



the GreenWay

SCA's Conservation Quarterly

Spring 2011



Photo credit: Paul Zink

Enlisting the support of friends and volunteers, SCA alumnus Jeff Chen launches a nationwide initiative committed to reducing plastic waste in our communities and waterways.

The Pick Up Artist

Sometimes, life-changing ideas can come out of nowhere. For SCA alum Jeff Chen, a trip to Yosemite National Park became the spark that ignited an all-consuming passion to rid America and our treasured parks of trash.

“On my first hike up Half Dome, I was astonished to see trash on the trail. Trash? At this national treasure? This sacred place? On the way back down my friend and I picked up every single piece of it,” exclaims Jeff.

And so began Jeff’s journey, which would eventually become known as *Pick Up America*.

“My parents moved to China while I was still in college and one summer I needed a place to live. So I called Yosemite, looking for a seasonal ranger job. Nothing. They suggested I call the Student Conservation Association. SCA called back wanting to know if I spoke another language?” “Yes!”

Feeling incredibly fortunate, Jeff spent ten weeks during the summer of 2006 at Yosemite National Park as an SCA interpretive intern—educating visitors, tracking black bears and hiking. “SCA is phenomenal. It made me realize I could do more. I made my first solo backpacking trip and learned to love the simplicity of having everything you need on your back and all you have to do is keep walking and cook something good to eat.”

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CONSERVATION BEGINS HERE

Student Conservation Association
thesca.org



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Transforming the Future

"Engage young Americans in public lands and water restoration [and] provide job training... on public lands."

The words are from a just-released report by America's Great Outdoors (AGO), a White House conservation initiative. But if the concept seems familiar, there's good reason.

For well over a year, SCA has been working with Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and others in Washington to formulate a 21st Century Conservation Service Corps that would expand service opportunities for youth and pave a pathway to professional opportunities in the conservation field. I was pleased to see this initiative presented as the #1 proposal in the AGO report.

Our public lands need extra hands. Youth unemployment has skyrocketed. And agency staffs are approaching retirement. In fact, last year, SCA began to realign our service programs, which target diverse individuals from 15-25 years of age, into a progressive continuum of experiences to better prepare career-oriented members for job opportunities both in and out of government.

We are heartened to see that with the AGO report, land management leaders are expressing the same commitment to connect young Americans to the land and open a similar path to conservation and community leadership.

Finally, as *The Green Way* goes to print, the terrible tragedies in Japan are just unfolding. As so many are suffering our hearts go out to them. We also are reminded of the generous spirit of humanity as so many respond by offering service and aid in so many ways. Let us all pull together and support those most in need.

Dale M. Penny

The Pick Up Artist *continued from page 1*

As a broadcast journalism major, Jeff's activism began in college where he says he began to connect the dots between consumption, pollution and environmental impact. "I noted the higher cancer rates where there are petrochemical plants, the massive depletion of ground water and the piles of plastic water bottles.

"We are turning our resources into rubbish," continues Jeff, "mountains of rubbish." According to the EPA, Americans produce an average of 4.3 pounds of rubbish per person per day. Only a fraction of that discarded waste ends up at a recycling facility. The rest is dumped by the roadside, or shipped to developing countries to be stripped of valuable metals or toxic plastics and then burned. Or it ends up in the oceans.

"I had this crazy idea. I would walk across America and pick up trash. I would get other young people in their twenties to volunteer and help. I wanted to start a big youth movement, really grassroots—to take a tangible, concrete action and hope that people would draw an intangible conclusion on their own."

Jeff enlisted the support of friends and supporters and together they began planning and assembling resources to launch *Pick Up America*.

In the spring of 2010, the *Pick Up Artists* set out from Maryland on a course that would take them west, with stops at colleges and in small towns along the way. When the team finally stopped for the winter in early November, the results they had achieved were impressive. Averaging 100 pounds of trash per mile, and about 1,000 pounds of trash each day, the *Pick Up Artists* and friends had traveled 734.8 miles and, with the help of 262 volunteers, removed 75,646 pounds of trash—that's 38 tons!

"The first year was so hard. Every day was exhausting and every day I wanted to quit. I kept asking myself, 'Why am I picking up other people's trash?'" recounts Jeff. "But then at the end of each day, there was hot food and new friends. Every meal was like Thanksgiving—so rewarding."

