

THE NATURALIST



Set off on Adventure

There is nothing like exploring the world, hands-on. And doing it with good friends only makes the experience better. On an Earth Explore Adventure you learn about your planet, its cultures, and how it all works together. We go to the most spectacular places on Planet Earth to explore the diversity of environments that makes our world so special.

Our partners are true experts, and the activities and learning adventures they provide are *available only to Earth Explore participants*. That means

on our adventures you can walk jungle trails and climb temples in Belize, hike into a volcano and meet elders in Hawaii, explore the ruins of Pompeii and the art of Michelangelo in Italy, view wild grizzlies and walk on a glacier in Alaska, measure geysers and dig for dinosaurs in Wyoming, and kayak with sea otters

and cruise with whales in Monterey. And that's just for starters. Designed to our specifications, for our participants only, each activity is sure to excite and inspire our students. And that's really what Earth Explore is all about. To learn more, go online to earthexplore.com.



Grab some credit!

How about earning some academic credit on your Earth Explore program? Scores of students do it each year and it's a great way to get even more out of your experience. Earth Explore works with Araura College's Pacific Studies Outreach Center to make high school-equivalent credit available to every student who wants to earn it. Check out the article inside this newsletter for more detailed information.

Leaders-A Great Resource

In order to have a successful, rewarding program, you need to have the best adult leadership available. That's where our Educator/Leaders come in. Each Earth Explore Leader is a unique person. He or she must be an active classroom educator who comes recommended to us by a parent. Many of our Leaders are middle school teachers, but all are great with kids and enjoy sharing time with them. They are also adept at providing the proper supervision at all times, and in helping our Student Naturalists understand the natural world more clearly.

Here is what Leader Joan Maluchnik of Michigan had to say about her experience:

"I feel blessed to have been able to be a part of such a wonderful program, and such a great opportunity for these kids. It was so neat to start with 42 unknown students and to bond with them in this 2 week project, as both teacher and surrogate parent. The trip was so well organized. You can't get a better educational experience than when you can be there and experience it with all of your senses. This is just a great program. Thank you Earth Explore for all of this."

Yosemite & Monterey Adventure

What happens when?

July-December

During this part of the year, Earth Explore accepts registrations from teachers and students, and the majority of groups form. Many of our Adventure destinations will reach capacity during this period. Students receive quarterly copies of the program newsletter, *the Naturalist*, as well as a study guide called the *Adventure Guide*. For many groups the initial Preparation Session may take place during this period.

January-April

In the early part of this period additional teacher registrations may be accepted, depending upon available space in our Adventures. The final groups will form early in this period. All students take part in program Preparation Sessions during this period; during which the spring edition of the program newsletter, *the Naturalist*, is received. Health Forms are sent to all enrolled students, completed and returned to group leaders.

May-July

During this period students receive their program caps, credentials, T-shirts, and other travel-related materials. In May, a detailed day-to-day itinerary is mailed to each family, which lists all accommodations, activities and daily scheduling. Final groupings take place, and air tickets are forwarded to leaders in late May or early June. Final Preparation Sessions for most groups occur at this time as well. Groups depart on their programs generally between June 10th and July 15th.

Yosemite: The inside story

Led by Yosemite Institute naturalists, Earth Explore students will have an unmatched opportunity to discover for themselves the wonder and majesty of Yosemite. From spectacular granite walls to breathtaking waterfalls, Yosemite is an awesome natural classroom. Students will hike trails in Yosemite Valley to explore mountain geology, and learn how this famous place owes its existence to glaciers. They will journey to the base of thundering waterfalls like Bridelveil and Yosemite, to explore their mysteries, and learn about high mountain



ecology and natural sciences on-site. Elsewhere, Student Naturalists will probe the wonders of the Giant Sequoia... native only to the Sierra, and learn how this forest patriarch lives to become the largest, and among the oldest living things on the planet. With expert Yosemite Institute naturalists as their companions, Earth Explore Student Naturalists will experience Yosemite, as few others ever do.

Parents' Perspective

"The program exceeded my son's expectations. The first night home he wished he was still with his Earth Explore delegation. He really missed all the activities."

"My son saw and did so many different types of experiences. It exceeded our expectations. The program was well laid out."

