

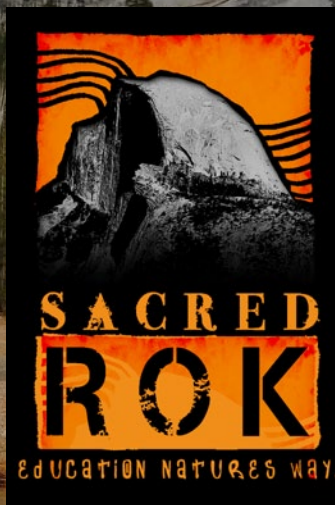
Annual Report 2015

SACRED
ROCK

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Letter from the Board

We are delighted to share our Fiscal Year 2015 Annual Report, highlighting our accomplishments July 2014-June 2015, and reflecting our plans for the future.

The Sacred Rok mission is to help youth to learn to respect nature and through that, to respect themselves. Our approach is to slow down and focus on the basics—water, air, breathing, walking, learning to be human—what we call “Education Nature’s Way.”

We lead day trips and camping trips with young people, as well as telling our story through books and videos, photographs, educational presentations, and online. We have continued to work closely with Merced County’s Probation Department, Merced Boys & Girls Club, and other youth-serving organizations in the Central Valley and Northern California.

This year we completed a short video, *Unifying Spirit—Honoring Indigenous*, with the American Indian tribes of Yosemite. The video was funded by an America’s Best Ideas grant from the National Parks Foundation.

We are also very excited that Ron Kauk was featured in *The Search for Freedom* by filmmaker Jon Long. This highly acclaimed documentary tells the stories of visionary action sports legends—rock climbers, surfers, snowboarders, skiers, skateboarders, and mountain bikers. In

the film, Ron shares the work that Sacred Rok does with Probation in Merced and Yosemite. We also partnered with the Merced County Probation Department’s Bear Creek Academy on *Voices From the Inside Out*, a book that tells the stories of 22 young men who have come to Yosemite with Sacred Rok, and what it has meant to them. *Voices From the Inside Out* will be available in January 2016.

These projects have been supported by Clif Bar Family Foundation, The North Face, Patagonia, Yosemite Conservancy, Merced County United Way, and the National Parks Foundation. We are especially grateful for the donation of a camper vehicle from Gary Erickson and Kit Crawford of Clif Bar, providing amenities such as refrigeration and hot water for our camping trips.

We are grateful for the opportunity to share the healing experience of nature with the young people we serve as well as with the larger community. We are especially grateful to our many supporters and donors, who share our values and commitment to our future as an inclusive society connected to nature and its wonders.

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Sacred Rok Board

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

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The Year in Review

With the support of our donors, Ron has led twenty-six day trips and five camping trips this fiscal year with Merced County Probation, Boys & Girls Clubs of Merced, EMQ FamiliesFirst, Yosemite area Indian tribes, and Symple Equazion. These trips provide the opportunity for these young people to experience nature and to build ongoing relationships.

We have especially focused on our relationship with the Merced County Probation Department. Almost every week Ron goes to the Merced County juvenile justice complex, Iris Garrett, for lunch with the youth. He brings healthy organic food and they share lunch and talk about their experiences in Yosemite. The upcoming book, *Voices From the Inside Out*, was developed jointly by Sacred Rok and the Probation Department youth.

We are excited about *Unifying Spirit—Honoring Indigenous*, the video we made with the Yosemite area Indian elders and youth, through a grant that Sacred Rok received with Yosemite National Park through the National Parks Foundation America's Best Ideas grant.

Ron has also made presentations to groups throughout the Bay Area as well as other educational presentations, including showing his movie *Return to Balance: A Climber's Journey* at the Yosemite Visitor Center on weekend nights during the spring and summer.

We are so grateful to our supporters. All of our trips are at no cost to the participants. We are 100% funded by donations (monetary and in-kind), grants, and contracts.



