

Tuesday August 9,  
2022 – Friday  
August 12, 2022

# Mini-DRT

## Forest Service Activities



### All About H<sub>2</sub>O Overnight (Mini-DRT) Camp

The Prince William Sound Science Center annually hosts the H<sub>2</sub>O Overnight (Mini-DRT) Camp. This camp is for kids going into grades 6-8. This year, the camp was held from August 9-12.

The H<sub>2</sub>O Overnight Camp focuses on restoration activities, ecosystem stewardship, and leadership development. This camp is fun and interactive. It is geared to those who love to be outside while learning about the wonderful landscape that surrounds Cordova. Every day is filled with hands-on science activities, games, and adventures. Campers also learn, firsthand, what it means to be a good steward through active participation in restoration projects on the Delta. By the end of the week, campers are able to see for themselves that from the headwaters to the ocean...it's all connected. Camp activities take place all over Cordova and the Copper River Delta.

The US Forest Service collaborates with the PWSSC for some of the activities throughout the day. The kids get to experience what the USFS does and what it is like to work for the USFS Fisheries, Wildlife and Ecology, and Recreation Departments.



Some of the Mini-DRT campers playing a game with Kate, PWSSC Education Specialist.  
Photo by Eden McCall



The Mini-DRT campers along with some of the staff from the PWSSC and USFS. Photo by Eden McCall

Cristina Reo

## The Inside Scoop

Featuring Avery

If you asked Avery about the Mini-DRT Camp, she would tell you that she enjoyed everything it had to offer. Avery's favorite day was the day she got to work with both the USFS Wildlife Crew and the USFS Ecology Crew. "I enjoyed learning new plant names that I didn't even know about, like coral fungus. And I loved checking the Canada goose nests for eggs and determining if the egg survived or not." Avery excelled at this camp and the USFS is so happy to have had all her hard work and help.



Left: Avery investigating the remains of an egg from a nest.  
Right: Avery filling out a fisheries data sheet.  
Photos by Eden McCall



Photos by Eden McCall

### Fisheries

Tuesday August 9

Campers got to see what it was like to work as a fisheries biologist for the USFS, learning techniques such as walking in waders, checking traps, handling fish, and taking proper measurements.

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### Recreation

Wednesday August 10

Kids got to work as Forestry Technicians and learn skills such as hand-sawing, brushing, swamping, and maintaining Forest Service Recreation Sites.

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### Wildlife and Ecology

Thursday August 11

Mini-DRT campers were able to learn how to look for goose nests, maintain nest islands, and collect plant seeds with the USFS Wildlife Crew and the USFS Ecology Crew

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Cristina Reo

Fisheries Technicians for a Day

On Tuesday, the kids of the H2O Overnight Camp got a special treat. They were able to experience what it was like to be a fisheries technician for the day. The day started at 11 am where they met the USFS Fisheries department at the 18-mile culvert in Cordova, Alaska. Despite the ongoing rain, these Cordova kids powered through and got the job done! They started by splitting into three groups: upstream, culvert, and downstream. The three groups waded into the water and began to search for the traps that the Fisheries Department had set the night before. Upon finding a trap, the kids would take turns pulling the fish out of the trap and placing them into a bucket. The kids were able to fearlessly take on this task. After emptying a trap, the traps were folded down and collected. After all the traps had been checked and pulled down, the groups headed back to shore to take proper measurements.

Once back on shore, the Fisheries Crew taught the kids how to set up a bubble box in the fish buckets. This allowed the fish to have oxygenated water. The kids then took turns taking length measurements of the fish. They measured from the mouth of the fish to the fork of the tail. While measuring the fish, the kids were able to observe what species each fish was. Some of the species that were seen include Dolly Varden, Coho Salmon, and Sculpins. They all got to take turns filling out an official USFS data sheet. The Mini-DRT campers were all excellent fisheries technicians.

When asked about their day, 44% of the kids said they could see themselves doing this for their future careers! A lot of the kids said their favorite part of the day was walking in the water with waders and trying not to go too deep and top their waders.



Top: Kate, PWSSC Education Specialist, and Mini-DRT campers Everleigh, Isla, and Avery observing fish.  
Bottom: Avery, Bastien, Andrew, and Kate working with Fisheries Technician, Sara, to collect fish from traps.  
Photos by Eden McCall



Left: Layla swamping the Recreation Site at the end of FS Road 220.  
Photo by Eden McCall

Cristina Reo

The Inside Scoop  
Featuring Layla

Layla was a very hard-working camper and loved learning the new skills taught to her by the USFS employees. Layla’s favorite thing to do was work with the USFS Fisheries Department. When asked what in particular she liked, she couldn’t choose. She said she loved all of activities that involved the Fisheries Department. Layla had a great time participating in the events during the Mini-DRT Camp. She also mentioned that she liked hauling the brush at the Recreation Site at the end of FS Road 220, as seen in the photo above.



