

Partnership Between Ore-Cal RC&D Council and California Deer Association



2024 YCC crew. From left to right, Emeraldal, Angeles, Brian, Dulce, Evan Hockett, and Nathalie.

A huge thank you to California Deer Association for another successful Goosenest Ranger District Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) season of habitat improvement and community service. Ore-Cal Resource Conservation and Development Council (Ore-Cal RC&DC) partnered with the Klamath National Forest Goosenest Ranger District, California Deer Association (CDA), Modoc Nation, Siskiyou County Fish and Game Commission, and Butte Valley High School to support the Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) for the 2024 summer season. Your funding support enabled Ore-Cal RC&DC to hire 5 youths (15-19 years old) from Butte Valley High School for this 2024 summer season. The mission of the Youth Conservation Corps is to make a difference in their community by participating in community service as well as coordinating with other organizations to make a positive impact in their community as well as habitat improvement projects working beside USFS personnel. Additionally, the YCC program helps youth to gain knowledge and experience in the world of conservation. Allowing these youth workers to gain practical experience on the ground can lead to careers in forest and range-related organizations and agencies do that work.

The YCC summer season begins with various training courses with a focus on safety. YCC receives training for the safe use of hand tools to complete various on-the-ground tasks. The use of mapping software such as Avenza enabled YCC crews to capture data and navigate the many miles of roads throughout the Goosenest Ranger District. Using their cell phones with GPS-enabled software, YCC crews identify and map invasive plants and

wildlife while learning to navigate outside their crew vehicle. Crew get CPR and First Aid training, so the entire team knows what to do in an emergency. Finally, everyone received radio training allowing them knowledge for safety and coordinating with other USFS crews. This adds to safety in case of wildfire or accidents.

Good leadership leads to an enjoyable experience and program coordinator Twyla Miller was back for the season. Her experience working in the Goosenest Ranger District enabled her to coordinate great projects and learning experiences for the YCC crew. Crew leader, Evan Hockett, a recent graduate from the Oregon Institute of Technology, led the team out each day and coordinated with USFS staff. The heart of the crew, the youth, were Butte Valley High School students Angeles, Emeraldal, Brian, Dulce, and Nathalie. All the crew worked hard throughout the season to complete the tasks assigned to them, making their season go off without a hitch.

Over the season the different organizations YCC worked with were generous enough to participate in many different learning experiences with the kids. For example, the employees at the USFS Goosenest Ranger District took a day to teach the crew how timber management works, showing them the process for how they choose which trees to thin due to overstocking and discussing why thinning trees is important. Another great learning experience for the crew was helping with bat surveys, they were able to learn how to conduct scientific surveys as well as why



Wildlife: YCC crew assisting Wildlife Biologist Katie with collecting bat surveying equipment.

bats are important. They were lucky enough to be able to go out for a day and participate in banding birds, they were taught how and why they are banded through hands-on teaching. This same hands-on teaching method was used when the YCC learned about bee surveys, they were able to learn how to catch the bees and identify their species (important pollinators) before they were released back safely. These examples are just a few of the great learning experiences the crew experienced.

Many thanks to the USFS Goosenest staff for making this a great season. There are also many great projects that the YCC was able to help with around the Butte Valley area. For a start, the crew was able to help the CDA by traveling around the Klamath National Forest maintaining guzzlers which are crucial to the wildlife in the surrounding areas. We also spent a lot of time this year making seed balls which in the future will hopefully play a



YCC Crew Participating in Maintaining Wildlife Guzzlers in the Klamath National Forest.

significant role in the reforestation of the areas that have burned in wildfires over the years by spreading the balls throughout the burned areas. Another project we worked on was for the Shasta River Wildlife Area, the crew was able to help by preparing choke cherry saplings for transplanting along the Shasta River. Using maps and GPS locations the YCC youth helped locate and capture data on vegetation transects throughout the Goosenest District to monitor fire recovery for wildlife grazing. These various work experiences help the surrounding environment and give YCC crew members a glimpse into the work that conservation professionals do every day.

Other great projects included assisting the Modoc Nation control noxious weeds by taking out scotch thistle. They participated in landscaping work at the Butte Valley Community Center, helping the Lion's Club. We also spent a day cleaning up the Goosenest Trail by raking the trail and cleaning up any trash we saw along the way. Picking up trash was a big part of the season as well whether it was cleaning up the Macdoel Wayside Park or helping the Goosenest by picking up the trash at the campgrounds. The YCC members were happy to help.

The youth who participated in the YCC this year were all very hard-working and enjoyed learning the new things that they were taught throughout the summer. They completed all the tasks given to them without complaint. That paired with the great partners who funded us (like CDA membership), the awesome employees who took the time out of their day to assist and teach the crew, and everyone else who assisted us made the 2024 YCC season a summer to remember.

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