



Conservation Volunteers International Program

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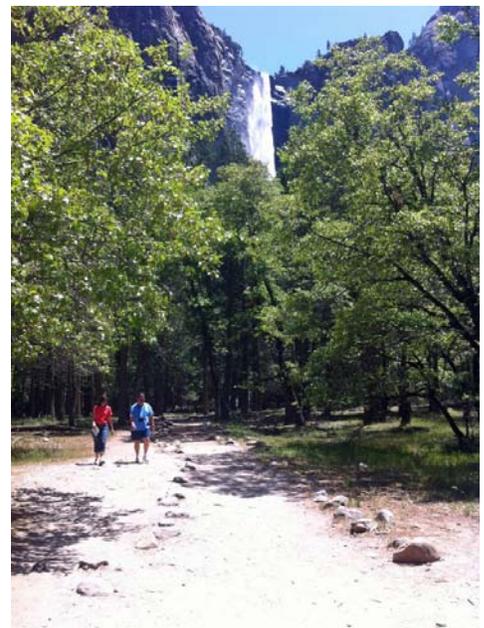
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Volunteer Project Trip Report Yosemite National Park May 16-20, 2012

Conservation Volunteers International Program, in cooperation with Yosemite National Park and REI Adventures, led a volunteer project to Yosemite Valley May 16-20, 2012. Volunteers completed three projects identified by the park. The first project restored a popular hiking trail from Southside Drive to the base of Bridalveil Waterfall. The second project maintained the popular Upper Yosemite Fall Trail from the Camp 4 Trailhead to Columbia Point, including assisting in the construction of new rock retaining walls. The third project restored areas in and around the beginning of the John Muir Trail and nearby Happy Isles Nature Center. Twenty volunteers worked alongside Conservation VIP trip leaders and National Park Service trail crewmembers. Volunteers contributed 620 hours of labor. The projects were authorized by the National Park Service, under the direction of Dave Kari, Yosemite National Park Program Manager for Trail Operations and Greg Torres, Yosemite Trail Crew Foreman. Trip leaders were Celia Dunlap and Rich Tobin.

Bridalveil Fall Restoration Project.

Bridalveil Waterfall is one of Yosemite Valley's most popular attractions, especially during the spring months when the fall is full with the water from melting snow. Visitors often park along Southside Drive to walk to the base of the fall. Due to its popularity, however, the area leading to the fall was heavily damaged by off-trail hiking and inadequate drainage. (See photo at right.) Volunteers restored this one-mile trail segment to its original design width, restoring trampled areas outside the trail corridor to a natural-looking appearance, and closing numerous social trails. Work included moving boulders and fallen trees with cable-grip mechanical winches to delineate trail; digging holes or trenches to properly place boulders in order to create a more natural appearance; constructing two major rolling dips for proper drainage and erosion control; scarification of soils compacted by visitor use to improve water penetration



and natural revegetation; and scattering woody debris to reduce erosion and create a natural-appearing landscape. More than an acre was restored.

Near the base of the waterfall, visitors had created social trails surrounding the main paved trail from the main Bridalveil Fall parking area. Volunteers again restored trampled areas outside of the formal trail to a natural-looking condition, and closed numerous social trails with large woody debris and boulders.



Upper Yosemite Waterfall Trail Maintenance and Construction Project.

With views of Half Dome and Yosemite Valley en route to the spectacular vista from the top of the Upper Yosemite Fall, this trail is understandably one of the most popular destinations in the park. Volunteers were asked to maintain the trail segment from the Camp 4 Trailhead to Columbia Point a distance of one and a half miles and an elevation gain of 1,000 feet. Maintenance included cleaning water bars and dips to ensure proper function, and re-contouring trail tread to eliminate erosion channels and improve shedding of water. In addition, water bars were reconstructed or repaired as needed.



