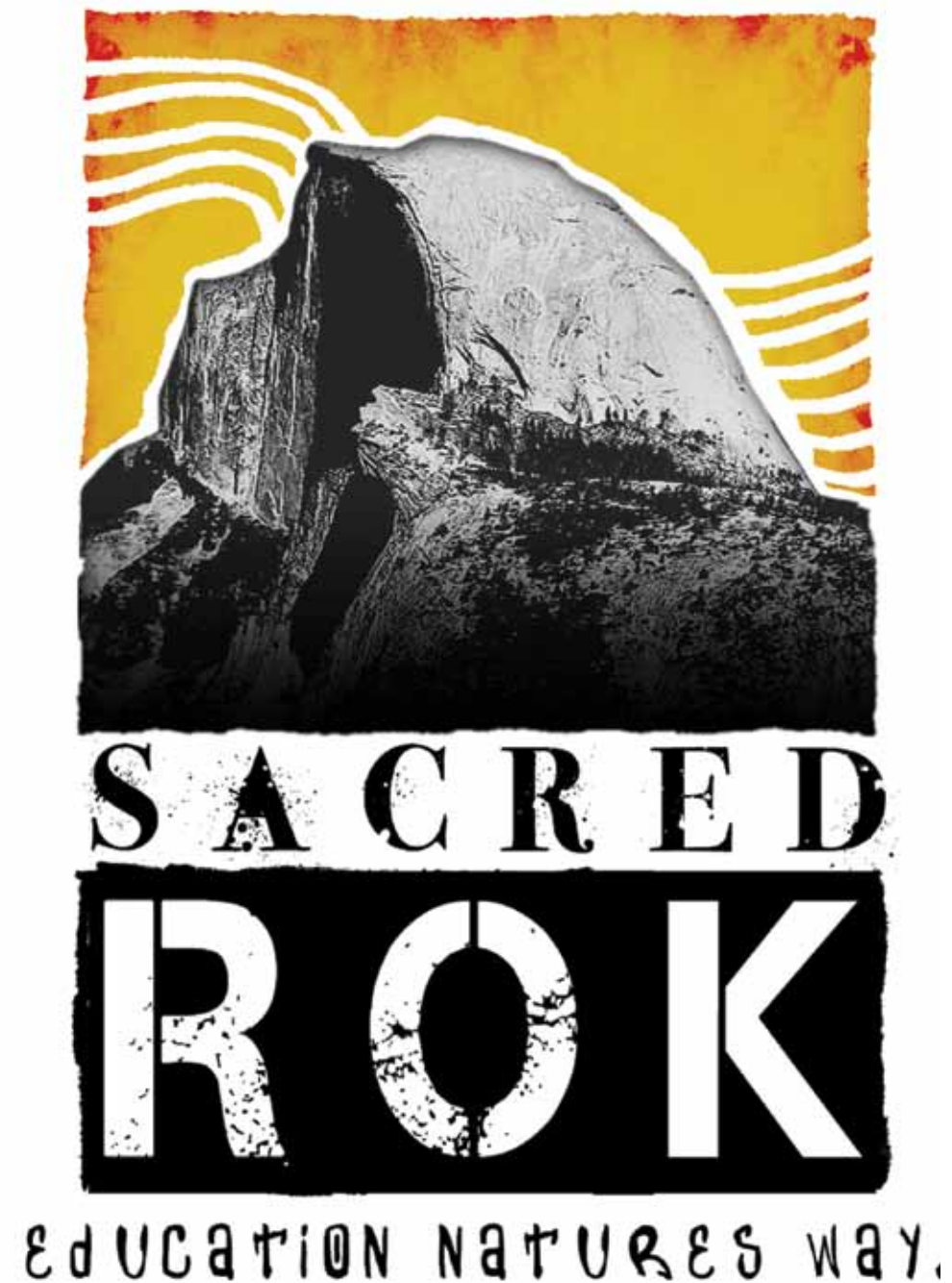




SACRED ROCK

EDUCATION NATURES WAY.

ANNUAL REPORT 2013



Letter from the Board

The Sacred Rok Board of Directors is delighted to share our Fiscal Year 2013 Annual Report, which provides an opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments and plans for the future.

As of this summer, it's been four years since we started Sacred Rok.

The Sacred Rok mission is to support youth in nature, helping youth to learn to respect nature and through that, to respect themselves. Our motto is "Education Nature's Way." Our approach is to slow down and focus on the basics—water, air, breathing, learning to walk again, learning to be human.

We accomplish our mission through day trips and camping trips with youth, as well as outreach—*Letters from Sacred Rok*, educational presentations, our newsletter, and our web site www.SacredRok.org.

Our main accomplishments this Fiscal Year, July 2012 through June 2013, year include the publication of our book, *Letters from Sacred Rok*, sharing it in a variety of venues, and leading day trips and camping trips in Yosemite National Park. We are also very excited to be working with a documentary filmmaker to tell the story of our relationship with the Probation kids in Merced.

