



Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge

August 2010

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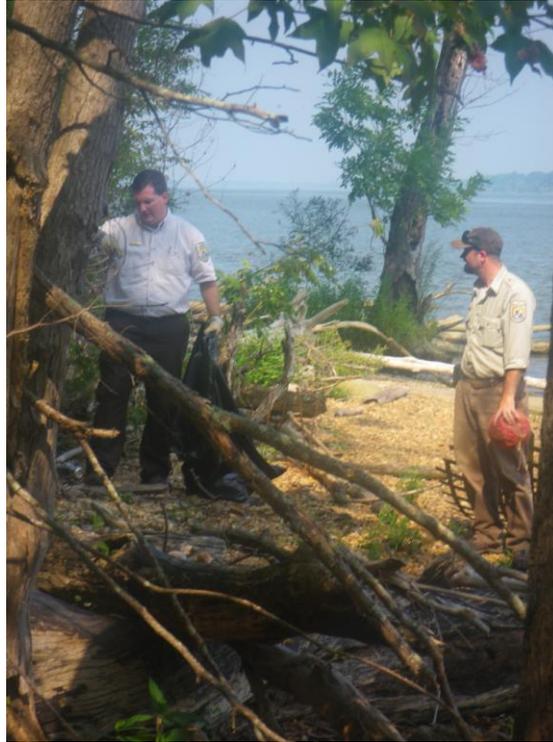
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Clean Up, Clean Up!



Acting DRM Andy Hofmann and ORP Cyrus Brame begin the clean up.

On August 10th, Acting Deputy Manager Andy Hofmann and the interns with Rappahannock River Valley NWR traveled to James River NWR to help with a shoreline restoration project. The staff and students worked with the National Park Service and their Youth Conservation Corps to clean up the site. Students helped move trash and debris from the area, including an old ice freezer that had washed up on the shore. After the hard work was finished, the staff was able to cool down with an afternoon canoeing trip. The James River NWR is one of four refuges in the Eastern Virginia Rivers NWR Complex; the cleanup project was on the entitled Blair's Wharf property, great habitat for bald eagles and other species.

Cuddlebugs!



On August 6th, interns Ricky and Megan ventured to Cuddlebugs, a daycare center in Warsaw, VA. The students were asked to teach 1-5 year old children about aquatic species. Thanks to the generosity of a local pet store owner, grass shrimp, a crab, turtle, and fish went with the students! After spending an hour teaching using various games and activities, the students received a big thank you from the facility manager for all of the students' hard work!

Left: Megan teaching children about various aquatic creatures.

Student Conservation Association

Anthony and Christine are Student Conservation Association (SCA) biological interns at Rappahannock this summer. They have had a very interesting experience helping with various refuge projects and outreach events which are listed in this newsletter. Anthony and Christine are in a program called the Conservation Internship Program (CIP). This program is designed to reach minorities and provide them with an opportunity to experience what it is like to work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The program was developed to get minorities outside and in touch with nature. This year, the program included 29 interns from across the U.S. Students came from different backgrounds and worked throughout the northeast. Initial training was held at the Rachel Carson NWR in Maine. During training interns were able to meet each other and receive information about the refuge system and some of the jobs that they would be involved in.

Anthony has been involved with the SCA for three years. This was Christine's first experience with SCA.



Anthony and Christine at the Wilna Unit of the Rappahannock River Valley NWR

But you gotta have friends...

The Rappahannock Wildlife Refuge Friends is an independent, nonprofit group of individuals dedicated to supporting the National Wildlife Refuge System. They also promote awareness of the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge through education and support.

Spot Light!



Andy testing the interns newly constructed benches after his Q & A interview!

Q: What has been your favorite experience at the Rappahannock River Valley NWR?

A: Working with the interns and seeing what they're all about! (Unbiased even though we interviewed him!)

Q: How did you get involved with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

A: I started as a temporary biological technician at Ohio River Islands NWR.

Q: What different refuges have you been a part of?

A: Ohio River Islands NWR, West Virginia; Prime Hook NWR, Delaware; Chincoteague NWR, Virginia; Ash Meadows NWR, Nevada; Gray's Lake NWR, Idaho; Bon Secour NWR, Alabama; Tennessee NWR, Tennessee; Canaan NWR, West Virginia

Q: Have you always wanted to work in the service?

A: I didn't know until I started applying for jobs, but I knew if offered a job with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I would not turn it down because of the many opportunities it presents.

Spot Light!



Kyran having too much fun with invasive bamboo when landscaping Laurel Grove!

After a summer of volunteering with the refuge in 2009, Kyran Belfield accepted a summer STEP position as a biological science aid. She currently attends Rappahannock High School and is entering her junior year, where she is highly active in volleyball and track. In addition, she also attends the Chesapeake Bay Governor's School for Marine and Environmental Science. Kyran has helped the refuge tremendously, especially with reminding the staff of the importance of heat safety and the proper procedures to take in an emergency situation.

