

Siskiyou Mountain Club is hiring interns

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After an exceptional 2020 season, the Siskiyou Mountain Club is hiring interns for their 2021 Wilderness Conservation Corps, an intensive summer program that includes 47 days of field work restoring the region's most remote and spectacular backwoods trails. More information and applications are available at siskiyoumountainclub.org/wcc2021.

Field crews will be dispatched on 10-day projects in the Rogue-Umpqua Divide, Red Buttes, Siskiyou and Kalmiopsis federal wilderness areas. Crews camp out and live on the trail for that time. The work includes removing brush and debris, digging out buried trail tread and using old-fashioned crosscut saws to remove trees that have fallen on trails. Interns receive a \$1,500 monthly educational stipend and are eligible for a bonus.

Interns receive on-the-job training, certificates and credentials recognized by federal land agencies. The program is recognized by the Conservation Service Corps and the 400 service hours can be used as a qualification element in federal jobs. The club provides housing on days off.

In 2020, Hector Avendano was hired onto the crew and traveled from his home in Las Vegas and ended up deep in the Kalmiopsis Wilderness on the remote Madstone Cabin Trail.

"It was rough around the edges," Hector said while reflecting on a 10-day work hitch working in 100-degree heat. "But you work your way through it and you get to see places hardly anyone else does."

Avendano started working as soon as he could legally, and probably a little before that.

“I grew up helping my parents out with whatever jobs they had,” he said.

He also worked in the Wild Rogue Wilderness Area, but his favorite project was in the highlands of the Siskiyou Wilderness along a mountain ridge that splits California’s Smith and Klamath rivers.

“We wanted to get this project done,” he said. “There were some days we were walking back into camp at 9 p.m.”

“Successful applicants are those in honest pursuit of a personal and professional challenge,” said Executive Director Gabriel Howe. “There’s no getting around it: This is tough work and most people aren’t up for it.”

He said the program is the heartbeat of the organization and the Corps is responsible for the hardest to reach and most difficult projects.

Interns must be 18 and over, able to hike 10 miles with 50 pounds, and perform other duties of the job, and Howe says he’s hiring for leadership.

“We need to grow our staff in the coming years to meet the growing demand for our work,” he said.

The club works mostly in the Siskiyou Mountains of Southwest Oregon and Northwest California. The area is known for its rugged mountainscape, biodiversity and vast tracts of federal wilderness. The nonprofit helps manage approximately 350 miles of trails throughout over 500,000 acres of wilderness. 2020 marked the organization’s 10th-year in operation.

Howe said he’s hoping to have hiring wrapped up by mid April. Read more and apply at siskiyoumountainclub.org/wcc2021/.