The lessons we have learned in bringing young people into nature over the past four years are profound. We are grateful for the opportunity to share these lessons with the young people we serve as well as with the larger community. We are also very grateful to our many supporters and donors, without whom this work would not be possible.



Board of Directors:

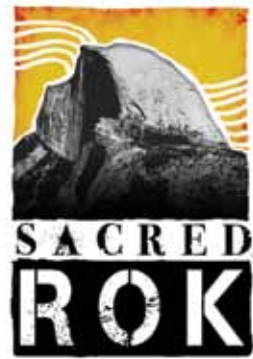
Ron Kauk *Executive Director*
Nancy Goodban *Board Chair*
Kenji Hakuta *Secretary/Treasurer*
Brian Cooley
Lamar Henderson
Steve Shackelton
Lucy Snyder

PO Box 148
Yosemite, CA 95389
www.SacredRok.org

photography: RonKauk ©2013

EDUCATION NATURES WAY.

The Year in Review



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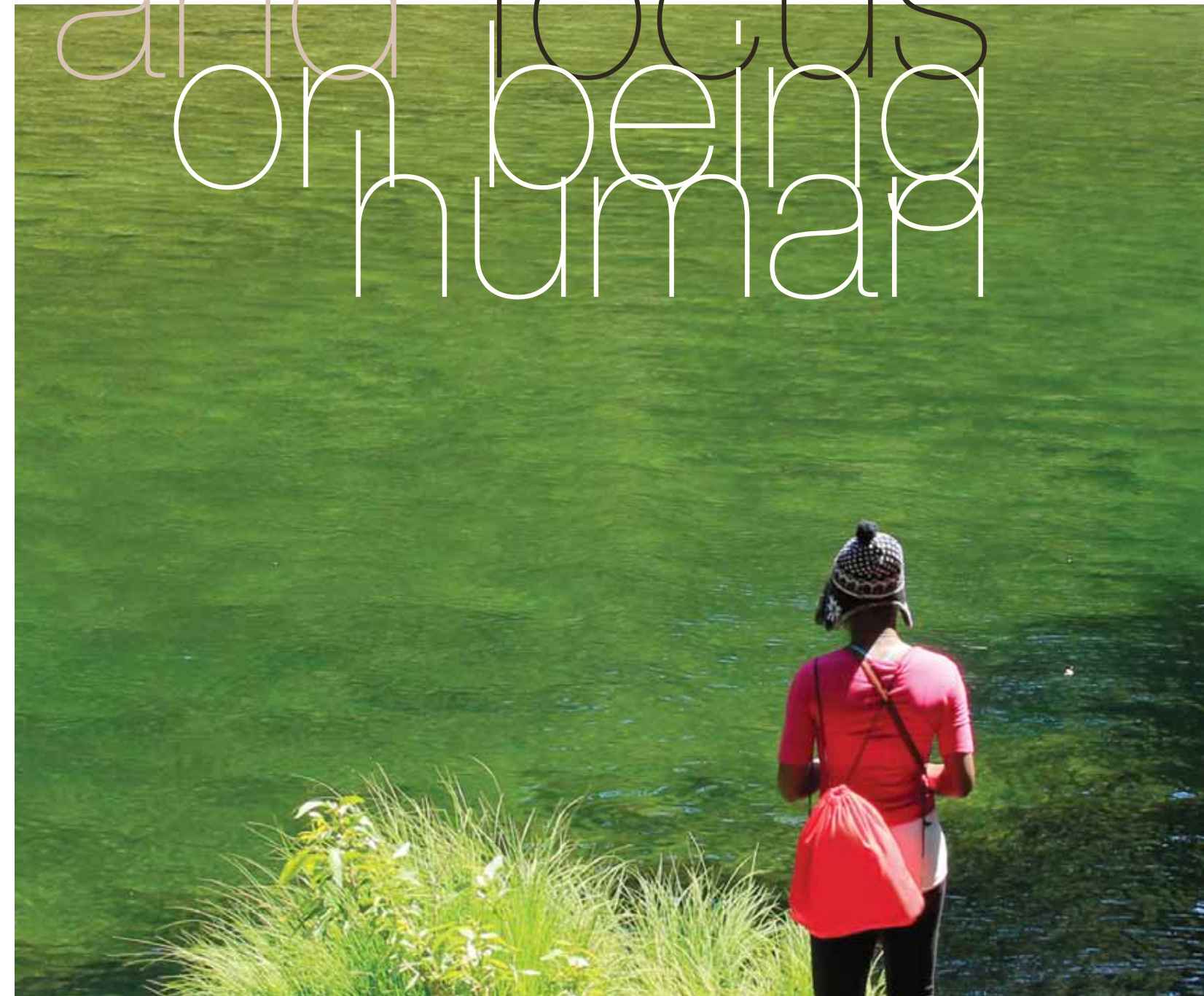
It has been four years since we started Sacred Rok. We are continuing to build relationships through the art of communication, appreciation and respect. Simply being and being in the moment - these experiences show the way back to the basics.

When we say “relationships” at Sacred Rok we mean with all life – air, water, and land. This is the Law for the Real World. When we say “communion with our senses” we mean tuning in and remembering how to feel as well as think. Our experiences continue to help us better understand the word education and commit to the reality of Education Nature’s Way.