"My hope is that more people will understand and make an effort to reduce their waste," he concludes, "and that they will commit to making the changes that they want to see in the world."

To see more photos and watch video of Jeff Chen and his fellow pick up artists at work, visit thesca.org/thepickupartist

Editor's note: Pick Up America will start up again in late March in Ripley, Ohio. If you would like to volunteer, please call Pick Up America at 301.523.1257.



Download the ParkFinder App Today!

Find the parks nearest you with the activities you want to do. SCA has teamed with American Park Network and Ford to offer the Oh, Ranger! ParkFinder app for iPhones, iPad and iPod Touches. It's filled with information on more than 6,000 public lands, easy to use and—best of all—free!

Learn more at thesca.org/parkfinder

Triple Your Gift
today through SCA's

Million Dollar
Challenge
\$1M



America's national parks need 1,200 more SCA volunteers this season!

Help us raise \$250,000 by May 31st so we can make this happen.

Your contribution of...

\$35 = \$140

\$100 = \$400

\$250 = \$1,000

of conservation service!

Visit thesca.org/challenge

Bugs, Sweat and Cheers!
Alternative Spring Break, Florida

Sandy beaches, sunny days and endless nights lure thousands of college students to central Florida every Spring Break. This March, thanks to the generous support of American Eagle Outfitters Foundation, 60 college students blazed their own trail to Orlando, where they built a 500-foot boardwalk and a new section of the Florida National Scenic Trail.

For photos, blog posts and to watch video, visit thesca.org/asb



Photo credit: Erika Barker

We'd like each issue to be better than the one before.

If you have suggestions for stories you'd like to see published or ideas on how to improve the newsletter, write to us at thegreenway@thesca.org



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Watch and listen to member stories on SCA's YouTube channel youtube.com/user/conservationinaction



North Woods waterfall in Central Park, New York City

Great Places to Visit

by Lauren Freedman, SCA '10, Alternative Spring Break - Grand Canyon



Of all the places to go in New York City, my favorite is Central Park. Maybe you've been there and enjoyed the zoo, visited the Shakespeare Garden, ridden the carousel, gone ice skating, or just wandered through the park to see what you could find.

There's something universally

fascinating about this large expanse of greenery in the middle of the bustle and concrete. It's a tourist attraction for millions of people each year. For me, it's part of my daily routine.

My fiancé and I start most weekends on our favorite bench in the East Meadow with our dog, Ruby, sipping coffee and watching the world go by. In the winter, kids (and kids-at-heart) bring their sleds, trash can lids, and cardboard boxes to slide down the hills. When the weather is nice, Ruby tries in vain to chase the squirrels up the trees. Sometimes we cross into the North Meadow to watch a Saturday morning baseball game or a pick-up soccer match. When there's enough snow, we see the cross country skiers making their way through the park along the bridle path.

But Ruby's favorite place is the North Woods. This amazing space has wooded trails, streams, and a beautiful waterfall—it's enough to make me forget I'm in Manhattan! Ruby loves to race through the muddy streams and chase us up the hill toward the Harlem Meer. From there we follow the path around the water and back toward our apartment through the Conservatory Garden. We meander through the beautiful mazes of manicured gardens, pausing to let Ruby check out the fountains.

All New Yorkers will tell you that Central Park is our backyard. For me, it couldn't be truer. Central Park is where I start and end my days. In the winter I play in the fields of snow and in the summer I hunt for the best sprinklers to run through. Last June, I even did yoga in Central Park with 10,000 of my closest friends. For apartment-dwelling outdoor lovers like me, Central Park is the greatest backyard in the world.

To read about more great places and share your own, visit thesca.org/great-places



“Retooling” Your Estate Plans Due to Major Changes in Gift and Estate Taxes?

The Tax Relief, Unemployment Reauthorization and Job Creation Act signed into law December 17, 2010 made major changes in gift and estate taxes. **It is extremely important to review your estate plans** to maximize opportunities created by this legislation and to avoid serious problems potentially caused by outdated tax planning.

When you review your plans, please consider leaving a legacy to help SCA equip future generations of young people with the tools they need to protect our treasured lands.

