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THE YOSEMITE FUND™
Providing for Yosemite's Future

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**The Yosemite Fund to Raise \$1 million for
“Youth in Yosemite” Programs to Cultivate Future Park Stewards
“Amid Yosemite’s grandeur, young lives are changed”**

San Francisco, Calif., March 8, 2010 – The Yosemite Fund is seeking \$1 million for youth programs to cultivate future park stewards through hands-on experience in Yosemite National Park.

“These programs build knowledge, leadership skills and a love for the outdoors,” said Mike Tollefson, president of the nonprofit Yosemite Fund. “In many cases, youth work side by side with National Park Service employees doing projects that preserve, protect and improve the park. Amid Yosemite’s grandeur, young lives are changed.”

Donations will fund a variety of programs in 2010 for children and young adults.

- Crews with the California Conservation Corps (CCC), a program for young adults in their late teens and early 20s, will repair several front country trails and more than 60 miles of backcountry trails.
- Forty members of the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), a program for 15-to 18-year-olds, will spend eight weeks living in the park restoring 35 miles of trail, replacing 350 fire rings, and taking action to reduce the potential for fires in meadows.
- A Student Conservation Association (SCA) program will have college interns removing inappropriate trails and non-native plants, as well as scanning 18,000 images from Yosemite’s archives, preserving them for future generations.
- Junior Ranger educational programs for children ages 7-13 and exhibits at Happy Isles Nature Center will expand, helping excite more children with a taste of Yosemite’s unique natural features.

Contributions to Youth in Yosemite programs can be made at www.yosemitefund.org or by calling 1-800-4-MY-PARK.

Erin Anders can be counted as one of many who found a new direction through youth conservation programs. He grew up in a tough part of Los Angeles working odd jobs before he saw a CCC poster and applied for the program.

“My CCC experience refocused my life,” said Anders, who today manages National Park Service and YCC trail crews in Yosemite. “I wanted to work outdoors and to do something that showed tangible results that benefitted the land and people. The CCC’s gave me that opportunity.”

Like Anders, many who started in the CCC have gone on to careers in the National Park Service. The same is true of youth enrolled in the YCC. “YCC participants have found career paths as biologists, trail interpreters, firefighters, and park utilities and communications specialists. It has worked out fantastically,” said Jose Lopez, YCC Program Manager. Today, more than a dozen YCC alumni work in Yosemite.

Intern Adam Fix, a graduate of the State University of New York at Buffalo, has been working with the SCA on preserving its historic resources. “Although my life is short and insignificant compared to Half Dome or the Sequoia, I can use that time to help ensure places like this are preserved,” he said.

The Junior Ranger program helps children and young people forge deep connections with Yosemite National Park. Donor funding will keep the Happy Isles Junior Ranger Center open nine months a year, seven days a week in 2010, and update museum exhibits. Last year, more than 27,000 children went through the Junior Ranger Program in Yosemite.

“We’re providing programs to help show young people the magic of our national parks,” said Victoria Mates, who manages interpretive programs for the National Park Service in Yosemite. “It’s a connection we hope they will carry with them the rest of their lives.”

Since 1988, The Yosemite Fund has granted over \$55 million for more than 300 projects in Yosemite as the primary fundraising organization for the park. Its notable projects include the rehabilitation to the approach to Yosemite Falls, repair of 100 miles of hiking trails, protection of Peregrine Falcons, restoration of meadows, and improvements to the Happy Isles Nature Center. The Yosemite Fund and Yosemite Association merged in January to generate even more support to preserve, protect and enhance the park. The Association, established in 1923, is an educational, nonprofit organization that supports Yosemite through volunteerism, outdoor learning, publishing, arts, wilderness and Junior Ranger programs. Outwardly, each nonprofit will operate as they are now until mid year. To learn more about the merger and to contribute, visit the Fund at yosemitefund.org or call 1-800-4-MY-PARK and the Association at yosemite.org or 209-379-2646.

-The Yosemite Fund-NPS-

Photographs: Courtesy of NPS

- YCC crews improve drainage systems at the Wawona Campground in Yosemite. (File name: YCC Crews at Wawona Courtesy NPS.JPG)
- YCC crews repair the Glen Aulin Trail in Yosemite’s backcountry. (File name: YCC Glen Aulin Trail Work Yosemite Courtesy of NPS.pdf)
- National Park Service Ranger Christine White Loberg helps young visitors understand the difference between brown and black bears as part of the Junior Ranger program. (File name: Yosemite Jr. Ranger Program Courtesy NPS.jpg)