



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Western PA National Parks
Press Release

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National Park Service News Release

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Local Students "Find Their Park," Gain Job Skills While Working in Western PA National Parks

Shanksville, PA – The five National Parks in Western PA; Flight 93 National Memorial, Johnstown Flood National Memorial, Fort Necessity National Battlefield, Friendship Hill National Historic Site and Allegheny Portage Railroad NHS have partnered with the Student Conservation Association (SCA), the Citizens Conservation Corp of West Virginia (CCCWV), regional universities and high schools to help local students gain job skills while learning to become stewards of the National Parks in their backyards. "Studies show that as SCA volunteers fortify our national parks, they develop a stronger commitment to conservation as well as the life skills necessary to thrive in school and careers," says SCA Regional Partnership Director Jennifer Meccariello Layman. "As the NPS centennial approaches, we are delighted to extend our partnership with the region's national parks and empower area students through hands-on service to the land."

To engage youth and encourage stewardship of the National Parks, the staff of the five Western PA National Parks units have recruited local youth to work in the five Parks this summer. A major goal of the NPS Centennial Commemoration in 2016 is to create educational and employment opportunities for the next generation of National Park stewards. Many area young people are working on a variety of projects in the Parks this summer; these projects provide training in preservation, interpretation and maintenance activities.

Two Youth and Conservation Corps crews are working in the Parks: the Citizens Conservation Corps of West Virginia (CCCWV) has a crew of five young people working on landscape projects at Flight 93 National Memorial, and another crew of six is working to rebuild trails at Johnstown Flood National Memorial in partnership with the Student Conservation Association. Jennifer Douglas, CCCWV Chief Operating Officer shared: "We are extremely honored to partner with Western PA National Parks and the Flight 93 National Memorial project. The impact being realized through this collaborative effort for our youth corps members will last a lifetime -- this is what we strive to accomplish each and every day and to see it come to fruition is truly rewarding."

Superintendent Stephen M. Clark recently met with the crew members during their first week of working in the Parks and is inspired by the hard work and dedication he observed. "It's wonderful to work with the students and to provide employment and on the job training for these young adults from all over Western PA" commented Clark.

Some projects involve funded work crews, some are volunteer projects, and some projects are being completed by interns earning college credit while working in the Parks. Regional college students are involved in doing research at Flight 93 National Memorial under the NPS Scientific Research Program. Biology students from Indiana University of Pennsylvania are helping gather data related to the survival and establishment of trees that have been planted at Flight 93 National Memorial over the last 4 years. Dr. Michael Tyree of IUP is managing this project and supervising the students.

Also at Flight 93 National Memorial, the Park Service has partnered again with SCA to employ a college intern to present Interpretive programs. The SCA Interpretive Intern position is partially funded by a generous grant from the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. The Citizens Conservation Corps of West Virginia has hired a local high school student to assist the Memorial's Cultural Resource Manager, Barbara Black with a variety of curatorial projects.

At Fort Necessity National Battlefield a Fairchance Boy Scout is completing an Eagle Scout project by rebuilding a bridge on the Braddock Road and a crew of six masonry class students from the Fayette Vocational Technical Program will begin building a Black Powder Shed later this summer. Also at Fort Necessity young men from the region have been trained and are presenting historic weapons programs and soldier talks each day to hundreds of visitors to the battlefield.

For more information about the SCA trail project at Johnstown Flood contact Maintenance Management Specialist, Ron Seanor at 814-884-6127. For more information about the CCWWV crew working at Flight 93 National Memorial contact Maintenance Leader Pat Sparks at 814-381-1909.

To learn more about volunteer, internship and employment opportunities for young people in the five National Parks in Western PA email maryellen_snyder@nps.gov or call 724-329-8131. For more information about the five National Park Service sites in Western PA visit: <http://www.nps.gov/fone/planyourvisit/visitwepa.htm>