



Maintenance

Steve's Story

Steve: (Thinking) I love the National Wildlife Refuge. It's awesome to be this close to nature.

Pamela: (Carrying ladder) Hey kid can you hold this ladder real quick!

Steve: Sure. What are you working on?

Pamela: I'm going to install an outdoor camera above a bald eagle nest way up in that tree. This will allow us to watch the eagles and their babies and put the video on the internet. My name's Pamela by the way.

Steve: Oh, cool! I'm Steve ... So, you mean I can watch a bald eagle grow up? I didn't know there were bald eagles on the refuge. Aren't they really rare?

Pamela: Not as rare as they used to be. At one time they were endangered because of pesticides and habitat loss, and biologists could only count about 800 of them in the continental U.S., but because of good laws and the efforts of a lot of people there are close to 20,000 of them here now.

Steve: Awesome, they look so cool in pictures! I'm glad they didn't all die. You're so lucky to be able to get to do stuff like this all the time.

Pamela: I am lucky. As a maintenance worker on a National Wildlife refuge, I get to be outside all the time, doing things that really matter, like creating habitat for wildlife and supervising our recycling program.

Steve: Yeah, and I bet you even get to drive bulldozers and stuff!!

Pamela: Yep, all the time. Thanks for your help with the ladder, Steve. While I am installing the eagle cam you should look around the refuge. I am sure you will be able to spot some more animals and take some pictures of your own.

Steve: Awesome, how does the camera work?

Pamela: Well just use the mouse to look around through the lens and click the mouse when you see an animal. This will take a picture, and I will be able to tell what kind of animal it was. You will be done when you take pictures of all five animals.

Pamela: Wow, that is a Sherman Fox Squirrel.

Pamela: Nice, that is a Florida panther.

Pamela: Great, that is a Indigo Snake.

Pamela: Whoa, that is a Red-cockaded Woodpecker.

Pamela: Good, that is a Gopher tortoise.

Pamela: Your pictures look great Steve. All of those animals are on the endangered species list. In fact there are less than a 100 Florida Panthers left in the wild. However, like the Bald Eagle, efforts from people like you and me have helped protect

and nurture the species. To take care of endangered species the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has set up ecological services field offices all over the U.S.

Steve: Wow I really hope they can help.

Pamela: Me too. Well now that you have taken some pictures, feel free to look around and ask me any questions you might have.

Recycling and Composting Program

Steve: You talked about recycling before. We recycle at home, but nobody ever told me how recycling helps. My brother told me they refill the cans with soda, but he was probably joking.

Pamela: Yes, he was joking, your cans don't get filled up again, but the metal from the cans is used to make new things. Companies that recycle make it so they do not have to mine new metal from the ground or cut down new trees for paper.

Steve: Oh so recycling is making new things out of old metal, paper, and other stuff. I get it. I hope more people start recycling, because I don't want more trees cut down.

Pamela: Me too. That's why we make sure that every National Wildlife refuge has a recycling program. We want to be good examples for everybody who comes and visits us, especially kids like you. You guys can really make a difference.

Steve: Really? What can I do? I am only a kid.

Pamela: Well for one thing you could make sure that your family keeps recycling at home. If you see your brother throwing something in the trash that could be recycled, tell him how much recycling helps. Another thing you could do is ask your parents when they buy something new if it is made out of recycled materials. Recycling only works if people complete the recycling loop.

Steve: You are right. I can do that. I am going to make sure I help.

Habitat Restoration

Steve: Awesome..Is that a bulldozer? Now that's what I want to drive when I grow up. Why are there bulldozers on the refuge?

Pamela: We actually call that a loader. We use it for a lot of things like removing invasive plants and making roads and other paths. Currently we are using it to restore wetland habitat for migrating birds.

Steve: What? I only see them knocking things down in the movies. How can you use it to help birds?

Pamela: Well a long time ago there was a twisty slow stream on the refuge. The wildlife around here loved the twisty slow water and would use it to build homes and hunt for food. Over the years humans changed the stream and made it deeper and more straight. This made it easier to farm, but it drained the wetlands too fast. We are going to use the loader to make the stream twisty and slow again.

Steve: Wow, the birds are going to love that! Your job is awesome! You get to help out and drive loaders!

Stewardship

Pamela: Oh look, Mark is coming over here. Your break must be over. Talk to you later.

Mark: How are you doing Steve?

Steve: Great. Pamela was just talking about those loaders. She is so cool. She also talked about recycling and helped me take pictures of animals.

Mark: Yeah, I don't know what we would do around here without her. She really makes things run. The world would be a better place with more people like her. Did she talk about how you could help?

Steve: Yeah, she told me some things that I could do like recycling.

Mark: That's good advice. Everybody affects nature in either a good way or a bad way. If we would all take some time to make sure we are doing the right things, like recycle, conserve, and volunteer, it would really help out. Everybody is responsible for how they treat the environment.

Steve: Wow, I didn't know it was so important. I'm going to always do good things for nature.