



November 3, 2021

Dear 7th and 8th Grade Parents,

Just over two months down the line we will be taking your sons and your daughters for the highlight of the school year, a week at Yosemite National Park with NatureBridge. While plenty of time remains before the trip, we want you to have this information early so that there is sufficient time to prepare and to get all your questions answered to your satisfaction.

First, the most basic information. The three chaperones for the week will be Terry Young, Mara Leonard and D'aria Rose Valbracht, all members of the Kittredge staff. The basic dates and times are as follows: We will **leave Kittredge at 10:00 AM on Monday, February 14, 2022.** A large, comfortable rented tour bus will provide transportation to and from Yosemite. We hope to be *on the road* by 10 o'clock that day. We will stop for a fast-food lunch along the way, but anyone who prefers to bring a bag lunch for the trip can certainly do that.

We will be at Yosemite throughout that week. We will leave the Park at 12:00 noon on **Friday, February 18, arriving back at Kittredge about 5:00 PM.** You can call the school that Friday afternoon for an update on our progress, but *please* be at school by 5:00 to pick up your child. We will call Kittredge as we leave the park, and again as we approach the Bay Area to confirm our arrival time. We will stop for a fast food lunch on the way home, so please furnish your child with a few dollars to cover this meal. Bag lunches will *not* be available.

NOTE: This program is an important and *required* (and graded) part of the 7th and 8th grade curriculum. If you think your child will not be attending the NatureBridge/Yosemite trip for any reason it is *crucial* that you contact Terry Young or Louise Pon-Barry **immediately**.

We will be staying at the Crane Flat campus in the high country the entire time. Do, therefore, **pay careful attention to the attached list of gear** necessary for the trip. We can tell you from experience that the kids will use just about everything on the list! Much of the necessary equipment can be rented at sporting goods stores (try G & M Sales Co., Sports Basement, Lombardi Sports or Play it Again Sports) or borrowed from other students or friends, so it may not be necessary to spend much money on purchasing items which may not get much use in the future. Each participant will need to carry all her/his own gear for some distance, so when packing be careful not to get *too* carried away.

Every student must have a completed **Registration/Health/Participant form**. This form must be completed online, and a link to that form follows: <https://www.tfaforms.com/4823340?piid=a0J5A00000VaHDR>

Attached to this letter there is also a **National Park Volunteer form** that must be completed on paper. Complete the Volunteer form at each of the arrows, so that we can do community service work around the park if called upon. Both the Volunteer form and the online Registration form should be completed as quickly as possible, please! The Registration form will be submitted electronically but the paper Volunteer form should be printed out and submitted to us at school. No student will be permitted to attend without these forms.

Please return all forms, signed, by Thursday, December 16. Completing/returning the forms even earlier, as soon as possible, is encouraged.

Each student will be provided with three meals a day by the Park food service and NatureBridge. A variety of foods is available every day. Generally speaking, the meals are quite sufficient and seconds (and *more*) are always available. By the way, the food at the Crane Flat campus is *excellent*.

There is not a lot to spend money on at NatureBridge. As previously stated, everyone will need lunch money for the ride home, as well as lunch money or a bag lunch for our trip up to the park. Anyone wishing to stock up on NatureBridge gear can do so before we go or after we return at this link: <https://www.naturebridgestore.org>

While we're on the subject of money, the cost per student for this trip will be \$360.00. This represents about one-half the actual cost per student, with the school picking up the remaining costs. When you consider the cost of transportation, food and lodging for one week at Yosemite, not to mention the highly trained educators NatureBridge provides, this is really quite a bargain. We would appreciate payment by November 30, 2021. Please make your check payable to Kittredge School, or, if you prefer, you can just ask Trudy to add the charge to your TADS account. *If this payment causes any particular hardship please don't hesitate to let Ms. Pon-Barry know. We do not want money to be the cause of any student missing out on this experience, and we will do all we can to make confidential arrangements to accommodate all families.*

Every student will be supplied with a journal upon our departure from Kittredge. Students will need to take notes on both the human and natural history of the park, geography and geology, native peoples, flora and fauna, among other topics. Journal-writing time will be provided each day and all journals will be submitted to the teachers and graded. Your daughter/son should be working on completing her/his journal upon arrival at home. It is due on Monday, February 28, immediately after the Presidents Week break. **The quality of the journal is very important.** Considerable credit will be granted in science, social studies and English/language arts.

As far as COVID mitigation is concerned, please know that NatureBridge takes this just as seriously as we at Kittredge do. Following is a link to their *Health and Safety Plan*. Much

of this plan applies to their program in the Valley, and we won't be there-- we'll be much more secluded from the general public. Looking at the plan, though, may give you an idea of the steps NatureBridge has taken to keep everyone safe. Here is a link to the plan: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1abI9KfmbZIBm9PXcn-XZ-SL6KVfidsFNle5rRa-kgQ/edit#heading=h.gjdgxs>

VERY IMPORTANT! All participants are required to be vaccinated and to be tested just prior to leaving for the trip. Naturebridge's policy is noted here:

Unless individuals have a religious/medical exemption approved by NatureBridge, all participants will need to be fully vaccinated by the start of your program. Additionally, all participants will need to take either a PRC test within 72 hours of program or an Antigen (rapid) test within 24 hours of arrival.

If you anticipate any of this being a problem, please contact us *NOW* so we can make plans accordingly.

We will be quite busy throughout the trip. The NatureBridge staff provides a highly structured and very demanding program, usually including hiking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing and indoor programs. To further enhance the experience we (and Naturebridge) require that **all electronic devices (except cameras) be left at home**. No CD players, radios, TVs, laptops, cell phones, or video cameras will be permitted. Any we find *will* be confiscated, and we cannot guarantee the safety of confiscated devices. Musical instruments are permissible, though we can't be responsible for their safety.

Please be aware that drugs, alcohol, weapons or disruptive behavior of any kind cannot and will not be tolerated. We are very serious about this. Even a Swiss Army-type knife is not permitted. In any such case the student's parents will be contacted and asked to come to Yosemite to get their child immediately. Students cannot be sent home unaccompanied on public transportation; a parent must

pick her/him up. Please discuss appropriate behavior with your son/daughter prior to the trip. Be assured we will do the same here at school.

If you'd like to take a look at NatureBridge's website, there is a wealth of information there. The link is: <https://naturebridge.org/programs/yosemite-school-environmental-science>. Please let us know if you have questions or concerns. All of us are experienced with this program and can probably put to rest any concerns you may have.

Last, let us remind you that there will be a Zoom meeting next week to give you more details and to answer whatever questions we can. **The meeting is on Wednesday, November 10, at 7:00.** We will send the Zoom link again closer to that date, for your convenience, but this is the link:

Join Zoom Meeting , 11/10, 7PM
[https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74303438599?](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74303438599?pwd=YkhUWWs5a3BoMVdsT0JRRE5ycmVIUT09)
[pwd=YkhUWWs5a3BoMVdsT0JRRE5ycmVIUT09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74303438599?pwd=YkhUWWs5a3BoMVdsT0JRRE5ycmVIUT09)

Meeting ID: 743 0343 8599
Passcode: 7F7WPP

Sincerely,

Terry Young, Mara Leonard and D'aria Rose Valbracht,
7th/8th grade teachers