

Sacramento District parks celebrate National Public Lands Day

September 24, 2011

By **Katrina Natividad (USACE)**

SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- More than 800 volunteers joined U.S. Army Corps of Engineers park staffs in celebrating National Public Lands Day today, completing dozens of park improvement projects at seven U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento District parks.

Volunteers planted trees, restored wildlife habitat, installed sprinkler systems, removed invasive species and litter, even constructed a sand volleyball court. Both volunteers and park staff said their efforts not only beautified the parks, but strengthened the community around them.



"We had a lot of good energy and good attitudes, and we got a lot done," said Corps park ranger Sara Jones, who organized the volunteer activities at Pine Flat Lake near Sanger. "And it helped to familiarize people with the amenities we have at the park."

At Black Butte Lake, scouts from Boy Scout Troop 4 worked with park rangers to clear brush from hiking trails. Volunteers planted trees and installed irrigation lines at Success Lake, and built a new walkway and horse corrals at Lake Kaweah. At New Hogan Lake, volunteers planted 60 trees and removed 1,000 pounds of litter. Pine Flat Lake volunteers planted 11 trees and built a new sand volleyball court and two horseshoe pits. Trail maintenance was the focus at Stanislaus River Parks.

Success Lake park manager Calvin Foster said a woman who's been volunteering at Success for four years approached him to say that today she saw a tree she planted three years ago. "They realized what they do here is making a difference," Foster said.

Eastman Lake and Hensley Lake volunteers teamed for tree planting, campground improvements and repainting Eastman's campground signs. Just a few miles apart, Eastman and Hensley alternate hosting National Public Lands Day each year.

"We want to keep things as close to their natural state as we can," said president of the Reedley College Forestry Club, Marian Picher, who volunteered at Pine Flat Lake. "We want to be able to have it for our kids."

Parks hosted a barbecue lunch for their volunteers, several with live music and educational booths. Volunteers received free admission to the park for the day, as well as a pass for free-day use admission any time in the next year at any project site managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or other participating agencies.



The Corps has been involved with National Public Lands Day since its inception in 1994, and has consistently been one of the largest providers of sites and volunteers participating in the event. Last year, more than 1,200 volunteers contributed to park improvement projects across the Sacramento District's parks. National Public Lands Day is a program of the National Environmental Education Foundation.