With the support of our donors, we have led twenty-three day trips and camping trips this fiscal year with Native American youth, Merced Probation, Merced Boys and Girls Club, Symple Equazion, and Mariposa Middle School. The beauty of these outings is getting to know each other, learning how to work together or just be together, and enjoying Yosemite’s ceremony of nature. The institutions and the social conditions that form the environment that these young people experience every day contrast to their experiences with us in Yosemite.

Our spring day trips set up the opportunity to follow the trail to summer camp in Tuolumne Meadows 8000 feet up the mountain. In July we had our first camping trip of the summer with the Boys and Girls Club and soon after we hosted our second camping trip with the Mariposa Middle School. We had been with all of these youth before throughout the last two years but for some this was their first camping trip.

Our approach
is to slow
down
and focus
on being
human





Camping is always a unique and important step not only for Sacred Rok but also for the youth, and we do our best to host them in the most nurturing way.

We hope that the experiences of nature promote their human development. The trees that they smell, the wind that they feel, and the pools in the river that they dip in all become a permanent part of their cumulative life memories — a collection of their being. As well, we hope that our approach shows them that most of what we learn as humans comes from the inside. As adults, we are humble facilitators of the connection to the great teacher, nature.

By learning from the inside, we mean that the young people’s appreciation of nature happens not because we “tell them” but because they resonate to what already exists in the human spirit. Sacred Rok is a facilitator of this connection.

This lesson, something that Ron has learned over his many years from his teacher Yosemite when he was 14 – facilitated by the adults around him – is really what he wants to share through Sacred Rok. And, over the past 4 years, our opportunities – working with Merced foster care, Merced Probation, the Boys and Girls Club, the Planada youth, Native American youth, as well as groups from elsewhere in Northern California – have reinforced this lesson. The youth who have

participated with us, many of whom have come back repeatedly, have told us so, in so many ways. One Probation youth put it this way: “Yosemite is life changing and will be an inspiration for the rest of my life.” Ron has deeply appreciated these experiences, which have, in turn, been his teacher.

Where is the source of education, and what is the adult role in it? That’s really what it boils down to. Board Secretary and Treasurer Kenji Hakuta, Lee L. Jacks Professor of Education at Stanford University, says that this is one of the basic debates that goes on in his world of schools in the K-12 world. Some things for sure need to be explicitly taught – for example, connecting the script to the sounds of a language is basic to learning to read any language. But many other things need to be constructed through facilitated experience – for example, finding the deep meaning of a poem requires discussion and reflection, and diving into the self – this is hard to teach through drills and worksheets and fill-in-the-bubble approaches. Students learn by connecting meaning to their self and their spirit, and connecting to the natural world.

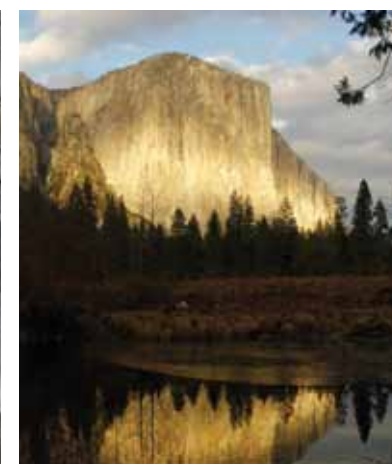
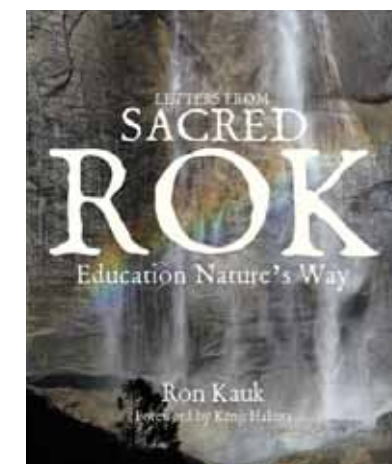
- 2013 Goals** The Board of Directors carried its four FY 2012 goals into FY 2013 and adopted them. These goals reflect Sacred Rok’s priorities and guide our efforts.
- Programming and activities such as day trips and camping;
 - Telling the story of Sacred Rok – this includes *Letters from Sacred Rok*, the newsletters, the website, and educational presentations.
 - Building organizational capacity including continuing to support grant writing, website maintenance, and bookkeeping; and
 - Finding land to provide a place where our Sacred Rok youth can return at any time for a safe haven, a refuge for these young adults to experience the healing ceremony of nature.

Activities & Accomplishments

This fiscal year was very active. Our biggest effort was that we compiled our newsletters into a book, *Letters from Sacred Rok*, published last December. We held book presentations at Heyday Books in Berkeley and at the Multicultural Arts Center in Merced. We also hosted more intimate events at the homes of Board members and supporters. These events provided the opportunity to share our story, and we found that audiences resonated strongly

to Ron’s story of how he has evolved as a climber and a person. Patagonia also offered *Letters from Sacred Rok* in its stores and on its website. Ron also continued to show his movie, *Return to Balance: A Climber’s Journey*, at the Yosemite Visitor Center on weekends in the spring and summer, and he was also able to share about Sacred Rok and our book with these visitors to Yosemite. This has provided the opportunity to connect with hundreds of people each week, and to promote the importance of these experiences in nature to the youth of today.

