

# It's hiring season at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge

by Scott Slavik

Do you know a college or high school student who likes to work hard in the outdoors, doesn't mind getting their hands dirty, and is looking for work this summer? The Kenai Refuge has a few challenging, yet rewarding, job opportunities. These summer positions could be described as a dream job for the outdoors type, but are equally as attractive for a student who wants to work for a large federal resource agency and discover what's involved in managing a two million acre national wildlife refuge.

**Kenai Trail Crew: Four Positions for College Students:** The refuge will be hiring a seasonal trail crew to complete new construction and rehabilitation projects on refuge frontcountry hiking trails, remote backcountry routes, and Wilderness canoe trails. Projects will include trail re-routes, construction of footbridges, boardwalks, and timber stairs, and installation of drainage and erosion control structures. The crews will be trained to use a variety of hand and power tools, including chain saws, to complete routine trail maintenance (clearing brush, trimming branches, removing downfall, etc.) and new trail construction projects. Trail crew positions begin on May 12 and may last until September 26. Pay is \$16.25 per hour.

Perhaps the most challenging, yet exciting aspect, of the trail crew job is the opportunity to participate in extended overnight stays in the field to complete projects in remote areas of the refuge. What these "spike camps" lack in creature comforts is offset by the unique and memorable Wilderness experiences they offer. The work is physically demanding and the working conditions are not always ideal, but the crew members will enjoy some of the most beautiful scenery the Kenai Refuge has to offer.

**Assistant Youth Conservation Crew (YCC) Leader: One Position for a College Student:** This position assists the YCC Crew Leader with the administration, supervision, and operation of an 8-week program for eight high school youth. Crew projects include maintenance of Kenai Refuge trails, cabins, campgrounds, bulletin boards, signs, toilets, etc. Additional responsibilities include training crew members to use hand tools and equipment, insuring safe work practices, and maintaining logs and field notes regard-

ing work projects and enrollee work performance. The position begins on May 12 and finishes August 15<sup>th</sup>. Pay is \$12.52 per hour.

The trail crew and assistant leader positions are being filled using the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) hiring authority. To be eligible to work at the Kenai Refuge under the STEP hiring authority, applicants must be 18 years of age or older, be currently enrolled as a half to full time student (at least six credits) at a college or university during spring 2008, and be returning to a college or university enrolled as a half to full time student in fall 2008.

Application packages for the trail crew and assistant leader positions must be turned into Scott Slavik, Backcountry Park Ranger, at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center on Ski Hill Road in Soldotna by April 18, 2008. Eligible applicants will be interviewed by April 23, 2008. After interviewing, final selections will be made by April 25, 2008 and selected applicants will be notified.

**Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) Enrollee: Eight Positions for High School Students:** If there was a list of the best jobs available for local high school students, the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program would be at the top. Enrollees work and learn together by completing projects on the refuge that further the development and conservation of natural resources. This summer, the refuge will hire a crew of eight local youth between the ages of 15-18 to accomplish a variety of projects on the refuge including trail maintenance and rehabilitation, campground maintenance, litter pick-up and special projects. Participants will receive training in first aid, CPR, hand tool use, and bear safety.

Applications will be available at all local high schools, Job Service, and at the Kenai Refuge Headquarters starting March 31 and will be accepted until May 9. Selections are made through a random selection process, equally split between males (four) and females (four). The pay rate will be \$7.75 per hour and the employment period is June 9 to August 1.

Applications and additional hiring information for all of these positions is available at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center on Ski Hill Road in

Soldotna. For more information, please contact Scott Slavik (260-6163) at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge.

*Scott Slavik is a Backcountry Ranger on the Kenai*

*National Wildlife Refuge. Previous Refuge Previous Refuge Notebook columns can be viewed on the Web at <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/kenai/>.*