

February 2008

Logan Canyon Accessibility Project receives national honor

People in wheelchairs should help decide if a campsite or trail is wheelchair accessible.

That is the award-winning idea that inspired a Utah Conservation Corps project to include people with disabilities in its accessibility survey of campsites and trails in Logan Canyon. Their work was named 2007 Project of the Year by The Corps Network, an organization of 113 service and conservation corps nationwide.

In addition to receiving the award during a ceremony on February 12, the Utah Conservation Corps leaders will train other corps program directors who want to make their programs inclusive, too. The UCC leaders will take with them some tools that were custom-fit at the Center for Persons with Disabilities' Adaptive Technology Lab to measure slope and distance. These tools—a measuring wheel and a level that indicates slope—can be bolted onto a wheelchair.

“Traditionally conservation corps crews were sent into the back country and very remote areas ... doing very physically demanding work,” said Kate Stephens, Utah Conservation Corps Program Administrator. But the Utah Conservation Corps decided to take a more inclusive view after Andy Zimmer, a UCC crew leader, sustained a spine injury in an accident in 2005.

After he was out of the hospital and into a wheelchair, Zimmer and Stephens talked about completing his term with the UCC. They brought him back as a crew leader over the Logan Canyon project from May to August in 2007. Fifty percent of the crew

members were people with disabilities. They went out and surveyed campgrounds and trails in Logan canyon.

Zimmer will help train leadership at The Corps Network conference this month.

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