



Wayne's 2006 YCC Crew Shatters Records for Work Accomplished

The Wayne National Forest's YCC crew in 2006 accomplished an amazing amount of work on the Forest.



Wayne National Forest's YCC crew takes a break while doing trail maintenance.

Lacie McMannis was crew leader for the Wayne National Forest's Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) crew during the summer of 2006. It was her third year to serve as crew leader and she noted it was easily the best crew she's had.

"Things just clicked with this group and we were pretty much unstoppable!" she said.

McMannis had one enrollee, Elias Wood, return from the previous year. The other three youths were new, and all were hard workers. Jesse Harman, Shannon Beacham, and Nicole Holtz rounded out the five-person crew.

"Our crew broke the Marietta Unit Record by maintaining 70.5 miles of trail in one season," McMannis said with pride. "And not only did we maintain 70.5 miles of trail in one season....we did it without a single accident."

She noted it was not all work and no play.

The group was given three full days of educational activities. One day was spent on Willow Island Lock and Dam; another day they spent getting their CPR / First Aid class certification; and last, to celebrate the summer's work, they took an interpretive canoe trip down the Little Muskingum River.

McMannis said the summer taught the YCC enrollees a great deal about their environment.

"We've seen mussels, some of which are endangered, all types of plant and aquatic life. And we learned to recognize invasive plant species and have seen first hand some of the damage that results from them," she explained.

McMannis said she hopes the enrollees can take some of what they have learned into their next job, or even choose a career with the Forest Service.

McMannis said she enjoyed leading the YCC crew, and found them to be an inspirational group.

"This is a hard working group of young adults," she said. "They set a goal in the beginning of the

year to break the previous records, and they went for it."

Forestry Technician Pam Blackburn also worked with the crew.

"This is the best crew that we have had in quite awhile," Blackburn said. "They brought enthusiasm to the job every day."

She said they had all the makings of a top trail maintenance crew.

"They did a great job of learning each others strengths and using them to make their job easier," Blackburn noted. "They also made sure that each other were working safely. That included watching each other for proper nutrition and hydration."

Jennie Freidhof, Assistant District Ranger for the Athens Ranger District, manages the district's recreation program as well as the YCC. She too was impressed with this summer's accomplishments and said the group raised the bar for future YCC crews.

Freidhof said the YCC program has been around a long time. It offers employment to young people age 15-18 most of whom have little or no work experience.

She explained the co-ed crews work together as a team to accomplish resource projects.

"The program is a win-win for everyone involved," Freidhof note. "The Wayne gets work accomplished, and the high school kids get a summer's experience that may change their lives."

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