"I feel that my daughter grew educationally, socially and in problem-solving. She shares many thoughts, things she learned, experiences that indicate her growth."

"His level of independence grew tremendously. He also learned some valuable money skills and travel skills. Our son had a wonderful time. We would recommend the program."

"She had to learn to take care of herself without relying on us and know the importance of responsibility. She expected to have fun and learn something at the same time and had a wonderful time."

"I think this program is wonderful. It helps them to begin to focus on the future and what's available to them."

"His confidence has increased and he seems more considerate of other's feelings. He was very pleased with the program."

Academic Credit

As part of their participation in the Earth Explore learning experience, every accepted student has the opportunity to earn high school credit for their work. In a program funded by Earth Explore, one Carnegie credit (the equivalent of a semester-long high school course), as well as up to 90 service learning hours, are awarded to students who successfully complete their research and journal assignments. Entitled *Exploring Earth Ecosystems*, the curriculum has been specially designed by the Pacific Studies Outreach Center to enhance and complement the hands-on learning available on the program. Complete information on the credit option is sent to each Earth Explore Student Naturalist upon acceptance into the program.



Students travel in style on luxury motorcoaches

Sea Kayak the Kelp Beds!

The thriving kelp beds of the Monterey Bay are among the richest and most diverse marine habitats anywhere. As part of their adventure, Earth Explore Naturalists will take to kayaks to explore this fascinating environment up-close. Carefully supervised by Sea Lab guides, students will observe a rich array of ocean life, and learn how the beds help to sustain an underwater forest, full of life. On the surface, group members will thrill to the sight of sea lions and sea otters cavorting in the kelp beds, and coming to the surface to feed on abalone and other tasty morsels. Our kayak adventure is just one of many opportunities to probe the wonders of the Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary with experts on ocean ecology and biology. Elsewhere, students will probe tidepool ecosystems, and learn about the wonders of the deep sea.



Leader reflections

As educators, each Earth Explore Leader brings something special to the program. Leaders Alina Henninger of Dumfries, Virginia and Marie Gehrig of Beach Park, Illinois, sent these impressions:

"This program encompasses all things that I would wish or hope for any child. Each of us came to Earth Explore a bit timid and anxious, but soon found ourselves a part of a family away from home. We depended upon one another, shared knowledge and experiences with each other, and grew together during our adventures. The students really seemed to build their confidence, independence and knowledge base."

Alina Henninger

"I wanted to personally thank Earth Explore for selecting me to chaperone the June trip. I can't describe what a wonderful experience I had. The students were great and the leaders were wonderful. It was an experience I will never forget. This trip was the perfect example of what hands-on learning can do for students. The knowledge I saw these students acquire was amazing."

Marie Gehrig



Whale Watch: A Breathtaking Adventure

There is no better way to understand the great whales, than to join them in their own environment. For Earth Explore students, the day of wonder spent among Pacific whales will be an unforgettable educational experience. We will board our cruise ship in the morning. Then, from a distance of a few hundred feet, students will observe species including the California gray and humpback, on their yearly migration route along the California coast. Throughout the day, expert naturalists will help students to understand this unique creature, and the challenges it faces in the modern world. For many of our students, this intimate encounter with these huge but gentle creatures, is among the most memorable and rewarding parts of the program.

Home in Yosemite: Curry Village

What is the best place to stay in Yosemite? We think it's historic Curry Village, in the heart of Yosemite Valley. At the foot of towering Glacier Point and Half Dome, our groups find all of the comforts of home. Sleeping takes place in comfortable tent cabins...a Yosemite tradition for more than 100 years! Nearby, we take meals at the Curry Village cafeteria, before setting out on our action packed days of discovery. When nighttime nears, our home among Yosemite Valley's pine trees...is just around the corner.

Fundraising...Just do it!

Each year, many Student Naturalists become actively involved in fundraising as a way to help out with the cost of their adventure. One such student was Alicia Sorenson, from the Seattle area. Alicia set out in November to raise most of her own program tuition. Her first task was to compose a letter in her own words about how the program worked, why she wanted to participate, and the academic credit she could earn. Although not everyone could help, her appeal got results. Says Alicia, "I was surprised because it seems like people have so many other troubles...but for them to help me out, that was great." In fact, some of the people Alicia contacted faxed the letter on to friends, who also made donations. By June, Alicia had raised two-thirds of her own program tuition. According to her mother Lisa, the experience involved hard work, but also taught some valuable lessons. "To know that you can do anything you put your heart and mind to makes you feel like anything you desire is possible." And how does Alicia sum up her experience? "I think it was a program in which kids grew. It was really a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."



