



# annual report 2009-2010



I am engaged. I am learning.  
I am motivated. I can lead. I am engaged. I am learning. I am motivated. I can lead. I am engaged. I am learning. I am motivated. I can lead. I am engaged. I am learning. I am motivated. I can lead.



*NatureBridge Environmental Education Programs Change Lives*

At the intersection of the current crises in education and the environment lies an opportunity—an opportunity to implement a solution that combines science education and environmental stewardship in a way that transforms lives and brightens the future for our children, our country, and our planet. We believe that solution is immersive environmental education for every student.

NatureBridge environmental education programs change lives—nearly one million since 1971. Forty thousand people participate in our programs annually at our campuses in Yosemite, the Marin Headlands, Olympic National Park, and the Santa Monica Mountains. Now we’re ready to do more. So we’re growing. Building on what we do best and increasing our relevance through new climate change curriculum, culturally relevant programs, and new technology to ensure that every NatureBridge student from every background is engaged, learning, and ready to lead.

We’re reaching new students with our first new campus in 22 years in the Santa Monica Mountains. And we’re looking forward—planning for a demonstration field science program at Prince William Forest Park in Virginia.

We are expanding our reach beyond the borders of our campuses to give teachers across the country the tools they need to transform their students into lifelong environmental stewards.

Our successful 39-year partnership with the National Park Service has inspired us to reach out to new partners. We are working with other environmental and educational leaders to promote the field of environmental education. And we are making our voice heard in the growing national discussion about education and the need to connect our children to nature.

NatureBridge wants all students to have a lifelong love for the environment, an understanding of the interconnectedness of nature, and the energy and motivation they are going to need to tackle the problems of today... and tomorrow.

We’re ready to make it happen. Are you ready to join us? Visit us at [www.naturebridge.org/ready](http://www.naturebridge.org/ready)



a message for you



NatureBridge  
Board Chairman

*Stephen M. Lockhart*  
Stephen Lockhart, M.D., Ph.D.



NatureBridge  
President & CEO

*Susan Smartt*  
Susan Smartt

*Strategy for 21st Century Environmental Education*

In October 2007, the NatureBridge Board of Directors adopted a national vision to dramatically expand youth participation in environmental education. This vision includes expansion beyond the West Coast, in partnership with the National Park Service.

**A Springboard for Sustainable Growth**

In May 2010, the Board adopted a strategic plan that charts the course toward achieving our national vision and outlines four critical drivers for our work moving forward.

- **Quality**—deliver and measure defined program outcomes
- **Reach**—bring NatureBridge programs to as many youth as possible
- **Diversity**—serve all populations in the areas in which we operate with highly relevant programs
- **Influence**—become a nationally recognized thought leader

Specific measureable goals are attached to investments in all of these areas: campus operations, program evaluation and assessment, partnerships, human resources, communications and marketing, Board engagement, and fundraising.

We are building a solid foundation for growth by strengthening our field science education programs, implementing necessary infrastructure, maintaining our strong financial position, and strengthening our relationships with the National Park Service and other strategic partners.

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## *A Framework for the Next 39 Years*

NatureBridge transforms lives. The NatureBridge Core Educational Framework is what makes it all possible. Developed in collaboration with education pioneers from Stanford University and other academic institutions, it is the foundation of all NatureBridge field science education programs.

The Core Educational Framework fosters learning experiences that develop a sense of place, identify interconnections, and encourage stewardship. It ensures that every student's experience is highly relevant and transferable to their home community. And it enables us to build standards-driven, customized programs that capitalize on student strengths and teachers' desired learning outcomes.

This year, the NatureBridge Education Advisory Council is recommending effective evaluation processes to ensure that the outcomes outlined in the NatureBridge Core Educational Framework are achieved in all of our programs, across all of our campuses.

