



## Plan & Organize Your NatureBridge Program

For assistance, please contact:

**Sara Edwards, Operations Manager:** [yosemiteopssupport@naturebridge.org](mailto:yosemiteopssupport@naturebridge.org), 209-280-0608

Required Forms	Date Due to NatureBridge
Final Numbers (aka 90-day Numbers)	90 days prior to program start
Online Participant Registration Forms	6-8 weeks prior to program start
Planning Questionnaire	4 weeks prior to program start
Learning Group Lists (with medical & dietary info)	4 weeks prior to program start
Lodging Assignments	4 weeks prior to program start
Volunteer Services Agreement	Upon arrival

### Getting Started

**Review this checklist:** identify the steps you need to take in order to make your program happen. All of the paperwork referenced can be found on [naturebridge.org/yosemiteprep](http://naturebridge.org/yosemiteprep).

**Initial interest meeting:** arrange a meeting with students, parents, and faculty to present the benefits of a residential environmental science program. Print the Packing List and Student Expectations document for each family and send them the link to the online Participant Registration Form. Ask parents to come to the meeting with a portion of the payment for the trip. A financial commitment will help determine an accurate participant count. Items to address in the initial meeting:

- Introduce the program: a unique, hands-on, residential, science-based learning adventure that will incorporate the lessons your students learn in the classroom into an outdoor education experience.
- Identify program benefits: an opportunity to study in the field with Yosemite National Park as a classroom. Interdisciplinary curriculum focuses on inquiry-based science and cooperative learning.
- Ask for support: parents can be involved with organization, bookkeeping, fundraising, transportation and/or serve as chaperones during your program.
- Discuss the costs, fundraising ideas and preferred method of payment: You may choose to propose an installment plan for families unable to pay in one lump sum. Collect a deposit from parents that evening.

**Reserve transportation:** methods most commonly used include carpooling, school buses, charter service, rental vehicles and Amtrak. Unsure about arrival and departure times? Contact Operations Manager for more information.

Look over the **Planning Questionnaire** and identify the educational outcomes for your program.

**Integrate Yosemite into your curriculum:** incorporate your upcoming experience into teaching goals and objectives for the year.



**Develop a fundraising plan:** visit the Funding Ideas page at [naturebridge.org/fundraisingideas](http://naturebridge.org/fundraisingideas).

**Scholarship Application:** submit a scholarship application as soon as possible in order to maximize the potential funds for your group. NatureBridge has scholarship funds available to offset costs for qualifying schools. It is possible to submit this application with your best estimate. If your participant numbers increase or decrease, the scholarship award may change accordingly. The application can be found on the Yosemite Planning page [naturebridge.org/yosemiteprep](http://naturebridge.org/yosemiteprep). Scholarships for the current school year are due September 30. After this time, scholarships are processed as they come in, until funding runs out.

## Preparing for your Program

### Prepare your students:

- Academic readiness. Present your NatureBridge program as an academic experience. Prepare students to engage in scientific inquiry and other hands-on learning opportunities.
- Physical readiness. Ensure that students and chaperones can walk 5-7 miles a day (on varied and sometimes steep terrain).
- Participation and behavior expectations. Emphasize cooperation and universal respect. Present and review the required Student Expectations.
- Personal readiness. Stress to parents and students the importance of strictly adhering to the NatureBridge Packing List so students are safe, comfortable and prepared to learn in the field.
- If a student has shown any symptoms of gastrointestinal illness within 48 hours of the start of their NatureBridge program, we ask that you do not bring them on the program.

### Review NatureBridge [Health and Safety Plan](#)

**Participant Registration Form:** Email to students, teachers and chaperones. Students and adults must have a completed and signed Registration Form to participate in a NatureBridge program!

- You can view which of your participants has turned in their forms with a personalized group coordinator link which we will send you via email. If you lose this link, please contact the operations managers listed at the top of the page.
- There is no need to print any registration forms once they have been submitted.

**Select chaperones carefully.** Refer to the [Guidelines for Selecting Chaperones](#).

**Execute fundraising plan:** emphasize group cooperation in the fundraising efforts. Successful collaboration on your fundraising plan increases student, parent and community investment in the program's success.