We reached out to the outdoor industry and foundations, and were grateful to receive grants from the North Face Explore Fund, the United Way of Merced County, and the Rotary Club of Yosemite as well as equipment donations from REI and other outdoor companies. We are especially grateful for the three-year operational grant from the Clif Bar Family Foundation.



Camping & Day Trips



The underpinning of our programmatic activities is the series of trips to Yosemite National Park led by our visionary executive director Ron Kauk, and supported by Katie Lambert, our extraordinary cook and camp manager.

Katie says, "Part of my job at Sacred Rok is to provide everyone with the best food I can conjure. This not only means good taste, it also means good for you. A lot of thought and time go into thinking of recipes, adapting recipes to fit with our mission of better health through nutrition, and what ingredients will be the most beneficial. I want to provide something warm, something healthy and something everyone will enjoy."

At Sacred Rok, nature provides our curriculum and our structure. Sunrise, sunset, wind and weather guide our activities. We follow the pace of nature, and this helps the kids to slow down and learn to breathe, walk, and listen to the water and the wind in the trees. This is not a one shot deal. These young people come back again and again, and over time we build our trust and strengthen our relationships that are simply natural. Through our experiences over the past four years, we have established the value of

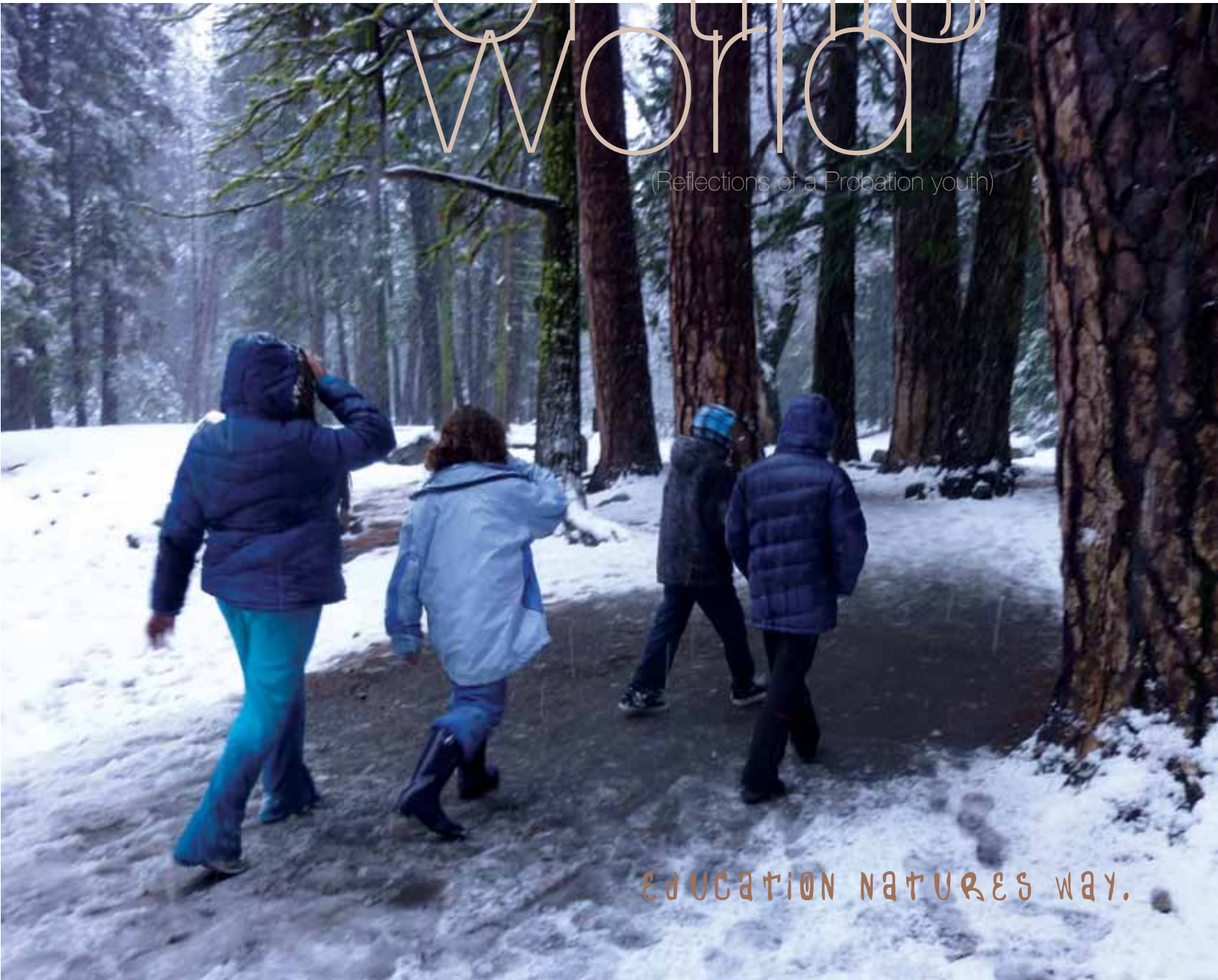
respecting the youth to connect in their own way given the chance, the value of providing healthy food, the value of place, and the continuity of learning over time. It seems as though formal institutions try to acknowledge the importance of learning from the inside, but they struggle with recognizing it fully. What we have shown is that this can be done at a small scale, working to facilitate small groups of youth with some continuity.

