July 2012 Overview
Yosemite I CCC Backcountry Trail Crew
Supervisor: Tessa d'Usseau

Overview:
The Yosemite I crew spent the first part of July in our frontcountry camp at Foresta spiking to Cascade Creek to finish the bridge project started last month. The crew got their first taste of rock work on this project finishing up multi-tier walls, retainers, and lots of crush! We didn't get to sit around admiring our handiwork too long as it was time to move out of the frontcountry and to our final destination in the backcountry and our new camp at Cony Crags. On Monday, July 16th we loaded up the vehicles and headed up to Tuolumne Meadows where we then loaded everything we own on our backs! The hike to Cony Crags (Elevation 9,100') took 2 days with the crew stopping along the way to clear the trail for the stock to safely follow with our camp gear and supplies. The 17 mile trek ladened with heavy loads and aching muscles has long been forgotten now that we've unpacked and settled into our new digs. Our new home is right off the High Water Trail with spectacular views from our tent sites of the Clark Range. This is why we came to the Backcountry!

Curriculum:
All kinds of informative and fun classes have filled our evening curriculum as well as covering safety tailgate meetings, back ergonomics (Anna Asp, NPS) and radio communication (Jeremy Brown, Anna Asp, NPS). Community Meetings were held each week facilitated by Ivan Klusyk (Greenwood CCC), Mathew Lutz (San Jose CCC), Sean Moodie (Fortuna CCC), and Kat Naf (Pomona CCC). These meetings are a time to discuss crew issues and concerns as well as keeping the crew informed on upcoming events. The camp move kept us busy rehabbing our old site at Foresta and moving and setting up our new camp at Cony Crags. We had a map and compass class taught by Dan Martinez of Yosemite's Education Branch, visited the Tuolumne Grove with its giant Sequoias, held weekend backpacking planning classes and had a Q&A evening with NPS packer Chris Flanagan. Oh yeah, let's not forget the fun stuff like the highly contested whiffle ball game that was called due to darkness (rematch to follow soon!); the equally contested evening of Kick-the-Can and the insane night of Capture the Flag. Way too much fun! We've finally started in on our corpsmember-taught classes with Tess Hankey (Georgia) dealing the crew an evening of Hearts and Matt Lutz (San Jose CCC) settling us into the basics of meditation.

Work:
The perfect end to our frontcountry hitch was the completion of the Cascade Creek Bridge Project replacing the bridge decking and rails and finishing the multi-tier walls supporting the bridge. All our energy was then turned to moving out of our frontcountry in Foresta and moving to Cony Crags and the backcountry for the remainder of the season. First on our to-do list was to complete maintenance on the 9.9 mile High Water Trail from the Isberg Junction to the Lewis Creek Junction. With that completed we're looking forward to the rock projects the NPS sponsors have laid out for us for the next month.

Weekends:
The crew has continued to take advantage of every weekend exploring as much of Yosemite's backcounty as they can. This month they traveled to Cathedral Lake, Echo Lake, Echo Peak, Tenaya Peak, Columbia's Finger, Cockscomb, Virginia Canyon, Spiller Canyon, Matterhorn Canyon, Kerrick Meadow, Benson Lake, Smedberg Lake, McCabe Lakes, Morrison Creek, Pate Valley, Ten Lakes, Lyell Fork of the Merced River, Mount Florence and of coarse, Cony Crags.

Odds & Ends:

- Happy Birthday to Andrew Kaplan and our cook Evelyn Garretson
- Thanks for the sodas, Russ Kish
- Thanks once again to the El Portal Maintenance Shop for hooking us up with a replacement tire for our truck!

Corpsmember Writings:

By Lauren Frietas "Letter to a Friend"

Sometimes I wake up in my dirty tent, tangled in my dirty sleeping bag, laying upon my dirty sleeping pad, wearing the same bra I've worn for 5 days straight and its 4:50 a.m. and I think to myself "I'm going to miss Happy Hour today."

Sometimes when I'm hiking up a mountain trying to attain 1,000 feet in elevation in a stretch of one mile with a 25-pound pack on my back, carrying a shovel, saw, rake, loppers, knowing that when I reach the mountain top I still somehow have 3 more miles of uphill to go before getting to the actual grade, where I will be spending the next 8 hours toiling away followed by the decent back down all while going at a speed just slight of running…gasping for air. I think to myself ***W.T.F.***

Sometimes I curse the universe for never letting me feel anything but discomfort. Be it that my muscles are sore. I have tensions or strains, I can't breathe, I just got bushwacked, I'm covered in bruises, scratches, bug bites...be it that I just tripped over a rock, or I'm growing a callous destined to become my fifth toe, or that I have to poop so bad that I don't care if I do it around little baby bear cubs whose raging mother is nearby.

But always…as I'm looking around after a long day…sitting in the middle of an outside living room decorated with a fire in its center, surrounded by worn out fold up chairs and rounds that have been deemed too strenuous to chop up…but when sat on feel as comfortable as any sofa…I'm content. There's a kettle of water in case I want tea and people sit across from me.

Laughing.

Talking.

…and just being as content as I am. There is the person who makes sure I wake up by 5:00 a.m. in my dirty tent, who reminds me that her bras are just as worn out. There's the person who was my hiking partner today. The person who was faster than me, but took my pace instead…who encouraged me and gave me some advice…the one who stopped and took my water out of my backpack when I couldn't bring my own arms to reach for it. The ones who look back to make sure I'm still there…the ones who breathe just as heavy as I do and still have enough to waste when something is funny. There is also the person with worse blisters than mine who gets out of their chair to walk a bandaid over to me. There's the one who I massaged the other night and now is feeling up someone else's sore shoulders. Always, there are the faces I see at the end of the day, that I saw during the day…as they bumped past me on the trail…looked up from their building, sawing, lopping to say something or nothing through either action give to me a sort of strength to walk on and on and on and on through the rock, dirt, pain, rock, wood, dirt, labor of each day.

Always I push myself and always I have their support.

Always we wish for beer but always decide how OK we are without such a thing.

Sometimes as I'm laying in the wilderness on a rock, listening to nothing but wind and bugs flying around, I forget to remember what I went through just to be sitting here. I forget to give myself credit or take a complete breath of CA air. I forget how lucky I am to have a crew like I do.

More importantly, I forget what I was really going to write you before I started remembering all this that I had forgotten first.

I hope this letter is as interesting to you, as much as it is a reminder to me.