

# NEBRASKA YOUTH CONSERVATION PROGRAM-LB549

## Summary Report



Omaha Crews-First Day of Program



Roofing picnic shelter built at Pawnee SRA



Clearing trails at Branched Oak SRA

## PLANNING PROCESS

Once the Legislature passed LB549 and it was signed into law by the Governor, the Director of Nebraska Game and Parks appointed a project manager and a committee was created to assist in the planning of the program. Project sites and activities were solicited from agency staff, which in turn shaped the locations of where the Youth Crews would be. It was determined that 16 crews from across the state would be created and that there would be two crew leaders per crew. Existing agency staff would also assist whenever necessary and would provide the majority of the educational programming that was required within the legislation. Staff put together a budget with the guidance of the Fiscal Note and by soliciting bids for materials and services to operate the program.

## CREW LOCATIONS

<b>Lincoln</b>	3 crews of 10= 30 youth and 6 crew leaders	<b>Omaha</b>	6 crews of 10=60 youth and 12 crew leaders
<b>Grand Island</b>	1 crew of 10= 10 youth and 2 crew leaders	<b>Norfolk</b>	1 crew of 10= 10 youth and 2 crew leaders
<b>North Platte</b>	1 crew of 10= 10 youth and 2 crew leaders	<b>Lexington</b>	1 crew of 10= 10 youth and 2 crew leaders
<b>Ogallala</b>	1 crew of 10= 10 youth and 2 crew leaders	<b>McCook</b>	1 crew of 10= 10 youth and 2 crew leaders
<b>Scottsbluff</b>	1 crew of 10= 10 youth and 2 crew leaders		
<b>Total Youth in Crew</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>Total Crew Leaders</b>	<b>32</b>

It was planned to have 160 youth and 32 crew leaders throughout the state. Actual numbers will be discussed further into the report.

## RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The recruitment process started with Game and Parks Commission entering into a contract with Nebraska Department of Labor (NDoL) for the recruitment of all of the youth that would participate in the program, along with half the crew leaders for the program. This contract was signed in December, 2011 and marketing materials were created in January, 2012. In February, massive marketing started to occur from the district offices to recruit youth into the program. NDoL started with approaching all schools, alternative schools, foster care system, Wards of the State, juvenile court system, organizations that work with youth and culled their own databases of youth that fit within the criteria established by the legislation. NDoL participated in career fairs and opened their offices to youth to apply for the positions. Crew members had to meet one of the four criteria below:

1. Be of low income (proof included being part of school lunch program, on Medicaid or income statements)
2. Potential of dropping out of school (proof included note from school counselor)

3. Having negative contact with law (proof included documentation from court or probation officer)

4. Direct or indirect contact with physical or substance abuse (proof included documentation from school counselor, other counselor, court information and police reports)

Recruitment took place from February until two weeks into the program. It was projected that all slots would be filled and there would be a waiting list for all project locations so Game and Parks would have replacements for any youth that quit or was terminated. That did not occur. Table one provides the number of youths that started the program.

**TABLE 1: YOUTH PARTICIPANTS OF PROGRAM**

<b>Start of Program</b>		<b>End of Program</b>	
<i>Crew Name</i>	<i>Number of Youth</i>	<i>Crew Name</i>	<i>Number of Youth</i>
Lincoln #1 (Branched Oak #1)	9	Lincoln #1 (Branched Oak #1)	6
Lincoln #2 (Branched Oak #2)	10	Lincoln #2 (Branched Oak #2)	9
Lincoln #3 (Pawnee)	9	Lincoln #3 (Pawnee)	8
Omaha #1 (Schramm)	10	Omaha #1 (Schramm)	8
Omaha #2 (Louisville)	9	Omaha #2 (Louisville)	8
Omaha #3 (Two Rivers)	10	Omaha #3 (Two Rivers)	7
Omaha #4 (Dead Timber #1)	10	Omaha #4 (Dead Timber #1)	6
Omaha #5 (Dead Timber #2)	10	Omaha #5 (Dead Timber #2)	9
Omaha #6 (Fremont)	10	Omaha #6 (Fremont)	8
Norfolk	9	Norfolk	8
Grand Island	10	Grand Island	7
Lexington	7	Lexington	5
North Platte	10	North Platte	7
Ogallala	8	Ogallala	4
McCook	10	McCook	7
Scottsbluff	9	Scottsbluff	5
<b>Total number of youth</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>Total Number of youth</b>	<b>112</b>

The program retained 74.7% of the youth for the duration of the six week program. A total of 38 youth did not make it through the program. Of those 38, 17 (45%) chose not to return to work and 21 (55%) were terminated due to three main reasons; unexcused absences, drug use or insubordination.

## **CREW LEADERS**

Game and Parks determined it was necessary to have two different types of individuals leading each crew; one would be more of a counselor (called Staff Assistant II) trained to work with youth and the other position would possess a skill set reflective of the construction and maintenance trades, thereby

able to teach those skills (called Facility Maintenance Leader). There were two different job descriptions for the crew leaders; with 16 being hired for each type of job. NDoL assisted in advertising the counselor position and 186 applicants applied for the 16 available positions. There were more applicants in the Omaha and Lincoln areas than any other area. Some locations had two to three applicants. There were 57 applicants for the Facility Maintenance Leader positions. In some instances there were very few applicants to interview for each location.

