

May 2012 Overview

Yosemite I Backcountry Trail Crew

Supervisor: Tessa d'Usseau

"...Two roads diverge in a wood, and I – I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference."

From: The Road Not Taken

By: Robert Frost

Overview:

The month of May has brought many changes to the Yosemite I Crew. We have now settled into Foresta; our home for the next month and a half. This historic 200-acre site, once inhabited by Miwok Indians, included Big Meadow, Crane Creek, and a rich history. Foresta still bears the scars of the 1990 fire that devastated this small community, leaving us our burned-over nest with a few pines and cedars surrounding camp, which offer a respite from the sun and wind. An array of colored tents can be seen sprinkled in among the Manzanita skeletons. The early morning witnesses a parade of head lamps filtering in to camp through the brush. After arriving in Yosemite in the beginning of May, we immediately set to learning everything we needed to know to get through each day and start "trail work." Jeremy Brown (Yosemite '95), Felipe Sanchez (Yosemite '06), Dan Schweitzer, Evelyn Garretson (Yosemite '09), and Max Breedlove introduced the crew to policies, procedures, and JHA's (safety) as well as hands-on instruction in chain saw use, tool rehandling and sharpening, wood splitting, radio/emergency communication, in-camp protocols, ergonomics, and IIPP training.

Our first challenge was completing maintenance on the Old Big Oak Flat Trail from the trailhead to Tamarak Creek. There, we honed our maintenance skills and tried out our new boots and safety gear. Soon after we headed up to unbelievable scenic Glacier and Washburn Points with their picturesque views of Half Dome and the high country. We then continued down the historic 4 Mile Trail to Yosemite Valley (3,260' elevation change) where we were treated to unforgettable panoramas of the valley, peaks, and waterfalls. The Mist Trail and John Muir Trail (JMT) ascending from Happy Isles and passing Vernal and Nevada Falls was our next conquest. Once again, we were rewarded with spectacular views and occasional mist from the waterfalls. We were finally allowed to work on a relatively flat trail! The Mirror Lake Loop – only to be followed the next day by 108 switchbacks and 3500' ascent of the Tenaya Zig-Zags to Snow Creek. The climb was difficult, but the views across the canyon of the vast granite wave of Cloud's Rest and the monolith of Half Dome were well worth the hike. The month comes to a close with maintenance on the Yosemite Falls Trail and breath-taking views of this majestic 2,400' waterfall.

Curriculum:

Our evening curriculum involved catching up on Backcountry Policy and working out any kinks having to do with running our camp. Shauna Potocky, Chief of Yosemite Education, visited the crew and discussed topics she and her interns will be able to provide the crew this season. We just missed the phenomenal wildflower display along the canyon into Hite's Cove this year but made the best of the day and hiked along the South Fork of the Merced River exploring some of the area's relics from the old Hite's mine. A day's visit to Hetch Hetchy was opportune to teach some history concerning the dam built in the 1920's to create a water supply for the city of San Francisco, and the controversy that evolved. We had a chance to spend the afternoon in Yosemite Valley and visited the Indian Museum, Visitor Center, Ansel Adams Gallery, and watched the "Spirit of Yosemite" video. Classes this month included Backpacking Cooking, Backpacking and Leave No Trace, Community Meetings and the formation of committees (Mission Statement, Special Events, Fun & Games, and Botany).

Odds and Ends:

The crew's first weekend hike was to Lake Vernon where everyone enjoyed a weekend out of camp and some rest and relaxation

We drove down to Yosemite Falls on the full moon to witness the "Moon Bow."

Saw a nesting pair of peregrine falcons, a couple of bears, and numerous rattlesnakes...

Visitors: We love visitors! Thanks for stopping by: Agnes Vianzon, John Goodwin, Steve Dolan, Steven Slack, Russ Kish, Tim Middleton, Tyrus K, Javier Nunez, and of course Max Breedlove who volunteered and worked with us for the first two weeks.

Shout out to Mary Daniels who left the crew early in the season. Hope all is going well for you. We send our love and we miss you.

Memorial Day Weekend was spent at Lake Eleanor which is nestled into the NW corner of Yosemite at 4,657'. We had a little bit of everything – rain, snow flurries, wind and sun during our stay.

Thank you to Dan Martinez and Jesus Dolores from the Yosemite Education Branch for the time you spent with the crew and your Leave No Trace class. We're looking forward to seeing you again soon.

Thank you Javier Nunez (Yosemite '11) for visiting us and bringing Dum-Dum Lollipops to share!

Happy 26th Birthday to our sponsor Felipe Sanchez! We loved your birthday cake!!