



Volunteers with YouthWRAP (left) and the Student Conservation Association (right) restoring Hurricane Sandy's devastation at Gateway NRA.

Youth Organizations' Volunteers Tackle Sandy Recovery Projects

For 6 weeks this summer, 100 local high school students and 20 college students from around Gateway National Recreation Area (GNRA) joined the Student Conservation Association (SCA) in Hurricane Sandy cleanup and recovery efforts. The National Park Service teamed up with SCA to put local teens to work in storm-damaged areas at all units of Gateway, in Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and Sandy Hook, New Jersey. This initial arrangement is to last for the next 2 years with hopes of continuing the partnership beyond 2015 - 2016. The SCA, founded in 1957, is a nonprofit group that engages teens in conservation efforts across the country.

In addition to the SCA, other groups assisted with cleanup efforts. One such group was YouthWRAP. This is a New York City Department of Probation (DOP) program to help build stronger and safer communities by working with and supervising people on probation, fostering positive change in their decision-making and behavior, and expanding opportunities for them to move out of the criminal and juvenile justice systems through meaningful education, employment, health services, family engagement and civic participation. Another group joining the efforts is the Jamaica Bay/Rockaway Park Restoration Corps: a NYC Parks partnership with the National Park Service that combines fieldwork with on-the-job training in technical and professional development areas to enhance the productivity of workers in the field.

Throughout the summer the crews cleaned beaches, removed storm debris, repaired fences, and rehabilitated parks. The hard work was much appreciated by local residents and the media, which thanked the volunteers for their service to Gateway's Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts.

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Secretary Jewell Announces Jamaica Bay Resiliency Institute, Praises Volunteers

Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, and National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis, along with other officials, gathered at Riis Landing on August 12, 2013, to announce the establishment of the Jamaica Bay Science and Resilience Institute. Mayor Bloomberg cited Jamaica Bay as a resource for studying ecosystems near urban areas. Director Jarvis encouraged the collection of “usable knowledge” that will inform the way humans and ecosystems coexist and cope with storms. Secretary Jewell highlighted the devastation wrought by Hurricane Sandy and praised the work of the Student Conservation Association volunteers. Their Sandy recovery projects at Gateway this summer have included removing debris, shifting sand, installing new fencing, and other tasks. The Secretary and Director Jarvis chatted with SCA members and thanked them for their work at Gateway.



Members of the SCA with Secretary Jewell and Director Jarvis

President Obama Calls on Americans to Volunteer

President Obama issued an Executive Order in July to make it easier for Americans to volunteer for national service. The order creates a task force designed to expand opportunities for volunteer service within agencies of the Federal government. It also aims to create pathways for volunteers to continue their public service in Federal employment. What are you waiting for? Heed the President’s call and volunteer today! To read the Executive Order, click <http://www.nps.gov/gate/supportyourpark/upload/Volunteering-Executive-Order.pdf>

Volunteer Spotlight: Austin Ramos



Senior at Aviation High School, studying to become an Aircraft Maintenance Technician. We asked Austin a few questions about his volunteer experience with the Historic Aircraft Restoration Project:

Q) How would you describe the Historic Aircraft Restoration Project (HARP) at Gateway?

A) HARP is a group of dedicated volunteers who are long-time mechanics who know and experienced the history of the aircraft in Floyd Bennett Field. They work with over 12 historic aircraft including missiles, helicopters, and jets. The Historic Aircraft Restoration Project is a national treasure for my generation to learn about the planes and the history behind them.

Q) Have you benefited from your volunteer experience with HARP?

A) I work with men much older, and more experienced in the aviation field than me. I gain advice and first-hand knowledge from people who worked in the field, which I will use to prepare myself for a career in aviation.

Q) What personal goals have you achieved?

A) I gained experience to make me a better Aircraft Maintenance Technician. I improved my knowledge of aviation and the rich history of Floyd Bennett Field.

Q) What was surprising about your HARP volunteer experience?

A) Working at Floyd Bennett Field, I was surprised at the amplitude and diversity of the aircrafts in Hanger B. I could see and feel the history behind Floyd Bennett Field and the Historic Aircraft Restoration Project.

Published by Sam Adels
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