During the course of the program, we had one crew leader called back to active duty in the military, one left due to health issues and two were terminated prior to the program starting during the training week. We were able to re-advertise the positions and fill them with very little disruption to the program. There were several times that NGPC did have to supplement staff to guarantee that the crews had two crew leaders per crew.



The crew leaders were hired and started one week prior to the program starting for the youth. The leaders were required to go to E.T. Mahoney State Park for a week long training to cover all aspects of the program. Lodging and breakfast and lunch were taken care of along with travel expenses to and from Lincoln for the week. Game and Parks shuttled the leaders to Mahoney from Lincoln every morning. The following items were the main topics the training covered:

- Policies and procedures of NE Game and Parks
- Management training
- Specific training dealing with youth (2 ½ days)
- Paperwork process of program
- Purchase cards and paperwork
- Injuries and accidents
- Workplace harassment
- Team building
- Gear/Transportation
- Meals and snack



## PROVISIONS FOR THE YOUTH

The program provided numerous things for the youth to make sure they were able to work out in the elements during the summer. Table two is a list of items the program provided.

**TABLE 2: PROVISIONS FOR THE YOUTH**

Shirts (3 per person)	Hat	Gloves (2 sets)
Eye wear (2 per person)	Ear protection (6 per person)	Water bottle
Lunch	Snacks (one in am and one in pm)	Transportation to and from work locations (at central location in community)
Jeans, if necessary	Boots, if necessary	

## PROJECT LOCATIONS

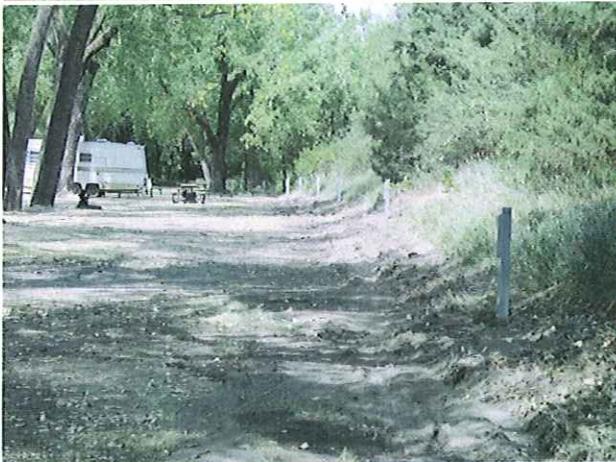
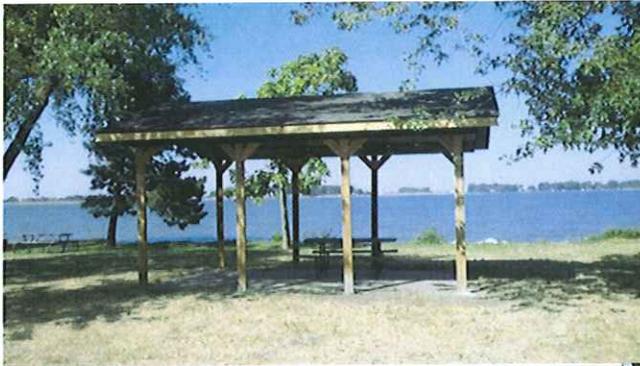
Table three shows the locations where projects were worked on and/or completed. The crews worked on projects in 23 State Recreation Areas, 1 State Historical Park and 41 Wildlife Management Areas.

**TABLE 3: PROJECT LOCATIONS**

Branched Oak State Recreation Area (SRA) & Wildlife Management Area (WMA)	Bluestem SRA & WMA	Wagon Train SRA & WMA
Pawnee SRA	Yankee Hill WMA	Stagecoach SRA & WMA
Olive Creek WMA	Wildwood WMA	Conestoga WMA
Twin Lakes WMA	Louisville SRA	Schilling WMA
Rakes Creek WMA	Wilson Creek WMA	Schramm SRA
Gifford Point WMA	Fremont Lakes SRA	Jack Sinn WMA
Memphis WMA	Two Rivers SRA & WMA	Gilmour WMA
Dead Timber SRA	Powderhorn WMA	Summit SRA
Lake Ogallala SRA	Clear Creek WMA	Lake McConaughy SRA
Ogallala Strip WMA	Wildcat Hills SRA	Bridgeport SRA
9 Mile WMA	Kiowa WMA	Montz Point WMA
Lake Minatare SRA	Cedar Canyon WMA	Buffalo Creek WMA
Bead Mountain WMA	Ft. Kearny SRA & State Historical Park	Cornhusker WMA
Martins Reach WMA	Loch Linda WMA	Willow Creek SRA
Oak Valley WMA	Wood Duck WMA	Yellowbanks WMA
Red Willow SRA	Swanson Reservoir SRA	Medicine Creek SRA & WMA
Hayes Center WMA	Cambridge D.D. WMA	Frenchman WMA
Johnson Lake SRA	Gallagher Canyon SRA	Darr Strip WMA
Cozad WMA	Bittern's Call WMA	

## COMPLETED PROJECTS

It was the goal of Game and Parks to teach youth some skills they did not have before, along with the experiences of holding down a job. For many of the youth in this program, it was their first job, so some things that were learned were how to work with co-workers, punctuality, following directions, and how to thrive in a work place. There were both large and small projects for each youth crew to complete. See Appendix A for an example of the work schedule of a crew. Table four and the photos show the majority of work completed during the program.