Top: Fisheries Crew measuring the length of a fish.  
Top Middle: Andrew, Mini-DRT camper, emptying a fish trap.  
Bottom Middle: Sara, Fisheries Technician, walking in the stream with Bastien looking for fish traps.  
Bottom: Mini-DRT campers Evie, Layla, and Brigg collecting fish data.  
Photos by Eden McCall

Cristina Reo

The Inside Scoop  
Featuring Isla

Isla enjoyed all that the Mini-DRT Camp had to offer. Her favorite Forest Service sponsored activity was hosted by the Fisheries Department. She loved wading through the stream to collect the fish traps, pulling the fish out of the traps, and measuring the fish. Isla was most helpful to her group by fearlessly taking on the challenges of handling fish. She strongly held the bucket of fish for her group while wading through the stream. Above everything else, her favorite memory was “kissing fishies!” After retrieving a fish from the trap, she would give it a big old kiss before placing it into the bucket. Thank you, Isla, for all your hard work!



Isla, Mini-DRT camper, holding and carefully observing a bag of sculpin, dolly varden, and salmon.





Cristina Reo

The Inside Scoop

Featuring Bastien



Left: Bastien shoveling at the 10-Mile Recreation Site.  
Right: Bastien walking in waders.  
Photos by Eden McCall

Bastien mentioned that his favorite activity is a toss-up between Wednesday and Thursday’s activities. Bastien enjoyed shoveling for the Recreation Department. He said, “[it] was really cool...to shovel rocks and moss and your shovel just slides under it.” He enjoyed how satisfying the process of shoveling the moss and rocks off the gravel was. Bastien also enjoyed the Wildlife activities, especially looking for goose nests. He most enjoyed going into the swamp to monitor the nest island.



Top: Anita, Forestry Technician, giving a safety briefing to the group before a day of Recreation maintenance.  
Bottom: Mini-DRT campers hauling brush away from the water and to the woods at the Recreation Site at the end of FS Road 220.  
Photos by Eden McCall

Cristina Reo

The Inside Scoop

Featuring Everleigh

Everleigh’s favorite activity was helping out the USFS Recreation Department. Her favorite thing to do was use the hand clippers. She enjoyed “clipping” while trying to solve riddles that Kate, PWSSC Education Specialist, came up with. Everleigh commented that “there are bugs everywhere.” Everleigh is a hard worker, and the USFS Recreation Department is grateful for all her hard work maintaining recreation sites.



Left: Everleigh hauling brush.  
Right: Everleigh picking out her PPE.  
Photos by Eden McCall



Left: Mini-DRT campers with Forest Service employees after finishing the 10-Mile Recreation Site. Top Right: Forest Service employee, Anita, shoveling with the kids. Bottom Right: Mini-DRT campers hard at work swamping the Recreation Site at the end of FS Road 220. Photos by Eden McCall

A Day in the Life of Trail Crew

Cristina Reo

On Wednesday, the Mini-DRT campers were able to spend a beautiful day in Cordova doing some Recreational maintenance. The day started out at the 10-Mile Recreation Site. Anita, Forestry Technician, led a group talk on why this kind of work is important and how to properly use the Forest Service tools. After that, the kids picked their tools of choice from a truck bed of tools and got to work. Some of the jobs included shoveling the moss and grass off the cement, using clippers to take down shrubs and bushes along the fence line, using handsaws to cut down trees, and dragging the brush into the woods. The boys eagerly got to work on sawing down some of the smaller trees that were in the way of the viewing platform. While doing this, some of the girls got to work on using the hand clippers to take down some shrubbery that was along the fence. All the kids reluctantly took turns shoveling. Thankfully, Kate Trudeau, PWSSC Education Specialist, was able to come up with a fun competition to make shoveling more appealing. She split the kids into two groups, boys and girls, and made it a competition to see which group could have the bigger pile. By the end of

their time at the 10-Mile Recreation Site, the boys had won the competition.

After a well-deserved lunch break and a quick game, it was back to work. The kids took on the Recreation Site at the end of FS Road 220. They all worked as a team to clear some previously cut down trees and drag them into the woods. This is a job that the F.S. Trail Crew calls “swamping.” After an hour of rigorous swamping, the site was brought back to its full potential. The Forest Service is so grateful for all the hard work that these H2O Overnight campers put into maintaining their Recreation Sites!

Quotes:

“Satisfying scooping it [grass, moss, and dirt] up” -Isla  
“Easier with the right gear” -Elizabeth

When asked, 55% of the kids said they would do this for a living!





