

## Keen on green

[By Ashley Gebb/Appeal-Democrat](#)

2009-12-17 23:45:33

Unemployed for more than a year, Yuba City resident Melissa Nahlan regained her optimism a few weeks ago with a flier for the Yuba-Sutter Green Corps.

"It gave me hope," she said. "I have not had hope for so long."

Nahlan, 22, sat with 14 other young adults Thursday at Yuba College to learn about a year-long, two-semester course that coaches students through classes with an environmental focus and earns them a certificate in Green Careers Training. Once the course is complete, the students will be on a path for careers in solar energy, biofuels or any environmental field they are interested in.

"It can be whatever you want it to be," said Francene Kennedy, executive director of the North Central Counties Consortium. "There are multiple pathways to green."

The auto industry is developing hybrids, architects are designing buildings that conserve energy and landscapers are looking into designs that use less water. Almost every field has some aspect that relates to the environment, she said.

Green jobs in California have grown exponentially in recent years, far outpacing overall job growth, according to a study released last week by the Next 10 public policy group. Green jobs have grown 36 percent since 1995, compared to a 13 percent increase in total jobs.

California has about 159,000 green jobs, or 1 percent of the job market, the study reports. The figure does not account for any jobs that may have been lost or created since January 2008.

Yuba City resident Stephanie Dulay, 20, said when she looks at the ecosystem, air quality and animals around her, it's obvious the world needs immediate improvement.

"With the economy the way it is, we are all going to be headed toward green and I want to be able to get in fast," she said. "Get in, get it over so I'm ahead."

She hopes the Green Corps will help her find a green job in the construction industry, her family's trade, and said she wants to one day work in the Yuba-Sutter area and give back to the community.

Linda resident Brandon Wallace, 22, is also hoping for a green construction job, perhaps in solar energy. He returned to school this fall when construction work was minimal and thinks an education, especially one with a green focus, will make him more competitive in the job market, he said.

"I just think this is the way of our future," he said. "We need to start changing our ways a little bit or we're going to be in trouble pretty soon."

Course completion requires 100 hours of community service and a summer internship or job. The effort is funded by a \$146,000 in federal stimulus funding and put into action by the North Central Counties Consortium, Yuba Community College District and the Sutter County and Yuba County One-Stops.

Green jobs will not just help the environment but save the economy, Nahlan said. They put people back into jobs, are less wasteful and invest money in new technology and development.

"Green jobs is the future," she said. "I voted for the right man. (President Barack) Obama has kept his promise of hope."

*Contact Appeal-Democrat reporter Ashley Gebb at 749-4724 or [agebb@appealdemocrat.com](mailto:agebb@appealdemocrat.com).*