# staying relevant

## CURRICULUM SPOTLIGHT

*NatureBridge programs continue to lead the field of environmental education. This year our Yosemite education team collaborated with the National Park Foundation, Great Smoky Mountains Institute, and North Cascades Institute to develop climate change curriculum for use at our campuses and in classrooms throughout the country. Now we are taking on the task of putting curriculum online for teachers everywhere and developing climate change-focused teacher professional development programs.*

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

*Virginia Delgado, age 19*

*San Francisco State University Environmental Studies Student*

*“If kids want to make a difference for the future of our world, the first thing they have to do is learn to love it.”*

Virginia Delgado first visited NatureBridge's Headlands Institute as a sixth-grade student at American Canyon Middle School. When she got home, Virginia told family and friends about her experience, thought more about how her actions impact the environment, and began a path of environmental leadership that would shape her life.

*“I feel like we are supposed to take care of the earth, so why not make a career of it?”*

In high school, Virginia interned with NatureBridge's Teen Environmental Education Mentorship program, where she led younger students in educational activities. She later became a counselor at our Coastal Camp. During these experiences, she saw firsthand how important environmental education is to the future of our planet.

*“I want to see change, and education is the most important way to fight global warming, environmental injustice, and the destruction of our environment and wildlife.”*

Now a sophomore in Environmental Studies at San Francisco State University, Virginia is studying policy and urban planning to help find ways for all people to have access to fresh air, clean water, and open space. She plans to go on to study environmental law.

*“I fell in love with nature at Headlands Institute, and I want to protect it. I never want a place like this to go away because of property development or bad habits that harm our environment. The best way to protect it is to make policies to ensure things like that won't happen.”*

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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Scott Gediman, Assistant Superintendent for Public and Legislative Affairs, Yosemite National Park

“My time at Yosemite Institute solidified my desire to be a park ranger. I said to myself, ‘These are the people I want to be like.’”

Scott Gediman grew up taking vacations with his family in Yosemite National Park. But he had never experienced it in the way he did when his eighth-grade class from Madison Middle School in North Hollywood spent a week at NatureBridge’s Yosemite Institute. Scott remembers how fun the educational experience was. He recalls hiking the Yosemite Falls Trail for the first time, the “sedges have edges” lesson, and smelling the Jeffrey Pine trees for vanilla. Every time he sees Yosemite Institute field science educators out with their students, he remembers how lucky he was to be one of those students and the impact this experience had on his life.

“I thought I was in heaven living and breathing Yosemite 24 hours a day. The immersion, although I didn’t know that’s what we were doing then, opened my eyes to the natural systems. I saw everything, from invertebrates to black bears to moss and lichen and pine trees, in a new and exciting way.”

The partnership between NatureBridge and the National Park Service is what makes the magic possible, Scott says. This partnership, more than anything else, instills a love and passion for Yosemite National Park among youth that keeps them coming back and keeps them bringing their families back.

“There is no way to measure the importance of this partnership. NatureBridge enables us to affect young lives in a way that we are not able to do otherwise. As these young people grow up, they are going to determine our future; they will be the leaders of our society. For them to carry their love of national parks into their adult lives helps us fulfill our mission.”

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- Yosemite National Park



\*Board lists include all members serving in 2009 and 2010.

Financial Report

NatureBridge had many key successes this year.

We worked closely with schools during this tough economic time to ensure they could continue to attend our programs, and we increased scholarships offered to students in need.

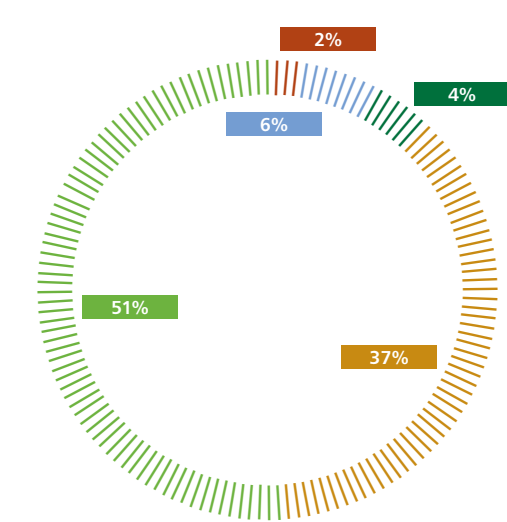
NatureBridge generated a \$427,000 operating surplus for the year, giving us a solid foundation for the success of our Strategic Plan initiatives.