Top Left: Picnic Shelter at Johnson Lake

Top Right: Wildlife Viewing Blind at Dead Timber

Middle Left: Electrical pedestals at Ft. Kearny SRA

Middle Right: Picnic Table

Bottom: ADA Playground at Fremont SRA

**TABLE 4: PROJECTS COMPLETED**

<b>Activity/Project</b>	<b>Amount Accomplished</b>
Removal of Fencing	25,755 feet
Construction of Fencing	28,806 feet
Fence Repair	27,920 feet
Tree Removal	367 acres
Vegetation Removal	30.5 acres
Picnic Table Renovation	248 tables
New Picnic Table Construction	55 tables
Campground Electrical Projects	184 pedestals
Painting	Pontoon boat, boat docks, pavilions, guard posts, storage structure
Shop Clean Ups	3
Visitor Center Clean Up	2
Trash Pick Up	1,566 acres
Shoreline Trash Pick Up	22,290 feet
Signs Built	1
Signs Erected	1
Signs Painted	15
Roofing	3 different structures
Playgrounds Installed	4 playgrounds
Playground Matting	2 playgrounds
Wildlife Viewing Blinds Constructed	5
Hunting Blinds Constructed	5
Picnic Shelters Constructed	2
Restroom repair	4 restrooms
Restroom Constructed	2
Painting Restrooms	19 restrooms
Trail Clearing	19,070 feet
Noxious Weed Control	155 acres
Decking & Railing at Schramm SRA	530' of deck and 800' of railing
Removal of Railing	800'
Parking Lot Improvements	2 parking lots
Shoreline Protection	50'
Guard Post Installation	56 posts
Vehicle Maintenance	6 areas
Tree thinning	12 acres
Spraying of trees	8 acres
Scout invasive species	5 areas
Fish Habitat	1 lake
Build Shooting Benches	4 benches
Build day use areas	3 parks
Clean fire rings	5 parks
Build gates	3 gates
Build access points	2 access areas
Landscaping	1 acre

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Another requirement of the Program was to provide educational programming about the outdoors to these youths. It was determined by the agency that the best way to go about this would be to provide interactive sessions where the youth got to experience the activities as opposed to have classroom sessions on the outdoors. For half of every Thursday of the program, the youth participated in some type of outdoor experience that was not work related. Staff had to come up with 96 programs in the 6 weeks for the youth to engage in. Some crews were combined at times so the crews could learn how to interact with one another. We had the NDoL also come out and give presentations on job opportunities after this program ended and from the organization, Education Quest, which talked to the kids about how to prepare, financially for college. Table five provides a listing of the educational programming done with the youth. See Appendix B for educational schedule of crews for the program.



**TABLE 5: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFERED**

Fishing	Outdoor Cooking	Archery	Airguns & Firearms
Firearms Safety	Canoeing	Kayaking	Horticulturalist Programming
Fish Seining	Bird Watching	Insect Identification	Prairie Exploration
Water Invasive Species	River Otter & Platte River animal Identification	Telemetry/Animal Tracking	Fish Hatcheries
Geocaching	Water Species identification	Wildlife Management	Nature Hiking
Hunting etiquette	Job Shadowing with Greg Wagner	Raptor Recovery	Introduction to game calling



## **EXPENDITURES**

There were direct and indirect costs that dealt with the youth of the program. Direct costs included the youth and leaders wages, office supplies for crews, transportation, gas, food, clothing and protective wear, miscellaneous items, the electrical apprenticeship licenses and the educational programs. Indirect costs included the NDoL contract for recruitment, costs incurred for recruitment, computer services for hiring process, training for the crew leaders, expenses for crew leaders and the phones for the crew leaders. These two costs make up 60.6% of the program funds spent. Table six provides an overview of the expenditures of this program.

Program Funds received= \$994,400

Program Funds with interest= \$1,026,172.54

Please note that we did not budget to spend the interest (\$31,772.54) because we left it as a contingency fund.

Direct costs for youth and crew leaders= \$479,549.12

Indirect costs for youth and crew leaders=\$78,352.31

Total costs for youth and crew leaders= \$557,901.43

**Program Funds expended= \$920,289.94**

Total Program Funds unexpended= \$74,110.06 (this includes the interest accrued)

Not only were program funds used for this Program, NGPC secured grants to take care of some of the material costs that were incurred for some of the projects. Capital improvement funds were used on project materials that were already in the works for other projects. Finally, NGPC staff contributed a tremendous amount of time towards the program and that is reflected in the costs as well.

