

Hi, I'm Kelly Billotte, I'm from the Division of Human Capital and I'm here to tell you about the new youth hiring initiative.

What is this new youth hiring initiative?

Secretary Salazar has created an initiative to hire more youth into the workplace.

So why are we doing this?

It's estimated over 50 percent of the U.S. work force will be eligible to retire by 2012.

Secretary Salazar has challenged us to hire 50 percent more youth in 2010 than we did in 2009.

It's good for conservation, it's good for business and it's good for the Service.

How is the Service implementing this initiative? The National Conservation Training Center has the lead role in developing the education and training programs.

The National Wildlife Refuge System has the lead role in developing performance measures and on-the-ground work projects.

The Division of Human Capital where I'm from, we are taking the lead on advising and hiring programs and developing outreach and recruitment materials. So what can you expect from HR.

We are creating a new HR tool kit, and in this kit you will see job evaluation steps, a non-federal hiring program outline for youth, which includes the Youth Conservation Corps as well as partner programs. We'll talk about reaching out resources, how you get those diverse youth and then development; once you have them, how do you develop them and grow them into long-term employees.

So, let's talk about the job evaluation steps. What are we going to look for?

We're going to help managers think about what type of job

this is, what are the duties, what type of work is needed, what type of employee are you looking for this position. And things we want you to think about; what's the work load current and future you have, skills and abilities needed for those positions, what new projects and initiatives do you have coming up, what are your existing team member skills and abilities, how much time is it going to take to train the new employee, and what is the best position type, is this a temporary position, a permanent position, or is it seasonal? So we'll help you look at all of those things.

We'll also talk about the non-federal hiring programs.

How are you going to hire these youth?

One program is the Youth Conservation Corps, the YCC, and in this program the youths participate in work projects and environmental education projects in public lands.

It's summer employment for youth ages 15-18 from a variety of backgrounds and the programs are usually 8 to 10 weeks in the summer.

The other program that we are going to focus on is the Public Land Corps. It is a partner program and the background is that many facilities and natural resources are in disrepair and need of extensive rehabilitation and restoration.

This Land Corps assists the department by working on backlog maintenance projects. Youth employment and education programs are things like trail work, wildlife monitoring, habitat restoration, cultural resource protection and other programs. There are a lot of them.

Without this assistance, these projects may not otherwise get completed.

NPLC, the participants are generally between 16-25 years old.

They are recruited through the nonprofit organizations that have partnerships agreements with the department.

And participants gain vocational training, education and

Life skills. So it is a win-win for everyone.

To find the youth hires where do you start?

First, be clear about what type of employee you're looking for.

Really know the job you're trying to fill.

Be prepared to explain the work clearly and promote the positive.

Get to know the people in your local community, schools, universities, community centers, career centers, wherever your local community meets, get to know those people.

Maybe meet with school guidance counselors, teachers that are in the field of study that might be helpful to your position. Really try to reach out to the community.

What organizations can I contact to find more diverse students?

The internet is a great resource tool with a multitude of organizations on-line at your fingertips.

Many of them have national websites; but, just don't just focus on the national websites, look for their local organizations as well. Reach out and see if there's a local chapter for that organization.

Ideas for community outreach: Schools and public, private institutions, colleges and universities, college student organizations are a great place, government agency programs, nonprofit organizations, Scientific organizations, agricultural organizations, environmental, youth. There are so many opportunities out there and so many organizations.

Once you get a hold of one of those organizations, how do you build a relationship with them?

Definitely contact the school or organization and let them know you have job opportunities for students and young adults.

Tell them about fish and wildlife service and what you're doing locally.

Share your passion about your work.

Share with them what work is currently available and find out if they have any ideas, if they have some students that "hey that might be right up their alley", and be sure to give them your contact information and any handouts so they can get back to you if they think of something they can share with you.

Stop by periodically. And then invite them to any special fish and wildlife events and just stay in touch. And if they have any events, attend their events, too. Make sure you keep in touch with them by phone, E-mail, whatever contact works best.

How do I maintain this relationship?

We've talked about staying in touch. Stop back periodically and meet with the organization, school or group.

Send E-mails, invite them to special fish events if we have any. Attend their events.

Give presentations on Service opportunities and career at the Fish and Wildlife Service and help the students learn what careers are at fish and wildlife.

Most students don't have any idea about what we do or any idea about how this could be a career for them in the federal government.

Follow up and notify them immediately if you have any student opportunities. Call them right away.

And provide clear and simple instructions on how the student can apply for this position.

So once you have this student or new youth employee, how do you grow them into a long-term employee?

Get to know that employee. Find out what work they enjoy and what they are really good at and try to have them do that work as often as possible.

Find things they are good at and encourage them.

Have them try new things. Train them on new things.

Have them stretch themselves and challenge themselves with a new opportunity and new task.

Keep them interested in their work, look for ways to do that and help them see the bigger picture with fish. How does that fit into their future?

Secretary Salazar challenged us to hire 50 percent more youth employees in 2010.

The Service has a long and positive history with engaging youth in conservation through employment, education, and volunteer programs.

It's good for conservation, it's good for business and it's great for the Service.

I know you can do it, I know we can do it.

Thank you.