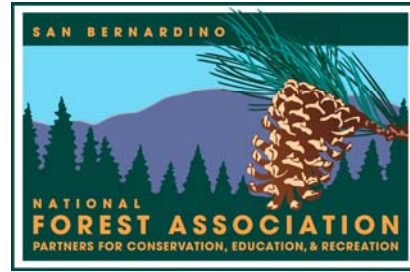


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAN BERNARDINO, Calif., September 29, 2009

Children's Forest Visitor Information Center Closing for Winter Season

The Children's Forest Visitor Information Center located at 32573 Highway 18 in Running Springs will observe a seasonal winter closure beginning October 1, 2009. The Visitor Center is busiest in the summer months, and will reopen in May with the reopening of Keller Peak Road allowing visitor access to the trails of the National Children's Forest and the Keller Peak Fire Lookout Tower. Operating hours are determined annually based on visitor and economic trends.

The Children's Forest youth volunteer program will remain active throughout the winter with a stronger emphasis on providing opportunities for youth to learn, serve, explore, and recreate in the outdoors. Volunteers will gain a deeper understanding of the ecosystem dynamics of our forest, which will be translated to visitors throughout the year. In addition, youth will have the opportunity to participate in recreation opportunities on the forest, including hiking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, rock climbing, camping, kayaking, and more.

Youth are also helping to restore the forest. The Children's Forest has a native plant greenhouse and tree nursery where youth volunteers, families, and community members can help collect seeds, germinate and grow plants, care and transplant trees and shrubs, and finally plant these native species in the forest. This forest restoration program has been most successful in 2009, with over 2,000 plants currently growing in the greenhouse.

Children's Forest Visitor Information Center opened in May 2001, providing residents and vacationers a nature-themed store, as well as an interpretive center where youth from the community teach others about the flora and fauna of the San Bernardino National Forest. The center is owned by the US Forest Service and is managed by the San Bernardino National Forest Association. This small center has been a place for personal growth and development for many mountain youth.

The San Bernardino National Forest Association thanks all in the community who support this special place, through volunteerism, donations, and partnership.

To find out more about the programs offered by the SBNFA or for information on how to volunteer with the Children's Forest, please visit the SBNFA website www.sbnfa.org.

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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 the Urban Conservation Corps.