Youth Conservation Crew (YCC)
Summer 2024 Report

PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

Youth Conservation Crew

The Youth Conservation Crew (YCC) program provides employment opportunities for Portland-area youth 14-to-19-years-old. Crews protect, restore, and monitor Portland Parks & Recreation's (PP&R) parks, natural areas, and community gardens, as well as local schoolyards and street trees. They do all this while developing job skills and exploring environmental career paths.

Workforce Development

YCC serves as a valuable entry point into the workforce for youth all across Portland. They gain practical experience in conservation and develop skills to advance as professionals in the environmental field. This report reviews their accomplishments and the impact they've had on our park system and our local communities.

YCC's 2024 Season Featured:

- **41** crew members, including **27** returners
- **8** crew leaders, **4** asst. crew leaders, **1** intern, including **8** returners
- **6** PP&R sponsors supported **4** Crews: City Nature East Crew, Community Gardens Crew, No Ivy League, and Trail Crew. Tree Crew will be returning for Summer 2025.

Two Crew Members in the Community Gardens Crew shovel mulch into a wheelbarrow at Woodlawn Community Garden.

YCC's Impact Across the City

As highlighted on the list below, crews performed critical conservation work at **23** sites across the city of Portland.

Berrydale Garden
Brentwood Community Garden
Colwood Natural Area
Council Crest Park
Eagle Point
Forest Park
George Himes Park
Kelley Point Park
Kelly Butte Natural Area
Lents Community Garden
Lent Elementary Garden
Maricara Natural Area
Marquam Nature Park
Mt. Tabor Park
Native Gathering Garden
Oaks Bottom/Oaks Crossing
Powers Marine Park
Terwilliger Park
Wahoo Creek Natural Area
Whitaker Ponds Natural Area
Wilkes Creek Headwaters
Woodlawn Community Garden
Woods Memorial Natural Area

Supporting Racial Equity

YCC attracts and hires from a diverse applicant pool. These emerging leaders will have the opportunity to participate in paid internships through age 25 as funding allows. This program contributes to a more diverse hiring pool for employees, in line with Portland Parks & Recreation's racial equity goals.

Youth Crew Member Demographics

Amongst staff participating in our workforce survey:

Youth came from **24** schools and **19** zip codes

61% use a language other than English, including Amharic, Arabic, ASL, Cantonese, Czech, Hmong, Japanese, Mandarin, Nepali, Spanish, Tigrinya, Vietnamese, and Zomi

29% of youth identified YCC as a first job experience

Thank You to Our Community Partners:

Bonneville Dam / Army Corps of Engineers | Cannon Beach Public Works | Christine and Clifton Bruno | Gregory Heights Library
Kindness Farm | Leach Botanical Garden | Lent Elementary | Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership
Mt. Hood National Forest / U.S. Forest Service | Oxbow Regional Park | Thimbleberry Collaborative Farm

Protecting Our Parks

The Youth Conservation Crew program significantly increases the number of Portland Parks & Recreation staff working to improve our parks, natural areas, and trails each summer.

A City Nature East crew member removes introduced plants to create turtle nesting habitat at Whitaker Ponds Nature Park.

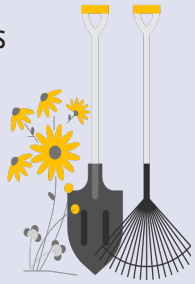
YCC Accomplishments at a Glance:

City Nature East Crew

- Surveyed and cleared invasively growing plants on more than 22,000 square feet of land
- Weeded 1,100 plants and trees and mulched 630 plants and trees
- Removed 98 linear feet of fencing and rebuilt 161 linear feet of fencing
- Built 69 beaver cages and surveyed for freshwater mussels

Community Gardens Crew

- Mulched 2,750 square feet around plant and trees
- Watered 440 square feet of plants
- Cleared 3,470 square feet of introduced plants
- Maintained 600 square feet of trail; installed 150 feet of irrigation



No Ivy League Crew

- Surveyed and cleared invasively growing plants on more than 72,000 square feet of natural area land
- Performed general conservation projects and a bioblitz survey, all supporting PP&R's habitat restoration goals without the use of pesticides

Trail Crew

- Built 30 linear feet of new trail
- Maintained 8,214 linear feet of established trail
- Moved 24 cubic yards of gravel
- Pruned 36 trees
- Built 313 square feet of rock wall

Appreciation to the Following City of Portland Teams:

City Fleet | City Nature Citywide | City Nature East | City Nature West | Community Gardens | Environmental Education
Horticultural Services | Land Stewardship | Payroll & Personnel | Portland Park Rangers | Urban Forestry

"The Crew Leaders are more than welcoming and excited to work with everyone in the crew. Everyone is safe with tools and works hard without distractions or judgement."

Trail Crew Member

"As a YCC Intern, I supported the whole program and really had the opportunity to see how beneficial it is for all of our Crew Members."

Kiara Maciel,
YCC Intern

"I feel proud of the work that I do. Although it is tiring, being able to see the ground that was once covered in all ivy and blackberries be all cleared out is quite satisfying."

No Ivy League Crew Member

"I feel respected by my crew. They actively listen to my ideas and suggestions. They create an environment where I feel valued."

Community Gardens Crew Member

"It's very fulfilling work. I feel proud of what I do. A lot of members of the public thank us for our work at Parks. It feels very good and like we are actually doing something."

City Nature East Crew Member

"The 2024 summer was a long, hot season for YCC. Staff members displayed immense passion and drive as demonstrated through their hard work to complete projects. We are very proud of the work we did and are looking forward to completing additional projects during the off-season." Kim Stolkowski, YCC Program Coordinator

Youth Conservation Crew Team:
Kim Stolkowski, YCC Program Coordinator
Gina Dake, Environmental Education Supervisor
Rachel Felice, City Nature Manager
Tonya Booker, Land Stewardship Division Manager

Anne Marie Santos and Yoko Silk, City Nature East Crew Sponsors
Max Rodrigues, Community Gardens Crew Sponsor
Monica Hescheles, No Ivy League Sponsor
Ahmed Yusuf, Trail Crew Sponsor
Zowie DeLeon, Tree Crew Sponsor