
NATUREBRIDGE IN YOSEMITE

APRIL 13 – 18, 2025

STUDENT INFORMATION PACKET

Welcome! You will soon embark on an exciting adventure in Yosemite National Park. This packet contains important information about the trip. Students and parents/guardians should read through the packet right away, then again as you prepare for the week in Yosemite.

CONTACTS:

- For information before the trip or to cancel:
Ana Bachman, Program Coordinator. e-mail: ana@mccconnellfoundation.org
. work phone: 530-226-6235
. cell phone: 530-515-7845
- For questions or issues during the trip:
Ashley Fuller, Lead Chaperone. cell phone: 530-262-4567
Erik Johnson, Lead Chaperone cell phone: 530-410-5495
- Emergency phone numbers during the trip See page 5

PREPARATION:

Two or three weeks before the trip, complete any forms your school requires for your upcoming absence, such as teacher permission(s), field trip release, etc. Also, obtain any assignments you will miss during your absence.

Equipment: Carefully pack the items noted on the NatureBridge Packing List. You could be miserable if you forget items on the list, as the weather in Yosemite is transitional during the month of April. The day may start sunny/warm and end rainy/cold. Groups go out into the field, rain or shine. To stay warm and dry, avoid clothes made of cotton. While you may choose to buy necessary items, you can probably borrow what you need from friends, neighbors, etc. Be sure to write your name and school on all your belongings. *Pack COMPACTLY – you will carry all your gear from the bus to your cabin.*

Physical preparation: Hikes can be steep and strenuous or flat and easy. The better shape you're in physically, the more you will enjoy activities. You don't have to go to a gym to get your legs and lungs in shape. You can climb stairs, go up and down bleachers, and do anything that gets you ready to climb to the top of a mountain!

TRANSPORTATION:

Students and chaperones will be transported to/from Yosemite National Park by chartered bus. Except for unforeseen delays, the buses run on time. **Students:** If you are running late on Sunday, April 13, call a Lead Chaperone and let them know so we don't leave without you. If you do not show up for the bus, we will call you to see where you are. **Parents:** If you would like an update on the return times, call your student after 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 18. The bus will make one meal stop on the way to Yosemite and one on the way back. Students should bring money for these two meal stops.

BUS SCHEDULE:

A name tag will be waiting for you at your pickup location. Be sure to put it on before loading the bus. This is how we take roll. If you would like to change your pickup location, email ana@mcconnellfoundation.org

If you attend ...	your pickup location is ...
Burney High School Central Valley High School Enterprise High School Foothill High School Modoc High School Redding School of the Arts Shasta High School Stellar Charter School U-Prep West Valley High School	Enterprise High School in front of Manitowa Gym 3411 Churn Creek Rd. Redding
Etna High School Golden Eagle Charter School McCloud High School Mt. Shasta High School Tulelake High School Weed High School Yreka High School	Mt. Shasta High School in front of the school 710 Everitt Memorial Hwy Mt. Shasta
Corning High School Red Bluff High School Tehama eLearning Academy Southern Trinity High School	Red Bluff High School student parking lot near the district office 1525 Douglass Street Red Bluff

Pickup location April 13

Pickup time

Mt. Shasta High School	6:00 a.m.
Enterprise High School	7:30 a.m.
Red Bluff High School	8:15 a.m.

Drop-off location April 18

Drop-off time

Red Bluff High School	6:30 p.m.
Enterprise High School	7:00-7:30 p.m.
Mt. Shasta High School	8:15 p.m.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- MARCH 3, 2025** - Required forms must be in The McConnell Foundation's hands by 5:00 p.m. If you're concerned about the post office not delivering paperwork on time, hand-deliver to 800 Shasta View Drive, Redding, CA 96003.

