

Alternative Spring Break on the Shawnee National Forest!

Shawnee National Forest offers ***Alternative Spring Break*** opportunities for students at universities, high schools, and middle schools. Discover what the lands of the Shawnee National Forest can provide for you and your school for an experiential service project possibility! Participants will travel to the beautiful Shawnee National Forest and work alongside Forest Service representatives to tackle trail maintenance and construction projects that help maintain the integrity of the ecosystem and watershed and support a large system of trails that winds through the hills, valleys, and bluffs of the Shawnee National Forest.

The Shawnee National Forest Volunteer Program can provide all camping gear for groups up to 12 people, which includes a full-kitchen (e.g., stove, pots and pans, utensils, plates), sleeping bags and pads, and tents. The skills learned as participants complete service projects will include working with hand tools (pulaskis, mcleods, axes, loppers, and shovels) to complete projects such as clear brush from trails, make full-bench cut trail, build retaining walls and correct issues with drainage by installing features such as causeways. The projects are endless and skills learned are invaluable. Whether you learn how to swing an axe, camp in the woods, or learn efficient and team-oriented ways to effectively complete a service project, it's a great opportunity for everyone—not to mention it looks great on a resume!

Past Alternative Spring Break participants have included such groups as Southern Illinois University (Registered Student Organizations, the Parks and Recreation Department, and the SIU Extern Program), University of Illinois Alternative Spring Break Program, and Fieldcrest Middle School from Wenona, Illinois. Each group was hosted during a different week in the spring and went away with increased knowledge for how to build and maintain trail and a heightened appreciation for the natural world, especially that of southern Illinois. Some students had never camped or worked on trail before, but they gained the knowledge and confidence to contribute to future trail projects or to join the greater movement of volunteers in this country.

Alternative Spring Breaks are a great way to bring together people that have a lot or little in common and challenge them to make a difference and have a positive impact on their public lands as a unified group.

Give us a call and discover what the Shawnee National Forest Volunteer Alternative Spring Break experience has to offer you and your group!

Murphysboro Work Center
618-687-1731 ext. 125 or email shawneevolunteercorps@yahoo.com for more information.

See you on the trail!