

**Contact:**  
Beth Pratt  
209-620-6271  
[prattb@nwf.org](mailto:prattb@nwf.org)



## New NWF California Advisory Council Meets in Yosemite

*Council formed to create visionary model for connecting the diverse peoples of California to wildlife and nature*

Yosemite National Park (November 15, 2011) – On a beautiful fall day last week, Larry Schweiger, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation, welcomed the new California Advisory Council to its first meeting. “We are proud to have such a talented and dedicated group working to help the National Wildlife Federation develop a new vision for our children, our wildlife, and our future in California and beyond.”

“I was personally inspired by the first meeting of the council,” said [Beth Pratt](#), director of NWF’s California Regional Center. **“This is just the beginning of an effort that will have enormous impact on the well being of the people and wildlife of California.** With such an outstanding and visionary group to support our work, I know we can make a difference in not just protecting our natural world, but also in reconnecting people to the wonder and fun of nature.”

For 75 years, the National Wildlife Federation has inspired Americans to protect wildlife for our children’s future. In continuing its historic vanguard position in conservation and environmental education, the organization is developing a new strategy with the potential to change environmental engagement in California—and ultimately across the country.

Few places possess the biodiversity of the Golden State. Home to an impressive array of wildlife and natural landmarks, the state and its diverse communities play a critical role in a stronger conservation movement—a process that begins with education and awareness. By utilizing its existing national and state resources (more than 4 million supporters across the country, and more than 150,000 members in California) and through a comprehensive program that includes initiatives focusing on diversity and empowerment, youth and families, and schools and communities, National Wildlife Federation will work with a variety of partners—NGOs, businesses, government agencies and committed individuals—to pioneer a new approach to repowering our nation’s conservation ethic.

National Wildlife Federation seeks tackle the issue of engaging Americans in nature in a new way, and as such invited a diverse group of individuals to participate, including poets, rock-climbers, artists, corporate CEOs, and young leaders. A partial list of members includes legendary Yosemite rock climber Ron Kauk; author of *Education*

*Nation*, Milton Chen; naturalist, educator, and artist John Muir Laws; founder of Heyday Books, Malcolm Margolin; Vice President of NatureBridge, Jason Morris; retired California State Parks professional, John Mott; National Manager for Toyota, Mary Nickerson; Outdoor Afro founder, Rue Mapp; professor at UC Berkeley and author of the upcoming, *Black Faces, White Spaces: African Americans and the Great Outdoors*, Dr. Carolyn Finney; founder and Executive Director of Save the Frogs, Dr. Kerry Kriger; and, Executive Director of the Bill Lane Center for the American West, Jon Christensen.

[Rue Mapp](#), the founder of Outdoor Afro who was also recently named the National Wildlife Federation's "Wildlife Champion of the Month, is excited to be participating in the council. "I feel privileged to 'give back' to my community as a member to help make local wildlife and natural spaces more relevant and enriching in the lives of people who look like me."

**"Our meeting in Yosemite was the deepest and most inspiring conversation that I have ever participated in exploring the beautiful, and moving connections that diverse Californians already have to nature and wildlife," said council member Jon Christensen, executive director for the Bill Lane Center for the American West.** "It is heartening that the National Wildlife Federation is committed to supporting all of this powerful diversity — natural and human! — in California, and gathering all of us together in this moving quest."

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*Celebrating 75 years of inspiring Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future.*