

[From Fall 2002]

YCC Highlights

This past summer, under the direction of Group Leader Tom Quinn, the CNWR hosted a Youth Conservation Corps (YCC). A national program, the YCC offers summer employment to youth ages 15 through 18. While working on refuge projects, enrollees learn about the conservation of natural resources on our public lands. The employment period was June 24 through August 16 for seven local high school students: Chris Mills, Traise Rawlings and Cassandra Bower from Chincoteague; Maria Weinberg and Rebekah Rohl from New Church; Brendan Rogalski from Wallops Island, and Brittany Gordon from Wattsville. The YCC worked on various projects throughout the summer.

One of their major accomplishments was the repair of the predator fence on the crossover dike at North Wash Flats. The work included vegetation removal and 1000 feet of fence reconstruction. This project contributes to the management of piping plovers by keeping out predators, as well as the Chincoteague ponies, during piping plover nesting season.

Another major accomplishment was the survey, repair and replacement of wood duck nest boxes and predator guards. The nest boxes and predator guards offer greater defense from predators and aid in the production of wood ducks. Additional YCC accomplishments included the painting of gas and diesel fuel tanks, spreading of mulch on the environmental education trail, cemetery maintenance, cleaning of government vehicles and removal of autumn olive, an invasive species.

The students learned about the management of refuges as they learned the importance of the projects they worked on. They were also given an overview on the management of piping plovers, and assisted the public use department in providing information to visitors at the pony corrals during pony penning week.

Geralyn Mireles
Refuge Operation Specialist CNWR