

LASSEN NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE LASSEN PARK FOUNDATION

SUMMER 2011

HIGHLIGHTS THIS ISSUE

TRANSFORMING YOUNG LIVES

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GRANTS

HIGHEST PRIORITY

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Once again, the Lassen Park Foundation is helping transform young lives by supporting youth groups for a summer camping trip in Lassen Volcanic National Park. Fifteen grants have been awarded to groups from as far north as Big Valley in Lassen County and as far south as San Francisco, representing a diverse population and a wide geographic area. The groups that benefit from these grants serve youth that come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and wouldn't ordinarily have access to enriching outdoor experiences, especially in a national park. Many are from very small rural towns in Northern California and others come from urban environments but they all share a lack of opportunities that we take for granted as normal childhood experience. Three of the groups provide residential care for youth with developmental disabilities; others are schools that serve low-income students. A mentoring group serves at risk

families. One of the groups provides culturally relevant services for American Indian youths in San Francisco. Camping trips teach strength and self-confidence. The youth bond with their peers and mentors as they learn about the natural environment through shared activities like setting up camp, fishing, and hiking. We hope to provide this unique experience to more youth each year—we know it makes a difference to their young lives and will help them grow into strong and capable adults that love national parks.



New this year: every youth camper group will meet with a ranger who will provide one or more programs that are specifically designed for the group and their interests. They will also have the opportunity to join the other ranger-led programs about Lassen Volcanic National Park this summer. In addition, the park supports each trip by providing

campsites and entrance fee waivers. These are some of the ways that we partner with the National Park Service for maximum outcome for youth.

One of the youth group coordinators reported, "Many of our boys experienced the climb to the summit by full moon. This helped with their self-confidence, understanding of great beauty, as well as being good exercise. We attended the Skins and Bones presentation near the Loomis Museum. There we learned about the skulls, skins and abilities of local wildlife. We also attended the Pioneers program at the Manzanita Lake Amphitheater and learned about life on the Emigrant Trail in 1853. Our boys, many of whom are from inner city areas, were at first stiff and uncomfortable. By the end of the program they could not stop laughing. The way back to camp that evening was filled with nonstop conversations about the new things they learned that day."

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this program this year! The results of our youth campaign were the best ever and allowed us to send more kids to camp!

THIS YEAR'S GRANTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS

YOUTH STEWARDSHIP HIGHEST PRIORITY

- Youth 4 Change, Paradise
- Today's Youth Matter, Sacramento
- Good Samaritan Family Resource Center, San Francisco
- Tehama County Mentoring Group, Red Bluff
- Oakdale After School Program, Oroville
- Los Molinas Elementary School, Los Molinos
- YouthQuake/Sunrise Bible Fellowship, Red Bluff
- Jackson Heights Elementary School, Red Bluff
- R Spot, Harmony Health Family Resource Center, Yuba City
- Women's Mountain Passages, Quincy
- Alice Birney School, Sacramento
- EMQ Families First Residential Treatment Program, Davis
- Remi Vista, Redding
- Big Valley Community Alliance, Big Valley
- Friendship House Association of American Indians, Inc.

The Lassen Park Foundation's Board of Directors has determined that their youth program has highest priority. A vision for the future has been created that includes enhancing the educational experience (starting this summer) and a plan for a designated campground for the youth groups. The National Park Service is supporting this vision by helping to plan for improvements to the Crags Campground on the north side of the park. Substantial fundraising is needed to fund these enhancements and the Foundation is committed to the work necessary to make it happen. The outcomes of the youth camping program, told by heartwarming stories of how valuable the trips were to the youth has created avid enthusiasm for an expansion of the program.

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REACH THE PEAK

This summer the five-year project to restore and rehabilitate the 2.5-mile Lassen Peak Trail is in its second year of work on the trail. The project will maintain the character of the trail while taking steps to improve the visitor experience and accommodate its increasing popularity. The park's trail crew and the California Conservation Corps are doing the backbreaking work of constructing 20 switchbacks, 40 rock staircases, one climbing turn and 900 linear feet of retaining walls at Lassen Volcanic National Park this summer.

The Lassen Park Foundation was successful in being awarded a \$199,479 grant from the Federal Highway Administration's Scenic Byway program that has helped the Foundation to be nearly halfway to their goal of raising \$500,000 for the project. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the project! We know that we'll be proud to have had a part in helping to rehabilitate one of the most popular trails in the national park system.

"Climbing to the top of an active volcano is an exciting adventure that you can only do at a few locations on Earth," says Park Superintendent Darlene Koontz, "Lassen Volcanic National Park is one of them." The project will widen the trail, reconstruct retaining walls, install drainage structures, create turnouts and restore areas previously damaged by visitor foot traffic.

"Of all the many projects we've undertaken, restoring the Lassen Peak Trail has perhaps the greatest direct benefit to park visitors, in that so many of the visitors have hiked the trail," says Jane Ziad, executive director of the Lassen Park Foundation. "Because it is so popular, it truly needed this attention. Over the years, hikers wore down the trail, lessening the experience. This restoration will provide a number of improvements, including rest stations, viewpoints and a better experience once on top of the volcano." At 10,475 feet in elevation, Lassen Peak is the world's largest plug dome volcano.

While being rehabilitated this summer, the Lassen Peak Trail will be closed. Access to the summit is only available August 13 – 14 and September 1 – 5.



NEW LEADERSHIP FOR THE FOUNDATION

The Lassen Park Foundation's 2010 strategic planning process identified a true "passion for Lassen", and energized the Foundation to take a leap forward to planning for a full-time executive director and a search is taking place now. The Board of Directors sees a great deal of possibilities for the Foundation and is committed to investing in more staff time in order to progress more quickly. Our vision for the youth program will necessitate more intensive fundraising and visibility. Over the last 27 years the Foundation has raised over \$1.3 million and funded many wonderful projects for Lassen Volcanic National Park. The Foundation serves as the philanthropic vehicle for fundraising for projects that cannot be funded by government dollars alone. In addition, the Foundation raises awareness for stewardship for our national parks, with the understanding that we must all help look after these national treasures.

A RECORD YEAR

The process of clearing the road at Lassen this year was made more difficult than usual by late snowfall. Overall the park had just over 20 feet of snow last winter. 100 days passed between the beginning of the road clearing on April 5th, and the road opening on July 16th.



ART AND WINE FESTIVAL ON SEPTEMBER 24TH

For the second year, the Art and Wine of Lassen event will be held at the Kohm Yah-mah-nee Visitor Center. On September 24th, from 11 am – 5 pm, five wineries and a microbrewery will be featured, artists will show their work, a special lunch will be offered, and Lassen authors will be present for book signing. There will be a Native American exhibit and demonstration too. Music will complete this special event. Don't miss this very popular event as the season winds down at Lassen.