In Fiscal Year 2013, Ron led twenty-three trips to Yosemite National Park—nineteen day trips and four camping trips. These trips included: **Seven day trips and one camping trip with teens from Merced Boys & Girls Club.**

With funding from United Way of Merced County matched with our Family Foundation grants, Ron led seven day trips for young people from the Boys & Girls Club in Merced and followed up with a camping trip in June 2013. For these trips, the AmeriCorps mentors at the Boys & Girls Club identify which Club members will attend and work with Sacred Rok on the scheduling. The mentors also accompany the Club members on the trips and provide continuity between

"We are all travelers in this wilderness of this world"

(Reflections of a Probation youth)



EDUCATION NATURES WAY.



the Yosemite experiences with Sacred Rok and the daily Club activities. The Club members loved the wilderness experience, and created a Sacred Rok banner in honor of Earth Day, to share what the experience of trees, mountains and water meant to them.

Ten day trips and a camping trip with Merced County Probation youth who are incarcerated in Iris Garrett Juvenile Justice facility.

We have been privileged to develop a strong collaboration with Merced County Juvenile Probation over the past four years. This year, Ron led ten day trips and a camping trip with young men from Probation. The Probation youth also did trail work on these day trips, rebuilding and repairing climbing access trails in partnership with the National Park Service and with funding from Yosemite Conservancy.

The Probation youth are in long term incarceration at the Iris Garrett Juvenile Detention facility in Merced County, and are selected by the Probation Department on the basis of good behavior. They are driven up in the Probation van and accompanied on trips by a Probation Officer.

The trips have meant a lot to these young men. One requested a character reference from Sacred Rok for his court date, to show the judge that he respected other people and the larger community.

A very exciting element has been continuing to work with these young men in the classroom. With the Probation Department, we have taken our Yosemite outings into their classroom back at Iris Garrett, working on a story sharing video from our pictures and video collection over the years. With their classroom teacher at Iris Garrett, these young men have developed narratives and songs, and made a Sacred Rok sign for their door. One young man stated, “I learned the purpose of nature is to preserve it, so that the future generation can enjoy it.”



This has an amazing potential to express the contrasting worlds of being incarcerated to standing under 1000 foot waterfalls with rainbows, fresh water springs, healthy food and stress free environments – as we experience the transformation of being free to be truly human. Sacred Rok is currently working with the Probation Department and a documentary filmmaker, who has filmed these young men at Yosemite and interviewed them as well.

One day trip and a camping trip with middle school students from Mariposa.

Following our day trip with them in spring 2012, we continued to work with the Mariposa Middle School youth, with a camping trip in July and a follow-up day trip in September. These trips were funded by Clif Bar Family Foundation and the North Face Explore Fund. Their social worker/school counselor said, “Five fourteen year-olds found themselves playing, creating, interacting, and challenging themselves physically beyond their expectations of themselves. Thanks to the unique opportunity that these students have had with Sacred Rok, they have more vitality and motivation to explore beyond their borders. Isn’t that what education is all about?”

Camping trip with Native American youth.

In July 2012, local Native American elder Bill Tucker brought up five Yosemite native young people between 11 and 16 years old for a three-day camping trip. Although these young men live in nearby Mariposa, they are not always familiar with Yosemite and the rich traditions of their culture there.

The morning started early. At first light, we got the fire going. Bill would walk over to the 6-man REI tent to tell the guys to get up. It only took saying it once. It was chilly out. They all walked out to the fire, some barefoot, some





just in a T-shirt, eyes half open. It's such a magical time of day, where the idea of waking up is profound with light brushing across the trees, the birds starting to sing, squirrels running around, deer crossing the river. Having an elder to keep things in perspective and to facilitate cultural awareness was a powerful experience, talking about respecting life and how to work together in this special place with its centuries of history with indigenous people.

Day trip with Symple Equazion youth

Symple Equazion is a new nonprofit that works with young people in Merced County including young women who are attending the alternative high school after having difficulties in the regular public high school. Symple Equazion was started by Kelly Jermaine Turner, a former inmate at Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) in Chowchilla, California, where she served 13 years of a 25-years-to-life California Three Strikes sentence for forging a \$146.16 check to a department store. While incarcerated Ms. Turner successfully petitioned the California Department of Corrections to allow the women inmates to pursue a college degree – at the time they were only

permitted to study for their GED – and earned her associate's degree by taking correspondence courses. Now an author and motivational speaker, Ms. Turner applies her hard earned life lessons to help young women make better choices in their own lives.