The USFS Wildlife Crew and the Mini-DRT campers after maintaining a nest island. Photo by Eden McCall

Cristina Reo

# Duck, Duck, Goose!

## A morning with the USFS Wildlife Crew



Mini-DRT campers observing the remains of a nest with Beau, USFS employee. Photo by Eden McCall

On Thursday, the Mini-DRT campers took on a fun filled day. At 10am, the campers met up with the USFS Wildlife Crew. The Wildlife Crew greeted the kids with high energy, despite the ominous weather, and had them dive right into an activity: searching for goose nests!

Right away, the campers were able to find a goose nest that had a decoy goose sitting on top of it. Inside the nest they saw four hatched eggs. The Wildlife Crew helped the kids learn the difference between a hatched egg and a predated egg. They also talked about whether they thought the nest was successful or not. After that, the campers were able to successfully find three more nests. Some of the nests showed signs of predation. One nest had 7 healthy hatches! The Wildlife Crew also informed the campers on some tips of how to find a nest based on male goose behavior.

After the fun of searching for nests, the Wildlife Crew took the H2O Overnight campers to one of the USFS created nest islands. The campers got to see up-close what the nest islands look like and how they function. After learning more about nest islands, and their importance, the campers were given the opportunity to help improve it. The USFS Wildlife Crew noticed the nest island was lacking in sweet gale. They decided to challenge the H2O Overnight campers to break into groups of three and dig up a chunk of sweet gale. Whichever group came back to the nest island with the most sweet gale would be the winner.

The team composed of Andrew, Evie, and Isla, named “Goosey”, was the winner! Following the competition, the groups were able to take turns installing their sweet gale onto the nest island. After the nest island was back to its full potential, the campers helped the USFS Wildlife Crew fill out a survey card about the nest island they just helped monitor and repair.

66% of the kids said they could see themselves working as a part of the USFS Wildlife Crew when they grow up!

Cristina Reo

## The Inside Scoop

### Featuring Brady

Brady was excellent at taking on the tasks of the Wildlife Crew. When searching for goose nests, he was always at the front leading everyone forward toward the next goose nest. He had a keen eye for the task. It’s no wonder that his favorite activity through the camp was working with the USFS Wildlife Crew. Thank you, Brady, for all your hard work and your positive attitude.



Left: Brady working with his team to dig up sweet gale. Right: Brady observing plant seeds. Photos by Eden McCall







Cristina Reo

The Inside Scoop

Featuring Brigg



Brigg helping the Recreation Department shovel at the 10-Mile Recreation Site.  
Photo by Eden McCall

Brigg’s favorite activity was looking for the goose nests. Brigg also said that he “thought the [Forest Service nest] islands were cool.” Brigg tried his hardest with all activities. He showed a lot of determination and great scientific abilities. The USFS is grateful for all of his hard work!



Top: Mini-DRT campers congratulating the winning team of the sweet gale competition.  
Bottom: Team Goosey digging up their sweet gale.  
Photos by Eden McCall

Cristina Reo

The Inside Scoop

Featuring Elizabeth

Elizabeth enjoyed all the H2O Overnight Camp had to offer. If she had to choose a favorite activity, it would be either working with the Ecology Crew or helping the Recreation Department. She enjoyed picking the seeds with the Ecology Crew. Elizabeth also loved helping the Recreation Department with “cleaning up the area and making it look nice.” Great job, Elizabeth!



Left: Elizabeth investigating a plant’s seeds.  
Right: Elizabeth observing fish.  
Photos by Eden McCall



Left: Mini-DRT campers, with the USFS Ecology Crew, learning about new plants and how to get their seeds. Top Right: Mini-DRT campers trying to find seeds with the Ecology Crew. Bottom Right: Mini-DRT campers learning about a new mushroom with Anne, USFS employee. Photos by Eden McCall

Ecology Fun

Cristina Reo

On Thursday, after the lunch break, the USFS Ecology Team met up with the H2O Overnight campers. The Ecology Crew talked about the importance of being aware of your surroundings. They informed all the campers to remain cautious about eating fruit growing in the woods. They also showed the campers what plants to avoid touching, like the wild celery. After the safety briefing, the Ecology Crew talked about one of their jobs, collecting seeds, and the importance of why they do it. They challenged the campers to collect as many seeds as they could. The campers went out on the sides of the road along the Alaganik and collected the seeds from both fireweed and large-leaf avens. Along the way, they also learned about other fun plants and mushrooms, collected berries, and had fun! The USFS is so grateful to the kids for all their hard work collecting seeds!

When asked, 55% of the campers said they would do this for a living!

Cristina Reo

The Inside Scoop

Featuring Andrew

Andrew’s favorite activity during the Mini-DRT Camp was picking the seeds with the Ecology Crew. Not only did Andrew like this task the best, but he was also very good at it. Andrew helped the Ecology crew collect many seeds! The Ecology Crew is very grateful for all of Andrew’s hard work!



Left: Andrew, yellow jacket, learning about a new plant.  
Right: Andrew helping to haul brush.  
Photos by Eden McCall