



American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Hells Canyon Trails Repair

Category: Trails

BLM
Arizona

Putting Money and Youth to Work in a BLM Arizona Wilderness Area

The youth crews working in the BLM's Hells Canyon Wilderness about an hour's drive north of Phoenix had to leave pavement behind once they reached the wilderness boundary to hike the rest of



the way to the job site. Motorized vehicles and equipment are prohibited in a National Wilderness Area. They had come to help the BLM improve trails in the area, but learned valuable lessons about the environment in the process.

The Southwest Conservation Corps of Tucson and Coconino

Rural Development Corporation of Flagstaff provided the youth crews who were recruited to help repair 33 miles of trails under a grant of \$70,200. Their work took them into the national landscapes of wildernesses, monuments, and public lands reserved for hikers, equestrians, and tourists, and frequented by those who study cultural and historic features.

Thirty-one youth collectively put in 2,100 hours. They completed more than 16 miles of work on the Harquahala Peak Pack Trail, Vulture Peak Trail and Hells Canyon Trails during the 2010 winter work season. They closed and revegetated 80 feet of trail; installed 15 rock water bars, 5 wood water bars, 4 rock check dams, 18 earthen dips, and 70 square feet of rock retaining wall; placed 51 rock steps and 12 rock cairns, and improved 6 switchbacks.

The initial phase of project is completed, but there are 17 miles of trails still needing work in the Hassayampa River Canyon Wilderness. That will be done during the next work season, which, in Arizona, is after the summer heat.

The BLM-Arizona has identified improvement of trails as mission critical. Trails serve to bolster quality of life for recreationists. This work also helps the BLM maintain a safe and user-friendly environment and provide public access to treasured historic trails. All trail remediation work is being performed by youth-oriented organizations and at-risk youth crews, providing young people invaluable work experience and helping to encourage a new generation of land stewards.

Representatives of the Wilderness Land Trust, Yavapai County and the

City of Peoria joined BLM Arizona State Director Jim Kenna, youth corps members and BLM Hassayampa Field Office Manager Steve Cohn in a November 13, 2009 ceremony to officially kick off the Recovery Act project. They stacked rocks to make a cairn marking the trailhead. The dignitaries then shoveled dirt around it in a symbolic ground-breaking and the crew went to work.



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U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

