



Green Corps student arborist learning and practicing climbing skills on Thompson Island, 2004.

## Branching Out: An Exploration in Arboriculture for Boston Youth

Building on an existing collaboration with Thompson Island Outward Bound's Green Corps Program and Boston Harbor Islands national park area, the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation is piloting a multi-year program in tree care for Boston youth. The program provides young people with an introduction to tree care, hands-on field experience with professional arborists, and opportunities to learn about educational scholarships and career paths in the fields of arboriculture, park management, and the environment. Working under the guidance of skilled arborists and experienced resource managers, participants progress through a series of workshops to learn about tree biology and management techniques.

For the past six years, youth in the Green Corps program at Thompson Island Outward Bound have participated in an introductory three-day workshop on tree care basics. This year, several returning students will have the opportunity to participate in a second level of training that will introduce broader arboricultural topics and techniques. This pilot will help assess the merits of further developing a trade-endorsed career development program in tree care and park management for Boston students.

Below is a brief overview of the sequenced Level I and Level II workshops:



**Level I** introduces participants to basic tree biology, tree care safety, rope use and knots, climbing equipment and techniques, and hand pruning. Professional certified arborists teach participants the concepts and fundamental practices of tree care.

**Level II** builds on the fundamentals that students acquire in Level I and challenges them to apply those skills and abilities in the field. During the first week of training, participants work alongside professional arborists to accomplish tree maintenance in a Boston -area park. Following the field experience, participants assist with instructing and mentoring new students entering Level I.

In addition to the summer workshops Level I and Level II participants are invited to participate in several arboricultural related field study experiences throughout the year.

A Level III workshop may be added to the sequence, as well as a culminating apprenticeship/internship opportunity for graduating participants who want to gain additional field and occupational experience. Upon completion of the program, participating students will be provided with opportunities for pursuing educational scholarships and employment in the field of arboriculture and park management.

The following organizations are involved in the development of this program:

- Boston Harbor Islands national park area, National Park Service
- Boston African American National Historic Site, National Park Service
- Boston Environmental Ambassadors to the National Parks
- Goodell Tree Service
- Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, National Park Service
- Shelter Tree Company
- Thompson Island Outward Bound
- Wind River Tree Care
- Youth Conservation Corps/Public Land Corps, National Park Service

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