



Willamette Valley Project partners

By Christie Johnson, Willamette Valley Project

During the past few years, park rangers in the Willamette Valley have fostered partnerships with local Boy Scout troops to improve facilities and natural resources in two popular Corps recreation areas. These projects, summarized below, have provided many benefits to both the Corps and the Scouts.

CAMPGROUND RECYCLING PROJECT

The Corps' most recent project with the Scouts started in February 2011 at Cottage Grove Lake. On a cold Saturday morning, 10 members of Boy Scout Troop 140 and four adult leaders gathered at the Pine Meadows Campground to break ground for two new recycling stations, one at each end of the campground. With guidance from Park Ranger Joe Ross and Scoutmaster Stuart Swearengin, the scouts formed gravel pads and cemented in steel frames for each station.

When the campground opens in May, recycling bins will be added to the stations and campers will be able to recycle deposit-only glass, plastic and aluminum containers. During the summer, the Scouts will collect the recycled materials from the campground as a fundraising project. Funds raised from the recycling will help pay for Scout activities, such as campouts, bowling and snow-tubing trips.

"For years, we have been looking for an economical and efficient way to offer a recycling

option to Pine Meadows campers," said Ross. "We are very excited that our partnership with the Scouts will finally make this possible."



Photo by Joe Ross, Willamette Valley Project

Scouts from Cottage Grove Troop 140 broke ground for a new recycling station at Pine Meadows Campground in February 2011.

AMPHITHEATER RENOVATION PROJECT

The recycling project is not the first partnership between Troop 140 and the Corps. In 2009, Boy Scout Tyler Costello of Cottage Grove coordinated the renovation of the Pine Meadows amphitheater to earn his Eagle Scout rank. Scouts from Troop 140 and students from Cottage Grove's Kennedy High School provided 246 hours of labor to build and install 15 new benches for the amphitheater. These labor hours were used as a matching contribution for



Corps of Engineers Photo

Corps park rangers and Boy Scouts and their families celebrated National Public Lands Day by planting trees and improving a stream crossing at Schwarz Campground.



with the Boy Scouts of America



the Challenge Partnership Handshake Program, which offers a source of seed money to Corps installations for worthwhile challenge partnership projects. The Corps received \$10,000 in Handshake funds to purchase materials for the benches and to install new electrical wiring, new lighting and a new storage shed for the amphitheater.

For more than 25 years, the amphitheater has been used to present interpretive programs about the Corps mission, local natural and cultural resources and important safety issues. "Thanks to the Corps partnership with the Boy Scouts, Pine Meadows campers are now able to learn from and enjoy these programs in a more comfortable, modern facility," said Park Ranger Christie Johnson.

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

During the fall seasons of 2008 and 2010, the Boy Scouts were instrumental in the success of the Willamette Valley Project's National Public Lands Day events. In 2008, about 90 volunteers, mostly Scouts and their families from Cottage Grove and Creswell, planted more than 100 trees and shrubs around Pine Meadows Campground. In 2010, two Scout troops from Eugene joined the Cottage Grove troop to participate in the Corps' NPLD event at Schwarz Campground below Dorena Dam. There, Scouts and their families planted about 200 native trees and shrubs and replaced a failing culvert with a bridge. Following these events, some of the Scouts celebrated their hard work with a free campout in the park.

"The new trees were planted to provide buffering zones between campsites, provide shade for campers, and protect sensitive areas from erosion," said Park Ranger Travis Chewning. "In the future, the Scouts will be able to return to these areas and enjoy the benefits of their hard work."

LIFE JACKET LOANER STATION

In November 2010, Boy Scout Tyler Cavilee of Salem built a life jacket loaner station as an Eagle Scout project. He solicited donations to purchase needed construction supplies and life jackets and, with the guidance of Park Ranger Michelle Frobose, installed the station at the swim beach in Pine Meadows Campground. The project will improve water safety by allowing campers to borrow life jackets during the summer recreation season free of charge.



Photo by Barrett Frobose, Willamette Valley Project

Park Ranger Michelle Frobose and Boy Scout Tyler Cavilee with the lifejacket loaner board built and installed for Cavilee's Eagle Scout project in November 2010.

"Tyler exemplified hard work, dedication and leadership while working more than 150 volunteer hours," said Park Ranger Frobose. "More than 90 percent of drowning victims at Corps lakes were not wearing a life jacket and this new station may help save lives of those who are enjoying the water."

THE BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIPS

When asked why these projects are valuable to the Boy Scouts, Troop 140 Scoutmaster Swearingin replied, "When the boys have these kinds of experiences, they learn new skills and learn to work hard and, at the same time, they also provide a nice service to the community."

Supervisory Park Ranger Tami Schroeder agrees that it is a win-win situation for everyone involved. "We really value our partnership with the Scouts because their volunteer labor allows us to complete projects that wouldn't be accomplished due to our limited staff and budget," said Schroeder. "But we also believe it's important to provide opportunities for young people to volunteer in our recreation areas because it promotes a sense of stewardship for public lands. They can come back to these areas with their families and be proud of what they have accomplished." 