

National Forest Association

602 South Tippecanoe Avenue
San Bernardino, CA 92408

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 2, 2010

Contact: Sarah Miggins, Executive Director
(909) 382-2796 smiggins@fs.fed.us



Forest Aid Tree Planting Moves to Big Bear April 21, 2010

Big Bear Lake, CA. ~ Forest Aid, a partnership of the U.S. Forest Service, the San Bernardino National Forest Association and LA-based TreePeople, will move their tree planting focus from the north shore of Lake Arrowhead to the Big Bear Valley on Wednesday, April 21, just in time for Earth Day and the biggest celebrated and active weekend of Earth Month. Weather and soil conditions permitting, planting will continue through May 16, 2010. Restoring the wildfire burn areas in the Valley will take hundreds of volunteers to plant native seedlings outside of Fawnskin around the popular forest camp site Hanna Flats and YMCA Camp Whittle.

“We’re gaining Valley-wide awareness and support,” said Sarah Miggins, executive director. “On board to volunteer are the Big Bear Lake Chamber, local real estate firms such as Coldwell Banker, service organizations and school children from the Bear Valley Unified School District. We’re so pleased with the response but we need more families to come out on the weekends and tree plant with us.”

Local Bear Valley residents and visitors are needed to help restore their public land, their Valley, and for visitors, one of their favorite recreation destinations. Families with children ages 6 and older and local business groups and organizations are encouraged to join the effort by signing up at www.forestaid.net. The website lists calendar availability, preparation information and background on the program. Planting dates are Wednesdays through Sundays, 9:00am to 1:00pm, with groups focusing on weekdays and individual/family volunteers on the weekends. YMCA Camp Whittle will again serve as the initial post for volunteers to park, register and board shuttles to the actual planting site. Past volunteers have expressed feeling a real sense of personally contributing to the stewardship and future of their National Forest for generations to come.

“We’re really looking forward to a strong local turnout for these planting days; we’re hoping for a real community effort.” said David Tankersley, San Bernardino Mountains Program Manager for TreePeople who resides in Fawnskin. He also encourages folks from off the mountain to come on up and help. “Don’t be deterred by the additional few minutes of drive time from the Highway 330 closure,” said Tankersley, “The drive is still beautiful and it will be a wonderful, fulfilling day in the forest.”

Reforestation Supervisors are needed for weekday school groups, Wednesdays through Fridays, starting Wednesday, April 21 through the final week of May 12- 14, 2010. Transportation has been donated by

Forest Aid partner, TreePeople, for the local Bear Valley students to participate in a community service while learning the value of trees and their impact on watershed. Volunteer supervisors are needed to accommodate the number of students scheduled for this valuable and fun field trip. Contact the Forest Aid hotline at 909.382.2780, email your interest to info@forestaid.net, or visit www.forestaid.net.

Volunteer supervisors must be 18 years or older and can participate for 1 planting day; however, 2 or more dates are preferred. Volunteer hours vary by day, but expect an 8:00am to 2:00pm commitment. All tools and equipment are provided along with head gear and gloves. Training will be provided on the job. Forest Aid t-shirts, designed by Children's Forest youth volunteer Jeff Gumpertz, can be earned through additional volunteer days. Children's Forest is a program of the National Forest Association.

Forest Aid is one of Southern California's largest volunteer-led efforts to restore public lands. The 2010 planting season extends from March 27 – May 16. In 2009, Forest Aid's first season, more than 20,000 trees were planted by 2,500 volunteers and led by 83 volunteer Reforestation Supervisor leaders who were trained to ensure the seedlings were properly planted. The 2009 effort wrapped up at Hanna Flats campground where weather and elevation permitted the tree planting to continue into May.

One of the National Forest Association's corporate partners, Yamaha Motor Corporation, has again rallied over 100 employees from their Cypress regional headquarters in Orange County to tree plant in year two of Forest Aid on Sunday, April 25. Other Inland Empire (IE) business groups, youth organizations and students from IE universities are returning to help restore their local mountain playground.

"We're glad to see return participants this year," said Miggins. "And we're especially grateful to Liz Ortenburger, executive director, and her team at Camp Whittle for again donating their services and facilities for Forest Aid 2010."

For more information on how to join Forest Aid or on sponsor and group opportunities, please visit www.forestaid.net, contact (909) 382-2780, or email info@forestaid.net.

#

About Forest Aid: The United States Forest Service, the National Forest Association and TreePeople are partnering to plant 25,000 seedlings in 2010 to help rebuild a healthy San Bernardino National Forest. This partnership is based on a simple belief: That a single person planting a single tree can help revitalize fire-damaged areas, effect climate change, clean the air, capture rainwater and build a sense of community. Forest Aid's mission is to replant and revitalize the mountains of Southern California. For more information, visit www.forestaid.net.

About the National Forest Association (NFA):

The National Forest Association, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and key partner to the U.S. Forest Service, is committed to three initiatives addressing conservation/restoration, environmental education and responsible recreation. Its mission is accomplished through a year-round portfolio of programming aimed at reaching Southern California's inland urban, mountain communities and visitor populations on

public lands. Through partnerships and a strong volunteer backbone network, the NFA brings communities of people, partners and funding resources to important public lands projects focused on health, stewardship and sustainability. Visit www.SBNFA.org.

About TreePeople: Founded in 1973 by teenagers, TreePeople staff and volunteers continue to plant trees and restore the pollution-damaged mountains of Southern California. TreePeople's mission is to inspire, engage and support people to take personal responsibility for the urban environment, making it safe, healthy, fun and sustainable and to share the process as a model for the world. For more information call (818) 753-4600 or visit www.treepeople.org.

About the U.S. Forest Service, San Bernardino National Forest: The San Bernardino National Forest is comprised of three Ranger Districts spanning 676,666 acres in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. From the desert floor to the pristine mountain peaks, the San Bernardino National Forest offers natural environments, spectacular scenery, developed campgrounds and picnic areas, numerous recreational opportunities, and the solitude of quiet wilderness and open space for the over 24 million residents of Southern California and those visiting the area. The forest environment also provides habitat for numerous plants and animals and is crucial in sustaining drinking water, air, and soil quality. Learn more at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sanbernardino/>.

