I'M READY TO LEARN
CHANGING CHILDREN’S LIVES

Students and teachers tell us that there’s a clear demand for programs like NatureBridge. They also remind us of what we do best: open children’s hearts and minds to the wonder and science of nature. Our programs ignite in them the courage to take action and to make the world a healthier place.

We received more than 75 essays from a group of seventh graders at Rippon Middle School in Woodbridge, Virginia. Their hope: to be one of 50 students chosen to be part of NatureBridge’s first demonstration program in Prince William Forest Park, a national park located just outside our nation’s capitol.

“I want to learn how snakes find food when their prey are camouflaged.”
“I want to attend so I can spend time away from my life and act as if I’m a total scientist in nature.”

We don’t have to convince children that there’s a world waiting for them outside their classroom. They want to go. I am proud to say that we serve 30,000 children and adults each year. But so many more dream of the chance to expand their learning beyond the four walls of their school and explore the forests, streams, and mountains of our extraordinary national parks.

At our 40th anniversary gala this past May, we celebrated 1 million lives changed since our founding in 1971. Imagine if we could double or triple that number.

We certainly couldn’t entertain such a bold goal without the ongoing support of donors and partners like you. We dream big because children deserve it. You help make it possible.

Let’s make environmental field science education a part of every child’s life—NatureBridge is ready to answer the call. I invite you to join us in this journey.

Susan Smartt
NatureBridge President & CEO
INSPIRING FUTURE LEADERS AND SCIENTISTS

NatureBridge connects children and teens to the wonder and science of nature in some of the most majestic classrooms—our national parks.

Our students measure weather phenomena in Yosemite Valley, study marine ecology as they explore the tide pools in Golden Gate, conduct water quality testing along the watersheds of Olympic National Park, collect scientific data as they hike the peaks of Santa Monica Mountains, learn about endemic flora and fauna in the Channel Islands, and investigate macroinvertebrates in Prince William Forest.

ACCELERATING CLASSROOM LEARNING

Through hands-on field science education, our students build critical thinking skills, knowledge, and self-esteem. Students conduct scientific research that drives more informed choices and gives them a stronger understanding of our interconnections with the natural world.

“Students get to view amazing landscapes, learn about the plants and animals, and see geology and weather in action. They grow a tremendous amount as young individuals. This trip changes our students’ lives.”

—Kristen Kunzelman, teacher, Central Middle School

REMOVING BARRIERS

Each year, 30,000 students and teachers take part in our educational programs. But there are so many more to reach. We provide scholarships to more than 35% of our schools in order to reach more students from underserved communities.

STUDENT DIVERSITY IN NATUREBRIDGE PROGRAMS

- 50% Caucasian
- 18% Latino
- 18% Asian-American
- 7% African-American
- 7% Multiracial/Unspecified
THE POWER OF PLACE

In 2012, with support from Google™, we opened our first East Coast campus in Virginia’s Prince William Forest Park and sparked the curiosity and imagination of local middle school students.

Programs like Prince William Forest demonstrate firsthand how environmental education can change a child’s life, instilling a passion for nature and science. Director of the National Park Service Jon Jarvis joined a group of students on the trail. Below, he reflects on that experience and the importance of connecting young people to our national parks and with programs like NatureBridge.

CHILDREN RETURN TO PRINCE WILLIAM FOREST PARK

Prince William Forest Park is a place near and dear to my heart. I spent four fantastic years as a national park ranger here. During this time, one of my favorite memories was the sound of children on the trails and in the camps. Last year, these memories came back to the surface when I once again heard the voices of children and saw them exploring and learning in this amazing park with NatureBridge.

I was down in the stream with seventh grade students from Rippon Middle School, and they were so excited to catch “things” in the creek. They tested the dissolved oxygen and talked about the pH, and they knew what they were talking about.

Over multiple days, this experience washed over them, and they came away changed—inspired, with a desire to become stewards.

It’s one thing to study the picture of a creek, but it’s totally different to stick your hands in that creek and pull up insects and understand this protected watershed.

“...it’s one thing to study the picture of a creek, but it’s totally different to stick your hands in that creek and pull up insects and understand this protected watershed.”

“I watched my kids walk off trail with the assignment to choose one thing to observe, describe it in their journals, and do it silently. And they did! What they had written was thoughtful, focused, and detailed. I haven’t seen that in the classroom.”

—Lisa Kight, teacher, Rippon Middle School
MAKING AN IMPACT

ENGAGING STUDENTS IN HANDS-ON SCIENCE

Our students participate in authentic science research to monitor the health of ecosystems and track changes in climate. In Olympic National Park, our students are making history as they study the largest dam removal effort in the country along the Elwha River.

Last fall, Nathan Hale students explored how plant communities were re-establishing on the deltas and measured changes in water quality and sediments. The data they and other NatureBridge students collected before and after the dam removal helps explain how the river restoration impacts the Elwha’s ecosystems. Through the lens of science, they realize that the complexity of this restoration project is larger than they ever imagined. They gain a greater understanding of their role in the environment on a local, regional, and global scale.

“To be honest, when we first started talking, I didn’t even know whether dam removal was a good thing. I’ve learned a lot. Maybe someday we’ll find a better way to do it.”

—Lisa, student, Nathan Hale High School

MEASURING OUTCOMES TO IMPROVE LEARNING

Through an innovative measurement and evaluation effort with researchers from Stanford University, we constantly seek to improve program quality and maximize field science education outcomes for every student we serve. This cutting-edge evaluation design allows for the measurement of otherwise challenging outcomes such as trust, interest, and curiosity. By providing opportunities for researchers to see our programs in action, NatureBridge contributed findings to academic publications, including The Journal of Environmental Education and Environmental Education Research.

