

Central California Consortium



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...And More!

By Lily M. Nieves

"2009 was a great year for the Central California Consortium (CCC). We celebrated the successful completion of about 135 diverse student interns during our 13th Intern Awards Ceremony. We are proud of our interns and the important work that they are accomplishing for the agency. We have been fortunate to receive grants such as the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council and the Fresno County Resource Advisory Committee (RAC), which allowed us to hire high school students in summer crews. In 2010, we will be building on our success, as new projects will include hiring more youth for our Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) summer crews and community members for our American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (AARA) work projects."

- James Oftedal
CCC Director

Another Successful Year...135 Interns Placed!

- By Jorge Silva

It was another record breaking year for the Central California Consortium (CCC), as the program placed 135 students into paid internships throughout California, Washington, and Oregon. Students completed internships in civil engineering, wildlife biology, recreation, firefighting, and business to name a few. The majority of these students are placed through the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP). This year, the CCC enhanced student workshops by providing more workshops during the student orientation, including leadership, networking, professionalism in the workplace, and career presentations.

The CCC formally celebrated the completion of its interns at the 13th Annual Intern Awards Ceremony on August 5, 2009. Students presented on their summer internship experiences to an audience of Forest Service employees, community partners, family and friends. Rene Villanueva, a SCEP program student who just converted into a career Law Enforcement position, served as the keynote speaker and shared his inspirational story. Jorge Silva, CCC STEP, stated, "This experience has opened my eyes to a new world of career possibilities that I did not know existed. I now see a career with the Forest Service as a real possibility!" CCC Director, James Oftedal, states, "We recruit the best students, but we could not place them without the support of supervisors who continue to utilize our program."

It was definitely another successful year for the CCC, as interns successfully completed their work and felt good about their contributions. In fact, in the CCC's 2009 program evaluation found that 100% of the students stated that they benefited from their internships and they would recommend this internship to others. For details on how to apply for a CCC internship, please go to: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/ccc/internship/>



Generation Green Recreation Crew



Generation Green Paint Crew

Employment

CCC Success Stories

- By Jorge Silva

Alicia Sanchez - Asst. Recreation Officer

Alicia (pictured at right) began her Forest Service career in May of 2007 as a Recreation Technician under the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) program. She was recruited by the Central California Consortium while attending California State University, Fresno. She successfully completed a Bachelors of Science degree in Recreation Administration and a Bachelors of Arts degree in Chicano and Latin American Studies. In August of 2008, she was selected for a Student Career Employment Program (SCEP) position on the Los Padres National Forest. She has since converted to a permanent position and she currently serves as a District Assistant Recreation Officer. Alicia states, "In order to understand how the different sectors of an entity function, it is important for an individual to work himself from the bottom up, and that is what I intend to do. I am excited to be part of the Forest Service team!"



Adrian Escobedo - Civil Rights Officer

Adrian (pictured at right) began his Forest Service career in 2005 as a Biological Technician at the Smokey Bear Ranger District in Ruidoso, New Mexico under the STEP program. His experience influenced him to earn a Zoology Bachelors of Science degree from Cal Poly Pomona. He moved to South Lake Tahoe, CA, where he helped start a successful Generation Green Club at South Tahoe High School in partnership with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) and the Central California Consortium. He coordinated Generation Green summer crews for the LTBMU. He has since taken on the position of the LTBMU Forest Civil Rights Officer. He continues to develop as a professional in his position while working on his Graduate degree at Sierra Nevada College. Adrian states, "I believe in the Forest Service mission and I am very happy to be in my current position. My goal is to learn as much as I can in order to contribute to my unit and assist my colleagues."



Increasing Generation Green HS Crews

- By Jorge Silva

Through partnerships with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and the Sierra and Sequoia National Forests, the Central California Consortium (CCC) helped organize seven Generation Green high school crews. The students improved Forest Service lands through projects like watershed and recreational site restoration, headcuts, and removing noxious weeds. Students gained access to public lands, learned to appreciate the environment and became stewards of the land. The Sierra National Forest Recreation Crew is pictured at right.

Many crew leaders were successful college students who provided mentoring and guidance on higher education, while maintaining a safe work environment. Through their participation, students received leadership training like career presentations, public speaking workshops, resume workshops, and an orientation on how to be professional in the workplace. The CCC creates a pipeline from K-12, to encourage students to go on to higher education and pursue careers with the Forest Service.



