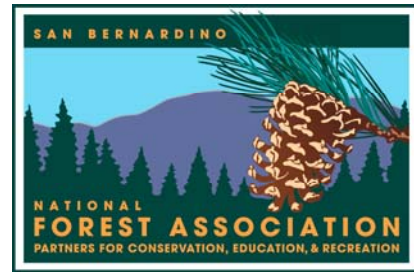


National Forest Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAN BERNARDINO, Calif., May 29, 2009

Kids! Is it time to give back to your community?

The Big Bear Discovery Center is offering a new program to local youth for summer. Youth, ages 11 and up, will have the opportunity to volunteer with the Discovery Center. Youth volunteers will have the opportunity to learn more about our forest, how to take care of the forest, and help teach your families and visitors about the forest.

You may ask, what is a volunteer?

According to San Bernardino National Forest Association (SBNFA) staff naturalist Marco Guzman, a volunteer is “someone who donates their time to give other people a quality life experience whether is taking them on a guided hike or simply taking the time to answer questions about our mountains. Volunteers are an important component of our Nation. They help rebuild the country, and have a huge impact on local communities.” Guzman coordinates volunteer programs for youth and adults in the Rim of the World School District, and now is focusing on starting a program just for Big Bear.

Kids, it *is* time to give back.

The San Bernardino Mountains are the most visited mountains in Southern California. People come from as far as Mexico to Santa Barbara, from Europe and Asia, to discover the beauty of our forest, right here in Big Bear. A few million people visit Big Bear every year. With this many visitors, our mountains need help!

We often hear youth in our communities complain that there s nothing to do in Big Bear. Well, here’s your chance! “There is so much to do out in the forest, there is no excuse to be bored in Big Bear,” explains Alison Bates, SBNFA program director, “especially if you love being outdoors and want to learn more about the forest or if you just want to do something different this year.”

Become part of the Big Bear Youth Volunteer Program. Help the San Bernardino National Forest in many different ways. Restore over-used and burned areas. Provide special programs for visitors and community members. Teach your families about protecting the land. Learn about our local history, botany, wildlife, geology and ecology.

In return, youth will get the satisfaction of giving back to the earth while learning life skills to become young naturalists. Youth will also have the opportunity to make new friends and build upon outdoor skills such as camping, hiking, backpacking, biking, and more. 15 youth from the Big Bear Valley have already started the program, and are excited about the upcoming opportunities.

For more information, youth and a parent can attend the information session being held at the **Big Bear Discovery Center on Wednesday, June 10 at 5:00pm**. Snacks and beverages will be provided free of charge. You should plan on spending an hour learning

about the program, asking questions, and meeting the staff. There is no commitment to join the program if you attend; it is just an information session.

For more information, please call Marco Guzman at 909 382-2778. You can also visit the SBNFA webpage www.sbnfa.org to learn more about volunteer programs.

The San Bernardino National Forest Association is the primary non-profit partner to the U.S. Forest Service and, through six programs and 1,000 volunteers, share a mutual mission of "caring for the land and serving the people" on the San Bernardino National Forest. The programs include Children's Forest, Big Bear Discovery Center, Off Highway Vehicle Outreach Education, Forest Care, Fire Lookout Hosts, and Wildfire Education Experience. For more information or to sponsor a program, please call Sarah Miggins, executive director, at (909) 382-2796.

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