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Volunteers build natural playground in day of service

May 18, 2014
By JACKIE STARK - Journal Staff Writer (jstark@miningjournal.net) , The Mining Journal

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MARQUETTE - Local AmeriCorps members took part in an Upper Peninsula-wide day of service Saturday, joining with the Superior Watershed Partnership, MooseWood Nature Center, local businesses and community members for a full day of volunteering.

Roughly 60 people showed up to lend a hand Saturday, some from AmeriCorps groups across the U.P., others from the SWP, 4H, the Marquette-Alger Regional Educational Services Agency's transitions class, North Star Academy and from the general community.

The volunteers were split between garbage pick-up along the bike path in Marquette and construction of an all-natural playground next to the MooseWood Nature Center on Presque Isle.

"We couldn't do this without this many volunteers," said Andrew Bek, executive director of the center. "To have a collective, daylong effort like this makes it possible to put in the infrastructure."

The volunteers were able to construct a walk-way in the "Nature's Discovery Area," using wood chips and logs donated from Hoovers Tree Service of Marquette.

The play area was designed for young learners to engage in outdoor play and make connections with the natural world.

Other partners for the day of service included Aubree's Pizzeria and Grill, Starbucks and Target, all of Marquette.

Kelly Sager, AmeriCorps program coordinator for MARESA, said Saturday's event was one of five around the state.

Ginna Holmes, executive director of the Michigan Community Service Commission in Lansing also stopped by during the volunteer effort.

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