

# High Country Life

February 2022

Published locally by:

Feather Publishing Co. Inc. and  
the Lassen County Times  
Main office: P.O. Box B,  
Quincy, CA 95971

## Local Non-Profits

### Committed to Our Community

#### Sierra Nevada Journeys Celebrates Permanent Home for STEM Education

For the past 13 years, Sierra Nevada Journeys (SNJ), an outdoor science education nonprofit, has helped more than 200,000 youth immerse themselves in nature through science to fuel their own unique connections and discoveries. The 515-acre Grizzly Creek Ranch (GCR) in Portola is now a permanent home for SNJ to inspire and serve youth.

They recently celebrated the completion of a capital campaign and purchased GCR – where they have been hosting

camp and outdoor school for more than a decade. Each year, more than 7,000 campers from across the regions attend programs at GCR.

#### Local Schools Participate

Many of the youth who attend SNJ's programs come from nearby communities and schools, including: C. Roy Carmichael, Loyalton, Johnstonville, Janesville and Shaffer elementary schools; Loyalton and Portola high schools; and Feather River College.

High school students from Portola, Quincy and Chester recently spent a few days at the camp working on leadership skills, teambuilding and environmental education.

"These eleventh and twelfth grade students are at a significant turning point in their journey to adulthood. Environmental education provides key impacts, such as improving academic performance, enhancing critical thinking and developing personal growth and life-building skills, including confidence, autonomy, and leadership. Also, we've seen environmental education increase civic engagement and positive environmental behaviors," says Executive Director Adam Yarnes.

"We want our local students to experience these same growth opportunities." Partnerships with organizations like Plumas Corporation supported this most recent leadership camp for local students.

#### Learning Experiences that Impact Our Unique Mountain Community – Forest Ecology

"We look forward to building on Plumas Bank's recent work with the Dixie Fire Fund in raising the discussion on long-term sustainability," added Yarnes. "While the bank provides disaster relief and long-term revitalization, SNJ focuses on what we do best – education through hands-on learning experiences. One of our most notable lesson series is Forest Ecology. With the devastation and impacts of forest fires in Northern

California, it is important that the education of our future generations creates a foundation for stewardship and respect of our forests."

Forest Ecology takes students from the valley to the top of the mountains. They learn about forest ecology, adaptations, survival and the interactions that make our forest such a dynamic place. Students stop at several key locations along the trail to participate in

hands-on activities that teach a variety of subjects including forest fires, food sources, survival adaptations of plants and animals, human history, shelter building and key principles regarding environmental stewardship.

"Our 515-acres of land at GCR make the perfect teaching environment. Feather River College uses our camp for its forestry program with in-depth discussions on forest management, outdoors and nature. It is a more powerful experience compared than reading it in a book," said Yarnes.

SNJ's goal is to give students an edge up academically, but also in building confidence, creating collaboration among peers and developing leadership skills.

Visit [sierranevadajourneys.org](http://sierranevadajourneys.org) to learn more.

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Above and right: Students practice their leadership and teambuilding skills on the challenge course at Grizzly Creek Ranch.



Below: Plumas Bank employees test their science skills at a Sierra Nevada Journeys' STEM station which demonstrates why the balloon doesn't pop when the skewer is inserted through the balloon.



Sierra Nevada JOURNEYS



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