

[From Fall 2000]

## **YCC Highlights**

The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) completed its third consecutive summer at Chincoteague refuge on August 11th. The camp, which began on June 19th, consisted of area high school students recruited from the local commuting area. Shiloh Scott, a participant of the 1998 and 1999 summer camps, returned as youth leader for the 2000 camp. Under the direction of group leader Holly Toadvine, Shiloh and the remaining enrollees Ashley Nock, Jeffrey Oshaben, Mark Bendon and Chelsea Baczek were able to complete a variety of projects during the eight week non-residential camp.

The summer's projects were kicked off by the reconstruction of sand fencing along a portion of the Swan's Cove bike trail where winter storms had washed out the existing dune systems. This trail is a major route to the beach for visitors who bike the refuge. Once completed, the fence line helps to re-establish the dunes in an area where severe storm damage existed and where unauthorized beach access was causing tremendous erosion.

One of the major accomplishments of the 2000 camp was compliance with handicap accessibility to all boardwalk areas on the refuge, Staff member Corky Collins helped supervise the crew and gave direction to the group leader for this much-needed project. The camp placed 1/4" edges on the existing boardwalks to comply with the accessibility standards for blind visitors. The enrollees were able to complete four of the six boardwalk areas needing the edge, reducing a maintenance backlog for the refuge. They were also able to assist a Landmark Volunteer crew in the construction of a boardwalk on the new environmental education trail being established next to the old Assateague Village site. Crew members were able to meet volunteers from all over the northeast and to assist in the construction of the boardwalk from start to finish. The addition of the boardwalk to this trail helps to preserve precious wetland habitat while allowing visitor access to the trail.