NGPC Costs= \$379,427.55

Grant Funds received= \$192,960.85

**Total NGPC Contribution to Program= \$572,388.40**

**TABLE 6: EXPENDITURES**

<b>Budgetary Item</b>	<b>Costs</b>
Wages for youth and crew leaders	\$362,255.88
NE Dept. of Labor Contract for Recruitment	\$58,149.90
Printing for recruitment	\$790.93
Computer Services for Hiring Process	\$75.00
Training for Crew Leaders	\$10,763.86
Expenses for Crew Leaders (travel to training)	\$4,646.85
Office Supplies for Crews	\$362.08
Transportation	\$50,007.64
Gas for Vans	\$15,700.93
Food	\$34,588.20
Clothing/protective wear for crews & leaders	\$9,100.75
Phones for crew leaders	\$3,925.77
Electrical Apprenticeship Licenses for youth	\$1,440
Miscellaneous items for youth (sunscreen, bug spray, first aid kits, water bottles...)	\$5,000.64
Educational Programs	\$1,093
Materials for projects	\$362,388.51
Labor of NGPC Staff	\$243,722.04
Capital Budget towards projects	\$135,705.51
Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants towards projects	\$140,013.60
Bureau of Reclamation funds towards projects	\$52,947.25
<b>Total Program Costs</b>	<b>\$1,492,678.34</b>

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON FUTURE PROGRAMMING

The following recommendations from staff are offered if this program is slated to continue:

- Recruitment starts later in the school year so youth have the opportunity in their minds when they are making summer plans. This year it started in February and it should have started in April since youth do not look as far in advance in planning their schedules.
- Recruitment occurs in March and hiring of leaders occurs in early April, so we lock in the leaders and can start some training earlier.
- Be allowed to provide more flexibility to write job descriptions that fits the work required of crew leaders.
- Hire additional staff in personnel and planning departments to assist in paperwork and logistics of program.
- Look to hire additional staff or bring in another agency that has more experience in the counseling of youth and their leaders on how to deal with the problems experienced on a day-to-day basis.
- Education occurs in morning and the youth then get rest of day off. Leaders stay and do paperwork, which would then eliminate overtime.
- Potentially start earlier in the day (must be mindful of bus schedules for youth to get to drop off location).
- More internal training of existing NGPC staff and more training of crew leaders on procedures and issues that may come up with the youth they are working with.
- Make crews smaller in number but keep same amount of crew leaders (so maybe 6-8 in a crew).
- Re-examine the locations of the crews. Some worked very well, others did not (had hard time recruiting enough youth, did not have enough areas/work to support the crew).
- Allow for more of the budget to be used for materials to provide the youth with additional skill sets and meaningful projects.
- Create partnerships in the local communities with charity organizations to aid those youth unprepared for the work day due to lack of housing, nutrition or clothing.
- Enhanced recognition of those youth completing the program.
- Incorporate leadership training into training time for leaders to better empower them to lead their team.
- Incorporate safety and other training necessary for youth the first two days of program.
- Improve communication by holding weekly conference call with leaders to better handle all housekeeping items as opposed to evening emails daily.
- Look to devise some sort of competition between teams for things like 100% attendance or zero accidents with special prizes awarded.

**Appendix A: Example of Work Schedule (Dead Timber Crew #1)**

**Dead Timber Crew #1**

Updated 6/9/12

Date	8:00-9:00	9:00-10:00	10:00-11:00
6/25/2012	Travel to Fremont	Orientation	Orientation
6/26/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Repair shelters	Repair shelters
6/27/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Repair shelters	Repair shelters
6/28/2012	Travel to Platte River	Education-Dutch oven cooking	Education-Dutch oven cooking
6/29/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Repair shelters	Repair shelters
7/2/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Install Guard Posts	Install Guard Posts
7/3/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Install Pipe Gates	Install Pipe Gates
7/5/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Redo entrance sign	Redo entrance sign
7/6/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Install Guard Posts	Install Guard Posts
7/9/2012	Travel to Powderhorn	Tree removal	Tree removal
7/10/2012	Travel to Powderhorn	Fence repair	Fence repair
7/11/2012	Travel to Powderhorn	Noxious weed control	trash pick up
7/12/2012	Travel to Platte River	Trail work	Trail Work
7/13/2012	Travel to Powderhorn	Fence repair	Fence repair
7/16/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds
7/17/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds
7/18/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds
7/19/2012	Travel to Lincoln	Education-Fishing	Education-Fishing
7/20/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds
7/23/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Trash pick up	Install Guard Posts
7/24/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Install Guard Posts	Install Guard Posts
7/25/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Install Pipe Gates	Install Pipe Gates
7/26/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	trash pick up
7/27/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds
7/30/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds
7/31/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds
8/1/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds
8/2/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds
8/3/2012	Travel to Dead Timber	Install Pipe Gates	Install Pipe Gates

