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Natural Resources Fair Kicks Off New High School Science Program

PLACERVILLE, Calif. October 8, 2008—El Dorado High School students and U.S. Forest Service employees hope to foster an interest in science among more than 250 middle and elementary school students expected at a natural resources fair on October 17.

The event is called “Natural Connections” and will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Institute of Forest Genetics, located at 2480 Carson Road in Placerville. The public is invited to attend and participate in free activities.

Participants will visit more than a dozen activity stations that will teach them about topics such as archaeology, wildlife tracking, fire safety, insects, non-native invasive species, urban forestry, timber management, and map and compass use.

About 32 El Dorado High School freshman and sophomore students will lead activities, along with Forest Service natural resources professionals with the Eldorado National Forest and Pacific Southwest Research Station.

Students leading activities are part of the new El Dorado High School Natural Resources Program, which encourages them to become self-directed learners in environmental studies. Program students are expected to work in local ecosystems and the community through a curriculum that will offer classes through their senior year.

Fifth through eighth-grade students from Placerville and Sacramento will be attending the event. El Dorado High School and Forest Service officials hope many of these students will gain an appreciation for science and participate in natural resources programs when they enter high school.

“We want to spread the word that the natural world does matter,” said Leigh Nedlo, coordinator for the event. “We also want these older students to get involved in the community and learn to teach younger students.”

For more information about the Natural Connections event, contact the Institute of Forest Genetics at (530) 622-1225.

The 596,724-acre Eldorado National Forest is located in the Central Sierra Nevada Mountains. Portions of El Dorado, Placer, Alpine and Amador Counties lie within its boundary.

The Institute of Forest Genetics was originally founded in 1925 by James G. Eddy and has been operated by the Pacific Southwest Research Station, U.S. Forest Service since 1935. It serves as the premier location for research in the areas of forestry and biology. The institute was listed on the National Register of Historic places in 1987.

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