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National Geographic's Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide Project Now Accepting Nominations for the Southern Sierra

National Geographic, in partnership with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and the Sierra Business Council (SBC), today announced the opening of the nomination period for the southern Sierra phase of its Web-based Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide project. From January through the end of April 2011, locals can nominate unique and interesting sites, activities, places to eat, events and much more by logging on to www.SierraNevadaGeotourism.org.

"The Sierra Nevada region has many iconic symbols that attract millions of visitors annually from around the world," said SNC Executive Officer Jim Branham. "The Sierra Nevada Geotourism Web site is now making it possible for visitors to learn about hundreds of other less well-known destinations in the Sierra that will enrich their next visit here."

"This is a great opportunity for residents of the southern Sierra to promote and share the special and unique places, festivals, events, restaurants, and historical points of interest with visitors to the region who are looking for a deeper Sierra experience," said SBC geotourism project manager Nicole DeJonghe. "The type of information you find on the map is the kind you would get through having dinner with locals."

"We define geotourism as tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place, including its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents," said National Geographic project manager Jim Dion. "Geotourism helps travelers to tread lightly and enjoy a locale's sense of place."

The MapGuide is now sweeping across the Sierra, after successful nomination periods in the Yosemite "Gateway" area and the Tahoe Emigrant Corridor in 2010. Since the MapGuide was created, more than 800 authentic nominations have been highlighted, which have generated more than 45,000 "cyber visitors" to the Sierra.

The Southern Sierra MapGuide nomination period is expected to be equally as robust with exciting destinations like Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks and Sequoia National Forest. Hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the world come to these parks and forests to witness the majesty of the Giant Sequoias in Giant Forest

—more—

and Grant Grove, the steep canyons, such as Kings Canyon, one of the deepest canyons in North America, mountains reaching over 14,000 feet into the sky, and the incredible views from the General's Highway, Sierra Vista Scenic Byway, and others. In addition to these well-known destinations, there are many other locations and opportunities for tourists to experience along the way.

Places like Whisky Falls, The Minarets mountains, Mountain Home State Forest, Millerton Lake, Dinkey Creek, Shaver and Huntington lakes, Pine Flat Lake, Kaweah Lake, Lake Success, California Hot Springs, Kernville, Lake Isabella, and Miracle Hot Springs all beckon. The nomination area generally covers the Sierra south of Madera County, from the foothills east to the crest of the Sierra, and south to Tehachapi along highway 58.

Sierra residents and visitors, community organizations, tourism stakeholders and local businesses will nominate sites for potential inclusion in the MapGuide. A favorite local restaurant, farm, winery, hiking or biking trail, swimming hole, museum or artist gallery are examples of the type of nominations National Geographic and its project partners are seeking. The Web site will target a variety of growing travel niches—adventure and nature tourism, cultural heritage travel and agritourism—and allow for residents to select the one-of-a-kind places integral to a distinctive character of place.

Using these nominations from local residents, National Geographic will add the southern Sierra to the Geotourism Web site to promote travel that celebrates and sustains what is most distinctive about the Sierra Nevada, including its scenic landscapes, vibrant local communities, rich biological and cultural diversity, and captivating history.

Phase four of the Sierra MapGuide project will cover the Sierra Cascade region, and will launch its nomination period later this year.

[Click here to view the project's Frequently Asked Questions.](#)

Southern Sierra Nomination Launch Events

Tuesday, January 18th, 2:30-3:30pm

(Followed by a "How to Nominate" workshop, 3:30-4:30pm)

North Fork Mono Rancheria Community Center

Contact: Brittany Dyer, (559) 877-8663 dyerbm@gmail.com

Wednesday, January 19th, 9:30-10:30am

Tulare County Board of Supervisors Chambers

Contact: Eric Coyne, (559) 636-5005 (office) or (559) 786-5339 (cell) ECoyne@co.tulare.ca.us

Thursday, January 20th, 9:00-10:15am

(Followed by a "How to Nominate" workshop, 10:15-11:15am)

U.S. Forest Service, Sequoia National Forest,

Kern River Ranger District - Kernville Office

Contact: Cynthia Allred, (760) 376-3848 cynthia@destinotravelcompany.com

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Objectives

The Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide Project seeks to promote tourism for the 21st century, tourism that can conserve the region's historic towns and heritage sites, restore and protect the landscape, and sustain local businesses and communities.

Attractions, businesses, and events distinctive to the Sierra Nevada will be recognized, providing travelers with a richer and more complete experience spread throughout the Sierra Nevada. Hence, this project seeks to celebrate the Sierra Nevada as a world-class destination, while contributing to the economic health of the region by promoting sustainable tourism.

Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide Examples (Click on any of the links below for more information)

[Granlibakken Conference Center and Lodge](#)

Granlibakken was built in 1928 and is known for its winter activities beginning with the Olympic Winter Games when it was the site for the ice rink, toboggan slide and jump hill. It has a long history going back to 1929, founding the Lake Tahoe Ski Club.

[Wagon Train Re-enactment](#)

Every June, men, women and children take the six-day, 90-mile organized ride over Echo Summit at Highway 50 down to the West Slope in horse-drawn travel carriages typical of those used in the 1860s and 1870s. The trek includes a dozen covered carriages, 75 horseback riders, two tons of hay and grain for the horses, several hundred pounds of beans, stew fixings, beef, pork, bacon, eggs and cowboy coffee for the riders.

[Borges Sleigh and Carriage Rides](#)

Family owned enterprise runs year-around all over the Tahoe-Truckee region offering incredible vistas and guided tours, on hand made carriages pulled by beautiful Belgium draft horses.

[Mono Market](#)

Originally started in 1927 as residence, but later converted into a market. Known for everything from organic produce, to excellent beef from Reno and everything needed for a camping trip. Locals rave about the Monoritos, a unique style of burrito.

[Bodie State Historic Park](#)

A genuine California gold-mining ghost town, once had a population of 10,000 people. From 1877-1888, the population of the town swelled to 10,000 people and produced over \$35 million in gold and silver.

Geotourism Contact Information:

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