 - ✓ Participant Agreement
 - ✓ Code of Conduct and Photo Use Agreement
 - ✓ Community Service Verification Form and a one-page essay
- MARCH 3, 2025** – NatureBridge's online Registration Form must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. Check your email for the direct link or visit The McConnell Foundation's website at www.mcconnellfoundation.org/nature-bridge-yosemite.
- MARCH 4, 2025** - Students who missed the March 3 deadline will be dropped from the program

- **MARCH 26** – Orientation. An optional orientation is scheduled for Wednesday, March 26, at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom. A link will be emailed to you ahead of time. This informational meeting brings the week to life, provides an opportunity to hear about the program first-hand, and to ask questions. If you cannot attend, all the information you need is in this Student Information Packet.
- **SUNDAY, APRIL 13** – LEAVE FOR YOSEMITE. Bring money for meal stop in Stockton. Also bring a pillow, book, music, or anything to help you be comfortable on the long ride to Yosemite. We will stop for lunch at the Park West complex, 10506 Trinity Pkwy, Stockton, CA 952198. There are several fast-food restaurants, and students can choose whatever they like.
- **FRIDAY, APRIL 18** - RETURN HOME FROM YOSEMITE. Bring money for meal stop in Stockton.

WHILE IN YOSEMITE

Cell phone use and service: School rules apply while students are "in class" with NatureBridge educators during the day. Talking on cell phones and texting are prohibited; however, phones may be used to take pictures. Students may not use cell phones at any time in NatureBridge dorms, dining halls, or bathrooms. During free time, students may use their phones. Keep in mind that cell phone service is spotty in Yosemite because of the mountainous terrain, but it may be available depending on your location.

Teaching Sites: Students and chaperones will spend the week exploring the Yosemite Valley.

Trail Groups: Trail groups are organized with 12-14 students, two school chaperones, and one NatureBridge educator. Every effort is made to put friends and acquaintances in separate groups so that students are on equal footing and get to know one another similarly.

Daily Schedule: Students are expected to be on time, be prepared with suitable clothing and equipment, and be ready to be an active participant in NatureBridge programming for the day. Students may not choose to stay in camp because they have sore muscles or don't feel up to another day of hiking. Students who cannot participate daily will need to be picked up by their parent/guardian.

6:00–6:30 a.m.	Wake up and get ready for the day
6:45–7:45 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30 a.m.	Meet NatureBridge Educators
8:45 a.m.	Hit the trail for the day!
3:30–4:30 p.m.	Arrive back from trail
4:30–5:00 p.m.	Supervised free time
5:00–6:00 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 or 8:00 p.m.	Evening Program
9:00–9:30 p.m.	Quiet time, everyone in their own rooms
9:30 p.m.	Lights out

Lodging: Students and chaperones stay in heated tent cabins in Curry Village in the Yosemite Valley. Students are assigned to cabins of three by gender assigned at birth.

Students are prohibited from visiting cabins assigned to students of the opposite gender unless an adult chaperone is present in the room at all times. Chaperone cabins are interspersed among student cabins. To keep wildlife outside of cabins, **anything** with a scent should be stored in bear boxes located in front of each cabin.

Dining: Breakfast and dinner are served in the Curry Village Dining Pavilion. Lunch is provided by NatureBridge and is served out on the trail. Lunch is carried by students on daily hikes, and consists of simple, light, and nutritional foods.

Through the information you provide in the NatureBridge Registration Form, NatureBridge Food Service is aware of food allergies and dietary restrictions and is prepared to meet students' needs. Most dietary restrictions, including vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and dairy-free, can be accommodated. NatureBridge is unable to accommodate sugar-free, Kosher or Halal meals.

Weather and Elevation: Curry Village is at 4,000 feet. In April, the weather is very transitional, meaning it can be sunny in the morning and snowing by mid-day, so be prepared for anything. Trail groups go out in all weather conditions.