Volunteers also helped the NPS trail crew to construct a rock retaining wall that was required to prevent a rockslide and loss of the trail below Columbia Point. Volunteers assisted by moving large boulders cut by the trail crew from a nearby rock quarry. Boulders weighing hundreds of pounds were lifted by grip-hoist on a high line cable. The boulders were then moved into place on wheeled dollies, requiring the use of ropes to slow decent of the boulders down a steep section of trail. Volunteers enjoyed starting their hike using the new connector trail from Camp 4 to the beginning of the Upper Yosemite Falls Trail which Conservation VIP volunteers and NPS trail crew had built in November 2011.



John Muir Trail and Happy Isles Nature Center Restoration Project. The Happy Isles area in Yosemite Valley receives some of the highest concentrated use in the park. The Happy Isles Nature Center serves as the trailhead for hikes on the John Muir trail, and hikes to Vernal Falls, Nevada Falls and Half Dome. Numerous social trails (unplanned trails created by visitors) zigzag through the forest, trampling vegetation, compacting soils, and creating an unnatural appearance within a highly sensitive area.

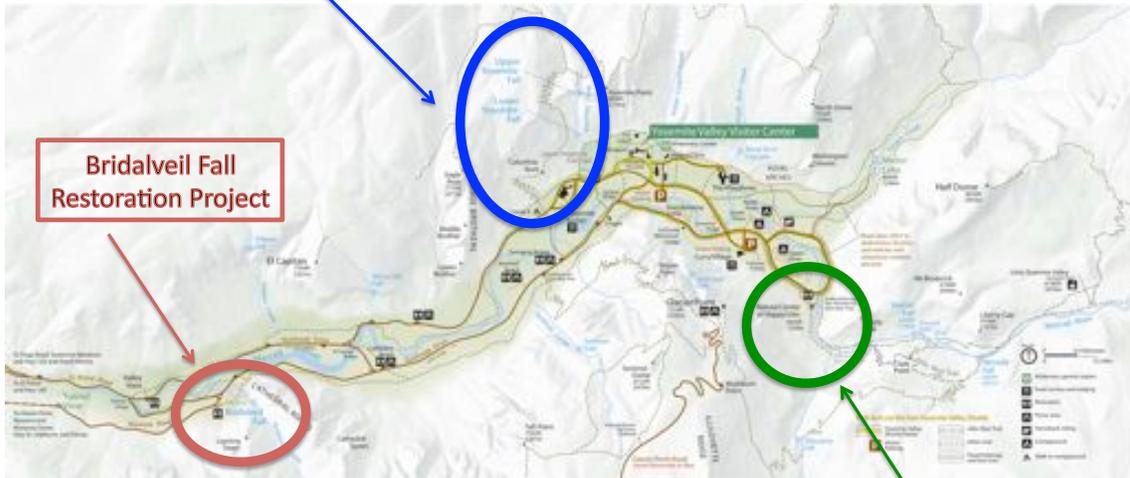


Volunteers completed restoration work along these trails by blocking entrances to social trails with large fallen trees and brush, scarifying the compacted soil to allow moisture penetration and encourage new plant growth; scattering woody debris to reduce erosion and create a natural-appearing landscape; narrowing the width of authorized trails to create the proper pedestrian scale within the forest setting; and marking established trails with native materials to encourage visitors to remain on designated routes. Approximately two acres were restored.

Conservation Volunteers International Program and volunteers give special thanks to the Yosemite National Park Valley Trail Crew under the leadership of Greg Torres, Yosemite National Park Trails Manager Dave Kari, and Yosemite National Park Volunteer Coordinator Heather Boothe for their commitment to our volunteer projects. Volunteers also thank the High Sierra Volunteer Trail Crew for their assistance with food preparation.

Upper Yosemite Falls Trail
Maintenance and Construction Project

Bridalveil Fall
Restoration Project



John Muir Trail
Trailhead Restoration Project



Yosemite Valley
Yosemite National Park
May 2012