



## ***Pikes Peak Corps 2010***

### **Environmental Education and Stewardship Program**

**June 7 – July 30, 2010**

### **INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS**

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW:**

In the summer of 2010, the Rocky Mountain Field Institute will select 10 high school students to participate in its 8-week *Pikes Peak Corps* education program. Run in partnership with the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, *Pikes Peak Corps* is designed to help develop the next generation of environmental leaders. The program introduces local high school students to a variety of environmental stewardship projects while providing an engaging curriculum of environmental science that provides a foundation and an understanding of the importance of the work we will be accomplishing. Upon successful completion of the program, students will earn 4 credit hours in GES 101: Environmental Systems—Landforms from UCCS. This is a core class and transferable to any college in Colorado. Participants age 17 and older will also be eligible for a \$1,000 AmeriCorps education scholarship.

#### **WHAT:**

*Environmental Education:* *Pikes Peak Corps* provides a unique educational opportunity for students to truly learn in a hands-on environment and earn college credit! As we complete several different trail and restoration projects, students will explore topics such as rocks and minerals, soils, weathering, stream dynamics, glaciers, and more. Each topic is related to the project work and provides the foundation for understanding the importance of the stewardship work we are completing. While much of the learning will take place at the project sites, we will also visit many of the amazing natural sites found in the area. Course requirements will be met through completing fun yet challenging field exercises and labs. Students will also be required to complete reading assignments and show proficiency in the course material through exams. Interactive group discussions will be held daily to emphasize important concepts and to ensure understanding of course material. The course is taught by Eric Billmeyer, RMFI Executive Director and UCCS Instructor. Mr. Billmeyer has over 5 years of teaching experience at UCCS in Geography and Environmental Studies and has spearheaded the development of the projects the 2010 corps will be working on. Additional instruction will be provided throughout the course of the program by experts in the fields of Hydrology, Geology, and Aquatic Biology.

*Environmental Service:* The 2010 *Pikes Peak Corps* will provide key support for a number of RMFI trail and restoration projects throughout the Pikes Peak Region. Work sites will include Garden of the Gods, Pikes Peak, Fountain Creek, and the South Platte River Watershed in the Pike National Forest. In the Garden of the Gods we will be reconstructing some of the park's most popular trails and restoring fragile park lands impacted by the heavy recreational use the park receives. On Pikes Peak, we will be restoring rare alpine wetlands that have been buried by sand and gravel coming off the Pikes Peak Highway. In the town of Manitou Springs, we will be completing a stream restoration project along Fountain Creek that will help to improve aquatic

habitat for trout. The South Platte Watershed was severely impacted by the Hayman fire; one of the largest and most devastating fires in Colorado's history. We will be completing stream restoration along Trail Creek and reconstructing a popular trail in the same area that was damaged during the fire. We will also complete another stream restoration project along the South Platte River in the Happy Meadows area that also has been impacted by erosion issues related to the fire.

Through the completion of these trail and restoration projects students will gain invaluable technical skills. Students will become proficient in a variety of restoration and trail building skills including how to build check dams, retaining walls, water bars, rock steps, and risers, as well as innovative revegetation techniques.

#### WHEN:

The program is 8 weeks in length, running on weekdays (no weekends!) from June 7 – July 30. Participants will work 8 hours per day, meeting at the RMFI office early each morning. All work sites are located in the Pikes Peak Region. Garden of the Gods and Fountain Creek sites are within Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs. The work on Pikes Peak is at an elevation of 12,500 feet and accessible via the Pikes Peak Highway. The two South Platte sites are located at Happy Meadows outside Lake George and near Deckers. Included in the program are 3 weeklong overnight camping sessions. (See more information below)

#### WHO:

The Pikes Peak Corps is open to current high school students age 16 and up, including students that graduate in 2010. Students must be 16 as of June 7, 2010. Excellent physical condition is a must! Work site elevations vary from 6,000 to 12,500 ft. The work requires demanding physical labor and calls for students to exercise the highest level of commitment, perseverance, and teamwork.

#### DAILY SCHEDULE:

Students will meet daily at the RMFI office at 6:30am (eek! we know it's early, but it's necessary to get an early start to avoid summer thunderstorms in the mountains) and will return to the office by 3:00pm. RMFI will provide transportation to and from the work sites and RMFI office. Participants must provide their own lunch for day sessions. RMFI will provide all food during the overnight sessions. Please note any dietary restrictions on the program application.

#### OVERNIGHT:

Included in the program are 3 weeklong overnight camping sessions (4-night, 5-day). These overnight sessions are required due to driving and hiking time to get to the farther work sites. And besides, camping is fun!! RMFI will provide all group gear, including a kitchen, food, tents, and water filter. Students must provide all their own personal gear, including sleeping bag and sleeping pad. RMFI has a limited number of sleeping bags and pads available on a first come, first served basis. There will be an outhouse/latrine onsite. RMFI runs many overnight service programs throughout the year, including a 30-day program for college students. All RMFI staff are trained in wilderness medicine and have extensive backcountry experience. The overnights are tentatively scheduled for June 28-July 2, July 5-9, and July 26-30.

#### 17+ \$1,000 AMERICORPS SCHOLARSHIP:

All participants 17 or older who successfully complete the program will be eligible to receive a \$1,000 AmeriCorps education scholarship. This is an award for completing 300 hours of unpaid, volunteer service with a qualifying organization. Students must be 17 by June 7, 2010. (Sorry, this is an AmeriCorps rule, not ours.) If you qualify, please check the appropriate box on the program application form.

#### ABOUT RMFI:

Founded in 1989, RMFI has been working to address critical land preservation and restoration issues at key natural areas in the Southern Rocky Mountain Region. Working in concert with federal, state, and local land management agencies, RMFI has provided leadership for several major restoration initiatives. RMFI has received national, state, and local recognition for trail construction and restoration that is widely regarded as some of the finest work of its kind accomplished in the Southern Rockies. *Pikes Peak Corps* will be conducted under the watchful supervision of a highly skilled and qualified staff. Our safety record for environmental service in remote and challenging terrain is outstanding.

#### COST:

The only cost to students is a \$160 administrative fee due at the time of program **acceptance**. The cost of tuition for college credit is covered by RMFI. Travel expenses to and from the RMFI office and daily lunches are the responsibility of the students.

We are often asked why Pikes Peak Corps is so inexpensive, especially since students receive college credit. We believe that Pikes Peak Corps is a remarkably unique program that integrates two previously separate pursuits—education and service work. We believe in making this opportunity available to all students regardless of income. For that reason, RMFI subsidizes the true cost of the program, including tuition, food, supplies, personnel, etc. We do offer two scholarships to cover the administrative fee. If you would like to be considered please submit a statement of need with your application materials.

#### TO APPLY:

Contact RMFI or visit [www.rmfi.org](http://www.rmfi.org) for an application form. In addition to the application form we also request you submit a one-page essay stating why you'd like to be a part of *Pikes Peak Corps*. Please mail or email completed application forms and all other materials to RMFI. If you choose to email the application, please put a signed copy in the mail as well. The application deadline is April 16<sup>th</sup>. Final decisions will be announced by April 30<sup>th</sup>. Outstanding applicants will be awarded placement in advance of deadline. Early applications are strongly encouraged.

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