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The American River Conservancy Seeks Proposals from El Dorado County Teachers

For the past three years, Silva Valley Elementary, in El Dorado Hills, has hosted a school-wide nature education field day. Appropriately named ‘No Child Left Inside’ Day, school staff, parents and volunteers provide over 600 students with hands-on nature and science education in an outdoor venue. Organizations like the Cameron Park Rotary, Folsom Zoo, REI and UC Davis share their knowledge and experience of nature through demonstrations with the students. Parent volunteer Gaynell Tomaszewski says the event inspires students to connect with nature. “They become better stewards of the land, and to be active participants in a school community that cares about nature.”

Silva Valley’s ‘No Child Left Inside’ Day is just one of many projects funded over the past three years by the Innovations in Environmental Education Fund (IEE). Through a charitable donation by the late Bob Massad, the IEE Fund now serves as a grant-giving program of the American River Conservancy, based in Coloma. Established to support El Dorado County educators, the IEE Fund encourages teachers to implement innovative environmental education in their classroom and community. The Fund is currently seeking projects that stress interaction with our human community and integrate environmental education into the curriculum, with a large part of each project being carried out beyond the classroom. The Conservancy invites teachers throughout El Dorado County, including the South Lake Tahoe area, to submit proposals that can be implemented over the upcoming school year.

The Fund hopes to build on the past success of programs like the ‘No Child Left Inside’ Day by offering support for projects in the \$400 to \$4,000 range. Eligible projects may focus on a variety of topics: school energy audits, water quality monitoring, field trips to public lands or nature preserves, school gardens, environmental writing workshops or other areas that spark innovation in environmental education. The deadline to submit proposals is Friday, October 7th, with award announcements coming around October 21st. Another round of funding will take place later in the school year.

Teachers, administrators and educators can find more details at the American River Conservancy’s website. Applicants may download a copy of the grant-making plan, Request for Proposal and application by visiting www.arconservancy.org/innovations. For questions or to learn more about the IEE Fund, please contact Michael Dotson, environmental education program manager at the Conservancy, 530-621-1224.

American River Conservancy

348 Highway 49

P.O. Box 562

Coloma, CA 95613

530-621-1224

Website: www.arconservancy.org/innovations

Contact Person: Michael Dotson, *Environmental Education Program Manager*

Email: michaeld@arconservancy.org