



To whom it may concern,

I am pleased to offer this letter of support for the outstanding environmental conservation and educational accomplishments of Wilderness International (WI).

As a steward of Oregon's federal workforce grants, I had the good fortune to visit a WI summer youth employment project (SYEP) that was funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in July, 2009.

The Wilderness International SYEP taught conservation, construction, horticulture and, most importantly, life skills, to ten court involved teens. These young people all have significant barriers to academic and life success, and for some, participation in the SYEP was the sole option other than incarceration.

The results of this project surpassed restoring habitat and improving parks in and around Gladstone, OR. The program participants I interviewed spoke to how working with the WI project, and with the Executive Director in particular, resulted in a new awareness that the contribution of their skills and talents is both important and needed in their communities. Many of the youth also mentioned that they had decided to finish high school and relinquish the destructive behaviors that led to their involvement in the juvenile justice system.

WI not only provided a summer work experience, it also collaborated with the county Juvenile Department to help the SYEP participants find internships, volunteer projects or paid work opportunities at the conclusion of the summer program to keep the youth engaged in positive activities.

Wilderness International created an outstanding SYEP project, and I wholeheartedly support WI's efforts to continue its conservation and educational activities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "I. T. Nyberg".

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