Please Note: \$3,220,000 of donations and grants are related to the Environmental Education Center project in Yosemite National Park. The unrestricted fund surplus for the year was \$427,000.

Investing in Our Future

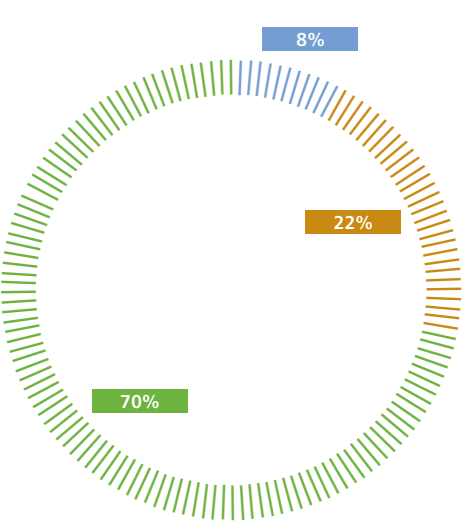
After a number of years of solid stewardship at our campuses, NatureBridge is growing again, bringing increased vitality to environmental education.

This year we made critical investments including in the Strategic Plan that will help guide our work and our growth. And we raised more capital funding for the Yosemite Environmental Education Center project. We welcomed our first students to Santa Monica Mountains Institute. More than \$500,000 was invested in this vital new campus during the year, which eventually will allow us to reach out to vast numbers of new students in diverse communities.



Income	
Field Science Programs	\$8,808,000
Donations & Grants	\$6,490,000
Adult & Conference Programs	\$1,140,000
Summer & Community Programs	\$675,000
Investments & Other	\$278,000

Total Revenue \$17, 391,000



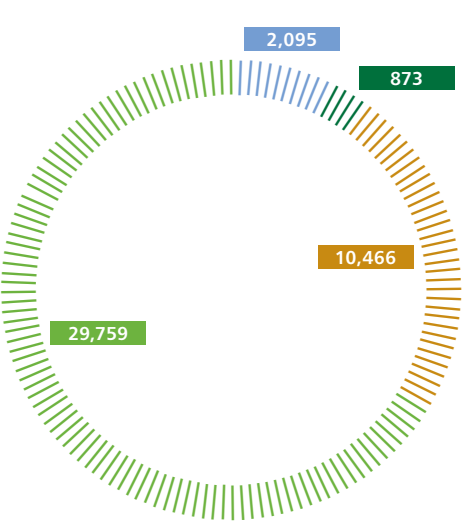
Expenses	
Program Services	\$11,111,000
General & Administrative	\$1,746,000
Fund Raising	\$1,091,000

Total Expenses \$13,948,000

The Breadth and Reach of NatureBridge Programs

This year NatureBridge served **more than 43,000 youth and adults** through our wide range of programs, of which nearly 30,000 participated in our award-winning field science education programs.

Our conference programs continue to be a good source of support for field science scholarships.



NatureBridge Program Participation	
Field Science Education Participants	29,759
Conference Participants	10,466
Community/Family/Other Program Participants	2,095
Summer Camp Participants	873

Commitment to Diversity

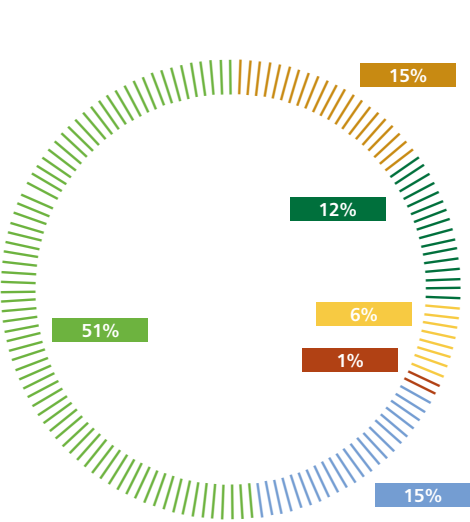
NatureBridge is deeply committed to engaging youth from all backgrounds.

