



FORESTS FOREVER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 14, 2007

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Redrawing the map of the wild *Redefining Wilderness Symposium unites thinkers and doers*

A gathering of academics, conservationists, public-lands managers, recreation industry professionals and local community members will come together at the Redefining Wilderness Symposium, to be held in the San Francisco State University Student Center on April 5 and 6.

The organizers of the symposium hope to find new ways of looking at the natural world, and new ways that thinkers, teachers, students, professionals, managers and ordinary citizens can work with each other to protect, restore, and come to understand the concept and reality of wilderness.

“What we’re trying to do is to have a truly organic and creative dialogue around our concept of wilderness in the public sphere, the academic sphere, and the professional world,” said Mike Yoshioka of Bay Area Wilderness Training, one of the sponsors of the symposium. “We want to identify areas of overlap, areas of conflict, and reconcile them, so that out of this we can develop an effective language matrix for wilderness that gives us much more of a politically and socially powerful tool.”

A wide range of speakers drawn from academia, government and private industry will address the definitions of “wilderness” and attempt to redraw the boundaries between our day-to-day experience and the natural world, and between different groups and individuals who work in, with and about wild nature.

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The ultimate aim of the symposium is to reframe the very idea of wilderness, and make new connections among people concerned with it: biologists, conservationists, land managers, child psychologists, philosophers and linguists, as well as members of the community.

The symposium will feature panel discussions of topics such as “The Living Wilderness” “Toward a Philosophy of Wilderness,” and “The Who and How of Wilderness Use.”

Paul Hughes, executive director of Forests Forever, will participate in a panel discussion of “Wilderness and the Politics of Land Management.”

In addition to the panel discussions and addresses, there will be workshops in wilderness first aid, backcountry skills, wilderness education and activism. Musical performances and art exhibits will be offered throughout the symposium, and there will be student paper and poster presentations.

“The cool thing about this symposium,” says Yoshioka, “is that there is no predetermined specific outcome. It’s like when you go out backpacking into the wilderness; you go in there knowing you’re going to explore and discover.”

Organizations sponsoring the symposium are: Bay Area Wilderness Training (www.bawt.org); Eco-Students of SFSU; Californians for Western Wilderness (www.caluwild.org); Forests Forever Foundation (www.forestsforever.org); Pacific Leadership Institute (www.pliprograms.org); and Hostelling International, Golden Gate Council (www.norcalhostels.org).

For a full schedule of panels, participants and workshops, visit the Bay Area Wilderness Training website at <http://www.bawt.org/symposium>, or call Mike Yoshioka at (530) 277-5940