

The GateWay Mountain Center – *for Place-Based Learning and Adventure*
P.O. Box 995, Soda Springs, CA. 95728
Ph. (530) 205-6245, Fx. (888) 508-2629
peter@sierraexperience.org

June 8, 2009

Bruce Herring
Bitney College Prep
11763 Ridge Road □
Grass Valley, CA 95945

Dear Bruce,

It will be our pleasure to provide guiding services this autumn for your students. I have provided a draft program description for your review, there are a number of curriculum choices, so we can easily modify this if needed. As soon as you come back to school I will provide student registration forms, hiking group lists, and equipment lists.

GUIDING SERVICES:

September 15th, Tuesday.

All students will board carpools at 8:00 am.

Arrival Time: 9:30am at the Clair Tappan Lodge

Check in and Orientation: After disembarking we will provide an orientation for the entire group - going over safety rules and Leave No Trace ethics and practices. The students will have already been assigned to hiking groups and they will know who their designated adult chaperones are. The groups will each move into the lodge with their chaperones, rooms and bunks will already have been assigned. We will then prepare our sack lunches and re-group ready to hike for the day.

Program Overview

Gateway Mountain Center programs balance field science instruction, hiking, and reflection. We emphasize active learning that is cooperative, fun, and provocative. Destinations are chosen by our staff to illustrate themes and concepts and to provide a meaningful outdoor experience. Group safety, trail conditions, group cooperation and fitness levels (including adult chaperones) are taken into account in determining a day's activities.

Sept. 15th, Tuesday through Sept. 18, Friday.

Each hiking group will do the following five course components over the course of the four days:

Riparian Habitat/streamside survey, wetland studies and restoration

The students will hike into Van Norden meadow- the headwater area of the South Yuba River. Here they will conduct a meadow/wetland habitat assessment, collecting, identifying and counting the aquatic macro-invertebrates that are indicator species for pollution and disturbances. Surveying the adjacent wetlands for “herps” (amphibians and reptiles), as well as counting the diversity of bird species. The students will complete a botanical survey determining the dominant wetland plant species in the meadow. We will then hike to assess the impacts of erosion from the nearby ski slopes, and learn about restoration work to mitigate those impacts.

History Hike

We will walk back in time passing through Tunnel 6 (infamous as the most difficult to complete section of the entire trans-continental railroad) – to the craggy gap that the emigrant Stevens and Donner parties struggled through with their wagons – down to some of the oldest petroglyphs found in the Sierra. Along the way we will share readings describing the Chinese rail worker experience, harrowing stories from the emigrant pioneers, and tales of initiation from California’s Native American tribes. Students will do a creative writing assignment describing a “day in the life” from one of the periods studied.

Forest Ecosystems/Carbon Sequestration/Forest Management

Working in the rich forest behind the lodge the students will study forest eco-systems, learning to assess forest health from a variety perspectives, depending on whether one is emphasizing timber yield, reducing fire hazard, preserving habitat, or optimizing carbon sequestration.

Rock Climbing

We will enjoy the challenge of climbing on the spectacular granite cliffs of Donner Summit.

Challenge Hike

Students will hike to the summit of Donner Peak, for spectacular views and a grand overview of the unique geology of the region.

The core curriculum is rounded out with nature games, art, sensitizing and reflection activities, and creative writing.

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Evening Programs:

Tuesday: Environmental Films

Wednesday: Night Hike

Thursday: Final evening campfire with skits/talent show

Groups will be made up of 10-12 students and one or two chaperones to one guide.

Please call with any questions, (530) 205-6245.

We look forward to sharing a fantastic learning adventure with your students next autumn!

Sincerely,



Peter Mayfield
Gateway Mountain Center