In 2010, the CCC plans to expand the Generation Green crews by partnering with the Eldorado National Forest and the Sequoia National Forest; increasing the number of crews for summer 2010 to nine crews. The Generation Green crews would not be possible without the partners involved. The CCC especially thanks the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, the Fresno County Advisory Committee, the Stewardship Council, the Workforce Investment Board for their support in the form of partnerships and grants.



Generation Green

Environmental Education & Leadership Program



CLUB OFFICERS

South Tahoe High School

President: Jose Gomez
President: Stephanie Campuzano
Vice President: Diky Sherpa
Vice President: Thalia Lomeli
Secretary: Christian Simental
Treasurer: Alma Yanez
Historian: Gaby Yanez



Reedley High School

President: Iveth Hernandez
Vice-President: Joanna Rodriguez
Activity Coordinator: Luis Aparicio
Treasurer: Stephanie Agavo
Secretary: Daisy Duarte
Historian: Martha Sanchez
Reporter: Yaneth Barreto



Orange Cove High

President: Angel Rodriguez
Vice-President: Christian Velasquez
Activity Coordinator: Ramon Medel
Treasurer: Carlos Robledo
Secretary: Judith Salazar
Historian: Fortunato Luviano

Generation Green Gives Back

Mentoring and Community Service

- By Juana Rosas

Hermanitos Mentoring Project

The Central California Consortium's (CCC) "Hermanitos (Little Brothers/Sisters) Mentoring Project" is a partnership with Kings Canyon School District (KCS D), Orange Cove High School, Citrus Middle School, and the Generation Green club. For two years this project has served as a bridge, helping middle school students' successfully transition to high school. Students receive one on one help with their homework, while developing social and academic skills (pictured right top) necessary to successfully transition to high school. Through different opportunities mentors and mentees build relationships based on trust and support. By having a mentor, students are staying in school, improving their grades, and becoming young stewards of the land!



Abuelitos Project

The Hermanitos Mentoring Project created the Abuelitos (grandparents) Project, where students nominate a senior citizen to get free help to clean up and maintain their yards. Students from Orange Cove High School, Reedley High School and Citrus Middle School join forces on weekends to improve their community. Mr. Vasquez, community member, stated, "I felt proud when I saw a dozen students working with shovels and rakes (pictured right bottom). It was like an army marching to help the community." Projects like this instill the importance and value of community service, while helping students improve their leadership skills. Kasandra Perez, GG middle school student, states: "Instead of adding to problems like graffiti, we are taking action to improve our community. We are showing that young people do care about for their community and for the environment."



Teaching Environmental Education to All Ages

- By Stephany Campuzano

In October, the South Tahoe High School Generation Green (GG) Club completed interpretational work at Taylor Creek. GG members taught the public about the local Kokanee Salmon over the weekends. Although mornings were super cold, members came on time because they wanted the chance to talk to people from all over the world. The public was amazed by the wildlife surrounding Lake Tahoe.

Every GG member became Project Learning Tree certified. Five members, along with Forest Service employees, went to four different elementary schools and taught K-5 kids about trees and the importance of respecting the environment. The kids were excited to learn and they enjoyed the hands-on lessons. They were thrilled to plant trees with GG and Forest Service employees. Prior to planting, the club went into the Angora Burn site and helped prepare the site by using McClouds to clear out brush and set up brims. The members enjoyed working hard and getting dirty.



All GG members have the goal of graduating high school and going to college, it is a club priority. Members also look forward to Forest Service summer internships. The community service projects prepare them for summer internships. The members who became interns were pleasantly surprised to learn that every day offered excitement and variety that cannot be experienced anywhere else except for Tahoe (pictured at left). The interns worked hard on restoration projects at Tallac Historic Site, built long lengths of trail on the Tahoe Rim Trail, and best of all they got to

go backpacking (pictured left bottom)! For many of the interns, backpacking was an entirely new concept so the first few trips were very challenging. Over the course of the summer backpacking went from being hated and feared, to one of their favorite activities. The interns became strong physically as they built endurance, but everyone said that they grew strong as a person with new ideas and appreciation for the world around them.

Students Learn at RAP CAMP

- By Nancy Vang

Generation Green (GG) club members attended the annual Resource and People (RAP) Camp. It was held on June 14-20, 2009 at the Winema National Forest in Camp Esther Applegate, on the Lake of the Woods in Oregon. Every year fifty students participate in this week long event. The Central CA Consortium (CCC) took ten GG students from Orange Cove and Reedley High Schools to attend this learning experience.

