

UNH Political Science Student Helps Restore Southern California National Forest During Winter Break

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While many UNH students were enjoying a break from studies recently during winter school break, one graduating senior spent part of his break restoring a Southern California national forest hard hit by natural disasters.

Political science student Derek Nahabedian of Nashua was one of 10 college students selected to join the Liberty Mutual Responsible Scholars Community Project team in Los Angeles Jan. 6-12, 2013, to help the Angeles National Forest Rangers with ongoing recovery efforts stemming from recent natural disasters such as wildfires.

Nahabedian worked on reforestation of the 650,000-acre Angeles National Forest by planting new saplings and erecting protective tents around them as well as putting in place ground protection that aids growth. The students also helped the rangers clean up the banks of the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers.



“The opportunity to travel across the United States and volunteer at the Angeles National Forest was a life-changing experience. We worked alongside two National Forest rangers, and they told us that due to unfortunate budget cuts, they actually rely on volunteer groups like ours to keep the place running. The work we did will help to sustain the forest, and knowing that I made a difference is more than I could have ever asked for,” Nahabedian said.

According to Nahabedian, the most challenging aspect of his volunteer experience was adjusting to the time zone on the West Coast.

Nahabedian, who learned about the volunteer opportunity while interning with Liberty Mutual, submitted a video explaining why he should be chosen for the community project. His video is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGKo7V0Ah4A&feature=youtu.be>.

“Making a difference, whether through volunteering on-campus or in the local community, is a key concern for college students,” said Lane Garnett, university relations program manager for Liberty Mutual Insurance. “The Community Project gives students the opportunity to reach beyond their usual scope of involvement to help people in a different section of the country that has experienced several natural disasters.”

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