



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mountain-Prairie Region

FACT SHEET

Recovery Act Funding Supports Youth Conservation Corps at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge

Quivira National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was awarded Recovery Act funding to support students' participation in the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) this summer. There are 10 YCC students working at the refuge and 2 students working at the Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita, KS. The funding from the Recovery Act allowed the refuge to increase its typical YCC staff of 3 students to 12 students for the summer of 2009.

The students began work on May 26th and, within the first week, had already started the two biggest projects scheduled for the summer: clearing the Migrant's Mile trail and the tree rows near the residences. Migrant's Mile is a hiking trail that is frequently used by the public. During the winter of 2007, an ice storm hit the area and many of the trees were damaged. The YCC students are working with refuge firefighters to clear the area of downed trees and create burn piles; refuge staff members will return in the fall to burn the brush. The students learned the importance of retaining some logs and trees to provide habitat for wildlife, and took care to leave some larger logs and standing snags away from the trail for reptiles and amphibians. After their first month of work, the YCC students have cleared approximately a quarter of the trail. This project is particularly important because the refuge also received Recovery Act funding to complete a hard surfacing project on Migrant's Mile and the clean-up work must be completed before that project can begin.

The other major project for the YCC students this year is clearing out the tree rows around the residences. The tree rows have been neglected for several years and include a lot of downed timber and brush. The YCC students are working to clear the area with handsaws (and the assistance of the fire crew when needed) and place all of the cleared wood into burn piles. Their efforts will make the residential area fire safe. The crew finished the south tree row on June 19th, and celebrated with an ice cream party.

In addition to the ongoing clearing effort, the YCC students have mowed the lawns around the residences and cleared them of limbs and debris. They have also repaired fences around the residences, removed a fence around the garden plot for the North residence, cleaned and rehabbed the sidewalks, and cleaned the rain gutters. Several of the students also helped a volunteer carpenter refinish the basement and replace doors in the South residence.

The YCC students have also assisted the refuge by painting posts along roads near the Little Salt Marsh. The students also cleared the cattails from the Kid's Fishing Pond, and were able to complete the project in time for the Quivira NWR children's fishing clinic held on June 6. The

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YCC also filled over 20 metal barrier posts around propane tanks with concrete, and then primed and painted them a bright safety red.

The group has also benefited from participating in several educational programs: a researcher on the Emerald Ash Borer spoke to them about trapping methods and how to find out if the insect is present in this county of Kansas, and Lorrie Beck of the Great Plains Nature Center gave a presentation on owls that included some preserved owls and a live burrowing owl. In addition, all of the YCC students completed First Aid and CPR training in June. The opportunities for several impromptu learning sessions have also presented themselves. For example, on June 19th, a bullsnake was found near the shop. Melanie Olds talked with the group about the snake and the proper method for handling snakes.