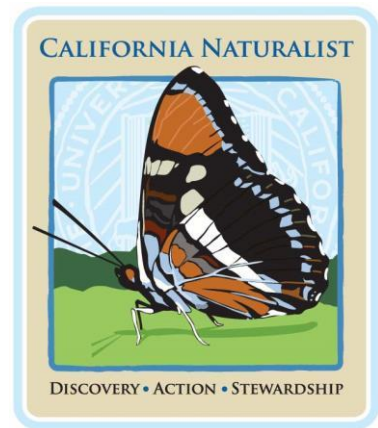


California Naturalist Training Program Coming to Big Trees

By Rebecca Miller-Cripps

Do you enjoy being in the outdoors? Exploring and learning about our local ecology? Engaging in citizen science? Sharing your knowledge with others? Then, this is the program for you! The mission of the California Naturalist program is to foster a diverse community of naturalists and promote stewardship of California's natural resources through education and service (<http://calnat.ucanr.edu/>).



Active Master Naturalist programs exist across the U.S., ranging from Arizona and Arkansas through Montana and Nebraska to Virginia and Wisconsin. To become a California Naturalist is to join a volunteer network of like-minded people across the country. In California the California Naturalist Program promotes environmental literacy and stewardship through discovery and action.

The next California Naturalist certification training class is coming to Calaveras Big Trees State Park in June. Classes will meet in the Ralston Classroom at the park on California State Highway 4 in Calaveras County. Trainees will meet for four weeks on Thursday evenings and all day Fridays, beginning June 1 and ending on June 23rd.

Aldo Leopold—naturalist, forester and professor at the University of Wisconsin—who is credited with being the father of the modern study of ecology, said, “We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.” The California Naturalist program seeks to provide information designed to enhance understanding of and create respect for the breathtaking diversity of California's natural communities. The training class will offer field discovery opportunities along with classroom lectures about various natural resources. Topics presented in a typical training program include: California geology, climate and soils; water; plants; forest and range management; animals; energy; and citizen science.

The course fee is \$225. Students must purchase *The California Naturalist Handbook* (2013, UC Press) and bring a field notebook. Registration is limited. Please expect the commitment of a collegiate level class, including reading and required projects in addition to weekly class meetings. A limited number of need-based, partial scholarships will be available.

Much more information about the program and the individual course can be found on the statewide California Naturalist website at <http://calnat.ucanr.edu/>. For online registration, click on “Become a Certified CA Naturalist” and scroll down the page to find the Calaveras Big Trees State Park course. The deadline for registration is May 1, 2017 and the scholarship application deadline is April 1, 2017 (see registration page for scholarship application)

Benefits of participation in a California Naturalist certification training course include:

- 40 hours of instruction that combine UC science curriculum with guest lecturers, field trips and project-based learning to explore the fascinating natural history of the central Sierra Nevada.
- UC California Naturalist Certification awarded upon completion of course requirements.
- Opportunities for volunteering and advanced learning across the state with participating organizations.
- Opportunity to receive UC extension academic credit
- Lifetime membership in a dedicated statewide network of naturalists

If this sounds like a fascinating program, find out more at: <http://calnat.ucanr.edu/> For additional information, call 209 795-1196 or email cbta@bigtrees.org.

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