Expectations: While in Yosemite, students will live and study closely together in an unfamiliar setting, away from their homes and families. Each student is expected to:

- *Respect other participants, their privacy, and their property* – students are prohibited from visiting inside cabins assigned to students of the opposite gender unless an adult chaperone is present in the cabin at all times.
- *Not discriminate against people because of their race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender, language, talents, or special needs* – there is ZERO tolerance for this type of behavior. The Code of Conduct signed by each student is strictly enforced.
- *Be prepared for the day* – wear and pack appropriate gear in your backpack, including a pencil or pen to write with, a warm jacket, hat, gloves, rain gear, and leak-proof water bottle.
- *Respect and care for yourself and others* – stay with your group and follow all safety directions. When not on the trail, your chaperone must know where you are at all times.
- *Behave in a safe and responsible manner; do not cause physical or emotional harm* – a physical or emotional injury can ruin the trip. If you or someone you are with is injured, contact our Lead Chaperone or NatureBridge staff member immediately.
- *Dress appropriately at all times* – dressing appropriately in Yosemite is no different than dressing appropriately for school. Flip flops, tank tops, spaghetti straps, jeans that expose underwear, short shorts, etc., are examples of what not to wear.
- *Respect silence* -- be quiet and respectful, especially in the mornings and evenings, so that everyone can get enough sleep to participate and stay healthy.
- *Respect wildlife* – though it can be tempting to approach, feed, or follow wild animals, please do not. Animals can be stressed when people approach or make loud noises near them. Human food is unhealthy for wild creatures, and feeding animals can lead to their deaths. Animals can injure you and may carry serious diseases. Antagonistic human behavior may force animals into taking aggressive actions as a means of self-defense.
- *Respect the environment* – take good care of the natural world around you that will be your home for the week. Your actions can either harm or help Yosemite, so please behave appropriately.

- *Be positive environmental stewards* by conserving energy. Turn off lights and heat when not in use, also reduce, reuse, and recycle whenever possible.
- *Treat all cabins and facilities with care.* These have housed students like yourself for many years, and we hope that they continue to do so for years to come. Students are financially responsible for any damage caused by them during their stay.

Emergencies: In cases of medical emergencies, students will be taken to the Yosemite Medical Clinic facility in Yosemite Valley. The facility is professionally staffed between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. For medical issues after hours, the National Park Service Dispatch (209-379-1992) will send paramedics to the location for free. If paramedics determine that further medical attention is needed, student will be transported via ambulance (for a fee) or personal vehicle to the hospital in either Mariposa or Sonora, depending on the situation.

To facilitate billing, students should have a photocopy of their insurance card. Emergency messages can be left for students, but students cannot be reached directly during the day.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS:

Ana Bachman, Program Coordinator - before the trip	530-226-6235
Ashley Fuller, Lead Chaperone - during the trip	530-262-4567
Erik Johnson, Lead Chaperone - during the trip	530-410-5495
NatureBridge Administrative Office	209-379-9511
Yosemite Medical Clinic (9 a.m. - 5 p.m.)	209-372-4637
Road and weather information	209-372-0200
Park Service Dispatch Direct (same as 911)	209-379-1992

AREAS OF STUDY

Yosemite National Park offers a rich learning environment for supporting classroom curricula. NatureBridge programs are multidisciplinary, including science, history, arts, literature, math, and more. Activities feature active learning targeted to multiple intelligences and reflect NatureBridge's Core Educational Framework themes: Sense of Place, Interconnections, and Stewardship. In nature's classroom, students have the unique opportunity to observe, experience, and personally connect with the knowledge and concepts outlined in the California Content Standards. NatureBridge works in partnership with school groups to choose academic emphases that most effectively transfer to and from the home classroom. Core academic emphases include:

Life Science & Ecology: Practice the skills of an ecologist, discover the organisms that call this landscape home and learn how they interact and adapt to their changing environment.

Watershed Studies: Yosemite Valley offers an incredible laboratory to learn about watersheds as students hike to waterfalls, assess water quality above and below confluences and learn about how this watershed impacts the health of California's agriculture.

Earth Science & Geology: Investigate how Yosemite's picturesque rock formations came to be, how erosion changed them over time and what could happen next.

Cultural History: Explore the rich cultural history of American Indians, settlers and conservationists of the region and their ongoing legacy in Yosemite National Park.

Current Environmental Issues: Natural processes are constantly at work in Yosemite. Learn about climate change, what it is, how it affects Yosemite and how science helps us understand its impact on our environment.

Fire Ecology: Our Fire Ecology Project offers the background, investigations and NGSS-based curriculum to help students better understand fire's role in the landscape and the forces that influence it.