Students spend their days on field trips and hands-on outdoor activities learning about natural resources such as: recreation management, fire ecology, forest ecosystems, and wildlife habitat. Students were able to hike on the Pacific Crest Trail, a trail that runs from Canada all the way down to Mexico. They also participated in outdoor recreation activities, learned how to canoe and fished with their new friends. During these “outdoor classroom” field trips, students explored the beautiful Winema National Forest’s mountain meadows wetlands, wildlife and the amazing Crater Lake in the Crater Lake National Park and many more.

Students gained confidence, independence and team building skills; all while having fun. They also gained valuable insights from natural resource professionals who encouraged them to pursue a future career in natural resource. Juana Rosas, CCC staff member and chaperon, stated, “The students had a great experience that they will never forget. It was their first time away from home and they enjoyed learning while being surrounded by nature. It was a great adventure!”



Wildlink 2009...On Top of the World!

- Saul Fernandez

Wow! What a hike! Students passed by thunderous waterfalls and unforgettable scenes. This year’s Wildlink expedition took place at Yosemite National Park from April 19-24, 2009. Saul Fernandez, CCC staff member, took five high school students (pictured at right) from Orange Cove and Reedley High Schools on an unforgettable week long expedition. For all the students, it was the first time away from home and recreating on public lands.

Students had to pack all their supplies to go on a three day, two night expedition in the wilderness. The wilderness experience was a very challenging adventure, both physically and mentally. Carrying close to 40 pound backpacks, the students had to hike up to the top of Little Yosemite Valley where they camped out in a disbursed area; along the way passing by beautiful waterfalls. Before they headed out for this overnight expedition, students were each assigned a job. Students rotated from being the cook, getting water, cleaning up, taking pictures, guiding us with a map, and doing volunteer work for Yosemite National Park (counting the number of people on certain trails). The students learned to be independent and used teamwork to survive. They learned how to set up a tent, cook their own meals, and most importantly how to respect and preserve our forest lands. On the second day of the expedition, students hiked up to the shoulder of Half Dome which was seven miles roundtrip. The scenery was beautiful, overseeing Yosemite Valley and Half Dome; which seemed like the top of the world. The night ended with telling stories around a campfire. The students practiced “pack it in, pack it out” with the campsite at departure, leaving the campsite cleaner than their arrival. Students said that the experience was tough mentally and physically, but well worth the adventure. “The destination is not the goal; it is the beauty of nature that you take in,” said Virginia Rivera, a Reedley High School student. Now knowing how to respect and preserve our natural forest, they can teach friends and family on how to take care and use their public lands. It was an adventure that they will never forget!



Middle School and Elementary Environmental Education Program

Students Learn while Eating their Vegetables!

- By Saul Fernandez

Green Zone is a program of the Central California Consortium (CCC). It is an environmental education program serving elementary and middle school students. All year long, students from A.L. Conner Elementary and Citrus Middle School learn about our environment using hands on activities. The lesson plans include topics such as: the web of life, plant anatomy, photosynthesis, the water cycle, water quality, trees, reducing and recycling, and more. Students also learned how to use a compass through orienteering around their school and setting up a tent (bottom picture). In addition, students entered competitions like the "Get 2 Know Project," where they created their own art, photos, or writings about their experience with nature. Currently, students are making creative drawings about how trees are energy wise and they will be submitting them to the Arbor Day 2010 contest.

Students have maintained a garden since spring of 2008 with successful growing seasons. They have grown flowers, watermelons, tomatoes, cucumbers, and so forth. Students learn how to grow their own garden from the start; germinating seeds, plant anatomy and their process of photosynthesizing. Students take care of their garden by watering and measuring plant growth, they have even developed their own "garden rules" (pictured at middle right). Students are now getting their garden ready for this spring's harvesting season; pulling weeds out and will soon prepare the soil. As part of plant preparation, students will learn about soil and begin testing their garden's soil. They love being outdoors and maintaining their garden. They are eager to start growing their own flowers and vegetables again!



It's all about... Environmental Education!

Green Zone Citrus Middle School Student,
"I like being in Green Zone. I learned it's important to be good to our environment. That's why I like helping to keep my community clean."

Connecting with the Local Hmong Community

- By Nancy Vang

The city of Fresno has the second largest Hmong population in the country. The Hmong community is traditionally tied to the land and they frequently visit public lands to recreate, hunt and gather. The CCC participates in many community events to outreach to the underserved community.

