

[From Fall 2005]

Youth Conservation Corps Accomplishments

The 2005 Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) completed a very successful summer program which began on June 27 with 3 enrollees: Kimberly Gillespie, Doug Davis and James Kelly. I coordinated the program with Chris Wentworth, the YCC group leader. The YCC crew completed many projects including cleaning and staining several wood items and constructing a major portion of a 30x30 gazebo for the Environmental Education Trail.

The crew spent a great deal of time and effort maintaining refuge trails to enhance visitors' experiences. Crosswalks and signs were repainted and new ones added, brush was cleared away from information signs, and low hanging limbs were removed from bike trails to increase visibility. A project that took quite a bit of time to complete was cleaning and sealing several wood items including informational signs and six outdoor bathrooms.

Another major project of the YCC crew was removal, repair, and replacement of the pony fence on the north wash flats. This fence is essential, since it protects the habitat of the piping plover and other nesting shorebirds. The enrollees took down old "chicken wire" type fencing and replaced it with a three-strand barbed wire fence.

Throughout the hot summer, the crew stayed focused and worked hard to assist refuge staff in completing many tasks. The crew was also able to lend a hand with smaller projects such as searching for invertebrates in marsh samples, cleaning and refurbishing some refuge housing and removing storm debris from the shoreline.

However, their primary accomplishment was the construction of a 30x30 foot gazebo to be used for environmental education. With the assistance of refuge maintenance worker Jeff Marshall and refuge volunteer Carl Palmer, the enrollees were able to assemble the flooring sections and side walls of the gazebo, getting the project near the point of completion. However, the project could not be completed by the YCC due to the extreme weight of the roof sections. It was determined that an outside contractor with specialized equipment, such as a crane, would be needed to complete this part of the project.

The YCC's accomplishments will continue to enhance our visitors' experiences for years to come.

Geralyn Mireles
Refuge Operations Specialist