



PRESS RELEASE
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Yosemite National Park Receives Impact Fund Grant from Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council

FOSTER CITY, CA – The Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council, a collaborative land conservation and youth investment foundation, recently announced Yosemite National Park as a recipient of the Impact Fund grant. The grants, part of the Stewardship Council’s Youth Investment Program, were awarded to organizations that offer creative and culturally relevant approaches to making the outdoors more accessible to underserved youth.

“Our goal is to help connect young Californians to the outdoors” says Jayne Battey, Executive Director of the Stewardship Council. “Programs funded by these grants guarantee that even kids who grow up in urban settings will have the opportunity to experience and appreciate California’s natural beauty.”

Yosemite National Park was chosen for its innovative program “Wildlink,” which supports the Youth Investment Program’s mission to connect youth with the outdoors. “Wildlink” aims to break down barriers between at-risk youth and the outdoors providing them with a transformative experience through a series of fully funded wilderness and community-based programs.

“WildLink gives underserved youth a transformative experience through a series of fully scholarshiped wilderness and community-based programs,” says Mandy Vance, WildLink Program Manager. “Through our strong partnership network, we provide youth with touchstones in both the wilderness and their home communities that keep them connected to the natural world anywhere they go.”

Yosemite National Park was awarded \$40,000 to fund “Wildlink,” and was one of twenty programs to receive youth program grants. The Stewardship Council has allocated over \$2 million in grants through the Youth Investment Program to organizations that provide kids with exposure to nature and the outdoors. Over the next ten years, the program will award \$30 million in grants and other resources.

"When we promote the involvement of our children in the outdoors, we're making an investment in their health, their education and in their future. We are also making an investment in the healthy and productive future of California's natural resources," said Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman, President of the Stewardship Council Board of

Directors. "As stewards of California's lands, these programs are critical for this generation and for those generations that will follow in our footsteps."

Of the grant money, \$150,000 is allocated for the Catalyst Fund, which targets grassroots organizations that are mostly or entirely volunteer driven and have an annual budget, including projects, of less than \$150,000. The remaining grants go toward Impact Funds and are designed to support more established organizations in furthering their current programs.

"It's simple, kids are choosing to stay indoors more than ever and not taking advantage of the amazing opportunities outdoors across our state," says Steve Hagler, Youth Investment Manager for the Stewardship Council. Programs such as "Wildlink," can start to reverse this trend by engaging and educating youth about California's natural environment."

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ABOUT THE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

The Stewardship Council is a collaborative land conservation and youth investment foundation. Its mandate includes evaluating and providing recommendations for the conservation of over 140,000 acres of watershed lands (currently owned by PG&E) spread across 22 counties, as well as developing and implementing community-based park and environmental education opportunities for underserved youth. For more information Stewardship Council, please visit: www.stewardshipcouncil.org.