

Central California Consortium



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Director's Message

"The CCC is excited about its many new partnerships! We are working on an ARRA project with the Fresno Local Conservation Corps, which is providing valuable job training and environmental education. The CCC hired youth to work on Generation Green (GG) summer crews from Edison High School in West Fresno, Granite Hills High School in Porterville, and more. We were fortunate to be awarded over \$100,000 in grants to put local youth to work on public lands. Once again the CCC set a new record by hiring 160 interns. I want to thank my staff for their hard work and all our partners for their continuous support. I would like to thank our Forest Supervisor, Scott Armentrout, for his leadership and support." - James Oftedal, CCC Director

Generation Green Students Attend Regional and National Forest Service Roundtable

Regional Planning Rule

- By Martha Maciel

Students from the Generation Green program participated in the Region 5 Roundtable on the National Planning Rule held in Sacramento on April 6, 2010. Middle and high school students provided important input to help develop a modern planning rule to address current and future needs of the 155 national forests and 20 grasslands in the National Forest System. Students urged the crowd of more than 150 participants to better educate, engage, and expose youth to the outdoors. They asked that work be done to keep the publics who speak different languages informed and provide opportunities for youth that have never seen forests to recreate and have an outdoor experience.

Generation Green students attending the Roundtable included: Skyy Diaz from Citrus Middle School; Victor Valdivia and Eric Sanchez from Orange Cove High School; and Arantxa Chavarria, Yaneth Barreto and Fabiola Rodriguez from Reedley High School. As pictured above, they had the opportunity to meet with the Region 5 Leadership.

Four Roundtable sessions were held throughout California to help develop a new planning rule for management of the national forests and grasslands. More than 500 participants attended the sessions hosted by the Forest Service in Sacramento, Bishop, Redding and San Bernardino. The input gathered from the Roundtables has been summarized and made available online: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/planning-rule/>



National Planning Rule

- By Chor Yang

For the first time in the Forest Service's National Planning Rule, diverse youth participated in a Youth Roundtable providing valuable feedback. Seven valley youth traveled to our nation's capitol, Washington D.C. on July 27-30, 2010, to serve on the youth roundtable. CCC Director, James Oftedal, and Regional Office Tribal Relations Program Manager, Merv George, led the group as they attended Forest Service Planning Rule.

The roundtable was used as a tool to be transparent in creating the planning rule by taking in feedback, recommendations, and comments from the public. The purpose of creating the planning rule was to create a universal rule that will describe the overall purpose of the planning rule and the principles that will guide land management planning. Five main topics discussed were collaboration, monitoring, plant and animal diversity, people and the environment, and restoration and resilience. The participants were broken up into breakout groups to discuss the topics, clarify the concepts, provide brief feedback on the concepts, explore fundamental concerns or gaps, implement ability, and provide suggestions on how concerns or gaps might be addressed. The following day, the CCC youth were given the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas on the topics with all of the participants. According to Tony Tooke, Director for Ecosystem Management Coordination, "The students, Chor Yang, Mai Chou Thao, Denaya Shorter, Angel Rodriguez, Wualter Rodan, Vilay Lee, and Pateisha Ferris, provided new insights that will be helpful in developing a new planning rule and associated policy."

The youth also had meetings with Forest Service staff at the Forest Service Headquarters. They met with Congressman Jim Costa, Senator Feinstein, and Senator Boxer's staff. Finally, they met with the Asian and Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund.



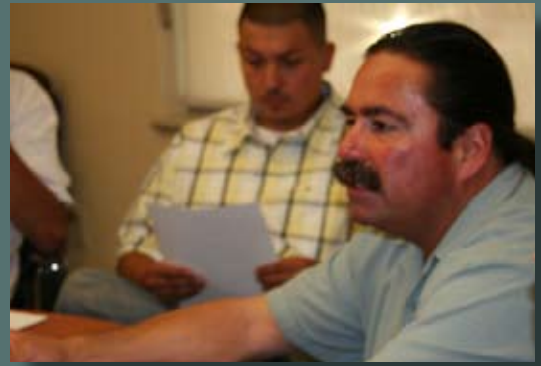
Green Jobs: Giving Fresno Youth a Second Chance

- By Lily Nieves

The Sierra National Forest Engineering Department received \$185,000 in American Results and Recovery Act (ARRA) funding to improve Forest Service facilities. The objective of the ARRA is to provide jobs to local people. With this in mind, Dean Gould, Forest Engineer, entered into a partnership with the Central California Consortium (CCC). CCC Director, James Oftedal, contacted the Fresno Economic Opportunity Commission (FCEOC); a well established organization and long time partner. The FCEOC's Local Conservation Corps (LCC) agreed to take on this painting project.

