



**California Naturalist Central Sierra: 11-Week Training Course
September 17 – December 10, 2014; New Melones Visitor Center**

About the Course:

California Naturalist is a program developed by the University of California Cooperative Extension to foster eco-literacy and a committed corps of volunteer naturalists and citizen scientists trained and ready to take an active role in natural resource conservation, education, and restoration.

In its first year in Tuolumne County, this 11-week course provides participants with content specifically focused on the ecosystem linkages of the Sierra Nevada. The course consists of presentations and lively collaborative discussions about individual components of the ecosystem, including influences on and interconnections with the whole system. Led by scholars and professionals in their fields, these sessions introduce and expand on the roles and importance of each entity, using examples from Sierra communities while relating to California’s unique ecology and natural history. Time in the field with researchers and professionals gives participants first-hand experiences in seeing nature from a scientist’s perspective as well as an opportunity to interpret what they see to make meaning for themselves and others. In order to receive certification as a California Naturalist, participants are required to attend all presentations and mandatory field sessions.

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Relate knowledge of natural history to becoming a naturalist and a Sierra Nevada steward.
2. Integrate knowledge about the interconnectedness of abiotic and biotic factors (including human) and their influence on the natural history of the Sierra Nevada.
3. Demonstrate skills in making and recording natural history observations in a field notebook.
4. Apply knowledge of the Sierra Nevada ecosystem to local and global environmental issues.
5. Understand and communicate the role of citizen science in informing the natural resources management decision making processes.

Attendance:

One excused absence is allowable with the understanding that it will be made up in an approved manner. Please note that, while we understand that unexpected demands sometimes arise, it is very hard to substitute a make up activity that can provide the depth of information and experience gained in the scheduled session, so we ask that you make a commitment to attend all sessions when you enroll in the course.

Capstone Project:

Certification also requires that each participant plan and complete a Capstone Project. See: [Capstone Project](#). We will provide examples and guidance in developing your project. No previous experience is required.

Participants may work individually or in teams to design and implement their Capstone Project. During the final evenings of the course, students give a 5-15 minute oral presentation (depending on number of people in the group) describing their Capstone Project. This could be an interpreter-style presentation similar to one given leading a hike or field service project, or it could be a formal presentation, similar to delivery at a public hearing. A short list of presentation sources must be provided to the course coordinator. You must submit the topic of your presentation by Week 5 for approval.

Volunteer Service:

After completing the California Naturalist Central Sierra training program, participants are expected to complete 40 hours of volunteer service relating to California's natural or environmental cultural history (stewardship, education/interpretation, citizen science or program support). Hours spent planning, developing and completing the Capstone Project count toward this 40-hour requirement. We provide information on local opportunities and students are encouraged to participate in and conduct activities with agencies within their own communities.

Naturalist Field Notebook:

Naturalists document their field observations with notes and sketches in a detailed Field Notebook. It is a course requirement to keep a Field Notebook during the course and hopefully beyond. Keeping a field notebook, and better yet a detailed field journal, is one of the best ways of recording observations for future reflection and for fostering continued learning and development as an experienced naturalist. Participants also record observations in an online field data collection and social networking tool called iNaturalist.

Registration and Fees:

The course registration fee is \$350. Class size is limited to 30 participants. After September 1, there is an additional late registration fee of \$50. Fees include course instruction and field sessions, course textbook: [The California Naturalist Handbook](#), graduation certificate, California Naturalist registration, website support and lapel pin. Students also need to provide a nature journal. You may wish to purchase your nature journal after we discuss journaling in class.

For an additional fee, [Continuing Education Credits \(CEUs\)](#) are available through UC Davis Extension to teachers and undergraduate students who successfully complete the course. If you desire CEUs, please speak to the course coordinator.

On-line registration can be accessed here. <http://ucanr.edu/uccecs-canaturalist-11weektrainingreg>

Meeting Times and Location:

The California Naturalist Central Sierra class will meet at the Bureau of Reclamation New Melones Visitor Center, 6850 Studhorse Flat Road, off California Highway 49, about 15 minutes from Sonora, CA.

The class will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. beginning Wednesday, September 17, concluding December 10, 2014. No class will be held during the week of October 26 and or the night before Thanksgiving, the week of November 23. Four Saturday field trips are scheduled, with dates and locations TBA.

California Naturalist Central Sierra Training: Course Syllabus - Draft

NOTE: CLASS MEETING DATES ARE SET; OTHER DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Week 1: September 17, New Melones Visitor Center, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Topic: **Introduction to the California Naturalist Program; tour of Visitor Center; discussion of Capstone Projects and Class Project.**

Staff: Rebecca Miller-Cripps, UCCE Central Sierra; Cal Nat Training Coordinator

Reading: Chapter 1, *Introduction to California Natural History and the World of Naturalists*

Field: Saturday, September 20, New Melones Visitor Center, 8:30 – 1:00

Topic: **Great Sierra River Cleanup; Citizen Science Project**

Staff: Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District, Tuolumne County Land Trust, UCCE

Week 2: September 24, New Melones Visitor Center, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Topic: **Interpretation, Communication and Citizen Science**

Staff: TBA, Interpretive Instructors

Reading: Chapter 8, *Interpretation, Communication, and Citizen Science*

Week 3: October 1, New Melones Visitor Center, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Topic: **Geology, Soils and Climate**

Guest: TBA

Reading: Chapter 2, *Geology, Climate, and Soils*

Week 4: October 8, New Melones Visitor Center, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Topic: **Water**

Guest: TBA

Reading: Chapter 3, *Water*

Field: Saturday, October 11, Bakers Station High Sierra Institute, Highway 108 near Kennedy Meadows, 9 - 3

Topic: **Water and Geology**

Week 5: October 15, New Melones Visitor Center, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Topic: **Plants**

Guest: TBA

Reading: Chapter 4, *Plants*

Week 6: October 22, New Melones Visitor Center, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Topic: **Animals**

Guest: TBA

October 29, No Class

Week 7: November 5, New Melones Visitor Center, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.
Topic: **Forest, and Woodland Resources and Management**
Guests: Susie Kocher, Natural Resources Advisor & Registered Professional Forester, UCCE Central Sierra
Reading: Chapter 5, *Forest, Woodland, and Range Resources and Management*

Week 8: November 12, New Melones Visitor Center, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.
Topic: **Range Resources and Management**
Guest: TBA
Reading: Chapter 5, *Forest, Woodland, and Range Resources and Management*

Field: Saturday, November 15
Topic: Rangeland/Forest Management
Guest: TBA

Week 9: November 19, New Melones Visitor Center, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.
Topic: **Invasive & Exotic Plants & Insects**
Guest: Beverly Bulaon, USFS Entomologist
Reading: Chapter 4, *Plants* and Chapter 6, *Animals*

November 26 – No Class: Happy Thanksgiving!!

Week 10: December 3, New Melones Visitor Center, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.
Topic: **Energy and Global Environmental Issues; Capstone Project Presentations**
Guest: TBA
Reading: Chapter 7, *Energy and Global Environmental Issues*

Field: Saturday, December 6, New Melones Visitor Center, 9 – 1
Topic: **Yellow Starthistle Mapping Project**
Guests: New Melones Rangers

Week 11: December 10, New Melones Visitor Center, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.
Topic: **Capstone Project Presentations; Graduation**
Staff: UCCE Central Sierra