In March 2013, Sacred Rok began a collaboration with Symple Equazion by taking three young women on a day trip. We found ourselves experiencing the healing power of nature together, looking for eagles as we meandered along.

These young women had never been to Yosemite before, and they shared with each other their difficult life experiences including one young woman who discussed the challenges of not knowing her father, another having a friend who was a “cutter” who cut herself because of her emotional pain, their own experiences with promiscuous activity, and not wanting to go home. This trip represented a healing escape from the difficulties of their daily lives. They wanted to pitch a tent and spend the night in the park. Symple Equazion is also working with young women in the Probation Department and we plan on continuing the collaboration.

Sacred Rok Outcomes

We seek positive outcomes—defined as changes in knowledge, attitude, or action —for youth participants.

Some outcomes are apparent immediately.

These short-term outcomes include an increased self-confidence in nature and caring for the environment. Young people learn to sit at peace under a tree or by a river without needing an electronic tether to communication and social media. They are calmer and better able to manage anger, and more able to control their impulses. One way to measure these outcomes is through participant surveys. We surveyed Boys & Girls Club members after each trip. Based on the survey responses, 100% of the participants stated that they had a better understanding of nature and the natural world after the trip. “One thing that was different was all the trees. At home I just see houses and cars.” All stated that they felt more confident being in nature after the trip.

In the medium term, additional outcomes are expected to be exhibited after return trips including speaking about the experience to other youth. Participants will exhibit better impulse control, and decreased stress, anxiety, and depression. Based on the survey responses, 71% of participants surveyed indicated they felt less stressful and anxious about their problems after the trip.



Longer term, outcomes include respect for nature and themselves, the feeling of being respected and valued by adults, more positive peer and adult relationships, and hopes and goals for the future that lead to more engagement in school or work. Based on another survey question of Boys & Girls Club participants we asked those who were taken on a second trip this year about how these kind of trips affect them at home and school. Eighty-six percent reported that trips like the trip to Yosemite and being in nature would help them when they were back home and in school. Fifty-seven percent said that it would help them be more patient before they acted. “Being in a relaxed environment makes you think about the solutions, not the problems.”

Probation youth shared the profound impact of the trips as they reflected on their own goals and connections to the trips they took:

“When you are motivated and dedicated you can climb any mountain.”

“The smallest choices we make now can have a huge impact on us later in life.”

“Setting goals like climbing mountains build your character and give you confidence. Setting small goals and achieving them weekly will help you be successful.”

“When you go to Yosemite listen for the call of your destiny and when it comes release your plans and follow.”

