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The Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council Awards \$275,000 in Grant Funds to Twelve Outdoor Youth Organizations

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

San Mateo, California, November 1, 2011 – An Oakland school-based program connects urban youth to overnight, outdoor adventure-based experiences; a Bay Area program builds confidence and promotes a life-affirming view for youth with incarcerated parents; a North Sacramento Valley organization encourages foster-care youth to explore environmental stewardship and leadership; and a Central Valley initiative helps at-risk youth discover career opportunities in the outdoor and recreation industries – these are just some of the Impact Fund grants the Stewardship Council has recently awarded.

The Stewardship Council awarded \$275,000 through the Impact Fund to support the efforts of twelve organizations that make outdoor spaces accessible and safe for youth and families. **The Impact Fund** provides support for more established organizations, whose annual operating budgets are over \$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 over 200 organizations. Stewardship Council funds have helped more than 250,000 youths. The Council is committed to providing funds to youth development organizations and programs that connect youth to the outdoors and transform them academically, personally, and socially. The following is a list of the twelve **2011 Impact Fund Round Two** awards:

ARISE High School (Oakland) was awarded \$30,000 to connect underserved Oakland youth to outdoor opportunities. ARISE's Beyond the Classroom program aspires to engage kids with the environment while providing development opportunities and outdoor adventures. The program builds the skills and confidence youth need for high school graduation and college success.

Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice (Oakland) was awarded \$25,000 for their SAFIRE Rising program. This program teaches practical environmental stewardship among young Asian women from low-income, immigrant and refugee families in urban Oakland. Through a series of retreats at a teaching farm/ecology center and hands-on outdoor experiences, these young women learn culturally relevant ecological practices applicable to their daily lives.

Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program (BORP) (Bay Area) was awarded \$20,000 for its Outdoor Adventures Program. By taking youth with physical disabilities off the paved roads and into nature, this program increases their self-confidence, self-perception, and independence. The Outdoor Adventures Program exposes these youth to a broad range of outdoor activities, shows them how to overcome obstacles, and encourages them to see obstacles as opportunities.

Bay Area Wilderness Training (BAWT) (Bay Area) was awarded \$30,000 for its Frontcountry Leadership Training program. The program provides teachers and youth workers with wilderness skills training; free outdoor equipment libraries; and financial, logistical, and consultative support. This program gives local teachers the skills and equipment they need to provide successful outdoor experiences to their students.

Boys and Girls Club of Fresno (Fresno) was awarded \$20,000 for its Adventures Connecting Career Education and Sparking Stewardship (A.C.C.E.S.S.) for Youth Project. The program aims to inspire 40 at-risk youth to seek career opportunities in the outdoor and recreation industries. While engaged in adventure-based learning, youth will develop positive life skills that will help them break the cycle of poverty and risky behaviors.

Briones Independent Study and Vicente High School (Martinez) was awarded \$25,000 for its New Leaf Outdoor Experiences project. New Leaf activities are created through the support of a collaborative network of volunteers, non-profits, and businesses. The program provides learning opportunities for students in wildlife ecology, conservation, and leadership development.

Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (San Francisco) was awarded \$20,000 for its Stewarding Diverse Environmental Leadership Program. Through this program, high school youth will help organize a summit to help explore how more youth of color and underserved youth can participate in outdoor activities and programs. In addition, the youth will help with restoration efforts and become interns with other local programs.

Native American Health Center (Oakland) was awarded \$30,000 for their Chae-Mal Wilderness Program. The program will provide outdoor educational and recreational activities including kayaking, white water rafting, hiking, camping, and mountain biking to urban Native American and other underserved Bay Area youth. These activities will help revive and nurture the youths' cultural connections with the land and environment, while supporting their holistic development into adulthood.

WildLink, a program of NatureBridge (San Joaquin Valley) was awarded \$20,000 for the WildLink program. This program transforms underserved youth through a series of no-cost wilderness and community-based outdoor programs. Using a robust partnership network, the program educates, inspires, and empowers youth to become long-term environmental stewards with strong connections to the natural world, both in the wilderness and within their home communities.

Project AVARY (Bay Area) was awarded \$25,000 for their Outdoor Leaders Training Project (OLTP), a part of Avary's Youth Leadership Program. Project AVARY focuses on children of incarcerated parents and builds a pool of young outdoor leaders by providing a variety of graduated training opportunities and experiences. The project culminates by connecting trained youth graduates with real employment experiences, both within the program and with partner organizations.

Urban Promise Academy (Oakland) was awarded \$20,000 for its Wilderness Independence and Leadership Development program (WILD). This program will provide 300 middle school students with multiple overnight and daylong wilderness excursions and opportunities for local environmental conservation. Through outdoor experiences, students will develop personal connections with nature and build the social, emotional, and life skills needed to achieve academically now and in high school.

Youth for Change, Inc. (Oroville) was awarded \$25,000 to implement a new wilderness program for youth referred from Butte County Child Welfare Services and the Southside Oroville African American Family and Cultural Center. The intense, nine-month program of learning and wilderness activities will provide culturally diverse youth, with little or no outdoor experience, the opportunity to learn about self, others, and the environment.

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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