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Youth Corps. provides outdoor experience

Marcelene Edwards
Oregon Daily Emerald

Students interested in learning about nature and the environment can spend a summer working for the Northwest Youth Corps. The organization lets people live and work in the woods of Oregon and Washington.

For Ethan Nelson, a crew leader since 1992, the corps was one of the greatest experiences of his life.

"Just being out in the woods and working is really fun," Nelson said.

This intensive summer program, geared toward 16- to 19-year-olds, allows University students to work as crew leaders guiding groups.

As a leader, Nelson was able to introduce kids to their first job experience in the woods. That is one of the most rewarding parts of the job, he said.

The crew leaders take a group of teenagers out to work on wildlife restoration and trail projects. The leaders put in long days and work with their crews

to complete a variety of manual-labor projects. They also coordinate meal preparation, prepare required course work, transport their crews and learn how to operate a chain saw.

All of the groups Nelson takes to the sites are diverse, he said. On one trip he had a male from a logging family in rural Oregon and an honor student who was going to Columbia University in the fall. These teenagers had to learn to relate to each other and discover the diversity of the group, he said.

One of the goals of the program is to allow teenagers to find themselves through being in nature.

"It is a more protected area where kids are able to see themselves," said Tom Westrum, a coordinator of the program. "They drop their shields and come closer to finding out who they are."

During the program the group works at different spots. One week they could be outside Prineville, Ore., and the next week they could be in the northern Cascade Mountains. When

the crews are resupplied, they are given their assignments for the next week.

"It's really cool because you don't know what programs you are doing from week to week," Nelson said. "It has an element of surprise and adventure."

The program stresses the development of skills necessary to excel at any job. The teenagers and crew leaders leave the program with a higher self esteem, Westrum said.

"The leaders are thrown into a spot where they have to deal with different situations," Westrum said.

Participants camp on work sites and are responsible for day-to-day operations of crew.

"The job is intense enough that results are easy to see," Westrum said.

Each evening the teenagers receive educational training in SEED sessions on current environmental issues facing the Northwest and the world, he said. The name SEED originates from planting a seed of knowledge.

Crew leaders receive a nine-

day training session. The job requires a minimum of one year of college education in outdoor recreation, forestry, environmental education, resource management, landscape architecture or a related field.

Experience working on manual-labor projects, using hand tools, operating chain saws and driving 15-passenger vans is desirable. Current first aid and CPR certifications are required. Applicants must be in good physical condition, capable of working long hours and able to backpack 7 miles and lift at least 50 pounds.

Westrum recruits participants from Oregon, Washington and Idaho, but hires from all over the United States. He has not set a deadline for applications, but he said he has already started hiring people.

The organization was founded in 1983 to give teenagers an opportunity to participate in an "education-based" work experience. If interested in summer job information, call Northwest Youth Corps at 746-8653.

Studying?



Kendra Moilan takes advantage of the nice weather by catching some sun while doing homework.

ET ALS MEETINGS

Asian/Pacific-American Student Union will meet today from 5 to 6 p.m. in the Multicultural Center. The meeting will include nominations for office. For more information, call 346-4342.

EMU Board of Directors House Committee will meet today from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the EMU Board Room. For more information, call 346-3770.

Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Alliance men's drop-in group will meet tonight from 6 to 7:30 at the Koinonia Center, 1414 Kincaid St. For more information, call 346-3360.

Mortar Board will meet tonight at 6 in EMU Cedar Room B.

Returning Students Association will meet today from 4 to 5 p.m. in EMU Suite 27. They will discuss general business and networking. For more information, call 346-4305.

Take Back the Night Planning Committee will meet today from 2 to 3:30 p.m. in the EMU Board Room. For more information, call 346-4095.

Tosco will meet tonight from 7 to 8:30 in EMU Cedar Room A. For more information, call 346-3235.

U.S. Peace Corps will meet tonight from 7 to 9 in the Gerlinger Lounge. For more information, call 346-3235.

MISCELLANEOUS

Career Center will offer an office orientation today from 2 to 3:15 p.m. in Room 221 Hendricks. Sign up for the workshop is available in Room 244 Hendricks. For more information, call 346-3235.

Creative Writing Program will offer a poetry reading tonight at 7:30 in the Adelaide Church Memorial Reading Room in the Knight Library. Dave Smith, an award-winning poet and editor of the *Southern Review*, will read. For more information, call 346-3944.

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Tuesday, May 2nd from 12:00-1:00 in EMU Cedar A.

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