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REI Grant Awards Children's Forest Youth Leadership Program \$15,000

RANCHO CUCAMONGA, CA – The National Forest Association is celebrating a new source of funding for its Children's Forest Youth Leadership Program: A \$15,000 grant from REI. The funding will go towards providing the program – one of six administered by the Association – with the funds it needs to continue its forest restoration, conservation and education efforts.

"This program is so important to accomplishing the goals of our organization," said Director of Environmental Education Stacy Gorin. "In order to inspire stewardship in these communities and in our visitors it really does start with kids. It's really gratifying to see them step up and become educators and leaders and that will continue to happen with the support we've received from REI."

The Youth Leadership Program has two major goals: promoting volunteerism through native plant restoration and trail maintenance projects with an emphasis on stewardship; and promoting outdoor skill-building and recreational activities. Adult volunteers lead stewardship projects and outdoor activities while program administrators design activities to convey lessons and understanding to equip youth to live as stewards of the outdoors.

While the program has many gifts to offer the San Bernardino Mountains in terms of restoration and education, it needs volunteer support to sustain its capacity for providing these services.

"We're always looking for volunteers," said Program Coordinator Monica Curiel. "We have a really dedicated group of fantastic kids and adult mentors, but we would love to see more kids come out and participate in these unique opportunities."

To learn more about how to become a Youth Leader with the National Forest Association's Children's Forest Program contact Monica Curiel at 909-382-2773.

About the National Forest Association

The National Forest Association, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and key partner to the US Forest Service, is committed conservation, education and responsible recreation through a year-round portfolio of programming aimed at reaching Southern California's urban and mountain communities and visitor populations on public lands. Through partnerships and a strong volunteer backbone network, the National Forest Association brings communities of people, partners, and funding resources to important public lands projects focused on health, stewardship and sustainability.

About Children's Forest

The mission of Children's Forest is to provide opportunities for children to take a leadership role in forest management by giving them a legitimate voice in caring for the forest; and through formal education and volunteer programs, evoke a fascination with nature that engenders a commitment to life-long learning and forest stewardship.