



Volunteer Project Report for May 13-19, 2018 Yosemite National Park Volunteer Trip

Executive Summary

Eight volunteers, two trip leaders, and Dale Walker (adjunct leader) contributed 324 hours of volunteer labor from May 14 through May 19, 2018, assisting the National Park Service in creating, maintaining, and repairing drainage and trail tread on the Mirror Lake Loop around Tenaya Creek for ~3.2 miles (1.7 miles on the north and 1.5 miles on the south) from the handicap accessible parking continuing up the Snow Creek Trail Junction and the Valley Loop Trail from El Capitan Meadow to Pohono Bridge on the northern and southern portions (~3.5 miles).

Under the supervision, guidance, and oversight of Joe Meno, National Park Service (NPS) Trail Crew Leader, projects were assigned to volunteers who partnered with and worked alongside members of the California Conservation Corps. All projects assigned were successfully completed and the NPS crew leadership noted the effective, efficient, and safe manner in which all volunteers conducted their tasks throughout the 4 work days, May 14-17, 2018.

Detailed Report

Day One – May 13, 2018 (Orientation)



Volunteers began arriving mid-day, Sunday, May 13, 2018. All volunteers were welcomed and assistance provided to hike into the section designated for our group and get their tents set up in Backpackers' Campground. An orientation to Conservation Volunteers International Program, the REI partnership, and general details on the work to be conducted was provided to the ConservationVIP® volunteers early afternoon on Sunday. Dinner and an evening campfire on our first night together provided opportunities to get acquainted with the Park and each other, answer questions, and for everyone to enjoy the pristine setting along Tenaya Creek.

Workday 1 - May 14, 2018

Volunteer project trip leader Paul Adams met with NPS Trail Crew Supervisor Joe Meno and his trail crew the morning of May 14 to discuss volunteer projects assigned to the volunteers and NPS expectations of the volunteers. Kelly McCoy (assistant Trip Leader) and Dale Walker assisted throughout the trip. NPS Trail Crew introductions were made to the entire group. All

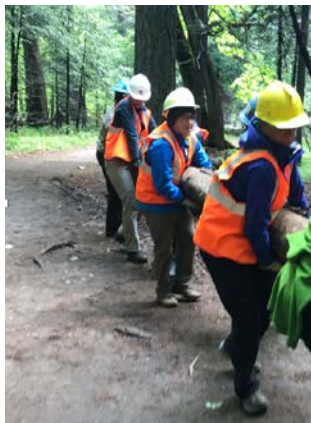
necessary tools and safety equipment required to perform the various projects were identified and provided by the NPS Trail Crew. A briefing was conducted and special note was made of doing the projects safely, enjoyably, and effectively.

The volunteers were checked throughout each workday to ensure they had work gloves, boots, safety goggles, adequate water, lunch, and snacks. The NPS provided hard hats and reflective vests, along with additional safety gear, all of which were required to be worn at all times.



The volunteers, leaders, and NPS Trail Crew joined a larger California Conservation Corps (CCC) Trail Crew. The entire group was split in half with some remaining on the Mirror Lake Loop (northside) while others hiked up the Snow Creek Trail Junction off the Mirror Lake Loop. Radio contact between leaders was maintained at all times and each group had one leader present for every workday.

Volunteers were paired with CCC members for the day. Under the oversight of the NPS Trail Crew, the CCC crew spent the day advising ConservationVIP® volunteers on the basics of trail maintenance and working side-by-side with volunteers. The volunteers learned appropriate



work-detail procedures, how to create, clean out and restore water drains (swales and berms), where and when to clear the vegetation from the trail corridor (brushing, lopping, and pruning), and guidelines for maintaining the trail tread (sweeping). The volunteers were treated to excellent views of the Park throughout the day. Numerous volunteers commented they enjoyed working with the CCC trail crew and learned a great deal. The combined NPS, CCC, and volunteer team completed approximately 1.7 miles of trail maintenance, restoring 6 drains, and creating 2 drains to shed water off the Mirror Lake Loop and Snow Creek Trail Junction, which required significant sweeping of rip rap on the tread.

Volunteers were encouraged to take frequent breaks, drink and snack frequently, and to work at their own pace. Hikers and tourists stopped to ask questions, compliment the volunteers and expressing gratitude for their work. This dynamic between volunteers and the visiting public became a theme throughout the week. A request for feedback from volunteers was made by the Trip Leaders at day's end in Backpackers' Campground. Some general comments were made, volunteers were satisfied on how the day progressed, and they expressed gratitude for learning more about trail maintenance. Everyone agreed the trip was enjoyable, rewarding, and met or exceeded expectations.

Workday 2 – May 15, 2018

The NPS Trail Crew met with the volunteers and leaders at Backpackers' Campground to discuss continuation of the work on the Mirror Lake Loop (southside). After the briefing and reiteration

of all safety guidelines, each volunteer was paired with a member of the California Conservation Corps on site to receive additional instructions and begin work on the trail. All volunteers were checked to ensure they had the necessary tools, safety gear, water, and nourishment for the day ahead.

Work continued on the southern portion of the Mirror Lake Loop at the Tenaya Bridge working toward the footbridge on the east end of the loop. Each team continued trail maintenance focusing on water drainage, tread maintenance, and brushing vegetation that encroached the trail. The two teams created or cleaned out approximately 22 drains along the trail and cleaned the tread by removing golf-ball or larger-sized debris. The volunteers were treated to stunning views, a host of visitors to the Park, and occasional wildlife while enjoying sounds from the rushing Tanaya Creek.



