

## **Project Summary**

### **Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit**

**Project Title:** YPP - South District Bighorn Canyon NRA Trail and Amphitheater Improvements/ Restore Hillsboro Historic Orchard

**Discipline:** Interdisciplinary  
**Type of Project:** Technical Assistance/Education  
**Funding Agency:** National Park Service  
**Other Partners/Cooperators:** University of Wyoming  
**Effective Dates:** 5/1/2014- 7/30/2015  
**Funding Amount:** \$29,000

**Investigators and Agency Representative:**

NPS Contact: Jennifer Schneider, 20 US HWY 14A East, Lovell, WY. 82431, Phone: 307-548-5420, Fax: 307-548-7826, email: jennifer\_schneider@nps.gov.

Investigator: Patrick Harrington, Project Coordinator, Sr., Wyoming Conservation Corps, Dept. 3994, 1000 E. University Ave, Laramie, WY 82071-2000, PHONE: 307-766-3048, FAX: (307)766-3616, email: pharrin2@uwyo.edu

**Project Abstract:** Through use of the Wyoming Conservation Corp (WCC) youth will be used to participate in trail maintenance and remediation, re-establishment of an historic orchard and a tuck-pointing project. These opportunities offer young people a venue to develop an understanding and appreciation of sustainable ecosystems, create interest in public land management careers, and be involved in contributing to cultural resource goals. Youth will develop an understanding of stewardship and ownership of our country's natural, recreational and cultural resources. Crews will work from July 21 through July 30, 2014 to complete these projects.

Project work consists of trail improvement on Upper Layout Creek Trail which is located beyond the Prior Mountain Wild Horse Range boundary, near the Historic Ewing Snell Ranch in the South District of Bighorn. This trail winds up Layout Creek Canyon past a waterfall to Layout Creek springs and provides access to our parks cultural and natural resources, both scenic and educational and offer opportunities for exploration into nature, our cultural history and the effects of past and current events. Trail work will consist of 2' of brush removal and grubbing back 2' of brush and undergrowth to widen a 50' stretch of path approx. 6' wide through an overgrown riparian area, as well as cutting in surface grade on steeper slopes of the trail with up to 10 switchbacks to create a safer walking surface for visitors and employees. This area of trail currently is potentially hazardous due to the existing grade of the trail for approx. ¼ mile. It will be necessary to install approximately (up to) 20 water bars to improve water run-off from the trail and to decrease erosion of the footpath. One WCC crew (2 Leaders, 6 crew members) will be utilized for a 10 day period to work on this project approximately 400 to 600 man hours.

Additional project work will be to the Horseshoe Bend Amphitheater. Project work will consist of: repairing mortar tuck-pointing on the amphitheater stone walls (approx. 70 lf of 8' to 10' walls) and repairing and replacing stone (amount of mortar and stone replacement to be determined) on the damaged flagstone fire ring (5' in diameter) that is located near the seating area that is used during interpretive programs. One crew will be used for approximately 200 to 400 man hours.

As well, WCC crews will assist the park preservation team in restoring the cultural landscape at the Hillsboro Historic Ranch. The Hillsboro Historic Orchard will be re-invented with 7 new in-kind apple trees that will be planted and mulched. The orchard will also get approx. 250 lf of a slow flow drip irrigation system to help the new trees get established. A new woven wire fence (approx. 80 lf x 8' H) will also be installed to protect the young trees from rabbits, deer, and bighorn sheep that frequent the area. Two Crew leaders and 6 crewmembers will dedicate approx. 800 work hours to this project. Crews will also assist in the removal of potential fire fuels in and around the orchard as well as the historic buildings.

BICA will gain from their (WCC) efforts accessible safe trails, re-establishment of an historic orchard and repairs to an amphitheater that is used for programs for the promotion, facilitation, and improvement of people's understanding of our natural resources, cultural history, and recreational opportunities.

**Outcomes with Completion Dates: 7/30/2015**

**Keywords:** Technical Assistance, Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, Wyoming Conservation Corps, University of Wyoming