Goals

The four FY 2015 goals adopted by the Board of Directors reflect Sacred Rok's priorities and guide our efforts:

- Programming and activities such as day trips and camping, focusing on building relationships and maintaining relationships with agencies we have been working with including Probation and Boys & Girls Club;
- Telling the story of Sacred Rok—this includes our video *Unifying Spirit—Honoring Indigenous* with the Yosemite Indians, the film *The Search for Freedom*, our upcoming book *Voices From the Inside Out*, newsletters, the website, the Facebook page, and educational presentations;
- Building organizational capacity including continuing to support grant writing, website maintenance, and bookkeeping; and
- Long term goals—sustainability funding, transportation, 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.

Day Trips & Camping Trips

Our programmatic activities are day trips and overnight camping trips, primarily to Yosemite National Park. Each trip is led by Sacred Rok Executive Director Ron Kauk, and camping trips are supported by Katie Lambert, our extraordinary cook and camp manager.

We limit each trip to 4-6 young people in order to be able to focus on the healing experience of the ceremony of nature, the setting, and the building of trust and relationships. We take the youth on repeat trips to help them become more comfortable and to build ongoing relationships over time.

Nature provides the curriculum and the structure – wind, weather, and water are our guides. A typical day trip in Yosemite Valley might include a stop at Fern Spring to fill water bottles and appreciate the ancient water flowing from the ground, a hike from Tunnel View up to Old Inspiration Point, or a walk to the base of El Capitan. Our camping trips are typically at Tuolumne Meadows Campground.

At 8,000 feet elevation, Tuolumne Meadows is only open in the summer months and is less crowded than Yosemite Valley. A camping trip might include a hike along the Tuolumne River past Pothole Dome, a walk to Parsons Lodge and Soda Springs, a dip in Tenaya Lake, or a hike up the back of Lembert Dome. Longer hikes include Cathedral Lakes, Elizabeth Lake, and Gaylor Lake. In Fiscal Year 2015, Ron led twenty-six day trips, as well as five camping trips to Yosemite National Park.

Several of the day trips included trail work in partnership with Yosemite Conservancy and the National Park Service. Here are some highlights.

Merced County Probation Department

Sacred Rok led sixteen day trips (including seven trail crew work days) and a camping trip with Merced County Probation youth who are incarcerated in Iris Garrett Juvenile Justice facility.

Sacred Rok continues to partner with the Merced County Probation Department to help the young people incarcerated at the Iris Garrett Juvenile Justice Facility in Merced. Participating youth are in long-term incarceration at Iris Garrett, and are selected by the Probation Department on the basis of good behavior. Sacred Rok is grateful for the support of The North Face for this project.

Twice a month, the Probation van brings these young people to Yosemite for a day trip with Ron, accompanied by a Probation officer. The day trips often include trail repair. Under the auspices of the National Park Service and funded by the Yosemite Conservancy, Sacred Rok and the Probation youth are helping to remove old

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Katie Lambert says, "For several years we have been working with these guys and it's been a really enjoyable process of seeing them year after year and getting to know one another. Our trips with them involve service work and hands-on stewardship, such as trail maintenance, trash clean-up, and helping with the upkeep of the corrals, as well as wood chopping. In addition to the physical work the guys also had ample time to make several day hikes from our campsite and enjoyed fishing, swimming in the Alpine lakes and general exploring about through the rocks and trees. Our meal times are always valuable in that we shared in the preparation of our food and told stories over the campfire. Each time we get together we build our relationships even stronger."



decaying asphalt on the Yosemite Valley trails near Camp 4. Once a year they go camping. And Ron goes to Iris Garrett every other week for lunch, bringing organic food, which is very much appreciated.

This experience has a powerful impact on these young men, many of whom have never been to Yosemite or exposed to nature in a way that would bring a deeper consideration of what it means to be human. This is all based on a mutual respect that Ron has for the kids, and that the kids have for Ron. The documentary film by Earth Network, *The Search for Freedom*, highlights Ron's work with Probation.

The Bear Creek Academy (BCA) is a short-term program for incarcerated youth developed by the Merced County Probation Department, designed for youth who have been committed by the Juvenile Court and are incarcerated for at least a year at the Iris Garrett Juvenile Justice Correctional Complex in Merced. BCA's mission is to make positive changes in how these young people think and behave in order to prepare them to return to their families and communities with a sense of respect, responsibility, and purpose.