11:00-12:00	12:00-12:30	12:30-1:30
Orientation	Lunch	Orientation
Repair shelters	Lunch	Repair shelters
Repair shelters	Lunch	Repair shelters
Education-Dutch oven cooking	Lunch	Travel to Dead Timber
Repair shelters	Lunch	Repair shelters
Install Guard Posts	Lunch	Install Guard Posts
Install Pipe Gates	Lunch	Redo entrance sign
Redo entrance sign	Lunch	Education-fish seining
Trash pick up	Lunch	Entrance sign
Tree removal	Lunch	Noxious weed control
Fence repair	Lunch	Fence repair
Tree removal	Lunch	tree removal
Trail work	Lunch	Education-Kayak/game calling
Fence repair	Lunch	Fence repair
Wildlife Viewing blinds	Lunch	Wildlife Viewing blinds
Wildlife Viewing blinds	Lunch	Wildlife Viewing blinds
Wildlife Viewing blinds	Lunch	Wildlife Viewing blinds
Education-Fishing	Lunch	Travel to Dead Timber
Wildlife Viewing blinds	Lunch	Wildlife Viewing blinds
Install Guard Posts	Lunch	Install Pipe Gates
Install Guard Posts	Lunch	Trash pick up
Install Pipe Gates	Lunch	Install Guard Posts
Travel to Louisville	Lunch	Education-Project Wild
Wildlife Viewing blinds	Lunch	Wildlife Viewing blinds
Wildlife Viewing blinds	Lunch	Wildlife Viewing blinds
Wildlife Viewing blinds	Lunch	Wildlife Viewing blinds
Wildlife Viewing blinds	Lunch	Wildlife Viewing blinds
Travel to Platte River	Lunch	Education-Archery
Install Pipe Gates	Lunch	Trash pick up

Date		1:30-2:30	2:30-3:30	3:30-4:30
6/25/2012	Orientation	Orientation	Orientation	Orientation
6/26/2012	Dead Timber	Repair shelters	Repair shelters	Paperwork/travel
6/27/2012	Dead Timber	Repair shelters	Repair shelters	Paperwork/travel
6/28/2012	Dead Timber	Repair shelters	Repair shelters	Paperwork/travel
6/29/2012	Dead Timber	Repair shelters	Repair shelters	Paperwork/travel
7/2/2012	Dead Timber	Install Guard Posts	Trash pick up	Paperwork/travel
7/3/2012	Dead Timber	Redo entrance sign	Redo entrance sign	Paperwork/travel
7/5/2012	Dead Timber	Education-fish seining	Education-DOL	Paperwork/travel
7/6/2012	Dead Timber	Entrance sign	Trash pick up	Paperwork/travel
7/9/2012	Powderhorn	Noxious weed control	trash pick up	Paperwork/travel
7/10/2012	Powderhorn	Fence repair	Fence repair	Paperwork/travel
7/11/2012	Powderhorn	Fence repair	Fence repair	Paperwork/travel
7/12/2012	Platte River	Education-Kayak/game calling	Education-Kayak/game calling	Paperwork/travel
7/13/2012	Powderhorn	Fence repair	Fence repair	Paperwork/travel
7/16/2012	Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Trash pick up	Paperwork/travel
7/17/2012	Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Paperwork/travel
7/18/2012	Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Paperwork/travel
7/19/2012	Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Paperwork/travel
7/20/2012	Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Paperwork/travel
7/23/2012	Dead Timber	Install Pipe Gates	Install Pipe Gates	Paperwork/travel
7/24/2012	Dead Timber	Install Pipe Gates	Install Pipe Gates	Paperwork/travel
7/25/2012	Dead Timber	Install Guard Posts	Install Guard Posts	Paperwork/travel
7/26/2012	Louisville	Education-Project Wild	Education-Project Wild	Paperwork/travel
7/27/2012	Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Paperwork/travel
7/30/2012	Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Paperwork/travel
7/31/2012	Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Paperwork/travel
8/1/2012	Dead Timber	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Wildlife Viewing blinds	Paperwork/travel
8/2/2012	Platte River	Education-Airguns	Education-Firearms	Paperwork/travel
8/3/2012	Fremont	Travel to Fremont/trash	Evaluation	Paperwork/travel

