
MINNESOTA YOUTH SUCCESS STORY

WSA 2 – Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program, Inc.

Camp Rabideau



Rural Minnesota CEP supplements wages for youth to work with the U.S. Forest Service at Rabideau Conservation Academy and Learning Center in Blackduck. In 2006, the Secretary of the Interior made Camp Rabineau a National Historic Landmark – the Rabideau Conservation Academy and Learning Center (CALC) is a former Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp. Youth conducted tours, assisted with the preservation and maintenance of the camp, removed invasive species, collected and replanted ash seeds, provided trail maintenance, transplanted sweet grass and lady slippers (and other endangered plant species), and harvested fruits and vegetables from the solar heated high-tunnel greenhouse. Youth participants also provided building and grounds maintenance at the camp. The U.S. Forest Service uses Camp Rabideau’s Learning Gardens is a designated nursery for endangered plant species. Youth participants safely removed and transplanted endangered sweet grass to the Camp Rabineau nursery. The U.S. Forest Service will transplant this endangered plant species throughout the Leech Lake Reservation. Sweet grass has immense spiritual and cultural significance for the Ojibwe Nation.

Youth participants developed a career portfolio exploring careers in the Forest Service and conservation; they also developed resumes and participated in a variety of work-based based learning activities that allowed youth to attain work readiness goals. The project combines academic instruction with learning on the job site. Youth participants developed a business plan for the Camp Rabideau Learning Gardens. They also completed a solar heated building that includes a 35 by 65 foot high “tunnel” greenhouse.

Youth participants insulated the building and installed a solar charging system to charge the batteries that run the fans which move the air from the solar heated building to a tubing system under ground in the greenhouse. Youth are instructed in safety techniques in preparation for their work on the site. The solar heaters in the greenhouse at Camp Rabideau were made from donated, recycled materials and built by youth workers.