

Helping hands sought for public lands

BY GAIL WESSON
STAFF WRITER
gwesson@pe.com

Federal lands managers are offering a variety of work projects open to volunteers on Saturday's National Public Lands Day, a hands-on effort to benefit the outdoors.

The date also is a chance to enjoy high-use recreation areas without paying the usual Forest Service \$5 Adventure Pass fee.

"Public Lands Day provides a great opportunity for people from

all walks of life to get out and enjoy our beautiful forests and grasslands" during the fall, U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell said in a news release.

Saturday is the start of three weekends of volunteer activity for the pinyon pines protection project. "I've had trees now for four years that I've been trying to plant," said Daniel McCarthy, San Bernardino National Forest's tribal relations program manager.

Volunteers are needed to plant and water seedlings and help clear

vegetation from mature trees in the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa mountains. Volunteers will learn about traditional gathering practices of pinyon and other plants used by Cahuilla Indians for food, medicine and utilitarian purposes.

Volunteers may camp overnight or meet the group along Highway 74 near the worksite Saturday. Contact McCarthy for details at dfmccarthy@fs.fed.us or 909-379-9332.

In the San Bernardino Mountains, "We will be planting about

500 native plants from our native plant nursery located at the Big Bear Ranger Station," said Linda Stamer, restoration biologist with San Bernardino National Forest.

The plants, including blue sage, sagebrush, rabbit brush and desert needle grass, were grown from seeds collected in Cactus Flats, an off-highway-vehicle staging area between Big Bear and Lucerne Valley. The aim is to replant disturbed areas there to control erosion. Volunteers should meet at

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LOCAL EXTRA



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Kaoru Katsumata holds a ladder for Takuo Yamazaki as they work together on the Japanese garden at White Park in Riverside on Wednesday. **STAN LIM/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**

EXPERT CARE

Residents of sister city of Sendai tend to Japanese garden on a visit to Riverside

BY MARK MUCKENFUSS
STAFF WRITER
mmuckenfuss@pe.com

Shin-ichi Kato and Kaoru Katsumata were back in Riverside on Wednesday, pruning trees and bushes and repairing a fence at the Japanese garden in White Park.

The two men were part of a team that built and dedicated the garden in 2007 as part of the 50-year anniversary of the sister city relationship between Riverside and Sendai, Japan. Both men are residents of Sendai and

members of the Orange Club, a group that supports sister city projects on the west side of the Pacific.

Kato and Katsumata were part of a four-man delegation that arrived Monday and will return to Japan on Oct. 8. While here, they will participate in next week's Pan Pacific Conference, a meeting of organizations connected with sister city projects. Sendai is Riverside's oldest sister city. The four men were helped in their work on the garden by Riverside Community College students who

are part of the international studies program.

Katsumata said the group planned its trip to Riverside as a response to the support Sendai received in the wake of the 9.0 earthquake and subsequent tsunami that struck northern Japan on March 11. In May, Mayor Ron Loveridge and other city officials traveled to Sendai and presented the mayor of the city with a relief check of \$520,000.

"We really appreciate everything the city of Riverside offered," Katsumata said

SEE **GARDEN/C4**



STAN LIM/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kaoru Katsumata, left, Shinichi Kato, middle, and Takuo Yamazaki, all from Japan, work on the Japanese garden.

GARDEN

PE.com See a video of the garden. PE.com

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through an interpreter. "Mr. Kato really wanted to come and thank everyone in person."

They also decided to take the opportunity to freshen up the garden. About a dozen trash bags of clippings and other debris were piled up on the edge of the garden by midday. Kato said the biggest task was straightening a leaning bamboo fence by installing two concrete footings.

"I'm very happy to be here to do some maintenance," Kato said through an interpreter. "I am really excited to work on this Japanese garden, especially to make it presentable for the Pan Pacific Conference. I'm hoping people that come to the conference will be able to come here and see it."

Kato's home was heavily

damaged in the tsunami. His neighborhood has been cleared of much of the debris from the disaster, he said, but is now overgrown with weeds and other rapidly growing plants. He still doesn't know whether he will be able to return to his home.

"Right before I came here, I went to City Hall to ask about it myself," he said. "They said they might be able to fix it and I might be able to go back and live there. I'm hoping as soon as I go back I'll be able to find that out."

The region was hit by a typhoon Wednesday. Katsumata said he had been on the phone to check on the situation.

"I'm extremely worried," he said. "But compared to the earthquake and tsunami, the typhoon is nothing."