

FY2012 Partnerships Report

ROGUE RIVER-SISKIYOU NATIONAL FOREST

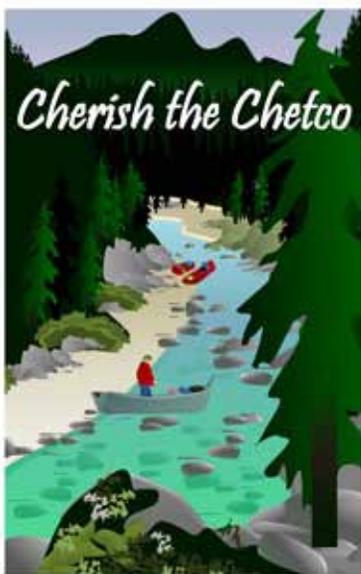
The RRS is involved with approximately 130 groups and organizations along with numerous individual volunteers, which provide an estimated total partnership value in fiscal year 2012 was \$3,888,225.

The value of new grants and agreements in 2012 totaled \$2, 955,335. Forest contributions constituted 53% of total (\$1,569,458) and partner contributions comprised 47 % of total (\$1,385,876).

The estimated value of services provided to the Forest through Youth, Hosted, and Volunteer activities totaled \$932,890.

1. Youth/Hosted programs: 1648 Participants, 28,346 Hours, \$617,659 value
2. Volunteer programs: 125 volunteers, 14,467 Hours, \$315,231 value

CHERISH THE CHETCO: stewardship, learning, and fun on a Wild & Scenic River



Southwest Oregon hosts one of the highest concentrations of National Wild & Scenic Rivers in America. The Forest Service and community partners seek to work together across the watersheds of our local Wild & Scenic Rivers to implement restoration and stewardship projects that will improve watershed conditions and recreational opportunities.

The South Coast Watershed Council based in Gold Beach, Oregon recently partnered with the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest to organize “Cherish the Chetco”, a two- day special event promoting stewardship of the National Wild and Scenic Chetco River. In addition to being part of the federally protected Wild and Scenic Rivers system, the Chetco River supplies drinking water for local communities, supports wild salmon and steelhead populations, and offers abundant recreation opportunities.

The successful event engaged six public agencies; twelve diverse community organizations, and one hundred and forty volunteers. In addition to the volunteers, nearly three hundred people attended “Cherish the Chetco” activities —a high number for small, rural communities on the southern Oregon coast.

Youth —ranging from elementary school to high school—were involved as participants and volunteers. Watershed council staff invited five hundred students through outreach in classrooms and recruited six student groups for service projects including sign-making, event set-up, river clean up, and catering a volunteer picnic.



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"I think the event was a great success," watershed council event coordinator Ann Vileisis said. "I think we had a good turnout. I think everyone had a really good time." Ann added, "It was a gorgeous day. The weather worked out perfect. It was warm enough to swim ... lots of kids were snorkeling and playing with boats, really enjoying it,"

"Cherish the Chetco" began with a standing-room-only evening event at the local library. The Friday night kick-off set a positive tone with inspiring speakers, film, displays and refreshments.

Field-based service projects began early the next morning at several locations in the Chetco watershed. Volunteers removed trash from gravel bars and noxious weeds from river banks. Service projects were followed by an afternoon river fair at Redwood Bar, a popular Chetco River recreation area. Families were invited to pack a picnic and enjoy an afternoon of fun and educational activities.

Participants enjoyed snorkeling, angling activities at aquatic invertebrate and aquatic others. The 40 foot long "salmon tent" setting and playfully engaged children salmon and other river and forest animals. families to experience different watercraft and paddle boards. River guides, the local Sheriff's Department, and boat rental businesses collaborated to incorporate important water safety instruction.



Cherish the Chetco participants learn about salmon and other aquatic species in the 40 'long "salmon tent"



Watercraft experts introduced families to kayaks, drift boats, rafts, and paddle boards after they completed a required water safety session

Cherish the Chetco organizers are exploring opportunities for a similar event on the Wild and Scenic Elk River, located approximately sixty miles north of the Chetco River, near Port Orford, Oregon. Through stewardship, learning and fun, we will continue to work collaboratively toward the vision of healthier local watersheds with better fish habitat, enhanced diversity of ecosystems, improved recreation management and local economic benefits from increased recreation and tourism opportunities and restoration jobs.

FOCUS ON YOUTH

"It gets you out in the woods, it's good money, and it looks good on my resume. When you're stuck in a small town for the summer, this is great," said 11th grader Colton Hanson of Butte Falls of his experience last summer in the Sky Lakes Wilderness. Colton and eleven other youth from Upper Rogue area high schools were members of a crew sponsored by the Upper Rogue Watershed Association to restore trails impacted by the 2008 Lonesome Fire on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest's High Cascades Ranger District.

Utilizing experienced crew leaders from the Lomakatsi Restoration Project, the two week long project allowed the crew to gain experience in backcountry safety, using tools, proper methods for trail tread repair, and working as a team toward a common goal. Funding for the project came from Secure Rural Schools Act Title II through the Rogue-Umpqua Resource Advisory Committee. "Besides the work experience and \$12.50 per hour wages, the kids got a lot of education on wilderness ecology and the effects of fire, and probably found out a few new things about both their physical and mental make-up as well," said Peter Mazzini, coordinator of the Upper Rogue Watershed Association (URWA).



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"Most of them respond very positively to the work — and to being away from TV and computers — and they like getting to be in the wild. Some have never camped before. If they do well, they can use us as a job reference," says crew leader Aaron Nauth. The project, says Nauth, is part of Lomakatsi's mission of youth education, and training a workforce that can be called on for future projects.

Beginning August 13, after an orientation session and review of camping gear and safety briefing by Forest Service staff and Lomakatsi crew leaders, the crew set off on a five mile hike to their base camp at McKie Meadow. Over the next two weeks, they repaired tread, installed water bars, cut encroaching vegetation and armored approaches at eroded stream crossings. Their work was all accomplished safely with hand tools, teamwork and sweat.

Their effort resulted in over 12.5 miles of the Tom and Jerry, McKie Camp, Mudjekeewis, Halifax, Stuart Falls and Pacific Crest Trails restored to Forest Service standards. "After the fire went through the area we had poor drainage issues from snow melt and rain", says Les Moscoso, recreation staff for the High Cascades Ranger District. "The water bars and drainage dips they have installed will greatly improve these trails' resistance to erosion. The brushing work is also important as the vegetation responds to the post-fire landscape. They have picked up a lot of skills and work ethics over the course of the project. Hopefully this work can translate into other jobs for these folks. For example, they can work on fire crews, who are using a lot of the same tools this crew was using."

Prospect 12th grader Josh Larson says, "I enjoy the woods, and this definitely gave me skills, possibly for logging work."

"We had a great experience with this group of kids," said URWA coordinator Mazzini, "and our Title II funding will enable us to replicate it again in 2013. It's important to my association, Lomakatsi and the Forest Service that we reconnect our youth to their watershed, give them an opportunity to experience and explore areas in their own backyards that they are unaware of, and grow the next generation of stewards and workers from the local area."



Demonstrating proper use of hand tools during orientation



*URWA Trail Crew working on stream crossing, Sky Lakes Wilderness, August, 2012
(Photos courtesy of Aaron Nauth, Lomakatsi Restoration Project)*



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