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**The Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council Awards
\$719,000 of Grants to 21 Organizations Dedicated to Getting Youth to the
Outdoors**

Six Catalyst grants, nine Impact grants, and six Initiative grants given to promote outdoor accessibility to youth, offer leadership opportunities and promote outdoor programs and activities to economically disadvantaged and underserved youth

San Mateo, Calif., Oct. 1, 2009 – An organization that connects healthy communities with parks, trails and agricultural lands; a project to engage urban high school students in watershed explorations in the Presidio’s Tennessee Hollow watershed; and a program that combines wilderness experience, adventure, reflection, and counseling to connect underserved youth with the natural world, are just a few of the projects that were awarded Catalyst, Impact, and Initiative Fund grants recently announced by the Stewardship Council.

“To get children outdoors, the Stewardship Council must fund outdoor recreation programs and more innovative approaches to engage underserved youth,” said Director of Youth Investment Program Steve Hagler. “It’s not just spending, it’s investing.”

- Six organizations have been awarded a total of \$44,000 in grants through the Catalyst Fund
- Nine organizations have been awarded a total of \$250,000 in grants through the Impact Fund
- Six organizations have been awarded a total of \$425,000 in grants through the Initiative Fund

The Catalyst Fund is open to grassroots organizations whose annual operating budgets are under \$150,000. In this grant round, 19 organizations requested \$296,853 in funds.

The Impact Fund is designed to support more established organizations with the resources they need to get underserved youth connected to the outdoors. In this grant round, 56 organizations requested more than \$2 million in funds.

The Initiative Fund is designed to support ventures that eliminate frequently-cited barriers to connecting young people with the outdoors. Grantees will create initiatives that demonstrate their ability to reduce local and/or regional barriers and that will have a ripple effect in their community and region. In this grant round, 19 organizations requested more than \$2 million in funds.

By providing funds to youth development organizations and programs, the Stewardship Council is committed to connecting youth to the outdoors, and hopes to positively transform young people academically, personally and socially.

The following is a list of **Catalyst Fund** awards:

Mariposa County

Balanced Rock Foundation (www.balancedrock.org) received \$7,000 to work with underserved Mariposa County youth to deepen their connection to self, others, and nature through structured group and individual challenges in Yosemite National Park and in their community.

San Jose

Escuelar Popular Outdoor Program received \$8,000 to fund the Natural Highs program that combines wilderness experience, adventure, reflection, and counseling, connecting underserved youth with the natural world, to rekindle motivation and curiosity, to demand accountability, and to encourage personal and academic growth.

Sacramento County

Project Great Outdoors (www.projectgo.org) received \$6,000 to offer expertly guided and facilitated whitewater rafting programs for youth and to provide whitewater guide training to individuals from underserved communities.

Humboldt

Southern Humboldt Youth and Community Services received \$5,000 for the Outdoor Adventures program to provide engaging outdoor activities for teens ages 12–17 in the Southern Humboldt and Northern Mendocino communities. Outdoor Adventures include camping, rafting, kayaking, mountain biking, hiking, and other positive activities that expose youth to their rich local natural resources.

Roseville

North Roseville R.E.C. Center received \$8,000 to provide outdoor activities that will enrich the lives, develop the physical, mental, and social capabilities, and improve the lives of underserved youth by building on the R.E.C. Center's existing youth development and leadership programs.

San Francisco

Community Grows (formerly Hayes Valley Neighborhood Parks Group, a project of the Tides Center, www.hvnparks.com) received \$10,000 toward training the BEETS (Band of Environmentally Educated and Employed Teens) who will have opportunities to earn internships and job placements in the green sector. The BEETS will also reach out and engage their community in environmental stewardship and ownership of neighborhood parks.

The following is a list of **Impact Fund** awards:

Watsonville

Community Alliance for Family Farmers (www.caff.org) received \$35,000 toward a collaborative project based at Watsonville High Agricultural Academy that connects youth with local farms practicing good environmental stewardship. This program offers hands-on education that emphasizes agricultural conservation practices, farm-fresh foods, and related job opportunities.

Oakland

East Oakland Boxing Association (www.eoba.org) received \$25,000 to support the Smartmoves Seeds of Change project that integrates outdoor experiential learning, academics, healthy lifestyle education, employment, and community service. Youth interns develop a meaningful awareness of the long-term connections between themselves, their families and community, their future possibilities, and the natural world around them.

Bay Area

Girl Ventures (www.girlventures.org) received \$25,000 to provide a ladder of leadership opportunities for diverse Bay Area girls that emphasize vocational and life skills. Participants engage in outdoor activities that inspire active lifestyles, boost self-esteem, and cultivate environmental awareness.