## Three Months in Advance

**Final numbers (90-day numbers) due:** You should receive an invoice you can use to confirm or update your final participation numbers. The invoice will show the confirmation due date.

- What does this due date mean?
  - At that date, we lock in your participant numbers with our food and lodging vendors, as



well as complete our staffing assignments. We hold groups to a guaranteed minimum participant number past this point, which is calculated as 95% of the participant number you give us by August 15th.

- For example: You confirm your final participant count as 100 participants (adults and students combined) by August 15th. Your guaranteed minimum is now 95 total participants. If only 93 can come on the program, you'll still pay for 95.
- If at any time you need to increase your student or adult numbers, you must ask us if we have the staffing and tent cabin capacity. Our ability to accommodate increases is very limited. Please consider this when deciding on your Final Participant Number.

## Two Months in Advance

**Schedule a 7-week out phone call with NatureBridge's Operations Manager.** You should receive a phone call invitation.

**Participant Registration Forms completed online.** Please use your group coordinator link to check which adults and students are missing forms.

**Finalize transportation:** double-check your transportation times, dates and locations both to and from NatureBridge.

**Chaperone training:** We recommend the school's group coordinator facilitate a chaperone training before arriving on site. Training should include:

- An outline of the role of the teachers, chaperones and NatureBridge staff during the program.
- The school's and NatureBridge's expectations of adults on the trip. Refer to the [Chaperone Guide](#).
- The school's academic, social and personal goals for students.
- Program logistics from arrival through departure.
- Sample discipline scenarios and how to handle them.
- Double check that all chaperones have completed their Participant Registration forms (Teachers, too!).

## One Month in Advance

**Planning Questionnaire due.** Please submit via the online form.

**Learning group lists with dietary, medical and behavioral alerts due.** Please accurately list the dietary and medical needs of your students and chaperones. Note that the total number of students should be divided by 12 to determine the number of learning groups needed. Your number of Learning Groups are subject to change based on participant number decreases. Increases in participant numbers cannot be guaranteed and are based on staff and lodging availability.

**Lodging assignments due** Rooming List must be filled out. If you're staying at Curry Village in Boystown, all participants should be grouped 2 per cabin.

**Submit final payment.** Send balance due to NatureBridge, 1033 Fort Cronkhite, Sausalito CA 94965 at least 30 days prior to your start date.



## Two Weeks in Advance

**Two-week Pre-Arrival Phone Call:** schedule a phone call with our Operations Manager to finalize the details of your trip.

**Arrival Day Email:** Operations Manager will email you important documents such as gate pass, directions, and your cabin numbers. Please assign your participants to specific cabins before your arrival.

## Arrival Day

**Travel logistics:** make sure each driver has a gate pass, map, clear printed directions, and important phone numbers. Cell phones will not work for parts of the drive - printed or saved directions are important!

**Travel Communication:** clearly communicate accurate information about planned stops along the way.

**Student preparedness:** confirm that each student has the necessities for the trip, including lunch for the first day, medication and that rain gear is easily accessible. *Daypacks should be packed separately from personal overnight gear so it is ready to take on the trail after luggage is dropped in dorm rooms.*

**If you are running late, please call the Site Manager:** In Curry Village, 209-600-1509, Crane Flat, 209-347-7520. This will help us be prepared to welcome you.

**Upon arrival:** NatureBridge staff will greet you and provide directions for unloading luggage and moving into cabins. Your group will also participate in a required outdoor orientation at this time.

**Check in:** The Attending Coordinator will check the group in with a NatureBridge staff member. During check-in, you will:

- Hand in Volunteer Service Agreement Forms.
- Confirm all Participant Registration Forms are accounted for.
- Confirm final student and chaperone/adult numbers.
- Finalize learning group lists and lodging assignments to ensure they are 100% accurate.

**Evening Program:** After dinner your group will attend an evening program. Afterwards your chaperones will be responsible for helping students settle into their cabins. Quiet hours begin at 9pm and students must be in cabins by 9:30 pm and have lights out at 10:00 pm.