

Almost 1,500 will benefit

DNR youth job program underway

More than 1,470 young persons will be hired in the seven-county, metropolitan-Detroit area through the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR)-sponsored Work Opportunity Resources Corps (WORC).

Those hired, between the ages of 15 and 21, will be kept busy through the rest of the summer at a host of outdoor projects throughout the state. And they will be paid \$2.57 per hour for their efforts.

The various local governmental agencies in the metropolitan area will receive more than \$1.8 million for local spruce-up and maintenance projects.

The Detroit Recreation Commission will, far and away, employ the largest number of young people, 512. The commission will receive more than \$700,000 to finance the projects.

The City of Westland will get more than \$91,500 to hire 72 employees for the remainder of the summer. Ed Gunther, Westland's personnel director, said the first 18 youths were put to work Aug. 1 and the city plans to have an average of nine new summer-time workhands on the job each day, until they have filled all 72 positions.

Gunther said the youths will be marking nature trails, collecting data on an erosion control survey and

cleaning drains in the parks as well as a number of other improvements projects.

"It's the first time any money has been available for 15 to 21 year-olds. I think it's great. It's a lot better than laying around the house reading and watching television and getting underfoot," Gunther said.

Three Oakland County agencies will be hiring a total of 61 summer hands for a number of projects. The DNR will provide more than \$97,000 for their employment.

The county Parks and Recreation Commission is slated to hire 40 new employees. Charles Ross, an administrative officer for the Oakland County Commission, said he expects the first employees to be on the job Aug. 8. He said they would be doing general park maintenance and landscaping at a number of county parks including Addison-Oaks, Groveland-Oaks, Independence-Oaks, Springfield-Oaks and White Lake-Oaks.

Ross said it was difficult to be specific about any of the projects because the WORC program was approved so quickly. He said, "We do have the projects, we're not hiring just to hire. No community has had any time to plan, but we do want the employees, and we're going to utilize them."

The Oakland County Drain Commission will hire 16 youths to clean a several lengthy open drains in the Walpole Lake and Wyandam areas. And four persons will be hired under the program to do hydrological testing on the Clinton River watershed and for the Southeast Oakland Sewage Disposal System.

The Central Services Bureau will hire nine summer employees with DNR funds.

To date the Oakland County Personnel Department has received between 30 and 40 applications for the summer program, county officials estimated.

A number of other Oakland and Wayne County governmental units are receiving funding from the DNR. Steve Underswood, supervisor of parks and forestry for the City of Birmingham, said the program will enable the cities and townships "to catch up on things we haven't had time to get around to."

"There are plenty of things that always need to be done, but we never seem to have the manpower to do them as often and as well as we'd like to," he said.

Birmingham, like Farmington Hills, Troy and Waterford Township, will be hiring 16 youths for the summer.

Northville Township and Avon Township will hire eight youths for the remainder of the summer.

In Wayne County, the City of Livonia will get more than \$25,000 to hire 15 new, summer employees. Plymouth and Redford Townships will be receiving more than \$11,000 apiece to hire eight new employees.

Across the state, more than 2,500 youths will be working through the end of the summer. The price tag to the DNR will exceed \$3.1 million. Since allocations were based essentially on population distribution, most local projects will be conducted in southeastern Michigan.

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