Workday 3 – May 16, 2018

The NPS Trail Crew met with the volunteers and leaders at Backpackers' Campground to discuss the work to be accomplished on the Valley Loop Trail. Volunteers joined the California Conservation Corps on site and were split equally into two teams along the Valley Loop Trail. One team worked the north side of the Valley Loop Trail while the other worked the south side repairing approximately 38 drains and constructing 3 new drains to shed water off the trail. All ConservationVIP® volunteers were observed to ensure they had necessary tools, safety gear, water and nourishment for the day. Everyone was treated to spectacular views of the Merced River running between the north and south sides of the Valley Loop Trail during the work day.



Throughout the day, NPS Trail Crew instructed the ConservationVIP® volunteers and CCC members on appropriate methods for fine-tuning the drainage for maximum effectiveness in shedding water off the trail. Volunteers were encouraged by Trip Leaders to take frequent breaks, drink and snack frequently, and to work at their own pace. Everyone experienced pleasant temperatures and abundant sunshine throughout the day. Hikers and tourists continued asking questions and making complimentary remarks to the volunteers for their work.

Workday 4 – May 17, 2018

The NPS Trail Crew met with the volunteers and leaders at Backpackers' Campground to discuss continuation of the work to be accomplished on the Valley Loop Trail. The volunteers worked in separate teams. One team was assigned the south side for additional trail maintenance while

the other team continued work on the north side starting near Four Mile trailhead working just west of Bridalveil Falls. We were treated to another beautiful day in the Valley with mild and comfortable temperatures.

Trail tread improvement continued along both the south and north sides with sweeping tread, brushing vegetation off the trail, and creating/restoring approximately 44 drains and covering around 3.5 miles. The work assignment was familiar to volunteers and so significant progress was made along this section. Encouragement continued from hikers and tourists who thanked the volunteers for their service.



Before



After

At the evening meal, the Trip Leader requested volunteers begin thinking about feedback, comments, suggestions, for our last evening during our roundup at camp fire after dinner on the next day.

Rest Day – May 18, 2018

The last full day of the trip was set aside as a day of rest and enjoying the Park. Volunteers kept the leaders informed as to their intentions and planned activities for the day. Many of the volunteers made plans with other volunteers for hikes, enjoying Park amenities and sights, as friendships emerged from the week and the value of traveling/hiking with a partner(s) was evident.

Some volunteers and one Trip Leader enjoyed the Valley Floor Tour via tram scheduled at 2-4pm, which provided an introduction to the layout and history of the Park. This is a great way of creating a sense of place and inspiration. Those on the tour greatly appreciated the experience and were glad to learn more about Yosemite National Park.

Sandy Hernandez from the NPS Park Volunteer Office joined the ConservationVIP® volunteers for dinner and shared appreciation for our work and gave a talk on the value volunteers bring to the Park each year. The volunteers were enthusiastic and asked many questions. After delivering Park patches and bandanas to commemorate our service, Sandy departed before desert was served.

During campfire roundup after the evening meal and during desert (SMORES!), ConservationVIP® volunteers asked a series of questions and were given significant time to provide feedback on the value, variety, activity, and overall enjoyment of the trip. Several keen comments were made with valuable suggestions. Everyone conveyed high satisfaction on how the week progressed, communication of details each day, and they expressed gratitude for learning more about trail maintenance. Special recognition for the Willow Creek Catering providers was expressed by all volunteers and their appreciation was shown for the food variety, meal preparations, quality, and presentation. Everyone agreed the trip was highly enjoyable, especially rewarding, and met or exceeded expectations.



Travel Day – May 20, 2017

Each ConservationVIP® volunteer started the morning with a light breakfast, then breaking down their camp, and retrieving their cars for packing out their gear. By mid-morning all had left Backpackers' Campground and it was left in its original condition.

Logistics

The NPS Trail Crew provided all tools for all work sites. Trip Leaders drove the volunteers to the different trailheads. The ConservationVIP® volunteers hiked to their respective work sites under the supervision of the NPS Trail Crew.

All personnel brought their own camping gear and tents and camped at Backpackers' Campground for the duration of the trip. The group was in the Backpackers' Campground because the usual volunteer camping site at Yellow Pine was closed due to flooding.

Willow Creek Catering provided all meals and snacks and the ConservationVIP® volunteers were especially appreciative of the variety and quality of the selections.

Summary

All volunteers worked extremely well together and enjoyed the work, the Park, the food, and the setting. The common bond of “sustaining some of the world’s greatest landscapes and cultural sites,” made a lasting impact on each ConservationVIP® volunteer and significantly enhanced the Park trails for all to enjoy safely. The NPS Trail Crew expressed their satisfaction and appreciation for all the work done and noted that every project they intended to complete was completed successfully. ConservationVIP® and volunteers give special thanks to the Yosemite National Park Valley Trail Crew under the leadership of Joe Meno, Yosemite National Park Trails Manager Dave Kari, and Acting Yosemite National Park Volunteer Coordinators Sally Kintner and Sandy Hernandez for their commitment to the Park and our volunteer projects. Volunteers also thanked the Willow Creek Catering company for their outstanding assistance with food preparation, delivery, and timely service.

In four workdays ConservationVIP® volunteers completed 324 hours of labor over 6.7 miles impacting approximately 115 drains, enjoyed tasty meals, spectacular scenery with effusive falls and, most importantly, made new friends and countless lasting memories!

