

CONNECTING YOUTH TO NATURE

Today, many people live at odds with the environment. Many of our children are educated in a system that often devalues science and does little to encourage an awareness of and passion for the environment. And for too many kids, learning is limited to a textbook and a classroom. As a result, we are facing a growing crisis in innovation, science, and environmental education.

We are Headlands Institute, a campus of NatureBridge. Each year we welcome more than 10,000 students from 240 schools to our campus on the shores of the Pacific Ocean in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Since 1977, our residential field-science and environmental education programs have served over 250,000 diverse students from all walks of life. Our students learn that science is the key to understanding nature, appreciating their connection to the environment, and caring for our natural spaces. They leave us with the desire to use what they've learned to improve environmental stewardship in their local communities.



Our classroom includes a state of the art marine lab, 60 miles of coastal lands rich with beaches, cliffs, chaparral, mountains, prairie, live oak woodlands, salt marshes, freshwater wetlands, and redwood forests. It contains more than half of North American avian species, nearly one third of California's plant species, 33 threatened and endangered species, and 61 archeological sites. This unique learning environment helps our students realize the impact their actions back home have on the world around them and inspires them toward lifelong stewardship.

BRIDGING THE GAPS

Our energetic and experienced field science educators open students' minds and inspire the kind of learning, comprehension and curiosity about nature and science that stays with them throughout their lives. Our educators teach via three consistent themes:

- Sense of Place: Experiencing familiarity and comfort in the natural world
- Interconnections: Feeling a connection to nature, to each other, and to ourselves
- Stewardship: Appreciating and desiring to protect and conserve the natural world

Our residential environmental science education programs build scientific aptitude and encourage environmental stewardship. Over three to five days, students in grades 4 through 8 progress through three life-changing themes that establish a lasting connection to nature and their own community. School groups cover a variety of topics including marine science, watershed ecology, and local cultural history. Our programs:

- restore active, experiential learning in K-12 academics.
- teach students that science opens the door to understanding and appreciating nature.
- improve interpersonal communications skills.
- renew curiosity about the natural world and their local communities.
- enhance comprehension of environmental issues.
- prepare students for academic success and a life of environmental stewardship.

Exercises range from calculating turbidity levels in the Rodeo Pond to studying evaporation, wave cycles, and coastal erosion while standing on the beach in Fort Cronkhite. Our nationally recognized educational framework:

- increases engagement in science.
- enhances comprehension of environmental issues.
- improves group dynamics.
- increases sense of citizenry.
- renews curiosity about the natural world and local communities.

In addition to our Residential Field Science programs, our spring and summer Coastal Camp program gives children an opportunity to experience our programs in a week-long day camp setting.

BUILDING DIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

We work in close partnership with hundreds of schools from underserved communities to ensure access to our programs for students from all walks of life. Nearly one-third of our schools receive tuition assistance through our donor-supported Diversity Initiative.

Our classroom-connections program extends learning beyond a student's time at Headlands Institute. Pre- and post-trip classroom visits and customized curriculum ensures that their entire experience fits their unique needs.

In 2004, the Headlands Institute received the California Governor's Award for Environmental and Economic Leadership in Children's Education, and, in 2008, we received the Sierra Club Marin Chapter's Hannah Creighton Environmental Justice Award.

CREATING LEADERS

Each summer up to 40 teachers participate in our Science & Environmental Education Development Program (SEED). This five-day residential program, offered in partnership with the National Park Service and the University of California Berkeley Extension program, provides teachers with skills for inquiry-based teaching of environmental science and helps them create projects in their schools that communicate the concepts of sustainability and stewardship. Our teacher training program provides classroom teachers, educators, and NPS interpreters the skills they need to successfully inspire their students and integrate environmental themes into their core curriculum.

Our year-long Teen Environmental Action Mentorship (TEAM) internship program inspires diverse groups of Bay Area teens to become leaders, environmental stewards, and mentors in their schools and communities. TEAM participants discover their inner strength as leaders, their ability to influence others, and the importance of diversity, community, and hands-on learning. They gain first-hand knowledge about the field of environmental education through one-on-one mentorship with our professional educators and by leading interactive activities with our elementary school participants.

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Monterey Bay Aquarium

The Banana Slug String Band

University of California Berkeley Extension

The Marine Mammal Center

Golden Gate Raptor Observatory

A comprehensive list of partners and supporters is available on our website.

LEARN MORE

Visit us at www.headlandsinstitute.org, send an email to hi@naturebridge.org, or call us at 415.332.5771 to discover how you can become a part of the Headlands Institute and the NatureBridge community.