The youth have created BCA Mission I'mpossible to share their stories about their experiences in Yosemite with Sacred Rok. Their mission: "Mission I'mpossible's members seek wisdom by learning from nature and life's experiences to find purpose in life, be more responsible, and respectful while being human beings." Their vision: Mission I'mpossible's members' goal is to share with others what nature can teach us and what we can all learn from its sacredness. Respect. Responsibility. Purpose. Ask yourself: "Do I demonstrate respect? Am I responsible? What is my purpose?" The Probation Department has

built Sacred Rok into its curriculum and programming for these young people.

Our biggest project is our upcoming book, *Voices From the Inside Out*, which shares the voices of twenty-two young men with BCA Mission I'mpossible, telling their story of what the Sacred Rok and Yosemite program means to them and how it has impacted their lives. It also includes reflections of key adults at BCA and Sacred Rok.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Merced
Sacred Rok led seven day trips and two camping trips with young people from Boys & Girls Clubs of Merced.

Sacred Rok has continued its partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Merced County, with the support of the United Way of Merced County. The mentors at the Boys & Girls Club identify the young people and accompany them on the trips. The day trips have taken place in all seasons, giving these young people the chance to experience Yosemite throughout the year.

The Boys & Girls Club has been a very special group to work with through the years. Some of our youngest participants have been from the Boys & Girls Club, and spending time with such youngsters brings about a certain lightness and mystery that is very fun to be around. This year we hosted two camping trips with the club youth, one in Yosemite Valley and one in Tuolumne Meadows. During our Valley trip we did a day of trash cleanup where we walked from our campsite around the Valley loop trail picking up litter and talking with tourists. We made friends with a family from India and afterwards took a swim in the cool waters of the Merced. Our time in Tuolumne was a little bit longer and we enjoyed sharing

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stories, talking in Spanish, cooking meals together and swimming in the Tuolumne River. It has been a great experience to work with the Boys & Girls Club mentors and kids and to see the youth as they grow through the years.

Symple Equazion

Sacred Rok led one day trip with Symple Equazion youth.

Sacred Rok has continued its partnership with Symple Equazion, a Merced-based nonprofit that works with young women and men who are attending the alternative high school after having difficulties in the regular public high schools, including those on probation. We took one day trip with them this year, giving these young women the chance to experience for themselves the healing ceremony of nature.

EMQ FamiliesFirst

Sacred Rok led three camping trips and one day trip with foster youth from EMQ FamiliesFirst.

One of the newer groups we have had the pleasure to work with is EMQ FamiliesFirst's Foster Care and Adoptions Agency in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The summer of 2015 was our second summer working together and it was great to see some of the same youth as well as to meet some newcomers. EMQFF brought teenagers from its foster care program in Santa Clara County to camp in Yosemite, in El Portal in the fall and at Tuolumne Meadows in the summer. Sacred Rok also went to the Bay Area to meet EMQFF youth and staff, where Ron led a day trip at Hidden Villa, an environmental farm in the Los Altos Hills, including a tour of the working farm, lunch, and a hike up the trail among the oak trees, ferns, and meandering creeks.

Our Yosemite trips were highlighted with time spent at the river in Tuolumne, sharing in camp duties such as wood splitting, preparing food and telling stories. One of the most memorable experiences we had was hiking up the slabs of Lembert Dome after dinner and watching the stars fill the sky.

The trips have had a powerful impact on the participants. One foster teen graduated from high school and attended the local community college where she signed up to take classes in environmental education and participated in the outdoor club,

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both as a direct result of her experience with Sacred Rok. She has attended follow-up trips as a mentor to the younger children. She also put together a presentation for the other foster youth at EMQFF, which she shared during their foster parent appreciation and training day. She is now pursuing her degree in Environmental Sciences at an out of state college. Sacred Rok and EMQFF are committed to continuing their partnership both in the Bay Area and in Yosemite.

Yosemite area California Indian youth

Sacred Rok partnered with Yosemite area Indian tribes on activities and a video,
Unifying Spirit - Honoring Indigenous.