## **Appendix B: Educational Schedule**

## Educational Programs

5/30/2012

Crew	6/28/2012	7/5/2012	7/12/2012	7/19/2012	7/26/2012	8/2/2012
Dead Timber Crew #1	Dutch oven cooking at PRSP in am-Christy Christensen/DOL	Fish Seining-NE District	Kayaking & Intro to Game Calling at PRSP-Rawlinson's crew	Tracking (Sam Wilson)/EducationQuest	Project Wild- Lindsay Rogers @ Louisville	Archery, Airguns and Firearms Safety at PRSP-Rawlinson's crew
Dead Timber Crew #2	Horticulturalist program-Groenwald staff	Archery, Airguns and Firearms Safety at PRSP-Rawlinson's	Project Wild-Lindsay Rogers @ Dead Timber	Tracking (Sam Wilson)/EducationQuest	Kayaking & Intro to Game Calling at PRSP-Rawlinson's crew	Dutch oven cooking at PRSP in am-Christy Christensen/DOL
Fremont	Dutch oven cooking at PRSP in am-Christy Christensen/DOL	Fishing -Larry Pape or staff	Project Wild-Lindsay Rogers @ Dead Timber	Canoeing on the Platte-Tony Korth	Kayaking & Intro to Game Calling at PRSP-Rawlinson's crew	Archery, Airguns and Firearms Safety at PRSP-Rawlinson's crew
Louisville	Canoeing on the Platte-Tony Korth	Archery, Airguns and Firearms Safety at PRSP-Rawlinson's crew	Kayaking & Intro to Game Calling at PRSP-Rawlinson's crew	Job shadowing/PSA creation w/ Greg Wagner	Project Wild- Lindsay Rogers	Dutch oven cooking at PRSP in am-Christy Christensen/DOL
Schramm	Dutch oven cooking at PRSP in am-Christy Christensen/DOL	Fish Seining-Jeff Jackson @ Louisville	Bird watching (Jeff Fields)/EducationQuest	Project Wild-Lindsay Rogers	Kayaking & Intro to Game Calling at PRSP-Rawlinson's crew	Archery, Airguns and Firearms Safety at PRSP-Rawlinson's crew
Two Rivers	Canoeing on the Platte-Tony Korth	Archery, Airguns and Firearms Safety at PRSP-Rawlinson's	Bird watching (Jeff Fields)/EducationQuest	Project Wild-Lindsay Rogers @ Schramm	Kayaking & Intro to Game Calling at PRSP-Rawlinson's crew	Dutch oven cooking at PRSP in am-Christy Christensen/DOL
Lincoln Crew #1	Dutch oven cooking at PRSP in am-Christy Christensen/DOL	Project Wild- Lindsay Rogers	Kayaking & Intro to Game Calling at PRSP-Rawlinson's crew	Fishing @ Holmes Lake-Larry Pape in am	Tracking (Sam Wilson)/EducationQuest	Fish Seining-Jeff Jackson @ Br. Oak

Crew	6/28/2012	7/5/2012	7/12/2012	7/19/2012	7/26/2012	8/2/2012
Lincoln Crew #2	Fish Seining-Fisheries @ Br. Oak-Jeff Jackson	Project Wild- Lindsay Rogers	Kayaking & Intro to Game Calling at PRSP-Rawlinson's	Fishing @ Holmes Lake-Larry Pape in am	Tracking (Sam Wilson)/EducationQuest	Dutch oven cooking at PRSP in am-Christy Christensen/DOL
Lincoln Crew #3	Fish Seining-Fisheries/DOL	Project Wild- Lindsay Rogers	Karie Decker-Invasive Species/Education	Fishing @ Holmes Lake-Larry Pape in am	Kayaking & Intro to Game Calling at PRSP-Rawlinson's crew	Dutch oven cooking at PRSP in am-Christy Christensen/DOL
Norfolk	Boating/Kayaking-Bruce Trindle	Bird Watching w/ Jeff Fields (@ Ponca?)	Grove Trout Rearing Station	Outdoor Cooking/Camping-Bruce Trindle	Project Wild- Jamie Bachman	Fish Seining @ Willow Creek/DOL
Grand Island	Fishing @ Ft. Kearny-Larry Pape	Fish Seining @ Mormon Island/DOL	River Otter Identification on the Platte-Sam	Project Wild-Jeanine Lackey	Archery-Bob Meduna @ Sac WMA	Calamus Fish Hatchery
Lexington	Fishing @ Ft. Kearny-Larry Pape	Archery-Bob Meduna @ Sac WMA	Fish Seining @ Johnson Lake/DOL	Horticulturalist program-Groenwald staff	Karie Decker-Invasive Species/EducationQuest	Project Wild- Jeanine Lackey
North Platte	Horticulturalist program-Groenwald staff	North Platte Fish Hatchery	Fishing w/ Adam Kestner/Education Quest	Insect Identification-T.J. Walker	Tree, plan & animal track id & WMA mgmnt @ Cedar	Fish Seining @ Sutherland/DOL
McCook	Fish Seining-Fisheries/DOL	Insect Identification-T.J. Walker	Gerry Steinauer-Prairie Exploration/Education	Archery-John Laux	Fishing w/ T.J. Walker	Rock Creek Hatchery
Ogallala	Fishing @ Lake Ogallala	Horticulturalists-Mike Groenwald	Project Wild-Maggie Vinson	Fish Seining @ Ogallala/DOL	Kayaking @ Lake Ogallala-Scott Eveland	Wildlife Management w/ Lance Hastings/Education
Scottsbluff	Fish Seining-Fisheries/DOL	Project Wild-Maggie Vinson	Horticulturalist program-Groenwald staff	Project Wild- Amanda Fillipi	Boating Safety/Kayaking/Canoeing @ Lake Minatare- Jim Zimmerman	Fishing @ Scottsbluff @ Zoo Pond/EducationQuest

**Appendix C: NEBRASKALand December 2012 Article on Program**

# Making a Difference

## Nebraska Youth Conservation Program

By Doug Carroll

**B**y all accounts, last summer's Nebraska Youth Conservation Program was a win-win for everyone involved. Participating youth earned money while learning new skills, gaining valuable job experience and getting on-the-job training in a variety of fields, and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission was able to complete several needed improvement and maintenance projects that had been put on hold due to budget and manpower constraints at state parks, recreation areas and wildlife management areas across the state.

This successful program resulted from the unanimous passage of LB549 by the Nebraska Legislature in 2011. Introduced by State Senator Brenda Council of Omaha, the bill provided money from the Cash Settlement Fund of the state attorney general's office for the Commission to hire youth for a six-week summer job where they could acquire work experience and skills while learning about Nebraska's natural resources.