OUTCOMES

Connect to SCIENCE + NATURE + SELF AND OTHERS: Students experience personal growth, build interpersonal skills, gain science knowledge, strengthen critical thinking skills and learn to act as environmental stewards. NatureBridge strives to create an impactful and lasting educational program for every student.

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NATURAL COMMUNITIES STUDIED IN YOSEMITE

MIXED CONIFEROUS FOREST

Yosemite Valley's dominant community. The Sierran mixed coniferous forest contains more than a dozen species of conifers and more than two dozen broadleaf trees and shrubs. In depth studies look at the diversity of animal life that inhabits this zone, the unique adaptations of each plant species and the human and natural alterations to these forests.

GRANITE CLIFFS, ROCK OUTCROPS AND TALUS SLOPES

Yosemite's steep sided canyon walls have been scoured by glaciers and create a delicate micro-ecosystem. The invasion of a rock crevice by wind blown dust and eventually plants is an excellent example of primary plant succession. Rocks falling down from the Valley walls pile up at the base of the walls forming a unique assemblage of boulders (talus) laced with caves.

MERCED RIVER

Flowing through Yosemite Valley, the crystal Merced River, with its seasonal flow and regular floods, creates a wide variety of habitats. Riparian vegetation lines its banks, pond and marshes remain from abandoned ox-bow lakes and the turbulent water hosts a myriad of organisms. Testing water chemistry and studying streamside plants, birds and aquatic insects gives students an understanding that water forms a continuous web that unites all life.

RED FIR FOREST

The "Snow Forest" begins at 6,000 feet, near the Crane Flat Campus. This life zone receives the greatest snowfall in the Sierra and offers a community to compare with the lower elevation mixed coniferous forest. Chickarees, grouse and martens are uniquely adapted to spending the winter months in this environment.

TUOLUMNE AND MERCED GROVES OF GIANT SEQUOIAS

Towering above its neighbors, the world's largest trees persist despite numerous challenges. Drought, fire, insects, competition and glaciers have restricted the Sequoias' growth to the west slope of the Sierra. Since their "discovery" in 1833, the big trees have been a source of inspiration for writers, artists, and scientists.

MONTANE CHAPARRAL

On south facing slopes, dense brush thickets are scattered throughout Yosemite's mid-elevations. Plants such as manzanita and chinquapin have adaptations to heat and drought. This community is characterized as one of the most fire prone vegetation types in the world.

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SPECIES STUDIED IN YOSEMITE

This checklist is not intended to be comprehensive; it merely provides a sampling of what you might see during your stay in Yosemite. Two suggestions for use of the list are:

1. As a comparison between the fauna and flora of your area and the Yosemite region.
2. As a checklist to be used during your stay in Yosemite.

COMMON TREES	Black Cottonwood California Gay Laurel Canyon Live Oak Giant Sequoia Jeffrey Pine Pacific Dogwood Quaking Aspen Red Fir White Alder White Fir	Bigleaf Maple California Black Oak Douglas Fir Incense Cedar Lodgepole Pine Ponderosa Pine Sierra Juniper Sugar Pine
COMMON MAMMALS	Beechy Ground Squirrel Chickaree Mule Deer Raccoon	Black Bear Coyote Pocket Gopher Western Gray Squirrel
COMMON BIRDS	Acorn Woodpecker American Robin Belted Kingfisher Brown Creeper Dark-eyed Junco Great Horned Owl Red-tailed Hawk Red-breasted Nuthatch	American Dipper Band-tailed Pigeon Brewer's Blackbird Common Flicker Great Grey Owl Mountain Chickadee Red-winged Blackbird Steller's Jay
FISH	Brook Trout Rainbow Trout	German Brown Trout Sucker
REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS	California Newt Northern Alligator Lizard Rubber Boa Western Garter Snake	Common Garter Snake Pacific Tree Frog Western Fence Lizard Western Rattlesnake
OTHER PLANTS	Bracken Fern Hazel Nut Lupine Milkweed Sierra Gooseberry	Chinquapin Horsetail Manzanita Mistletoe Willow

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