Yosemite National Park and Sacred Rok received a grant from the National Parks Foundation this year for Sacred Rok to partner with the Yosemite area Indian tribes to reconnect young people to their rich cultural heritage and their roots. Yosemite has a powerful resonance for the California Indian community. The Miwok, Paiute, Mono, and Chukchansi tribes have lived in the Sierras for centuries. The Miwok People were evicted from their homes in Yosemite Valley as late as the 1960s, when the last

homes were burned, and many young people in these tribes no longer have the connection to their history and culture in the park, nor the opportunity to connect with its granite rocks, rushing waters, and healing power.

Sacred Rok and tribal elder Bill Tucker collaborated with other elders and youth on a series of activities including the annual Spiritual Camp and the annual Long Walk, culminating in the 13 minute video *Unifying Spirit - Honoring Indigenous* by award winning filmmaker Sterling Johnson. Bill Tucker provides the cultural and traditional touchstone for the youth in this collaborative partnership.

A Note from the Camp Kitchen

Katie Lambert, our extraordinary cook and camp manager who is currently studying for a Masters Degree in Nutrition, reflects on our food.



Everything we put in us has an impact but the body is also very powerful and resilient and has the capacity to endure a lot. But, we must nurture the body with food, water, thoughts and environment. We should do so with the cleanest food, water and energy we can. Clean food, real food, organic food and whole food will keep the body in a healthy way and we will perform better, function better, have better sleep, clearer minds and healthier bodies.

Just as the plants need water, we need water. We need to hydrate ourselves to keep our cells healthy and full, our body loose and limber. Water is cleansing and life giving. The choices we make in what we eat make a difference in our health and the health of our families. Leaving behind the fast food and the convenience food and

going for the whole food and the real food is better for the environment, better for you and keeps more money in your pockets.

Sacred Rok's camp kitchen has been an advocate of this way of eating and nurturing the body from the beginning. Each year we strive to bring the groups we work with the best food we can obtain and prepare. Our menus consist of organic grains, free-range and local meats and eggs, organic and locally procured fruits and vegetables, raw and local dairy as well as items picked wild in the Sierra. Part of our job in the kitchen is to not only provide this food and prepare this food but it is also to share an understanding about nutrition and what it is we are getting from the things we eat. We also share the process of preparing and help our groups realize that they too can eat this way at home.

Outreach and Education

One of Sacred Rok's goals is to tell the story to help people understand the importance of nature, to share how we can learn to get back to the basics of being human, talking, walking, and breathing. We do this through books, videos, social media, and personal presentations.

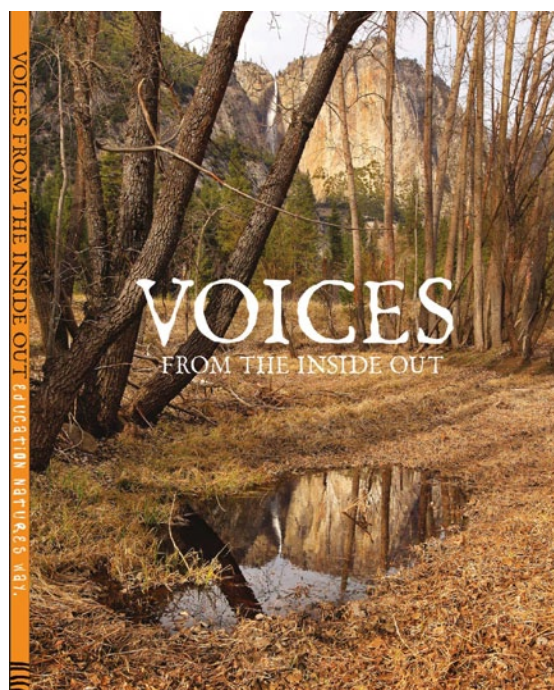
Ron makes presentations at Patagonia locations and other venues in the San Francisco Bay Area, in addition to showing his movie, *Return to Balance: A Climber's Journey*, at the Yosemite Visitor Center on weekends in the summer.

This year Ron was highlighted along with other visionaries in the fields of sports and action in the documentary *The Search for Freedom*, sharing his experience leading trips with the Probation youth.