“The Elwha River hands-on field experience with NatureBridge is the highlight of the middle school science experience for my students. Last year, when we weren’t able to attend NatureBridge, their scores on the Washington standardized test dropped to 73% from 91% the previous year, when they did attend.”

—Brenda Manson, teacher, Stevens Middle School
INVESTING IN A STRONG FUTURE

In 2010, Google™ awarded NatureBridge a $4 million grant to help build the foundation of the organization and dramatically expand our impact. Google grant funds have focused our programs, helped us gain operational efficiencies, and helped us build a stronger technology infrastructure. To support these efforts, NatureBridge invested additional funds in general and administrative costs, which is an increase compared to previous years. We expect these expenses to decline in the coming years once Google-funded projects are fully implemented.

The financial results depicted below are derived from the NatureBridge audited June 30, 2012, financial statements, which contain an unqualified audit opinion of Hood & Strong LLP. Complete NatureBridge audited financial statements can be found online at: [naturebridge.org/financials](http://naturebridge.org/financials)

### REVENUE

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<th>Category</th>
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<td>Field Science Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations &amp; Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult &amp; Conference Programs</td>
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<td>Summer &amp; Community Programs</td>
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<td>Investments &amp; Other</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
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### EXPENSES

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<td>Program Services</td>
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<td>General &amp; Administrative</td>
<td>$2,575,602</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising &amp; Development</td>
<td>$1,286,696</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$15,280,482</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Circle charts showing revenue and expenses breakdowns](image-url)
STRENGTHENING THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Our commitment to making environmental education a priority for all young people is highlighted through our leadership of the Environmental Education Collaborative, formed in 2010. NatureBridge helped launch this united group of thought leaders in partnership with Stanford University, the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, and the Pisces Foundation. The Environmental Education Collaborative will work to implement solutions that improve the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of the field of environmental education for children and teens, parents, teachers, and the greater community. Members include: Stanford University, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, California Academy of Sciences, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Pie Ranch, Exploratorium, Tuolumne River Trust, and The Lawrence Hall of Science.

Learn more about the Environmental Education Collaborative: eecollaborative.org

“There is evidence and a sense of urgency around the need to cultivate the skills and knowledge necessary to protect the environment. Together, nonprofits, researchers, and funders can create high-quality environmental learning opportunities that will prepare young people to meet future challenges and build lasting connections to the natural world.”

— Randi Fisher, cofounder and trustee, Pisces Foundation

CHANGING THE FACES OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Our Educator Development Program prepares diverse educators for success in the field of environmental education. Many graduates of this program now work at NatureBridge. Program graduate and current NatureBridge field science educator Indira Phukan sums up the impact of this program:

“Through gentle guidance, questioning, and the creation of impactful experiential moments, I found a new depth of learning that I can share with all my students.”

— Indira Phukan, field science educator, NatureBridge
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NatureBridge Prince William Forest Park

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NatureBridge is a proud partner of the National Park Service. We work closely with academic institutions, associations and coalitions, corporations, government agencies, and other nonprofit organizations committed to connecting youth to nature and advancing science education. We thank our partners for all the ways they support our work.

**Government Agencies**
- National Park Service
- Olympic National Park
- Prince William Forest Park
- Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
- US Forest Service
- Yosemite National Park

**Corporations**
- Aramark
- Delaware North Companies Parks & Resorts at Yosemite, Inc.

**Associations & Coalitions**
- California Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education
- E3 Washington
- National Military Family Association
- No Child Left Inside
- Outdoor Alliance for Kids
- Puget Sound Partnership
- Sequoia Natural History Association
- Student Conservation Association

**Government Agencies**
- Channel Islands National Park
- Golden Gate National Recreation Area
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- National Park Service
- National Science Foundation
- Olympic National Park
- Prince William Forest Park
- Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
- State of Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
- United States Geological Survey
- Yosemite National Park

**Nonprofit Organizations**
- American Rivers
- American Whitewater
- California Academy of Sciences
- California Institute for Biodiversity
- Call of the Sea
- Education Foundation for Prince William County Schools
- Exploratorium
- Feiro Marine Life Center

**Academic Institutions**
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- Lawrence Hall of Science

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THANK YOU FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

For over 40 years, NatureBridge has measured its impact on environmental education one child at a time through high quality field science programs and teacher professional development. Last year we celebrated 1 million students served. Now NatureBridge must look to a future in which leadership in the entire field of environmental education is needed, a void which, by virtue of our experience, we have a responsibility to fill.

We will continue to grow our programs and engage and connect youth with the natural world. We have also taken on the challenge of leading a collaborative effort to better define the field of environmental education, to develop integrated curricula and teaching methodology, and to provide evidence-based approaches to measurement and evaluation. These field-building efforts provide a path to reaching an even greater number of children and having an even more profound impact.

The Yosemite Environmental Education Center continues to be a focus of our work. Endowed with prominence by virtue of its location in an iconic national park, it will be the flagship campus for NatureBridge and a symbol and physical representation of environmental education throughout the world. As a laboratory for modeling best practices in the field of environmental education, it will shine as a beacon for excellence regionally and nationally as an innovative space to convene thought leaders in the field. This new NatureBridge campus has the power to transform how our country thinks about environmental education and the role that our national parks play in it.

This letter provides a unique opportunity for me to thank all of you for your ongoing support of NatureBridge. As an organization, we are stronger than ever and excited about our future. It has been a great honor to serve, and I thank you for your interest and support.

Sincerely,

Stephen H. Lockhart, M.D., Ph.D.
Chair, Board of Directors