

NEWS RELEASE

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National Geographic Geotourism MapGuide Opens Nomination Period for Tahoe Emigrant Corridor

Nominations now open for Placer, Nevada, Washoe, Carson and Douglas Counties

Auburn—National Geographic's newest online Geotourism MapGuide—the latest in digital mapping loaded with interactive features for fun and custom trip planning—is now accepting nominations to highlight unique, and interesting places to visit in the Sierra Nevada between the Sacramento area and Reno.

The "Tahoe Emigrant Corridor" is the second of four regions to be highlighted within the enormous Sierra Nevada, through a project funded by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, the Sierra Business Council, and National Geographic's Center for Sustainable Destinations. The MapGuide highlights people, places, businesses, and events unique to the Sierra Nevada, as well as other experiences all in the form of map points on an interactive Web site.

From quaint Gold Rush era towns, awe-inspiring scenic views, recreational and dining experiences, the Sierra is rich with opportunities to explore. The MapGuide Web site is intended to point out some of the less well-known destinations and give visitors more of a local flavor.

"There is a lot more to see and experience in the Sierra Nevada beyond the more well-known and obvious destinations," said SNC Executive Officer Jim Branham. "Through the MapGuide nomination process, local folks are providing special inside knowledge of the history and current culture of the Sierra to enhance the visitor's overall experience. It's good for the visitor and it's a shot in the arm to the local Sierra economy."

Nominations of the Geotourism assets shown on the map are made by residents of the Sierra and reflect the unique character of the region.

The Tahoe Emigrant Corridor is the second of four phases of the Web site project. The first phase, the Yosemite Gateway, launched in April with approximately 1,000 nominations and has had more than 38,000 cyber visits from 79 countries in just three months. The Web site is located at www.SierraNevadaGeotourism.org.

"The Tahoe Emigrant Corridor is such a magnificent part of the region," said Sierra Business Council President Steven Frisch. "There is an entrepreneurial spirit embodied in the people who've settled here; you're sure to find unique retail shops, restaurants

and local farms working together, and local economies innovating to remain vibrant and strong.”

National Geographic defines Geotourism as “tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place; its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents.” A Geotourism study by National Geographic Traveler magazine and the Travel Industry Association of America found that at least 55 million American adults can be classified as “geotourists;” a strong incentive for scenic regions to protect assets for future visitors.

The National Geographic Society has worked with community-based alliances to develop similar Geotourism MapGuides in other regions of the world. MapGuide projects have been completed or are ongoing in California’s Redwood Coast, Central Cascades, Montreal, Greater Yellowstone, Crown of the Continent (Alberta, British Columbia, Montana), Guatemala, Sonora Desert (Arizona, Sonora), Peru, Baja California, Vermont and Appalachia.

The MapGuide Project also received funding from the Federal Highway Administration’s Scenic Byways Program and the Morgan Family Foundation.

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About the Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Created in 2004, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy is a state agency whose mission is to improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region. In its first five years, the SNC, which receives no general fund tax dollars, has awarded nearly \$30 million in grants for projects ranging from fuels reduction to trail improvements, and conservation easements to watershed restoration. Funding for these projects comes from Proposition 84 passed by voters in 2006.