Oftedal states, "Upon meeting, it was clear that this was the start of a great working relationship. Our goals are well aligned and we want to provide opportunities for local youth." Mutual goals include: providing work experience to diverse youth, encouraging youth to take ownership of the land and care for the environment, improving public lands and facilities, providing environmental education, exposing youth to public lands and natural resource careers, and encouraging education.

LCC Director, Shawn Riggins, states, "The youth we serve live in an environment full of blithe and hopelessness. They have made mistakes and many have given up on them. The LCC is giving them a second chance by providing a pathway to earn a high school diploma and gain job training. As we say, we are recycling lives. We are excited that the Forest Service came to us with this ARRA opportunity and we look forward to collaborating in the future. We are excited about future opportunities to work together."



Tina Terrell, Sequoia National Forest Supervisor, is a proponent of the FS working with the underserved communities of southeast and west Fresno. She and the CCC staff met with the LCC leadership for a tour of the new LCC facility. It is very impressive with a state of the art classroom and recycling programs that the trainees helped build. They discussed the current ARRA partnership and future opportunities to work together. Tina Terrell took the time to speak directly with a few young ladies who are enrolled in the LCC Youth Build program (right, bottom picture); a program that serves youth ages 18-24. Tina shared her background with the students and motivated them to consider natural resource careers. She shared, "Focus on getting your education and stay on the right path. The Forest Service offers great jobs and scholarships for students interested in natural resources."

On April 30, the LCC staff and CCC staff both met with the selected youth (trainees) to review the ARRA project, work expectations and goals. Oftedal addressed the youth (right, top picture), saying, "I'm excited that you will visit the forest for the first time and be exposed to nature. You should feel proud about the work you are doing. Work hard and stay focused on your goals." Nicole Baaza, an LCC Trainee, stated, "The LCC is changing lives. I won't let my past define me because I know that people believe in me and I can succeed. I'm excited to work in the forest and learn about nature. I know that without natural resources we cannot live, so it's important to conserve and preserve."

Dave Martin, Bass Lake District Ranger, recently stated, "The LCC crew is doing an excellent job for us. The Bass Lake District wants to formally show our appreciation for their hard work."

The LCC crew started (pictured at left) work May 3, 2010 and will complete their projects by September 30, 2011.



First Earth Day Celebration at Citrus Middle School

- By Saul Fernandez

The Generation Green Hermanitos Mentoring Program organized an Earth Day celebration with the theme “Reduce-Reuse-Recycle”. The event was held at Citrus Middle School in Orange Cove on April 23, 2010 and included activities such as chalk drawing, face painting, sack races, water balloon tossing, and a dance contest. The middle school students were excited to teach their fellow students about the importance of caring for the earth. They posted posters around the school with tips on how to care for our earth. They also compiled creative poster boards that showed actual pictures of their community’s trash problem areas and requested change.

Along with food, games, and prizes, there were special guests including: Forest Supervisor, Betty Mathews; Orange Cove City Councilwoman, Glenda Hill; and Citrus Middle School Principal, Mr. Gutierrez. Barney, the school bus, was present promoting lower emissions for school buses (above picture). The students were also excited to see Smokey Bear and learn about fire prevention. They even received Smokey Bear giveaways.

Juana Rosas, CCC Rural Coordinator/GG Advisor, stated, “With the support of Citrus Middle School Principal Mr. Gutierrez, the students were able to organize the first Earth Day celebration at their school. The event was a fun way for local kids of all ages to learn about how they can make a difference in the environment by starting with helping clean up their own community. They had a lot of fun, while learning to be good stewards of the land!”

The Central California Consortium’s Generation Green program organizes the Hermanitos Mentoring Program. It is a unique program that provides one on one mentoring for middle school students. The mentors, who are high school students from Reedley and Orange Cove High School, provide academic tutoring and team building activities to help the students build leadership skills, improve their self confidence, and stay on the right path to success.



Generation Green Goes to Wildlink

- By Juana Rosas

Every year the Generation Green (GG) Program joins forces with the Wildlink Program to take six youth to the wilderness. The Wildlink adventure exposed our local youth to wildlife in the wilderness for the first time!

For the first time, students from the Southern and Central California Consortium united to take part in this incredible outdoor expedition. Together both groups became a big family. They shared food, tents, water and more. Students were very curious as they saw animals such as mule and deer in the wild. They listened to the “cheese burger” of the mountain chickadee. A highlight of the trip was when the group did not give up during challenging hikes. As Miguel put it, “Pain is only weakness leaving the body. So, we were happy to keep working hard until we met our goal.”