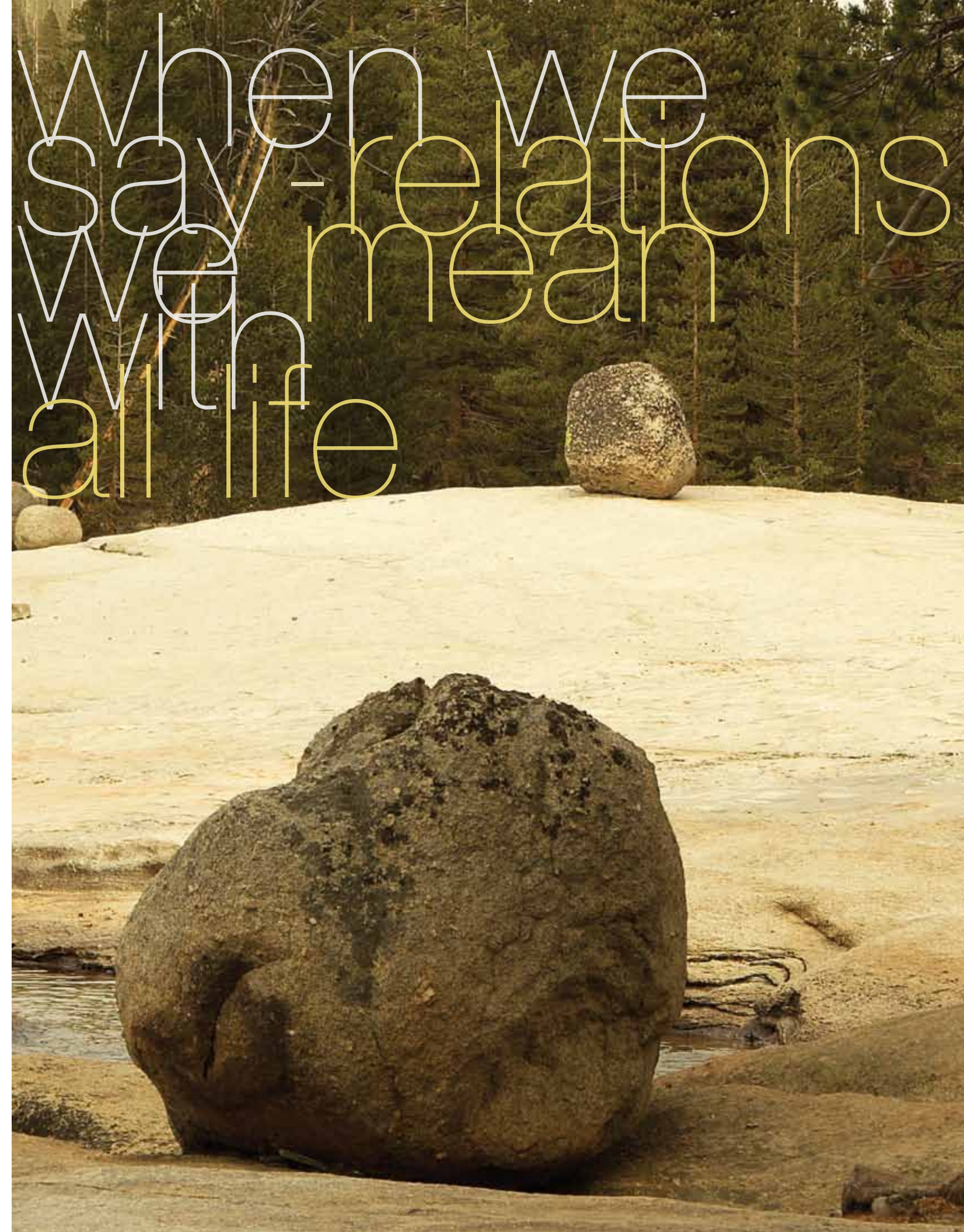


Future Plans

Here is one reflection we had this summer. There is a beautiful boulder which sits just across the river from Ron's campsite at Tuolumne Meadows Campground. It got here having floated down the canyon carried on top of a glacier thousands of years ago, and was placed here as the glacier melted. The Tuolumne River is still flowing from the Lyell Glacier that receded but continues to provide the flow of this river, being watched by the boulder. This celebrates the art of nature.

When we established Sacred Rok in 2009, we knew that we wanted to support young people with the ceremony of nature. We had a vision, but we did not have a specific plan. But we have mapped it out during the last four years, demonstrating the feasibility and power of our vision. Through the help of great friends who have given us generous grants and individuals who have contributed donations for our books and photos, we have subsidized trips working with the Merced agencies and other organizations that are working hard to support these youth.

So what is our next 5-year plan? We plan to consolidate these successes further so that the organizations see this as a central part of their own mission, rather than as an add-on subsidized by outsiders. As we do this, we hope to use our gifts, grants and donations to work toward the establishment of a "place"





for Sacred Rok. Having a specific piece of land owned by Sacred Rok and established as a center for learning is important because the “sense of place” is central to our work. We see the mountains from which the water for much of California emanates as an essential link for our youths to the land. Because we want all of our youth impacted by Sacred Rok to have a sense of place grounded in nature, a place for them to come and stay to re-connect with the earth, is essential. We are thus seeking a modest piece of land where we can start growing organic food, staying for gatherings, building fires, and having the time to inspire. Such a place may be in the foothills on the western or eastern side of the Sierras.

Finally, during the next 5 years, we are hoping to play more of a convening role for organizations that seek to help youth that share our philosophy. In our work with the various organizations in Merced, we have found like-minded people within probation, youth development organizations, Native American, and foster care agencies. We also have met many people in school systems throughout California who understand the barren agenda of school reform focused on narrow academic skills and neglecting the nurturing of the human spirit. We are contemplating the next 5



years as a period where we can develop leadership potential for people within these organizations, and to collaborate in the re-birth of humanity through partnerships with inspirational individuals who are in a position to transform their organizations. The land we hope to acquire will serve as a center where gatherings of these leaders can occur.

The grants and donations we have received allow us to provide trips at low cost or no cost to young people to experience the beauty of Yosemite. We would like to stabilize our ongoing operational funding at \$50,000 a year. This will allow us to be able to continue our good work and implement the vision of Sacred Rok. We want to ensure that we can continue to facilitate these relationships with our partner agencies and the youth we serve.

Supporters

We owe special thanks to this year’s supporters, without whom our efforts would not be possible. We are so grateful for the many donations that we receive from people who are inspired by our story, who read our newsletter, attend our events, or meet Ron when he shows his movies at the Yosemite Visitor Center.