Kyran is still unsure what she wants to pursue for a career but is looking forward to returning to the refuge next summer!

Look What We Did!

The interns at the Rappahannock River Valley NWR have been EXTREMELY busy this summer and have accomplished a great deal. The following is a small portion of the activities they have completed! And of course, there's much more! But now they're leaving and you can only imagine how much the staff is going to miss the summer interns!

Blair's Wharf Shoreline Restoration

Students tag-teamed with the National Park Service and the Youth Conservation Corps to clean up shores of the James River by removing trash and debris.

Kids' Fishing Day

Rappahannock River Valley NWR invites kids to a fishing day at Wilna pond full of educational activities and fun!

Rivah Fest

Rappahannock River Valley NWR engages the town of Tappahannock in refuge activities.

Nature Walks

Students led nature walks on the Hutchinson Tract on Friday mornings for 2 months.

Native Bee Survey

With Wildlife Biologist Spencer, students conducted a native bee survey at various fields at the Wilna Tract. They also learned about the importance of pollinators and native plants.

Tree Tube Maintenance

Tree tube maintenance was conducted by the students at the Wellford and Tayloe Tracts.



Megan and Nick during the shoreline restoration project at James River NWR.



Above: A group photo at a recent nature walk.



Above: Christine and Rebecca performing tree tube maintenance.

Look What We Did! (cont.)

Don't Tell My Secret!

Students cleared a new trail for visitors to make their way to our secret pond.

Cleared area for Eagle Scouts' Bird Blind

Students cleared an area in preparation for placement of an accessible bird watching and deer hunting blind.

Scrapbooking

Students collected articles about the refuge and archived them.

Doug Austen

We had an exciting visit from Doug Austen who is the newly appointed national coordinator for the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives.

Back Bay NWR

SCA students informed the public of the importance of saving endangered species.

Cuddlebugs

Megan and Ricky taught 1-5 year old children about aquatic species.

Removed Non-biodegradable Silt Screens and Stakes

Students assisted Maintenance Staff in removing silt screens and stakes to improve the environment at the Wilna, Hutchinson, and Tayloe Tracts.

Gabion stone at Hutchinson

Students added gabion stones to roadway ditches to slow water velocity and protect roads.

It's Hotttt!

Students researched and discussed heat safety and emergencies with Frances, the administrative assistant for the refuge.

Bobwhite survey

Megan and Kyran completed a Bobwhite quail survey over the course of four weeks.

Safety First!

Students compiled a video of safety tips for use when training future interns.



Ricky teaching kids about aquatic species at Cuddlebugs.



Acting Refuge Manager Merry Maxwell leading students to the trail to Secret Pond



Left: Megan and Kyran treating the constructed benches.



Right: Christine conquering the large pile of brush at Laurel Grove.



Interns of Eastern Virginia Rivers NWRC

Carpenters!

The students researched building plans and constructed two benches and planter boxes for the Wilna Headquarters.

It's Not Just for Ducks

Interns promoted the sale of the Duck Stamp at local post offices.

Bird Walks with the Biologist

Guided by the biologist, students learned bird calls, techniques for bird watching, how to properly use a field guide, how to listen, and researched information about songbirds in preparation for scheduled nature walks.

Laurel Grove

Students helped maintenance staff and volunteers to prepare refuge quarters at the Laurel Grove Tract, including the removal of invasive bamboo.

The Wildlife Center of Virginia

Students visited the Center and learned about wildlife, conservation medicine, rehabilitation, educational facilities, and how animals that cannot be released are used for education.

Created path in Wilna Lodge Garden

SCA students created a circular path through the Lodge native plant garden.

Helped save an Osprey

Students saved an osprey at Capt. Thomas' dock in Tappahannock when a large plastic bag became entangled around the bird's talon. The bird was taken to the Wild Bunch Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Warsaw, VA.

EXTRA! EXTRA! Read All About It!

Students composed 4 newsletters this summer. Thanks to Christine and Anthony for all of their hard work and dedication with the newsletter.

Let's Take A Walk...



Nature walks at a glance...

The intern-lead nature walks at the Hutchinson Tract were another success. Starting Friday July 16, the students lead interpretive walks every Friday until August 13. Students were able to identify various species of grasses and trees, as well as interesting aspects and history of the trail, their student programs, and their experience with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Students were able to take what they have learned and pass on that knowledge to the public and encourage them to learn more about uses of the tracts currently open to the public. Students promoted and discussed the Duck Stamp and the Junior Duck Stamp program, both very important to the National Wildlife Refuge System. The walks usually started with a student and a discussion of the native garden that marks the beginning of the trail. At the garden site they explained the importance of native plants and pollinators and how the average person can make a difference, just by donating a small portion of their yard to native plants.

Shown are various pictures from the nature walks.