To that end, 16 crews of young people between the ages of 16 to 20

went to work across the state: six from Omaha, three from Lincoln, and one each from Norfolk, Grand Island, Lexington, McCook, North Platte, Ogallala and Scottsbluff. The number and location of crews were determined after soliciting project suggestions from Commission staff. Two crew leaders were hired and assigned to each group to teach the skills needed to complete assigned projects, and the Nebraska Department of Labor helped find and recruit the workers, following the guidelines set forth in LB549.

Participants needed to meet one of the following criteria: come from low-income households, have the potential of dropping out of school, have had negative contact with the law, or have direct or indirect contact with physical or substance abuse.

The youth were provided shirts, eye and ear protection, hats, gloves, water bottles, lunch and snacks, and transportation to and from the work locations each day. The crews worked closely with area Commission employees to build picnic shelters; repair vault toilets; install playgrounds,

campround electrical projects and fencing; perform shoreline restoration; improve fishing access; work on docks; do painting, landscaping and trash removal; and develop and maintain trails, among other things.

Crew members earned a little over minimum wage and put in 40-hour weeks for the duration of the program, often on days where the afternoon temperatures were in excess of 100 degrees. This schedule was a bit of an eye opener. "For many of the youth in this program it was their first job, so some of the things that were learned were how to work with co-workers, punctuality, following directions, and how to thrive in a work place," said Michelle Stryker, who coordinated the program for the Commission.

Another requirement of the program was to provide educational programming about the outdoors to the youth, so half of each Thursday was reserved for some type of interactive educational or recreational activity. Crew members learned about fishing, outdoor cooking, archery, kayaking, hiking, bird watching and a variety of other outdoor activities. These opportunities also helped the Commission meet some of its Recruitment, Development and Retention (RDR) goals of introducing more youth to the outdoors.

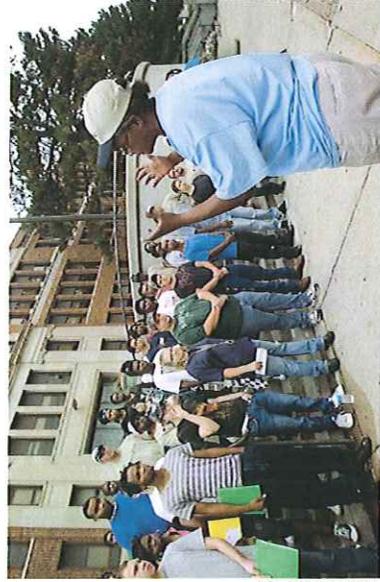
"Some of these kids experienced things they may never have had the chance to except for this program," said Stryker. "It helped some of them get over their fears about the outdoors."

In addition to the recreational opportunities the crews learned about, the Nebraska Department of Labor also gave a presentation on other job opportunities that might be available after the program ended, and an organization called Education Quest gave a talk about how to prepare financially for college. Some of the workers were already saving their paychecks to help pay for college.



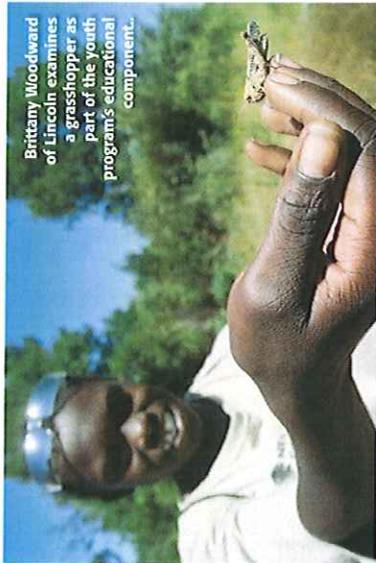
Tyler Jakes (left) and Nick Shefor, both of Lincoln, set a post while installing a new fence at Pawnee SRA last summer.

PHOTO BY DOUG CARROLL



Former state senator Brenda Council gives opening remarks at Omaha North High School on the first day of the Nebraska Youth Conservation Program last summer.

PHOTO BY DOUG CARROLL



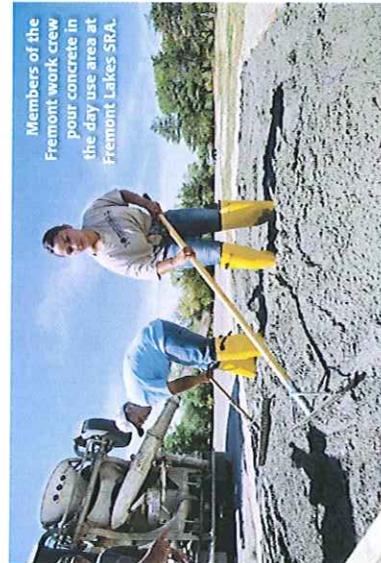
Brittany Woodward of Lincoln examines a grasshopper as part of the youth program's educational component.