With the Yosemite area tribal elders and youth we made the video *Unifying Spirit – Honoring Indigenous* reflecting on the value and power of the indigenous experience in Yosemite. This video allowed them to share their experiences and feelings with their own culture and how it plays out in Yosemite.

Our other big project has been our upcoming book *Voices From the Inside Out* with the Merced County Probation Department, sharing the voices of the young people who are incarcerated.



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We surveyed participants after the trip whether they thought the trip would help them to do better at home and school. Fifty percent said yes, 33% said “maybe,” and 17% said “no.”

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Outcomes

We seek positive outcomes—defined as changes in knowledge, attitude, or behavior—for youth participants. Here are some of our findings.

Immediate Outcomes

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 participants after each trip. Based on surveys, 84% said the trip made them feel less stressful or anxious (8% said “maybe” and 8% said “no”). 92% said they had a better understanding and more confidence in nature, and 8% said “maybe.”

The Boys & Girls Club mentor reports, “From the bus ride to the Yosemite experience, it is outstanding. These trips give youth a chance to let their guard down and to be more open to others and most importantly, themselves. Also for adults, it gives them an opportunity to step out of their roles, becoming more approachable and not so authoritative. These trips help build these relationships so much, where youth and adult can look back and reflect on their experience together and talk about the good times.”

Long-term Outcomes

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. We surveyed participants after the trip whether they thought the trip would help them to do better at home and school. Fifty percent said yes, 33% said “maybe” and 17% said “no.”

The Boys & Girls Club mentor reports, “The youth who attended understand that it is a privilege to go to Yosemite. Most importantly, being selected for these trips, we look at youth who do their homework and attend school and stay out of trouble. The youth are consistent about completing their schoolwork and some of them are even involved in extracurricular activities such as basketball and cheerleading.”

Based on surveys, 67% said the trips would help them get along better with other people, and 33% said “maybe.” 75% said the trip would help them be more patient and think before they act (17% said “maybe” and 8% said “no”). The Boys & Girls Club mentor reports, “The youth who took the trip have been really kind and respectful lately here at the club. Their manners have improved when having adult conversations. The youth have become easier to work with and they are more understanding.”

Future Plans

We will continue telling the story of Sacred Rok, the story of how to learn to be human, how to respect nature and learn to respect ourselves-through books, videos, newsletter, social media, and presentations.

We especially look forward to sharing *Voices From the Inside Out* with a wide audience, in particular policy makers in the juvenile justice arena. We believe that this model could help save the lives of youth who are in trouble, one child at a time.

We will continue to lead trips for youth from Merced and the rest of California. In Merced, we will continue our partnership with the Probation Department, the Boys & Girls Cub, and Symple Equazion. Beyond Merced, one of the Merced County Probation managers is now in a neighboring county, and we are working with him to develop a partnership including day trips to Pinnacles National Park and camping trips in the summer at Yosemite National Park. We will also continue to collaborate with EMQFF on day trips in the Bay Area.

We will convene like-minded adults who share our philosophy, including those in the education field who recognize the need to incorporate the value of nature and the true value of being human into the classroom.

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Thank you for your support and friendship!

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 touched 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, \$5,000- \$15,000

The North Face

Patagonia

A.C. Israel Foundation

Partners, \$500-\$5,000

Assistance League of

Los Altos

ConnTESOL Connecticut

Teachers of English to

Speakers of Other Languages

Lisa Mckethan &

Brian McNerny

Andres Pelaez

United Way of Merced County

Yosemite Conservancy

Supporters, \$100-\$500

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Kenji Hakuta

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Melody Ross

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Stephen Wakeman

Kelina Smith

Tom Street

Sonya & Mitchel Sukalski

Financials

In the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2015, Sacred Rok received \$59,267.84 in revenue and had \$89,713.83 in expenses, for a net operating loss of \$30,445.99. The balance sheet showed \$47,012.92 in total liabilities and equity.

