



Career Tech crew members Craig Henderson, Corey Vertner and Amber Wolfe clean out fish traps on Schooner Creek. (Courtesy photo)

Youth natural resource crews make a difference

After six months in the field, Community Services Consortium's (CSC) youth crew members have done fish ladder checks at Schooner Creek, conducted trash surveys at Salmon Drift Creek, planted vine maples at the Port of Toledo, constructed cages for native trees at Flynn Creek, and they're not finished yet. The crews have time off for spring break, but they will be back in the field the first week of April, working to restore habitats and become effective natural resource stewards in their Lincoln County communities.

CSC Natural Resource Crews give youth the chance to explore careers in science and conservation, according to CSC Principal Youth Advisor Macy Holmes.

Joel Riverman, crew leader and science/math teacher at Career Tech Charter High School, said, "It's a good thing for a lot of kids. Working on the crews helps them to build up the simple things about work, like responsibility, showing up on time, aspiring to the expectations set by myself as crew leader and by project leads from the agencies we work with."

The CSC Natural Resource Crews were developed to be educational, as well as provide positive work experiences for young people in Lincoln County. Crew youth learn environmental science, utilize math skills, explore career pathways, build their resumes and become work ready.

"Some of the kids don't have

During the school year, crews work one day a week as part of their high school curriculum or their GED preparation studies. In the summer, crews work five days a week. Two Newport crewmembers recently earned their GED certificates at Oregon Coast Community College. CSC's Workforce Investment Act youth program and Newport HELP (Homeless Education and Literacy Project) are partnering this semester to secure housing for two homeless students on the crew.

Community Services Consortium (CSC) is a state-designated Community Action Agency serving Linn, Benton and Lincoln counties with housing, utility, food, economic stability, and educational assistance programs

“Meeting with agency professionals, seeing what real people in their communities do in their professions, is an effective way for crew members to learn about careers, not just by reading about them, but by observing the kind of work that project leaders do and the commitment they have to their agencies and the environment,” Holmes said.

She sees the CSC Natural Resource Stewardship Crews as “an opportunity for youth to enrich their lives.”

“Through the actual daily work they do in the field, working together with local professionals, they build self-confidence and self-esteem,” Holmes said.

Crew members work with conservation professionals, including Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, United States Forest Service, Hatfield Marine Science Center, Oregon Coast Aquarium, Port of Toledo, and Salmon Drift Creek Watershed Council. Youth crews work on various local conservation projects throughout the school year and during the summer season. Holmes said youth like the hands-on nature of the work and see it as relevant work experience.

real good role models,” Riverman said. “We try to be positive role models. Every day, they are building positive relationships with CSC staff and partners in the field that they can carry into the future.”

This year, two crews each with six to seven youth have worked each school semester in Lincoln County, one based at CSC’s Career Tech Charter High School in Lincoln City and one at CSC’s Newport location.

since 1980.

For more information about CSC’s poverty-fighting programs, visit www.community-services.us. Donations may be made through the website or mailed to the main office: Community Services Consortium, 245 Broadalbin Street, Suite 2A, Albany, OR 97321.

More CSC news may be found at <http://communityservicesblog.blogspot.com> or on Facebook.



John Skiles of the Oregon Hunters Association, Nick Leonetti of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Newport crewmember Sargenka Parks, and Mike Downing of the Oregon Hunters Association are pictured at the Flynn Creek habitat restoration project for elk and deer. (Courtesy photo)