You can **remember SCA in your will or living trust**. Or, you can simply name SCA as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy or an IRA, 401(k) or 403(b) plan by requesting and completing a new beneficiary designation form from your insurance company or plan provider.

To learn more about estate planning tools and techniques under the new tax law, please contact **Hugh Montgomery at 603.504.3241 or hmontgomery@thesca.org**. And dial into our free telephone seminar on May 17th. *(See ad at right.)*

Leave No Trace



Each year, millions of people enjoy camping or hiking in the great outdoors. As a *Leave No Trace* partner, SCA wants to help outdoor enthusiasts like you reduce your impact on the land. What's *Leave No Trace*? It is a national and international program best understood as a set of seven guiding principles.

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

For more information and ways to incorporate the seven principles in your outdoor experiences, visit thesca.org/leave-no-trace

SCA Remembers Carroll Vogel



SCA is saddened to report the passing of Carroll Vogel. Among the organization's most influential leaders, his visionary involvement with SCA continues to touch the lives of young leaders seeking out pathways to outdoor education and service to the environment.

Carroll's contributions to SCA and conservation were many. He will be greatly missed.

To read more, visit thesca.org/carroll-vogel

Join our FREE Telephone Seminar

New Tools and Techniques for Estate Planning, Income Tax Planning and Charitable Gift Planning

Presented by Alice A. Pinsley, Ph.D., CFP™
with Program Update by SCA President Dale Penny

Tuesday, May 17, 2011

12:00 pm – 2:00 pm EDT
11:00 am – 1:00 pm CDT
10:00 am – 12:00 pm MDT
9:00 am – 11:00 am PDT

To register, contact
Hugh Montgomery at
603.504.3241 or
hmontgomery@thesca.org

Connecting with the Canyon

by Matthew Myers, SCA '10



Having never lived or spent much time in the Southwest, I had no idea what to expect when SCA told me that I would be heading to Grand Canyon. All I could assume was that it would be warmer, sunnier and drier than where I had just spent the last six months: Seward, Alaska. Being greeted upon arrival at the canyon by a heavy monsoon left me wondering just what I had gotten myself into.

Once the clouds cleared and I was able to view the canyon, I knew that it was going to be an experience of a lifetime. Everyone I met had their own unique story about how they ended up there—some by random chance, some to escape the burden of urban life, and others to have an experience they had never had before. What made me realize this place was going to free me in a way that no other place could was the calm, quiet and vastness that the canyon allows people to experience.

One of the most helpful ways to preserve and enhance a place like Grand Canyon is through stewardship. Stewardship preserves the land now and for future generations. It helps



one to know and connect with the land. Through stewardship, one begins to understand that we are connected with the land and can be a constructive force instead of a destructive one. At the canyon I have learned just what it takes for stewardship to happen—dedicated, upbeat, motivated and caring people. And everyone I have gotten a chance to work with there has been all of these things. From learning about all the different flora, to getting my hands dirty and restoring the land, to teaching budding young conservationists and then witnessing their awestruck faces as they see the canyon for the first time—stewardship and conservation is ingrained in the work that I (and others like me) do every day.

Another rewarding aspect of my SCA internship has been getting to teach stewardship and conservation to the local 10th graders. Instilling the values of connecting and caring for the land is one of the most important things we can do as environmental educators. I've been fortunate to work with a great bunch of students and I can't wait to see how their knowledge and outlook will change by the end of the school year.

I want to end by saying thank you to SCA and the Grand Canyon for giving me what I'm sure will be one of my greatest experiences. It is one thing to visit a place, but to really understand it you have to immerse yourself in your surroundings. And I am doing just that.

Editor's Note: Matthew currently serves as an SCA Environmental Education School-to-Work Intern. He volunteers with both the vegetation program and environmental education office, where he leads field trip programs, teaches distance learning, performs outreach, and works on curriculum development.

Make a lasting difference.
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thesca.org/givemonthly

Scene + Heard



The 2-Minute Interview with Danny Nguyen

Three-time SCA alumnus Danny Nguyen muses on how he came to love the outdoors. The son of Vietnamese immigrants, Danny grew up in Oakland, California where he says, “All I knew were cars, noise, streetlights, and skyscrapers. Until my SCA summer crew in Oakland, rarely had I ever been exposed to camping, parks, or nature.”

