

August 2012 Overview  
Stanislaus CCC Backcountry Crew  
Supervisor: Miguel Diaz

The Stanislaus Backcountry Trail Crew started the month on August with only 17 days left of our time in the Mt. San Jacinto State Park. Miguel and the rest of the crew are determined to finish strong. Even after pion jarring hundreds of holes and rolling thousands of cubic feet of rock in July, there was a still lot of work to be done. Like our final push late June in the Stanislaus, the crew thrived under pressure once again. We finished on a good note having completed a three-tier structure wall, two junk walls, two sets of stairs for a total of 19 steps, and a two-tier structure wall. One of the only unfinished projects was the infamous Turtle Rock project. Although the large re-route was incomplete, thousands of cubic feet of junk wall was set with SUV-size rocks supporting it at the base. Only a skyline grip hoist set-up could pull that job off safely. And safe we were! No serious injuries were recorded in the month of August and that is something we're proud of. Even when keeping safety first, we were able to get all that work done!

Every other week while in the San Jacinto our crew would hike down Marion Mountain and hike back up with packs stuffed full with some of the food our crew would consume for the next two weeks. The generous packers that volunteered their time and energies brought all they could pack, but they could only do so much. As a result, we transformed into human mules, hiking up the daringly steep mountain trail. Though an extreme challenge in the humid, blazing summer heat, there was a genuine pleasure cursing through our veins every other week. It was a pleasure that emerged from the simplicity of the experience. We know that we worked hard to earn those delicious meals every morning and night. We helped feed one another – we played a vital role in our community. We know that every calorie burned, every bead of sweat spilt, and every muscle ache that came was worth it. We were fueled by purpose.

Now, as we leave the San Jac and head back to the Stan, we would like to thank our foreman, Gardner, for lining us out on ambitious projects, hence pushing us to be super efficient, super quality, and super safe simultaneously. We would like to thank Lance, our sponsor, for sharing his knowledge of rock work so readily, for being patient, and for pushing us out on the grade. We would also like to thank Chelsea, our awesome team leader, for always willing to lend a helping hand and always being there for us when we needed her. And last, but surely not least, we would like to thank our wonderful cook, Marla, for taking such good care of us. Marla was always going above and beyond, she whipped us up countless mouthwatering meals and we must also mention the amazing desserts!

So we plan and pack, say our good-byes to the people we lived with, worked with, and grew close to for 7 weeks, and we look towards our return to where our season began. The morning of the move we ate a simple breakfast with what remains of our food and wash the dirty dishes. After last-minute pack adjustments and finding ways to pack down miscellaneous community items, we start our descent on the dreaded Marion Trail. Once we got down the trail, we loaded up our vehicles and headed to a local camp site for the night. Waking the next day with motivation, we found ourselves back in the van and truck, heading for the Stanislaus National Forest. After a long drive, we arrived at our first camp of the season, Strawberry Camp. While waiting for our sponsors to arrive, we decided that we wanted something other than backpacking food to eat. And pizza it was! That's what we wanted and that's what we got – and lots of it!

Once eating was done, we got down to business. Our new camp was going to be at Buck Lakes, 14 miles in the backcountry. The trail to camp was beautiful, but Buck Lakes was beautiful as we arrived during sunset. Upon arrival, we got a moment's rest and began setting up camp. After two days of set-up we are home for the next few weeks. Back to the trails!