The Central California Consortium (CCC) is a big community partner. The CCC participated in the 21st Annual HmSA Educational Conference; which served 50 Hmong youth from the Central Valley through a three day, two night youth conference. The theme was "The Future is Now: Be the Change You Wish to See". It took place on April 4-6, 2009 at the Sierra Pine Youth Camp in the Sierra National Forest. It is one of the longest running conferences promoting higher education for Hmong community youth in the country. CCC staff members, Nancy Vang and Saul Fernandez, facilitated a workshop to educate students about preserving and conserving. Students were inspired to be good stewards of the land and consider natural resource careers.



Another event was the 8th Annual Hmong Water Festival, which was held May 23-25, 2009 at the City of Fresno Sports Regional Park. It is one of the largest Southeast Asian sports tournaments in California, with cultural entertainment, water games, and good food. This event attracts over 15,000 people on a daily basis who come to celebrate their culture in the hot summer. CCC Asian Community Liaisons, Chor Yang and Nancy Vang, went on KBIF Hmong Radio Station to encourage listeners to attend the festival and visit their environmental education and resource booth. They frequently present on Hmong Radio to share FS information, safety messages, and upcoming events. The radio station reaches over 90% of the Hmong listeners on a daily basis.



Hmong National and International Outreach

- By Chor Yang

Hmong New Year

The Central California Consortium (CCC) and the Sierra National Forest (SNF) Fire and Aviation Management Unit participated in the 2009-2010 Hmong International New Year (HINY). It took place on December 26, 2009 through January 2, 2010, at the Fresno Fair Grounds in Fresno, CA. Since the Hmong arrival to the United States in 1975, the HINY celebration has been one of the largest Hmong celebrations in the United States; attracting over 100,000 attendees from around the world. HINY promotes cultural unity, higher education, offer local entertainment, and build bridges with the world.

Chor Yang and Nancy Vang CCC staff members, along with Jesse Lee, Michael Gonzales, Jason Rodriguez, Teresa Carreon, and Jason Madrigal from the SNF Fire and Aviation Management Unit hosted a Forest Service (FS) booth at the HINY. Every year attendees look for the FS booth and last year over 200 free camp fire permits were issued. FS employees share information in their native Hmong language regarding topics such as: fire prevention, recreational opportunities, stewardship, safety messages and employment opportunities. Through many years of participating in this event, the community recognizes the FS shield.

Hmong National Development Conference

The CCC also participates in the Hmong National Development (HND) Conference, which provides a forum for professionals, students, and community leaders to network, exchange information and ideas, and share best practices. The recent HND Conference took place in Appleton, WI on April 3-5, 2009. The conference's theme was "Building Partnerships for Success: Embracing Emerging Opportunities". CCC's Program Director, James Oftedal, and Asian Community Liaison, Chor Yang, demonstrated partnerships by collaborating with Chawntou Yang, a student from the University of Wisconsin. CCC also invited FS partners from Region 9- Daryl Pridgen, Urban Connection Program Manager and Clara J. Johnson, Job Corps Liaison to attend the workshop. The workshop provided tips for success for young professionals who face adversity when going into the workforce and highlighted FS career opportunities. The workshop was well attended and received positive feedback.

Supervisors....
Are You Looking for an Intern?

Students....
Are You Looking for an Internship?

For over 13 years the Central California Consortium (CCC) has provided high quality students to work in a variety of Forest Service positions throughout California and other states.

If you are a supervisor looking for a bright and talented diverse students to work for you during the summer, let us find you a quality employee! We have a diverse applicant pool.

If you are a student looking for paid summer employment with a great learning experience, then our summer internships are for you. We offer positions in a variety of fields and majors.

For more information please contact Julissa Gonzalez, CCC Job Placement Coordinator at (559) 297-0706 ext. 4962.

Supervisors and students can find more information online at:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/ccc/internship/>

CCC Mission

The Central California Consortium is an environmental education, outreach, and recruitment program. The CCC serves as bridge between the USDA Forest Service, underserved areas, and community partners. Our mission is to diversify the Forest Service workforce by encouraging careers in natural resources, higher education, and employment through mentoring, leadership, and community outreach efforts. We are committed to providing an all inclusive, nurturing, respectful, and positive work environment.

The USDA Forest Service is an equal opportunity service provider and employer.

