

## MAY 2010 OVERVIEW

### STANISLAUS BACKCOUNTRY TRAIL CREW

#### PETE BLAU

**OVERVIEW:**The month of May found our crew growing stronger and closer as a community, as well as each of us growing physically stronger. We're busting out more push-ups at PT time and more trails at work time. We're becoming faster hikers and better friends. Spring time here in the Sierra's has shown not only a blossom of awesome wildflowers, but a significant growth in our relationships and work.

**MISSION STATEMENT:**Our crew has been thinking over and putting together our mission statement. We all believe strongly in the significance of this and how it should reflect the important path we've all chosen. Although still a "rough draft", major points that everyone on the crew agrees should be in the mission statement are:

- Through small community living we take on a new responsibility to ourselves, each other and our environment.
- By taking care of ourselves, each other and the animals and plants around us, we promise to leave each place better than we found it.
- We promise to work as hard as we can to build good trails so that other people can experience the beauty and power of nature.

**CURRICULAM:**It's been great that we can work our minds and not just our bodies. It's a very nice balance. In May our crew took a First Aid/ CPR class as well as learning some wilderness first aid from Pete at camp. One night we read Jack London's short story To Build A Fire while sitting together around the camp fire. We discussed the story and wrote down personal ties to the character and his challenges. We've also discussed the importance of confidence as well as what we'd like to gain from our experience here to bring back to the outside world. Most recently Pete gave us a more in depth class to map and compass use.

**AROUND CAMP / OUT ON WEEKENDS:**Our crew knows how to laugh and have a good time – we've been managing to have a blast even between bouts of poison oak and injuries. Around camp we enjoy telling each other absurd stories about aliens and time travel, singing about good times and bad, making wooden instruments and spoons, as well as talking in loud and outrageous accents.

On the weekends we've gone: swimming inside a cave, hugging gigantic sequoias, gone on moonlit hikes into meadows, stargazing, people watching, standing under waterfalls by Hetch Hetchy and cross-countrying across snow in search of a lake we've yet to find. We've been rained on, sleeted on, hailed on, and snowed on – we've also sweated and gotten sunburnt. The Sierra's weather is as haphazard as our crew trying to plan a weekend trip.

**WORK:**It's what we're here to do! We all like getting our hands dirty, which is how we've managed to bust out serious trail work. This month we've worked along four different trails: The Hamby Trail, where we completed 2.5 miles of work on extremely steep terrain (Whew! What a hike); the Tuolumne River Trail, where we brushed out 5 miles, benched trail for 1,320 ft and completed one big logout; the adjacent Mine Trail include 2.5 miles of serious lopping and banana-sawing, as well as eleven waterbars. And last but not least, was the Kibbie Ridge Trail, in which we worked 4.5 miles, doing 107 logouts, 67 waterbars and 1.25 miles of heavy trail maintenance including new trees and rock removal. During one work day, we also cleared 89 logs along 3 miles of road leading up to the trail head.

**CHANGES AND CHALLENGES:** We've had 2 serious injuries unfortunately. Stephanie was burnt badly on her leg while carrying boiling water from the jungle can. Separated from the crew for a month to recover, she finally rejoined us May 24th. We all admire her strength and tenacity.

Devin injured his knee while jumping up to a rock to cut down a small tree. After a leg brace, crutches, two doctors appointments and an MRI, Devin is slowly getting better. He's been stuck at camp for a few weeks now, but on the same day that Stephanie rejoined us, Devin decided it was his time to hit the trail, again. His leg is still bothering him though, so we're all hoping for the best. Devin has shown a great energy during his ordeal!

We've also picked up one more crew member. Mitchell Castaneda comes to us with lots of CCC Trail work experience from Fortuna. Although we haven't even spent a full day with him, he seems to fit in well and adds a nice spice to the crew. We welcome and are excited to learn what he has to offer.

**ODDS AND ENDS:** Each day we realize how lucky we are to work with the sponsors we have. John, Wendy and Dolan are all very knowledgeable as well as kind and funny people. We've seen John piss-ant rocks as big as himself as well as knocking down cigars twice as tall. We have a lot to learn and great people to teach us about trail work.

Thanks to Karlson for visiting us, bringing with him his infamous stories, strong laughter, glairing energy and continuous use of swear words (which we hear less and less of these days).