What was your perception of the outdoors prior to working with SCA?

Camping? You’re kidding! Trail building? It looks like labor. And I would never wear one of those hard hats was my initial reaction. I didn’t expect to fall in love with SCA, nature and the outdoors.

How was your second summer with SCA at Hopewell Furnace in Pennsylvania?

I lived with seven strangers in the middle of the woods. It didn’t take us long to become a family after spending our days building trails together. My experience was eye-opening. Never before had I seen stars the way I did at Hopewell.

You came back for more, right?

Yes, I recently worked as an SCA intern at Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail in Oakland, where I spent a lot of time documenting different segments of the trail with photos and GIS data. This experience really increased my interest in the environment.

How has your SCA experience changed your career aspirations?

Before my latest internship with SCA, I was a computer science major at UC Berkeley. Now I am majoring in environmental economics and policy. It’s a surprise even to me, but sometimes you just have to do what you love.

For more about Danny, and to view photos, visit thesca.org/danny

Celebrities Donate Time to “Invade” Homes to Save Water

By the year 2013, 36 U.S. states are expected to face serious water shortages. This troubling data has prompted SCA and American Water, in partnership with EPA’s WaterSense program, to promote household water conservation through a year-long public service campaign.

These short videos—featuring national surfing champion and SCA spokesperson Lakey Peterson; *Saturday Night Live* alums Rachel Dratch and Horatio Sanz, and Diane Neal (formerly of *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*)—deliver practical, actionable tips to help you start making a difference.

Watch the PSAs at thesca.org/save-water-today, and then tell us what you think!



Great Videos We’re Watching

Inspiring, controversial, informative. With so many great videos about conservation circulating online, we recently added a special recurring section in our online newsletter, *Hands On*. See what we’re watching and tell us what you think—then send us your favorite conservation video link and we’ll post it.

Recent picks include “Green Hip-Hop—Change is Needed,” “The Economics of Happiness,” and the trailer for “Green Fire—A Land Ethic for Our Time” a documentary about the life and work of conservation giant, Aldo Leopold.

Watch them now at thesca.org/conservation-videos





AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF PHILANTHROPY
Helping you give wisely to charity

The American Institute of Philanthropy and Charity Navigator rank SCA among America's top conservation charities for fund-raising efficiency.

SCA is a nationwide conservation force of college and high school volunteers who protect and restore America's parks, forests, and other public lands. SCA's active, hands-on approach to conservation has helped to develop a new generation of conservation leaders, inspire lifelong stewardship, and save our planet.

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Student Conservation Association

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Free Entrance Days in the National Parks

America's Best Idea—the national parks—gets even better with several fee-free days at more than 100 national parks that usually charge entrance fees. Mark your calendar!

Making the fun even more affordable, many national park concessioners are joining the National Park Service in welcoming visitors with their own special offers.

nps.gov/findapark/feefreeparks.htm

April 16-24
(National Park Week)

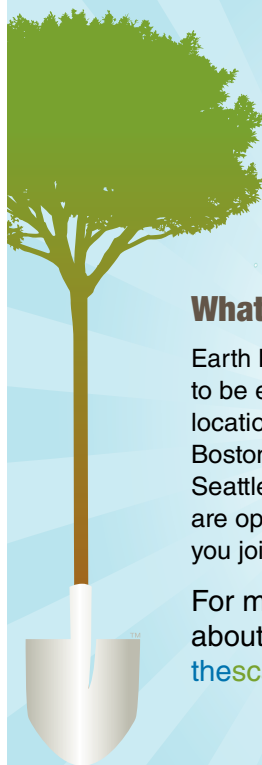
June 21
(First day of summer)

September 24
(Public Lands Day)

November 11-13
(Veterans Day weekend)



the **GreenWay**
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Join SCA to celebrate
earth day 2011

What are you doing for Earth Day?

Earth Day will soon be here. Friday, April 22 to be exact. SCA is planning events at locations all across the country including Boston, DC, Chicago, Houston, Pittsburgh, Seattle, and San Francisco/Bay Area. Some are open to the public and we'd love to have you join us.

For more information and to tell us about your plans for Earth Day, visit thesca.org/events