

# Reaching out

## BRO, LAO, LAO-W, SFO

### A wet and wild Yosemite adventure

When you hear "August Yosemite Trip," what do you picture? The sun's glare, bucolic hikes and hanging around the campfire? Well, add flash floods, a hailstorm, altitude sickness and two-mile climbs and you'll get an idea of this summer's challenging — yet still incredibly fun and rewarding — Capital-sponsored

*Volunteer weekend in Yosemite*  
*service trip*

On the morning of Friday the 13th, 23 associates from BRO, LAO-W and LAO boarded a *bus* coach for a nine-hour *drive* trip to Tuolumne Meadows, the crown jewel of Yosemite's High Country.

When they arrived, it was raining.

Undeterred, the group piled out of the bus, donned rain gear *for* garbage bags and took off across the meadow. They got wet, but the scenery was beautiful and it felt great to move *backs and legs stiffened by such a long drive*

Once in the camp, they met up with a small group from SFO *Southern California associates* and dried off. Then, as the trees dripped and the fire crackled, Jerry Edelbrock, president of the Yosemite Fund, described the weekend's project: hiding (or covering over) an illegal, badly eroded trail up Lembert Dome, so it wouldn't endanger hikers.

The next morning brought sunshine, breakfast and the good news that the "bear-box" did its job. After meeting the park service guide, Victor, and his right-hand gal, Donya, they ambled to the trailhead and grabbed tools for the day — shovels, saws and pruners. *Volunteers*

It quickly became apparent that hiking two miles at 8,000 feet, straight up the dome, is a far cry from a sea-level stroll. They became a huffing, puffing, sweaty group — and hadn't yet hidden an inch of trail.

Fortunately, the climb was worth it. At the top, on the backside of Lembert Dome's granite hump, they checked out views near and far: Tuolumne Meadows, groves of incense cedars and a giant, clear blue sky.

For the rest of the day, they *Workers* toiled. Some planted, others dug ditches. Some hauled logs, others scattered "duff." It was satisfying work. By late afternoon, they could already see a difference.

That evening, while they ate s'mores around a campfire, Jerry detailed how an idea becomes a Yosemite Fund project. *Restoration*

The following morning, they *Volunteers* reassembled for several more hours of trail hiding. This time, however, dark clouds and lightning chased the group off the mountain before they could finish. Even so, the results of their labor were evident. The old trail was barely recognizable. They hiked back down sore but satisfied.

The timing couldn't have been better. As they piled into a *the* waiting bus and left the park, a hailstorm struck, pelting the windows and whitening the road. The drive home down Highway 395 was also dramatic, with flash-flooded roads north of Mojave. *is occurring on*

Safe, but quieter and dirtier, they *ragged bunch* arrived at LAO a happy group. The group traded good-byes *Associates* all around and promises to share photos and *shuttled home to soft beds*

— by Erin Douglass & Lauri King *LAO* participants in the first of two volunteer weekends

*protecting snacks and other fragrant products from night-time marauders*

*the inches-deep layer of fallen leaves and pine needles*