Students walk among giants

What is it like to walk among towering trees almost 300 feet tall? Ask our students, who will spend an inspiring day among Yosemite's Giant Sequoia, at Tuolumne Grove. These behemoths are the largest living things on the planet....larger even than the blue whale. They can measure an amazing 40 feet in diameter. What's more, they can live to more than 4 thousand years of age. Once widespread, Giant Sequoia now survive in just a few dozen scattered groves in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Yosemite Institute experts will share their knowledge and appreciation of these living giants, and the story of how they survive the most intense forest fires, to become patriarchs of the Sierra.



San Francisco: Everyone's Favorite City

What better way to wrap up a California adventure, than with a visit to the amazing city of San Francisco? In a day of action-packed fun, our groups will visit some of the top sights...including Fisherman's Wharf,



Pier 39, the Golden Gate Bridge and the world-famous Exploratorium. Here students will be free to sample from a mind-bending array of hands-on science activities. Our final night will include dinner at the Hard Rock Cafe. As always students will be closely supervised during free-time activities by their Leaders, as well as their program Travel Manager.

Sentinel Dome: Check out THIS View

Three thousand five hundred feet above Yosemite Valley, the view from Sentinel Dome encompasses the spectacular Yosemite backcountry...a magical land of granite domes, cathedral-like peaks, and fir forests. Also in view are at least four waterfalls, along with Half Dome, Clouds Rest and other Yosemite landmarks. Directly below is the heart of Yosemite Valley...including Curry Village and Yosemite Village. Sentinel Dome offers more than great vistas...it is also a wonderful learning opportunity. Here Yosemite Institute naturalists will share the geologic history of the range spread out in full view. Students will also discuss high country ecosystems, and animals like the Sierran black bear. And one extra bonus: at sunset, the view can reach the Pacific Ocean....150 miles away.



Partners



Camp Sea Lab

In partnership with Earth Explore, the educators and naturalists of Camp Sea Lab have assembled a unique and active multi-day learning experience for our students. Groups will stay at the University of California-Monterey Bay, and use this as a base to explore the amazing marine environments of the California coast; from tidepools, to kelp beds, to the open ocean environment of the Gray whale. Students will come away with a new found understanding of marine science, and a respect for the ecosystems and creatures that make up two thirds of the planet's surface.

Yosemite National Institute

Earth Explore has partnered with the Yosemite Institute on an unforgettable multi-day program of science and discovery. This expert and renowned team of California naturalists insure that our students will see Yosemite, as few others do. The curriculum includes wildlife viewing, trailside talks, and hands-on activities, from Yosemite Valley to the High Country. Truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience for our teachers and students.

University of California-Monterey Bay

Our partnership with the University offers unique access to educational facilities of the Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary, as well as accommodations on campus. The University is at the center of a unique educational and research community, which makes Monterey Bay the world's foremost venue for the exploration of marine science.

Monterey Bay Aquarium

Often called the finest facility of its kind anywhere, the Monterey Bay Aquarium provides a wonderful environment for marine science study and adventure. Highlights range from a three story high living kelp bed, to exhibits showcasing marine mammals like the sea otter, and deep sea creatures like the amazing jellyfish. This world class educational wonderland will provide our students yet another fascinating venue in which to explore the wonders of the living sea.

Sanctuary Cruises

In partnership with Earth Explore, the staff of Sanctuary Cruises provide our students an unforgettable opportunity to view protected pacific whales, from aboard ship. This adventure is enhanced by the contribution of on-board whale experts, who will help our students to enjoy, and understand, these gentle giants of the sea.

Accommodations roll out red carpet

When our Student Naturalists arrive at their hotel, dorm, or camp at the end of a busy day, they find everything prepared for a comfortable stay. They may even be greeted by a sign like the one to the right! Our staff inspect all accommodations, and our hotel partners go the extra mile to make sure students are well taken care of at all times. Students stay two or three to a room, depending upon the area, and enjoy the "grown-up" responsibility of sharing a hotel or dorm room with a roommate. Generally there is free-time allotted at the hotel for journal writing, swimming or just relaxing with friends.



