

September 2011 Overview
Yosemite Backcountry Trail Crew
Mark Allee Supervisor

A series of late afternoon thunderstorms with hi-def thunder and lightning booming off the granite domes and cliffs reminds us that summer comes to its close. Fall is in the air and a light chill descends on the meadow each evening. Headlamps are standard PPE in the breakfast dishline now and breakfast itself is eaten in full dark. The beards are at their longest and our well worn uniforms have reached the end of their respectable lifespans. Thoughts turn to home while every moment out here feels more precious than the last. September is the month of transition. All lessons have already been offered. We enter the time of reflection where meaning and insight may be gleaned for years to come. The future trailworkers of America garnered some new recruits from Yosemite this year and our sponsors are pleased.

For those about to rock: we salute you! At last we get to sink our teeth deep into some rockwork. The Yosemite crew shined in the month of September toiling over 14 unique and challenging rock projects. Andy and Erin hammered out a beautiful stone stoop, back to back terra-rap steps pinned in by a junk wall. Mikey slammed out a waterbar and pan then moved on to big rock wall repairs. Aaron and Morgan put in a nice section of pivot wall complete with some check steps and a waterbar. Javi and Dustin dug deep and constructed a massive section of handsome wall under Dan's guidance. Boss Felipe monitored all the projects and single handedly took care of all 2 man boulder moving. Jeremy was on quality control and patiently shared many tips and tricks for rockwork success. Mira and Loni's rock skills grew with their evolving project, which culminated in a bomb-proof corner terrace step with adjacent wall sections. Javan and Emily were slammin' and jammin' on a pan-waterbar combo along with a good looking set of check steps and terra-rap pinned in with junk wall. Mikey and Aaron were hit and repairmen on a blown out section of ancient wall as well. The Red Dawn General struggled to complete the ultimate 100 year waterbar and a long stretch of unwalkable junk retainer wall using his head as the double jack. On the plus side, the quest for the perfect rock turned up a massive subterranean bear den! Rockwork was the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow that we were all waiting for. After months of maintenance it was a well-deserved and fun capstone to our season. The final week holds the last camp breakdown and the ceremonial trip up to half dome, which we will do for sunrise on the fall equinox.

The crew has continued to take advantage of every weekend opportunity exploring out as far as Matterhorn Canyon and Jr. Matterhorn peak, over 60 miles roundtrip and as close to home as Deep Canyon right here in the neighborhood. Laurel and Branigan Lakes remained popular and for the final shebang the whole crew hoofed it out to Lake Eleanor together for old times sake.

We closed out our series of crew led classes with Erin's thought provoking class on the Bread and Roses food co-op and Mira's insightful class on the Meyers-Briggs personality test. We celebrated Loni's 21st birthday with a boba tea party (her favorite) complete with funny hats and a groundscore balloon. Happy Bday Loni! We worked on our end of

season essays and did some video interviews. We finished up life stories and completed program evaluations. Mikey and Andy rounded it out with the final back health class. Jeremy, Felipe, and Dan taught classes on safe rock moving and shaping and on how to apply for National Park Service trail jobs. On our last night in camp we celebrated with the traditional talent show. Man, what a hilarious and talented group of individuals we are! Best in show went to Mikey and Erin for their grandma makes a PB and J skit.

Thanks to Fred Lietzke for coming out to visit and documenting our life out here. Thanks to Mira for stepping up to volunteer in the kitchen. Thanks to Phil, Tessa, and Karlson for providing us all with this amazing opportunity. Thanks to our sponsors Jeremy, Felipe, Evelyn, Anna, and Dan. You keep the dream alive! We couldn't have done it without you.

And lastly, it has been an honor to work and live and play with such a fine group of young people. I will never forget our amazing adventure in Yosemite. Best of luck to each and every one of you in whatever you choose to do. You have my full support. Just don't ever leave home without a fully stocked daypack: Always be prepared!

Congratulations Yosemite! You did it.

Love,

The Red Dawn General