed work projects, educational sessions, and field trips that instilled a work ethic and a new appreciation for the natural resources of the Allegheny National Forest area.

Safety is a primary concern; each day started with a ‘tailgate’ safety session where the crew leader covered the types of hazards the crew might encounter. This year the YCC crew built rock steps on the Tanbark Trail that involved digging and moving large rocks. The youth tackled litter pick up at dispersed recreation sites and roads leading to major recreation areas around the Allegheny Reservoir.

Examples of this year’s daily work and learning projects included:

- maintenance of archeological site grounds with on-site education from the archeologist crew leader Kelly Ristau;
- job shadowing with archeologists and wildlife biologists;
- working with the timber crew to become familiar with the timber sale marking process;

- removal of tubes used to protect seedling trees and promote their growth;
- maintenance of wildlife openings by removing invading vegetation; and
- reclamation on a stone pit to return it to a more natural setting.

The educational portion of their work experience included field trips to natural resource based facilities: the Jamestown Audubon Society, an educational program at Oil Creek State Park near Franklin, the Lumberman Museum near Coudersport, and a tour of the Kinzua Dam sponsored by the Army Corps of Engineers.

The Bradford YCC crew participated this year in a “Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics” class taught by Eric Flood, the Allegheny National Forest’s wilderness specialist. The crew experienced outdoor camping by actually doing some “back-in-the-woods” overnight camping complete with campfire with Forest Service employees, the Marienville Ranger District YCC crew, and a Youth Corps crew from Buffalo, New York.

YCC is a great place to work and learn!

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