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**Section:** Education

## CEC students volunteer at park

From Staff Reports education@newnan.com

Sixteen students from the Central Educational Center (CEC) spent time blazing trails, clearing campsites and setting up the visitors center at the newly-opened **Chattahoochee Bend** State Park this summer. The students worked with Park Manager Trint Wicklund and Friends of **Chattahoochee Bend** volunteer Dave Smith during the week of July 11-15, as a part of a Work-Based Learning internship. The students are also currently working to compile a history of the land that is now the state park.

Team members will also complete two individual summer projects with other community service organizations.

The **Chattahoochee Bend** experience was part of summer work-based projects through the charter school's "Work-Based Learning: Service Learning and Leadership" course.

The course allows seniors planned and meaningful community service experiences in conjunction with beginning their college application process and individualized career plan (ICP).

Last summer, the group service learning project involved the use of Pearson Early Learning's "Get Ready to Read" program. The free program was aimed at assisting parents and the general public with methods to enhance preschoolers' abilities to come to school ready to read, and was accomplished with the help of Mercer University, the United Way, and the support of the Coweta County Health Department.

Work-Based Learning directors Mrs. Regina Jackson, Dr. Steve Humphrey, and Dr. Susan Mullins recruit juniors from all three Coweta County high schools. Juniors apply for the course, are interviewed, and then selected based on their desire to participate in service learning, their school record and their interest in researching their desired careers in depth.

"Colleges, universities, businesses and community organizations value service learning," said Mullins. "Service Learning and Leadership focuses on community service learning, a completed college application portfolio and preparation of an Individualized Career Plan along with organized job shadowing experiences. Team members have the opportunity to get a head start on the college application process and the college portfolio."

Mullins said that data collected from last year show that parents and team members value the individualized career planning, the in-depth authentic job shadowing and interviewing experiences, and the early completion of the college admissions process.

All of last year's participants had been accepted to at least one post-secondary institution of their choice by October of their senior year of high school. Data also show that team members understood the value of service learning within this community, she said.

Special

Work-based interns from the Central Educational Center who worked at **Chattahoochee Bend** State Park included front, left to right, Zach Ponce, Brock Dorman, Kenny Johnson, Jesse Stearns, Jimmie Reid, Ethan Blevins, Mitch Knabe and Sam Lasater; back, Gabriela Bump, Alex Palacio, Haley Johnson, Ashley Davis, Sidney Sowerbrower, Olecia Witt, Alison Walker, and Kyle Sorrells.

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