This year **more than 9,000 youth** participating in our field science education programs were students of color. In the coming years, NatureBridge will continue work vigorously to ensure that the populations engaged in our programs reflect the populations of the regions we serve.

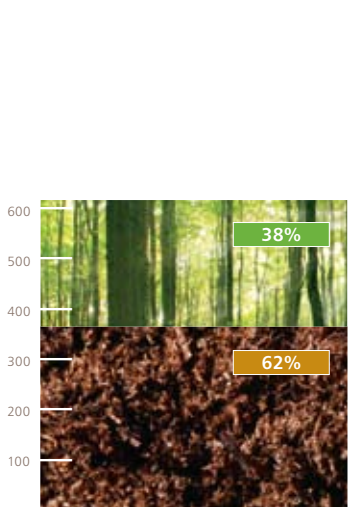
Your Contributions at Work

To meet our goal of serving a diverse student population, it is essential that NatureBridge help under-resourced schools bring their students to our transformative field science education programs.

This year NatureBridge served 608 schools and provided **more than \$900,000 in scholarships to 233 of these schools** in underserved communities throughout California and Washington.



Student Diversity in Field Science Education	
Caucasian Students	51%
Latino Students	15%
Other/Unknown Students	15%
Asian American Students	12%
African American Students	6%
Native American Students	1%



Scholarships Awarded	
Schools Awarded Scholarships	38%
Schools Paying Tuition	62%



## Recent Accomplishments

While we've been busy doing our strategic planning, we've also been continuing to grow, to develop and deliver high-quality programs, and to evolve to meet the needs of our students in the 21st Century. It has been a busy couple of years. Here are just a few of the highlights:

- We launched our first new campus in 22 years in the Santa Monica Mountains—our first step toward reaching more underserved students, in more parks, with more programs.
- We launched our digital stories initiative to help tell the stories of transformation that happen every day on our campuses.
- We launched family programs to bring families together for fun, educational, and inspiring experiences at NatureBridge campuses.
- NatureBridge President and CEO Susan Smartt was invited to testify before the Congressional Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands about how the National Park Service can improve and strengthen relationships with its mission-critical partners.
- We've strengthened existing partnerships and developed new ones with organizations including Klean Kanteen, Google, AT&T, Clif Bar, and others.

# growing, evolving

## Stay With Us

There is too much happening to include it all here. Be sure to register to receive the latest news and information from NatureBridge so you don't miss a thing.

Sign up today at [www.naturebridge.org/ready](http://www.naturebridge.org/ready)



## NATUREBRIDGE SPOTLIGHT

*Tia Skerbeck, Elwha Science Education Coordinator,  
Olympic Park Institute*

*“The Klallam say, ‘tradition is our culture, education is our future.’ I’m very lucky to be able to work so closely with my community to help fulfill that vision.”*

For 100 years the consequences of the Elwha Dam have gone far beyond environmental impacts. It has had a lasting effect on the Klallam Native American communities on Washington state’s Olympic Peninsula. Tia Skerbeck understands those impacts well. And as NatureBridge’s Elwha Science Education Coordinator, she is working to help the next generation rebuild their environment and reconnect to their culture.

A member of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, Tia grew up on the Elwha, fishing for salmon with her brother and attending “Free the Elwha River” rallies with tribal members.

*“After serving in the U.S. Army and going to college, I returned and realized that the disappearance of our language over multiple generations paralleled the disappearance of the salmon. But just like the river and the salmon, we are resilient. The Klallam language is being revitalized, and we are recapturing our cultural heritage along with our river.”*

The Elwha Science Education Project teaches students science from the perspectives of Klallam culture. It helps them connect what they are learning to the work done by their ancestors who were scientists in their own right—keeping the river healthy as well as predicting the weather, tides and currents, and salmon runs that they depended on.

*“We give the students an opportunity to visit and learn about the wilderness their great-grandparents spent so much time in, but they’ve never seen. And those cultural connections get them excited about science. They see that there are many different types of scientists. You don’t need a lab and a white coat. You can be outside, on your land, following your traditions.”*

The dam is scheduled for removal beginning in fall 2011.

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*We Thank Our Donors\**

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