



Bringing the Adventure and Science Communities Together

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Katie Smith

Katie@adventureandscience.org

**Seventh-graders from West Oakland Middle School First to Record
Pika Presence in Desolation Wilderness**

West Oakland, CA September 25th, 2012 - Seventh-graders from West Oakland Middle School have successfully documented the presence of the American Pika in several areas of Desolation Wilderness where the species had yet to be documented. Starry skies, fresh mountain air and the smallest member of the rabbit family, the American Pika, were all new to the 7th graders from West Oakland Middle School last week when they joined *Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation* (ASC) on a science expedition to Desolation Wilderness near Lake Tahoe. The students spent five days hiking, camping, and collecting data on the American Pika for a monitoring project conducted in partnership with Joseph Stewart, a researcher from the University of Nevada-Reno. ASC is a nonprofit organization that provides hands-on science learning experiences for students that are challenging, meaningful and fun. “The best way to excite kids about science is to get them out in the field participating in hands on data collection. It gives them an important boost of self confidence and pride they may not find in a traditional classroom,” states ASC executive Director, Gregg Treinish.

The students faced challenges everyday from learning to identify the pikas’ hay piles tucked in rock crevices to figuring out how to survive in the wilderness far from the comforts of home. “It made me feel great, like I achieved a goal I would never do,” reflects 12-year-old Brooke-lynn Upshur, one of the students on the trip. Her classmate Anton Jackson was similarly affected by the experience, “We saw a pika today at the lake. It was amazing

-Continued-

because I felt like I had done it and now I know it's in this area." The students each used an expedition backpack donated by Osprey Packs to carry their camping supplies including waterproof jackets and hats provided by Outdoor Research, and a waterproof notebook provided by Rite in the Rain. "It's really cool getting to expose young people to ecology," says Stewart. "I hope some of the students came away with a sense that this is something they might want to do when they grow up."

Each of the students hiked farther than they had ever hiked before and worked together to identify hay piles, scat, and other signs left by pika, which are an indicator species for climate change. Using the pika as a model, students learned about the effect of climate change on animal habitat and felt proud to part of an important research project. Joe Green, another seventh grader, was glad to be part of the program, "It was fun and I want to do it again. I want to be a scientist and learn a lot more."

This expedition would not have been possible without the generous support of Friends of Oakland Parks & Rec and the financial support of the Rapier Foundation, Pacific Gas and Electric, and the Rotary Club of Oakland. Also essential were the sleeping bags and sleeping pads provided by REI of Concord and camping supplies from Sports Basement in Walnut Creek. For more information on ASC please visit www.adventureandscience.org and for guided programs for your school please visit www.adventureandscience.org/citizen-science.

About Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation

Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation was founded with the understanding that many people traveling in the outdoors genuinely want to do more for the places they visit but often struggle with how to help. ASC exists to bridge this gap by providing the opportunity for people of all ages to participate in scientific data collection, and pairing adventure athletes already traveling to some of the earth's most difficult-to-reach places with the scientists who need information from those areas. ASC also has the goal of creating unique and innovative learning experiences about science, while also saving the scientific and conservation communities millions of dollars in data collection costs. For more information visit www.adventureandscience.org

###

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Lance Craighead • Conrad Anker • Jon Bowermaster

Trip Jennings • Roz Savage • Beth Holland • Celine Cousteau • Captain Joel Fogel • Geoff Pampush

406.579.9702 • info@adventureandscience.org • www.adventureandscience.org
621 N. Bozeman Ave • Bozeman, MT 59715