



Contacts:

For Immediate Release, May 25, 2011

Sierra Nevada Conservancy: Bob Kingman or Pete Dufour (530) 823-4670
Sierra Business Council: Nicole DeJonghe or Nikki Streegan (530) 582-4800

National Geographic Sierra Nevada Geotourism “MapGuide” Project Now Accepting Nominations for the Northern Sierra Cascade Region

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 Northern Sierra Cascade region, the fourth and final phase of its Web-based Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide project.

From June 1 through the end of August, 2011, locals can nominate unique and interesting sites, activities, places to eat, events and much more by logging on to www.SierraNevadaGeotourism.org.

“This is a great opportunity for residents of the Northern Sierra and Southern Cascade region 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 geotourism project manager Nicole DeJonghe. “Consider the type of information you find on the map the kind you would get through having dinner with locals.”

“National Geographic defines ‘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.”

“There are many special places and experiences in the Northern Sierra and Southern Cascade region that would be great to share with geotourists,” said SNC Executive Officer Jim Branham. “So far this project has compiled more than 1000 authentic nominations from other parts of the Sierra on the interactive MapGuide and I’m looking forward to seeing what local residents in the north have to add.”

The MapGuide has completed nomination phases for the Yosemite “Gateway” area, Tahoe Emigrant Corridor, and the southern Sierra. The current phase includes all or part of the following eight counties: Shasta, Butte, Tehama, Modoc, Lassen, Plumas, Sierra and Yuba.

“The Sierra Nevada Geotourism Project puts small Sierra towns on equal footing with Yosemite National Park,” said Lee Adams, Sierra County Board of Supervisors.

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The Northern Sierra Cascade nomination area is the largest geographic phase the project is tackling, covering nearly sixteen thousand square miles of public lands, outdoor recreation opportunities, small towns and historic communities. Visitors can marvel at the unique geology of the region, with Lassen and Shasta serving as the region's largest volcanic mountains. Lassen Volcanic National Park, one of the least visited National Parks in the nation, is home to unexplored hiking trails, lakes, waterfalls, and hydrothermal features that deliver solace.

One example of a local geotourism nomination is the Greenhorn Creek Guest Ranch. The ranch serves up a classic dude ranch experience, allowing urban folk to trade their city shoes for cowboy boots. In the northern Sierra, wind sailing incredible geological features, and salt-of-the-earth communities abound. *Genuine* and *rustic* may describe adventures in this part of the Sierra Nevada.

"We've worked very hard to populate the map by hosting nomination phases all across the region," said DeJonghe. "We're excited to begin this final phase, featuring the Northern Sierra and Cascade Mountain regions, rounding out more than 18 months of public participation in the nomination process."

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, volunteer opportunity, 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 agricultural tourism—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 Northern Sierra Cascade region 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.

[Click here for frequently asked questions.](#)

Northern Sierra Cascade Nomination Phase Launch Event
Saturday, June 4, 2011
Graeagle, California

We encourage community members and visitors to the Northern Sierra to join our launch event during the [Lost Sierra Trail Daze](#), hosted in conjunction with the Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship Group. Volunteer with the group and join a post-work party to include live music, cold beer, a BBQ, prize drawings and the announcement of the Northern Sierra Cascade Nomination launch.

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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. The map achieves this objective because it is created by tapping into the knowledge of local people who live and prosper in Sierra communities. Because their well-being and quality of life depends greatly on tourism, this tool empowers communities to share information about a place that residents and visitors can care for.

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.

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