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The Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council Awards \$100,000 of Grant Funds to Eight Organizations Dedicated to Getting Youth Outdoors

Eight Catalyst grants were given to promote outdoor accessibility and offer leadership opportunities to economically disadvantaged and underserved youth.

San Mateo, California, August 12, 2011 – A San Francisco high school takes their students on a wilderness adventure, a Paso Robles program engages at-risk youth with the outdoors through horseback riding, and a Nevada City organization challenges youth perspectives with an urban and rural exchange program – these are just a few of the projects recently awarded Catalyst Fund grants by the Stewardship Council.

The Stewardship Council awarded \$100,000 through the Catalyst Fund to support the efforts of eight organizations that make outdoor spaces accessible and safe for youth and families. The Catalyst Fund provides general support for emergent organizations, whose annual operating budgets are under \$250,000, with the resources they need to get underserved youth connected to the outdoors.

The Stewardship Council is in its sixth year of grant funding. During this time, the Council has awarded more than \$10 million to 223 organizations. Stewardship Council funds have helped more than 250,000 youths. By providing funds to youth development organizations and programs, the Council is committed to connecting youth to the outdoors. The Council hopes to positively transform young people academically, personally, and socially.

The following is a list of the **2011 Catalyst Fund Round Two** awards:

Sunrise Middle School Outdoor Program (San Jose) Sunrise Middle School, a new charter school, was awarded \$11,000 to expose underserved middle schoolers to valuable outdoor experiences. The program will introduce youth to activities such as whitewater rafting, high ropes courses, and horseback riding. These activities are designed to give youth reflective time in nature and a chance to build relationships with one another.

Growing Up Wild (Santa Cruz) Growing Up Wild's Rites of Passage Program was awarded \$13,000 for a wilderness-based teen boys coming-of-age program. The program provides small groups of underserved teen boys with extensive hands-on outdoor experiences. Groups engage in four separate weekends of educational activities including a backpacking trip that fosters life skills, health and fitness, and nature education.

WildPlaces/SEE (Springville) WildPlaces/SEE was awarded \$14,000 to team up two groups of youth with biologists, outdoor educators, U.S. Forest Service personnel, teachers, artists, activists, peer counselors, and a PG&E powerhouse operator for two front- and back-country camping trips in Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument. These two programs will allow over 100 Central Valley youths to experience hands-on recreational and environmental stewardship activities.

Downtown High School Get out and Learn (GOAL) (San Francisco) Downtown High School was awarded \$14,000 to help students transform their academic and social potential through a ten-day wilderness expedition and local sailing and wooden boatbuilding experiences.

North Roseville Recreational Education and Creative Center, Inc. (Roseville) The North Roseville R.E.C. Center serves primarily low-income youth in the Roseville area. The center was awarded \$11,000 to provide recreational programs and activities in nature, including camping, visiting nature museum, swimming in local lakes, learning about local wildlife, and participating in conservation activities.

Kids in Parks (San Francisco) Kids in Parks was awarded \$15,000 to provide nearly 750 San Francisco youths with opportunities to discover the many ecological resources in their neighborhoods, as well as how to care for those resources through service learning. Participating youths will gain an appreciation for nature and learn invaluable vocational skills that translate into real-world careers.

Alliance Equine Rescue and Youth Education Foundation (Paso Robles) EAYF was awarded \$10,000 to provide year-round, experiential outdoor learning activities using horses to engage and support at-risk youth participants in their own life improvement processes.

Movimiento (Nevada City) Movimiento was awarded \$12,000 for its RUYEL program: Rural-Urban Youth Environmental Leadership. Through this program, urban and rural youth spend time in each other's home communities, to exchange experiences and learn strategies for environmental, personal, and social change. Youth from the Bay Area and Nevada County will share knowledge about local food/farming, watershed, cultural, and socio-environmental issues through activities such as wilderness excursions, food and farming, indigenous youth initiatives, and the arts.

The Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council is a private, nonprofit foundation. Established in 2004, its mission is to protect and enhance more than 140,000 acres of watershed lands and invest in efforts to improve the lives of young Californians through connections with the outdoors. The Stewardship Council brings together the expertise of leading conservation, natural resource management, business, and public officials to undertake this historic conservation effort for California. Unique and collaborative, the Stewardship Council's Board of Directors unites a broad range of interests to guide the development and execution of the Land Conservation Program and Youth Investment Program to benefit current and future generations of Californians. Our core values are collaboration, stewardship, discovery, sustainability and leadership. For more information about the Stewardship Council please visit the web site: www.stewardshipcouncil.org.

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