Nature served as a beautiful “outdoor classroom” for the students. They learned about the importance of conserving and preserving. They also engaged in thoughtful discussion and brainstormed ways they could lessen their environmental footprint. Gustavo Morales, a GG student, stated, “I have learned so much about the natural world. These are lessons that I can go back and share with my family and friends.” Stephanie Aguayo, also a GG student, summarized her experience by saying, “Being in the outdoors was amazing. When you are on top of a mountain and the wind is hitting you, you just feel free and connected with nature.”

This experience definitely reached the students’ hearts, as they experienced the spirit of the wild, the mist of the waterfalls and the beauty of blooming wild flowers.



Connecting with the Hmong Community through Radio

- By Mai Chou Thao



KBIF 900AM has been serving its community since 1954. In the 1990s, due to the large Southeast Asian population, KBIF began catering its program for the Asian community. KBIF continues to be a popular venue for the Asian community to turn to for news, entertainment, and information. Thus, the Central California Consortium (CCC) continuously provides information to the Asian community via radio.

Most recently, on May 3, 2010, Chor Yang and Mai Chou Thao, CCC Hmong Community Liaisons, appeared on the KBIF radio station show to inform the Hmong community in their native Hmong language on the Forest Service mission, safety messages, fire prevention information, and public resources (left picture). They stressed the importance of planning ahead, following rules and regulations, respecting the forest, and being aware of high fire seasons. They also emphasized the need to obtain fire permits and the responsibilities that come with a permit.

During the show a listener called to ask Chor and Mai if the need for fire permits is a new rule. They replied that it is not a new rule and outlined how to get free permits. Chor Yang, stated, "The question asked was a good indicator that there is more work to be done in educating the Hmong community of Forest Service rules and regulations. We are happy to answer any questions." CCC Director, James Oftedal, states, "As public servants, we are committed to reaching out to the community and providing information and resources. The work we are doing will help keep them safe and help conserve and preserve our public lands."



Celebrating Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

- Mai Chou Thao

The Asian Pacific American Heritage Month was celebrated on May 12, 2010 at the Sierra National Supervisor's Office. It opened with a Hmong dance routine from "Ntxhais Hmoob Txuj Ci" (talented Hmong dancers). The young ladies' dance depicted the song's lyrics, which described the harvest season and the New Year celebration in their homeland of Laos.

Next, Dr. Tou shared the importance of knowing one's own culture and background. He shared obstacles that the Hmong community has overcome and stated, "You have to work to own a piece of the pie and one day you'll own the bakery." Dr. Tou encouraged the Forest Service to continue working toward their positive mission and congratulated the Central California Consortium (CCC) for their work in the community.

A well known leaf performer, Instructor Bee Yang, gave an educational performance using leaves, brass harps, and flutes. He explained how, why, and when each instrument was used. He specifically described how the instruments were traditionally used in past times. He amazed the audience by singing Hmong folk songs that are commonly heard in the annual New Year celebration.

Finally, martial artists jumped into action with a routine that had everyone on their feet. They explained that for a period of time, martial art was kept within the family that created it. They added that when word spread regarding their martial arts to the ShaoLin Temple in China, outsiders were eager to learn, which led to being taught to more and more people.

At the end of the event, Forest Service staff left with a smile on their face and new knowledge about Asian cultures. The event was coordinated by CCC Asian Community Liaisons, Chor Yang and Mai Chou Thao.

Partnership Sends Interns to Washington D.C.

- By Lily Nieves

Through a new partnership between the National Parks Service (NPS) and the Forest Service's Central California Consortium (CCC), two exceptional students will be completing an exciting internship. Jose Martinez is completing his Bachelors degree in Environmental Studies with a minor in Biology. Marilyn Santos is pursuing a Criminology Masters degree from California State University, Fresno.

The students worked for two weeks on the Sequoia Kings Canyon National Park. Their supervisor, Erika Jostad, Law Enforcement Officer, stated, "Marilyn and Jose are very passionate and committed to doing a good job. I'd really like to see Marilyn and Jose develop some kind of career position with the Park Service. We have been trying to hook them and I think its working."

They completed their work experience in the field and completed eight weeks with the National Parks Wilderness Program in Washington D.C. Their projects included exploring opportunities to engage with urban youth regarding the value of wilderness; creating a public outreach plan to recruit college students for wilderness careers; developing communication materials; and brainstorming new and innovative technologies for increasing public involvement in the wilderness stewardship.