San Francisco

Project WISE of the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (www.parksconservancy.org) received \$30,000 to engage urban high school students in watershed explorations in the Presidio's Tennessee Hollow watershed. Project WISE connects city youth with meaningful outdoor experiences by enabling active participation in project-based science learning.

San Francisco

Literacy for Environmental Justice (LEJ) (www.lejyouth.org) received \$25,000 toward service learning and field excursions that root environmental commitment in the daily lives of southeast San Francisco youth. Youth participate in year-round internships that make a substantive contribution to community environmental justice priorities and peer-to-peer training in environmental justice.

Bay Area

The Mosaic Project (www.mosaicproject.org) received \$20,000 to support the Youth Leadership Project, which offers outdoor leadership training for high-school students. The youth leaders serve as mentors for younger students at an outdoor school that creates a microcosm of the diverse, inclusive world to show the students that peace is possible, and to provide them with enriching experiences in nature.

Central Valley

WildLink a program of NatureBridge (wildlink.wilderness.net, www.naturebridge.org) received \$25,000 toward WildLink, which transforms underserved youth through a series of wilderness and community-based outdoor programs designed to educate, inspire and empower youth to become long-term environmental stewards with strong connections to the natural world in both the wilderness and their home communities.

San Francisco

Real Options for City Kids (ROCK) - (www.rocksf.org) received \$20,000 to provide programming designed to break the cycle of poverty and violence in Visitacion Valley. Through a combination of outdoor adventures, community service, and leadership training, and by implementing best youth development practices, ROCK empowers its participants with the tools and experiences necessary to become successful, productive adults.

Fresno

Central California Consortium of the US Forest Service (www.fs.fed.us/r5/ccc) received \$45,000 toward the Central California Consortium, an environmental education, outreach, and employment program that provides diverse youth from urban and rural areas with paid internships. The program encourages youth to seek higher education, develop careers in natural resources, and become stewards of the land.

The following is a list of **Initiative Fund** awards:

Bay Area

The Bay Area Open Space Council (www.openspacecouncil.org) received \$65,000 to conduct a survey and develop solutions to transportation barriers in the Bay Area. The initiative will focus on connecting underserved populations to parklands, sharing best practices between park, transportation, and community agencies/organizations, and convening a broad base of partners to implement two pilot projects that develop specific, comprehensive, and sustainable solutions to better connect youth and their families to parks beyond their neighborhoods.

Bay Area

Bay Area Wilderness Training, Presidio Trust, and National Park Service (www.bawt.org, www.presidio.gov/kids/cap.htm) received \$75,000 to create the Bay Area Camping (BAC) program, which will leverage the successful Camping at the Presidio (CAP) program to expand access to other Bay Area campgrounds for staff from youth development organizations. BAC will provide training for youth workers, including camp skills training, free camping gear, subsidized transportation, and educational and interpretive resources.

Statewide

California State Parks Foundation and Pacific Leadership Institute (www.parks.ca.gov, www.pliprograms.org) received \$95,000 to support the continued expansion of the Outdoor Youth Connection, which addresses the need to connect youth with nature while making resources, access, and information attainable for California's underserved youth while overcoming barriers of poverty, lack of transportation, and fear.

East Bay

East Bay Regional Parks Foundation (www.ebparks.org) received \$65,000 toward the Community Overnight Camping Program that will increase school year camping opportunities for high-need youth in order to reinforce a year-round connection to the outdoors and nature in a close-to-home park environment.

Monterey Bay

Monterey Bay Aquarium and Watsonville Wetlands Watch (www.montereybayaquarium.org, www.watsonvillewetlandswatch.org) received \$75,000 to implement an environmental education initiative that will connect 1,000 underserved teens to the local watershed in culturally relevant ways. Throughout the academic year, Watsonville teachers will implement project-based environmental learning for their students, including direct access to open spaces through field research and docent-led outdoor activities.

Redwood City

Redwood City 2020 (www.redwoodcity.org) received \$50,000 toward incorporating YO-It's Youth Outdoors! as a critical element of the collaborative approach to addressing and overcoming health disparities in Redwood City. Redwood City 2020's community-based approach includes engaging and empowering youth to identify solutions to increase their connection and access to the outdoors.

“Funding outdoor programs now will help ensure our future stewards of California are healthy and well-prepared for their vital responsibilities,” added Hagler.

The Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council (Stewardship Council) is a private, nonprofit foundation. Established in 2004, its mission is to protect and enhance more than 140,000 acres of PG&E-owned 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. A unique and collaborative endeavor, the Stewardship Council's Board of Directors unites a broad range of interests to guide the development and execution of a Land Conservation Program and a 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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