PHOTO BY DOUG CARROLL



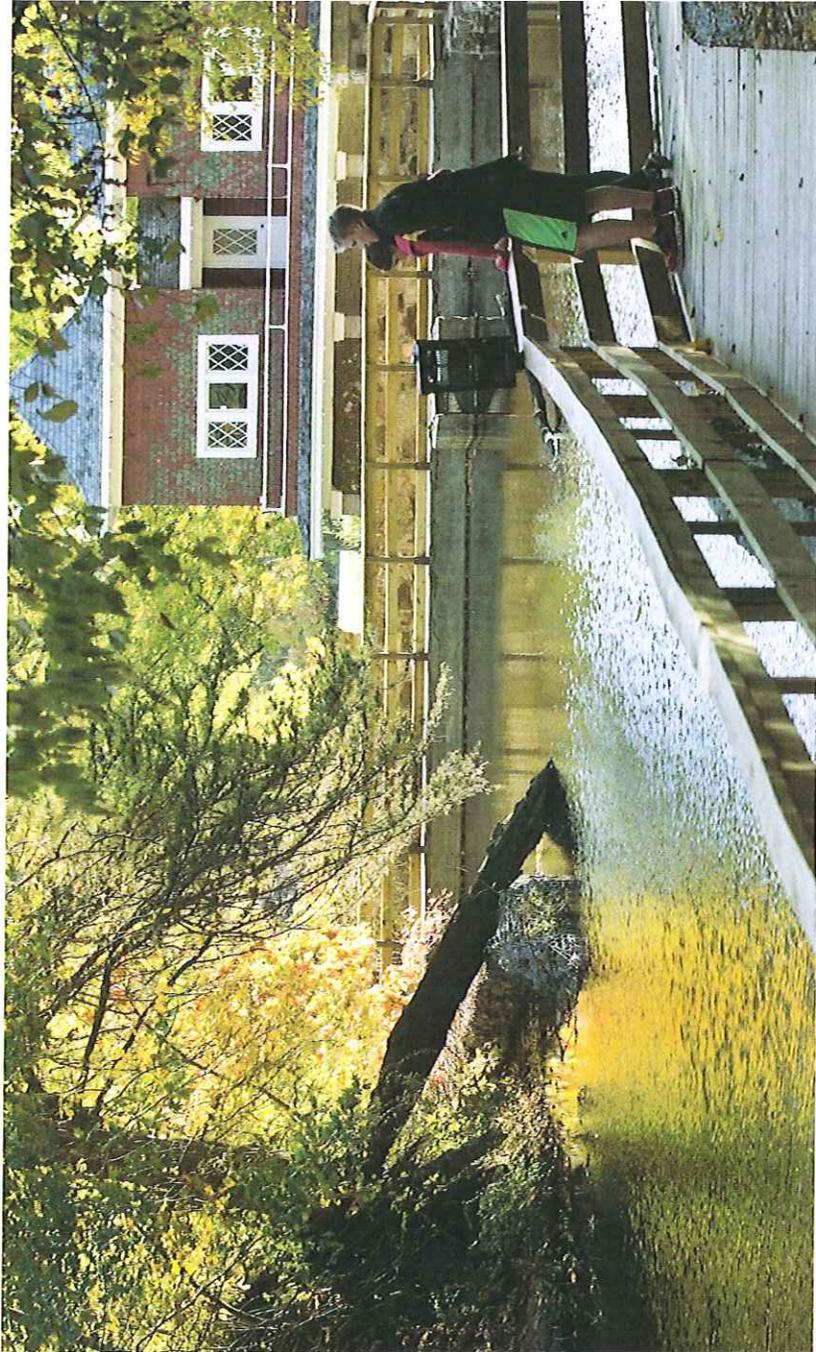
Bradley Blylock of Sidney (foreground), Vanessa Garza of Scottsbluff and Derek Bilhinitis of Aumsville help trench for electrical lines at Lake Minatare SRA.

PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER



Members of the Fremont work crew pour concrete in the day use area at Fremont Lakes SRA.

PHOTO BY JEFF KLUMBS



The new boardwalk installed by youth at Schramm Park State Recreation Area will be enjoyed by visitors for years to come.

PHOTO BY DOUG CARROLL

while others were using theirs to help feed siblings and help their family, said Stryker.

By the time the program ended, the crews had worked on projects at 23 state recreation areas, one state historical park and 41 state wildlife management areas. The amount of work accomplished through this program was significant: more than 300 picnic tables were renovated or built; 184 campground electrical pedestals were installed; four playgrounds were built; 530 feet of deck and 800 feet of railing were installed at Schramm Park State Recreation Area; fire rings were cleaned at five different parks; the roofs of three different structures were repaired; two picnic shelters, five hunting blinds and five

photography blinds were constructed; approximately 90,000 feet of fencing was removed, constructed or repaired; more than 19,000 feet of trails were cleaned – the list goes on and on.

Because much of the program's funding came from last year's transfer of money from the state attorney general's office, as well as grants the Commission was able to secure and money it had in its capital budget last year, it remains to be seen whether or not the program will continue.

Time will tell what long-term effect the program had on its participants, but it provided invaluable work experience, some much-needed money, and resulted in numerous improvements to public areas across the state that Nebraskans will be able to enjoy well into the future. ■



PHOTO BY DOUG CARROLL

Learning to shoot a bow was just one of many things the youth got to experience.