Marilyn stated, "I am really thankful for this learning experience. It was very exciting to be in Washington D.C for the first time ever." Jose said, "It was an exciting new challenge in my life. I have grown from my experience and I am closer to my goal of obtaining a career in natural resources."



Youth Work to Improve Public Lands

- By Lily Nieves

The Central California Consortium (CCC) coordinated and hired five summer high school crews this summer. The CCC staff met with the students and their parents to help them prepare for the summer work experience. CCC Director, James Oftedal, explained the Forest Service mission, his expectations of all summer interns and the benefits of working for the agency. He stated, "You will gain valuable work experience and learn how you can help take care of the land. I encourage you to take your families to see the work that you will accomplish and enjoy your public lands." The meeting also included a special speaker, Nevia Brown, who is a NEPA Planner on the High Sierra Ranger District. Nevia shared her personal background, education, and

valuable tips for success with the high school students. She explained, "I never thought about being a forester when I was your age, but look at me now. There are scholarships for minority students who are interested in the field. I encourage you to apply to Historically Black Colleges. Remember, you can do anything you set your mind to!"

The summer crews completed their projects this month. They were all led by college students who served as positive role models and stressed the importance of higher education. For example, the Sierra Recreation Crew (pictured above) was led by crew leader, Yesenia Torres, a Senior at California State University of Fresno (CSUF) completing a double major in Social Work and Spanish. Denaya Shorter served as the crew assistant. She is a senior at CSUF majoring in Wildlife Biology. They led a crew of four high school students to survey camp grounds by utilizing global positioning systems (GPS) to create accurate maps of camp grounds facilities. The students included: Donavon Fullner, a graduate of Selma High School and now freshman at Reedley College; Angel Rodriguez, a graduate of Orange Cove High School and now freshman at the University of Los Angeles (UCLA); Brittney Brown, a junior at Edison High School; and Mireya Lyons, a senior at Edison High School. Donavon stated, "I enjoyed working for the Forest Service and I hope to make it a career."



Outdoor Nation Summit in New York

- By Chor Yang

The Outdoor Nation Summit took place in Central Park in New York City on June 19-20th, 2010. It was the first time in U.S. history that more than 500 young leaders, from across the country, joined together to address the growing disconnect between young people and the outdoors. Generation Green students Jose Gomez and Araceli Ramos were selected to attend as delegates. Central California Consortium (CCC) staff members Chor Yang and Saul Fernandez were also selected as Forest Service delegates for the event. They participated in the outdoor opportunities and in the discussion portion of the summit.

It was a youth-driven Outdoor Nation movement focused on the following topics: outdoor assumptions and perceptions, connecting and engaging youth, challenges and barriers to engagement, outdoors careers, and many more.

Chor Yang, CCC Asian Community Liaison, stated “This is the first environmental conference that I’ve been to where it’s diverse in ethnicity and incorporates the targeted group (youth). It’s important to have events like this because they focus on finding sustainable positive solutions rather than focusing on negative issues.”

James Oftedal, CCC Director, said, “It is important for youth to be involved in the process of creating sustainable solutions and implementing them. If we engage them, they will take ownership of the land and embrace their roles as young stewards.”

For a full summit summary and results developed by the Youth Summit Delegates on the two-day event please visit: www.outdoornation.org/YouthSummit/tabid/75/Default.aspx



CCC Interns Gain Valuable Work Experience

- By Lily Nieves



The Central California Consortium (CCC) would like to welcome its newest staff interns. CCC Director, James Oftedal, states, “We are excited to be working with such talented individuals. They started working early this summer and have gained valuable work experience. The training they have received will help them prepare for their future career.”

Mai Chou Thao (left) is a current junior at California State University (CSU), Fresno, majoring in Business with an option in Human Resources. As the CCC Asian Community Liaison and Budget Assistant, she is partnering with many local and national Asian organizations, representing the Forest Service at cultural events, and helping track program expenditures.



Melissa Souaykoumane (top right) is a current junior, majoring in Business with an option in Human Resources, at California State University (CSU), Fresno. As a Human Resources Intern, she helps guide students through the CCC application process, processes applications, and assists with summer programs such as the Generation Green State Fair Leadership Camp. Melissa states, “This internship has been a wonderful experience for me. I gained experience that will help me in my future career. I am grateful to have received this amazing opportunity.”

Marco Chavez (bottom right) recently graduated from CSU Fresno with a degree in Business and an option in Management. He serves as a Human Resource Intern, helping students through the CCC application process, processing applications, and assisting with program evaluations.



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.

