



www.SierraNevadaGeotourism.org

National Geographic's Geotourism Sierra MapGuide Mobile Phone "App" Reveals Local, Authentic Attractions For Labor Day Travel in the Sierra Nevada

For Immediate Release, August 29, 2012

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Travelers and visitors of all ages who are preparing to venture into the Sierra Nevada for the Labor Day weekend are invited to enjoy free downloads of a new mobile phone "app" for the National Geographic Sierra MapGuide. Sierra Nevada travel tips, restaurants, tourist information and more are now as close as your "smart phone" thanks to these new apps available for iPhone and Droid devices. The MapGuide features more than 1,500 destinations provided by local residents and Sierra insiders, for everything from iconic Sierra experiences, to wine tasting venues, funky cafes, and off-the-beaten-path adventures.

By searching for the "Sierra MapGuide" app on an iPhone or Droid device, travelers will be able to combine GPS technology and the mobile phone app to display nearby attractions, giving them the ability to not only plan their route ahead of time, but to also enjoy the fun of spontaneous discoveries.

The Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide, sponsored by the Sierra Business Council (SBC) and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), working with National Geographic, highlights unique, authentic experiences recommended by local Sierra residents from the Oregon border to south of Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks. It brings together a compelling combination of both the Sierra's little-known and famous sites, as well as volunteer opportunities, small businesses, hiking trails and more.

Highlights range from the Shasta Land Trust, an organization known for conserving natural areas and getting people "out on the land" in the Northern Sierra, to the "Cannell Plunge," a popular mountain bike ride near Kernville, east of Bakersfield. The MapGuide not only helps travelers explore the Sierra, it links those experiences to the opportunity to have a deeper connection to the land and culture.

Examples of unique attractions include the following:

- The Foresthill Divide (Placer County) Heritage Festival featuring National Gold Panning Championships, International Chili Society & Community Chili Cook-offs, California State Lumber Jack and Jill Championships, Sierra Sixguns and Sidekicks, and more!
- The Inter-Mountain Fair...an 'old-fashioned country fair' held every Labor Day weekend in McArthur (Shasta County). A local tradition since 1918, the fair features arts and crafts, exhibits, carnival, a parade, livestock, and much more. The hometown and

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friendly atmosphere makes the Inter-Mountain Fair a perfect outing for families.

- 1st Saturday in Three Rivers (Tulare County) offers food, fun and fabulous art. On the 1st Saturday of every month, artists, restaurants, and merchants of Three Rivers open their doors and invite you to join in a town-wide celebration from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"The Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide is a resource travelers can use to find unique places, events and activities throughout the Sierra – and now you can access these highlights from your smart phone," said SBC Senior Program Director Nicole DeJonghe. "It is a way to direct visitors to local attractions that keep tourism dollars within the community. The MapGuide has been built by Sierra residents nominating what they would like to see on the map, contributing their local wisdom and vision."

"Smart phone technology is becoming more popular with travelers, so linking GPS technology to the Sierra MapGuide seemed like a good fit," said SNC project manager Bob Kingman. "Now visitors can spontaneously plan their vacations on-the-go with the help of National Geographic, local residents, and their mobile phone!"

"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."

Dion noted that the online Sierra Nevada map is "living and breathing, constantly being updated." Site visitors can add comments, read what others have posted and connect to Facebook or Twitter accounts to share what they have found. In addition, it is never too late to add unique attractions to the MapGuide; nominations are continually reviewed for possible inclusion.

National Geographic, Sierra Business Council, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, and a geotourism council made up of Sierra locals will continue to steward the project. The Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide web site is www.SierraNevadaGeotourism.org

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. 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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