Ordinary Income/Expense: June 30 2015

Income

Restricted

Corporate Grants	\$5,000.00
Government Grants and Contracts	\$5,749.92
Foundation Grants	\$28,396.00

Total Restricted	\$39,145.92
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Unrestricted

Individual and Foundation Donations	\$18,796.71
Corporate Donations	\$1,309.23
Interest	\$15.98

Total Unrestricted	\$20,121.92
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Total Income	\$59,267.84
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Expense

Organizational Costs

Administrative Support Staff	\$1,800.00
Postage and Mailing	\$164.62
Telephone and Telecommunications	\$1,581.59
Insurance	\$3,272.50
Office supplies, misc administrative	\$311.31
Bank and PayPal Fees	\$190.04

Total Organizational Costs	\$7,320.06
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Outreach and Education Costs

Shipping and Printing	\$498.52
Design	\$9,198.97
Other	\$5,999.50

Total Outreach and Education Costs	\$15,696.99
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Camping and Day Trip Costs

Program Staff	\$47,992.64
Travel	\$8,333.69
Food and Camping Supplies	\$10,370.45

Total Camping and Day Trip Costs	\$66,696.78
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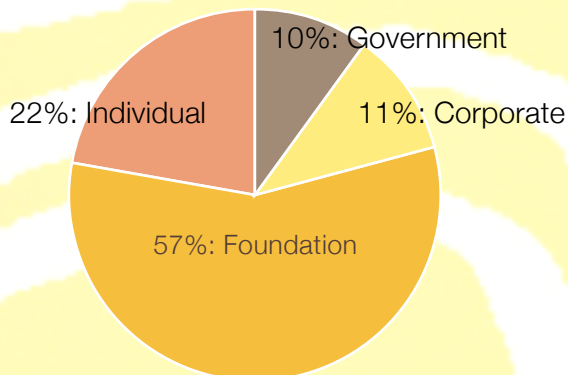
Total Expense	\$89,713.83
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Net Ordinary Income	\$-30,445.99
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Net Income	\$-30,445.99
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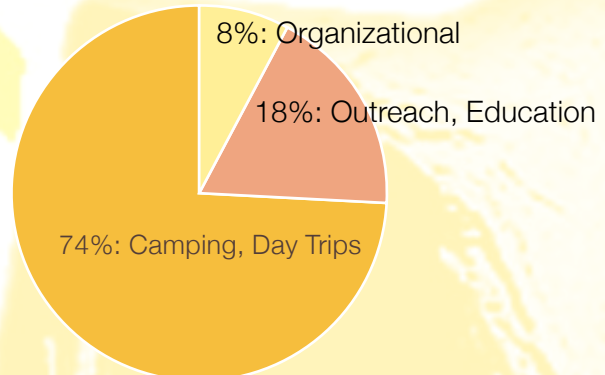
Fiscal Year 2015 Revenue



The pie charts above show our revenue sources and our costs.

Our primary funding in FY 2015 was foundation funding (\$34,396, 57% of our revenue), followed by individual donations (\$12,797, 22% of our revenue), corporate donations (\$6,309, 11% of our revenue), and government contracts (\$5,750, 10% of our revenue).

Fiscal Year 2015 Expenses



Our primary expense was camping and day trips, which accounted for \$66,696.78 or 74% of our costs. Outreach and education made up \$15,696.99 or 17% of our expenses. Organizational expenses made up the remaining \$7,320.06 or 8% of our expenses. Our largest organizational expenses are insurance, telecommunications, postage, and administrative support staffing for grant writing and upkeep of the web site and newsletter. The Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet are shown on these pages.

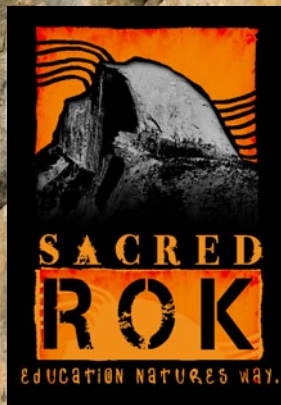
Balance Sheet FY 2015 June 30, 2015

Assets

Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	\$44,140.74
PayPal	\$350.00
Supplies/Inventory	\$827.21
Total Current Assets	\$45,317.95
Fixed Assets	\$1,694.97
Total assets	\$47,012.92

Liabilities & equity

Equity	
Retained Earnings	\$77,458.93
Net Income	\$-30,446.01
Total Equity	\$47,012.92
Total liabilities & equity	\$47,012.92



www.SacredRok.org

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