Leader profiles

What does it take to be an Earth

Explore Leader? We rely on energetic, enthusiastic teachers to lead local Preparation Sessions, and help guide students on their summer learning adventure. Some of our great Leaders in recent years were Linda Dailey of Kintnersville, Pennsylvania, Jill Buoso of Chester Spings, PA, Ted Brooks of East Earl, PA and Doug Johnson of Seattle, Washington. Let's briefly meet them all!

Linda Dailey attended a fall meeting in Doylestown, Pennsylvania along with her daughter Joelynn. Both of them participated in the program. Linda's enthusiasm and upbeat personality immediately identified her as a teacher who cares, and makes a difference. Here's what she had to say about her Earth Explore experience:

"This was an excellently organized program. I am amazed at the things I learned and what I can share with my students. Everywhere we went we met awesome people who interacted with our students in such a positive manner ...asking questions, challenging them, and making each experience a memorable one."

Jill Buoso came to Earth Explore as the result of parent recommendation at a meeting in West Chester, Pennsylvania. A teacher of language arts and math at Downingtown Middle School,

Jill works to connect her teaching with "real world" experiences. That is one reason the Earth Explore program appealed so much to her. Jill's Earth Explore students called her "an enthusiastic Leader," and "caring and very nice." In the picture here, we caught Jill and co-Leader Ted Brooks at Jackson Lake, in Grand Teton National Park. Besides Earth Explore, Jill has been a volunteer for Special Olympics, and the Head Start program.



Ted Brooks

is pictured here in front of the Teton Range in Wyoming. A lifelong outdoor enthusiast, Ted loves canoeing, camping, skiing and mountain biking, and also working with kids. A fourth grade teacher, Ted had a chance to work closely with Earth Explore students, leading teambuilding sessions, and encouraging them during hiking, journaling and field science activities. Shortly after the conclusion of his Earth Explore program, Ted accepted a teaching job in Colorado, where he'll be closer to the Rocky Mountains, and their myriad of outdoor opportunities.

Yosemite Waterfalls

Yosemite is known for its waterfalls, and our students will be treated to an amazing display. From their cabins in Yosemite Valley, they will see up to five different cascades, including world-famous Yosemite Fall, at 2425 feet in height. That's higher than the Sears Tower and the Eiffel Tower stacked together! Our expert Yosemite Institute guides will take us to the base of Bridelveil and Yosemite Falls for special discoveries and behind the scenes views.



Monterey Bay Aquarium

One of the treasures of the Pacific coast, the Monterey Bay Aquarium leads the way in preserving marine species, and educating the public. Our students will participate in hands-on labs here.... touching sea cucumbers, sea stars and other marine life, and gaining a new appreciation of the richness of the world's oceans. Amazing displays introduce the rich kelp bed ecosystem, marine mammals like the sea otter and seal, and deep ocean creatures like the mysterious jellyfish.



Travel Managers

Keeping things organized

Our on-site Travel Managers play a key role at Earth Explore. They are staff members or teachers appointed by the National Office who travel with each group to handle all logistical details during the program, leaving Leaders free to devote their time and energy to the students.

That means carrying a cell phone, coordinating check-in at the hotels and program venues, and keeping the group on the tight schedule provided by the National Office.

One of our recent Travel Managers was Neva Im. According to a fellow Leader, "Neva was wonderful in every way. She jumped right in and helped out in any way she could. She made suggestions about what to do based upon her experience. The kids loved her and so did we!"



Yosemite Institute: Smaller is better

Yosemite National Park provides unmatched opportunities for hands-on learning...and part of the magic is in keeping things small. When teachers and students hit the trails, they will be split into "trail groups" of 8 to 10 students. The smaller groups allow each student a more intimate, personal experience, and also greater contact with expert Yosemite Institute instructors while hiking, examining ecosystems, and sighting wildlife. In this setting students learn more quickly, and have a greater appreciation of the spectacular natural surroundings. As student Chelsay Nordtvedt said "I thought it was rewarding because everything we did there was a lot of fun, but at the same time we were learning."