Top of the Rock, \$15,000 & above

Clif Bar Family Foundation

Sponsors, \$500- \$5,000

Patagonia

A.C. Israel Foundation

Taylor Samuels, TMS Environmental
Systems

North Face Explore Fund

United Way of Merced

Yosemite Conservancy

Rotary Club of Yosemite

Partners, \$200-\$500

Jeff Baptista

Susan Brochini

Nancy Goodban & Kenji Hakuta

Hilary Hopkins

Beth Ogilvie &

Susan Straghalis

Linda Ottey

Helen & Dan Quinn

Family Fund

Christophe Pfistner

Sonya & Mitchel Sukalski

David Tyack

Supporters, \$100-\$200

Brian & Mary Swick Cooley

Maria Cranor

Nancy Dyar & Tom Higgins

David Forbes

Nicole Gabel

Travis Keay

Stephen & Linda Lansdowne

Kent Newbold

Debbie & Victor Peng

Elizabeth Weal &

Bruce Hodge

Dennis Yonemura

Patty Payne-Zajac & Mark Zajac

Friends, up to \$100

Lee & Ann Andersen

Valerie & Tony Anthony

Mary Ann & James Barbee

Mary Bender & Charley Hoyt

Michelle Bowling

Lorraine Burnham

Carpe Diem Fine Books

Stacia Wilson Cronin &

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Claudia Davis

Margaret Coesfeld Denny &

Glen Denny

Meg Durbin

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Sabai Thai Paper

Ana Sandoval

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Ilana Umansky

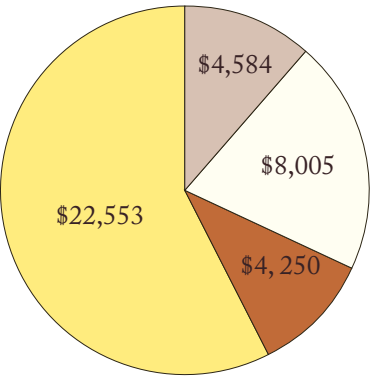
Dana Vidrine

Sharon & Frank Viggiano

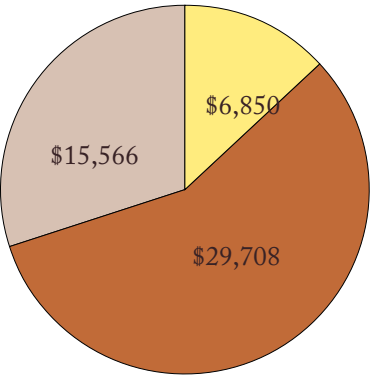
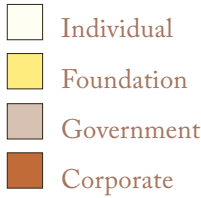
Susana & Dave Yerian

Financials

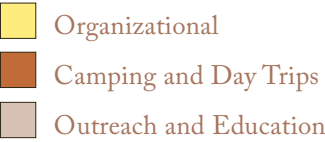
Fiscal Year 2013



Revenue



Expenses



In the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2013, Sacred Rok received \$39,439.75 in revenue and had \$52,123.85 in expenses, for a net loss of \$12,684.10. The net loss was a one-time event due to additional costs incurred this year (compared to prior years) because of the \$15,566.09 in outreach associated with book and photo design and printing. However, due to strong carryover from the prior year, we still ended the year with a solid cash reserve, with \$47,843.82 in the bank.

Our primary funding in FY 2013 was foundation funding (\$22,553, 57% of our revenue), followed by individual donations (\$8,005, 20% of our revenue), government contracts (\$4,584, 12% of our revenue), and corporate donations (\$4,250, 11% of our revenue).

Our primary expense was camping and day trips, which accounted for \$29,708 or 57% of our costs. Outreach and education made up \$15,566 or 30% of our expenses. Organizational expenses made up the remaining \$6,850 or 13% of our expenses. Our largest organizational expenses are administrative support staffing for grant writing and upkeep of the web site and newsletter, insurance, and telephone/internet.

The pie charts above show our revenue sources and our costs. The Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet are shown below and on the next page.

Sacred Rok Balance Sheet, July 1 2013

Assets		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings	\$47,843.82	
Accounts Receivable	\$0.00	
Supplies/Inventory	\$827.21	
Total Current Assets	\$48,671.03	
Total Assets	\$48,671.03	
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Current Liabilities	\$0.00	
Long Term Liabilities	\$0.00	
Total Liabilities	\$0.00	

Sacred Rok Fiscal
Year-End
Profit and Loss
Statement FY 2013



Ordinary Income/Expense

Income	
Restricted	
Government Grants and Contracts	\$4,583.61
Foundation Grants	\$22,553.00
Total Restricted	\$27,136.61
Unrestricted	
Individual and Foundation Donations	\$8,005.22
Corporate Donations	\$4,250.00
Interest	\$47.92
Total Unrestricted	\$12,303.14
Total Income	\$39,439.75

Expense	
Organizational Costs	
Administrative Support Staff	\$1,800.00
Postage and Mailing	\$171.11
Telephone and Telecommunications	\$1,435.39
Insurance	\$2,886.63
Office supplies, miscellaneous administrative	\$297.28
Bank and PayPal Fees	\$259.29
Total Organizational Costs	\$6,849.70
Outreach and Education Costs	
Book Shipping and Printing	\$8,383.88
Book Design	\$4,495.00
Photo Printing and Other	\$2,687.21
Total Outreach and Education Costs	\$15,566.09
Camping and Day Trip Costs	
Program Staff	\$25,550.00
Food and Camping Supplies	\$4,158.06
Total Camping and Day Trip Costs	\$29,708.06

Total Expense	\$52,123.85
Net Ordinary Income	\$-12,684.10
Net Income	\$-12,684.10



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Our mission is simple—we seek to help youth learn to respect nature and, through that, to respect themselves.

www.SacredRok.org