



Fixing the Flood Damage

by Sabrina Carlson

On October 14, 2016 5 members of the Page Middle School volunteered their time to help rebuild and repair one of the landscaping islands at the Lone Rock parking area in the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.

Along with the students were

Mr. Manz, the Dean of Students, and Mrs. Manz, one of the teachers at the school. We were joined by Joel Jimenez and Nick Crowley from the National Park Service. During a heavy rain in the previous year, huge landslides of sand had at one point covered the road and inundated all of the landscaping islands in the area. Loose sand was still sitting on the surface of the landscaping islands and blowing around in the frequent wind experienced at Lake Powell. This disturbed surface had also become home invasive weed species like Russian Thistle.



The students made fast work of removing the weeds. They then set about raking and leveling the dirt, and removing excess rocks that had become buried and lost in the sand deluge. Once the ground was prepped, Mr. Jimenez brought in large decorative rocks to place around the island, and all of the volunteers raked soil around them to set the large rocks in place. It was fascinating to watch the big yellow machine move such large heavy objects around with such ease.

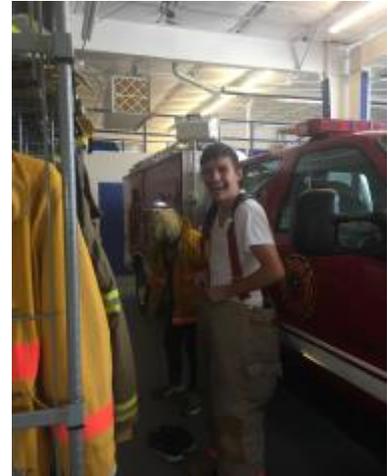
Finally, once all the soil was prepped and the rocks placed, we covered the ground with weed cloth, cutting holes for the handsome rocks to show through. As we worked we talked about the reasons for our efforts. Invasive weeds can take hold quickly and spread to natural places. Sand and soil that hasn't been secured will blow into people's faces and be very uncomfortable. By putting the weed barrier in place we can slow the return of unwanted plants. Once the large gravel was put in place after we left, it would secure the cloth and the sand from causing further problems.



Adding a personal touch!

The students worked incredibly well throughout the day. Though it was hard to go before every last rock was in place, it was time to head off to lunch and our next adventures.

In order to make the day as complete as possible, Mr. Manz had arranged a visit to a local fire station. The students toured the building, saw the engines and talked about what each one was used for. Since Mr. Manz is a volunteer firefighter at this station, he demonstrated how to get into fire gear quickly and let a few of the students try on the gear as well. The safety patrol program has a big emphasis on encouraging young people to explore careers in public service such as fire, police, and paramedics.



Future Fire Chief!

In the classroom at the firehouse I was able to present to the students about common wilderness emergencies and what to do about them. We went over signs of heat exhaustion, dehydration, hypothermia, and other common issues. We talked about the importance of proper planning before going out into the wilderness to avoid a dangerous situation in the first place, and emphasized how we must take care of ourselves first before we can assist someone else. I encouraged everyone to consider a Wilderness First Aid or Wilderness First Responder course as a great way to be more confident outdoors and as a logical stepping stone to working for fire, ambulance, wildland fire crews or the Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue team.

It was a full day with so much learned and a splendid feeling of accomplishment.



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