

## **“Center for Natural Lands Management and the California Conservation Corps restore habitat on Pace Preserve” (May 2009)**

Temperatures soared, pencils flew, and tools swung as the 13-member California Conservation Corps (CCC) Delta Satellite crew collaborated with CNLM staff for a week of education and habitat restoration on CNLM’s Pace Preserve outside of Stockton, CA.

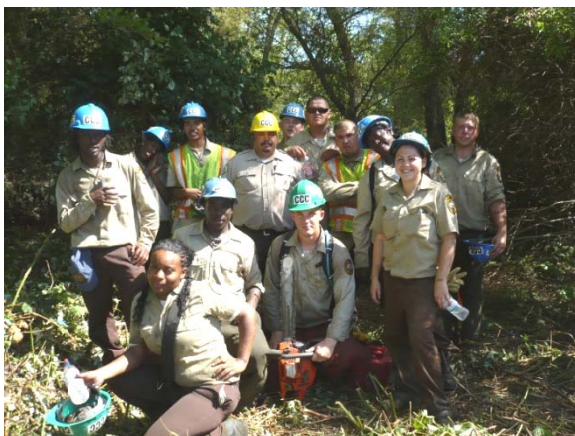
“Conservation is the way to go!” remarked Tania Gayles, Delta Satellite Crew Member.

The CCC is a state agency that hires young men and women (ages 18-25) for a year of natural resource work and emergency response. Their motto is “Hard work, low pay, miserable working conditions, and more!” The conditions were indeed tough as CCC members and CNLM staff cleared invasive Himalaya blackberry (*Rubus discolor*)



bushes that loomed overhead, obscuring and outcompeting native vegetation. They also cleared water structures, removed beaver dam debris, chopped thistle, and otherwise facilitated recovery of the dynamic native resources that Pace possesses. Hard work, but worth it: “The task we are in the process of accomplishing will benefit the biodiversity within the nature preserve” commented Ivan Mireles, Delta Satellite Crew Member.

The Pace Preserve was established in 1995 as mitigation for the Brookside Estates Subdivision. The site is a created system of sloughs and islands, and contains seasonal wetlands, tule marsh, riparian, oak sycamore, and upland habitats. Since its inception, 174 different species of birds have been documented as using the preserve, along with many species of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates. Pace’s rich peat soil fosters a lush profusion of native—and invasive—flora, making the removal of weeds a key component of preserving conservation values.



The mission statement, as well of the motto, of the CCC was in evidence as the crew worked energetically to restore this treasure in the rough: “The young men and women of the Corps work hard protecting and restoring California’s environment, and responding to disasters,

becoming stronger workers, citizens, and individuals through their service.” (<http://www.ccc.ca.gov/>). Delta Satellite motivation and engagement was truly inspiring as they discussed biodiversity and habitat restoration during their breaks, and then donned gloves and hefted tools to put theory into action.

CNLM benefited from being able to work with the crew and improve the intended conditions at Pace, while providing to CCC educational orientations about habitat restoration and conservation, plant identification, and careers in the natural sciences.

“We learned about mitigation, migration, biodiversity, habitat, European Blackberry, and native plants ...You cannot always use chemicals to get rid of a weed ...it may kill the necessary plants, bugs, even animals” remarked Ashley Larkin, Delta Satellite Crew Member.

The California Conservation Corps and the Center for Natural Lands Management have also partnered on restoration projects at Prichard Lake and other locations.

