Spending time in nature makes children smarter, healthier, and happier.
WE ARE PROUD to report that 2011 was a year of sustainable growth at Wilderness Youth Project (WYP). We increased our program offerings by 17% and our fund-raising by 27%. We currently offer 21 different weekday programs during the school year and 39 weeks of summer camp. Two exciting new additions to our offerings are the inclusion project, making our programs accessible for participants with physical and cognitive disabilities; and the Adams School project, offering nature connection mentoring to students performing below grade level. We look forward to strengthening and growing these new projects and our existing programs in 2012.

WYP has a proven track record of offering nature connection to a diverse population of Santa Barbara’s youth. WYP’s 4:1 youth to counselor ratio affords our participants a high quality of mentoring typically unavailable in youth services. Because we operate with a long-term mentoring model, most of our participants return for multiple years of participation. Lessons learned at WYP transfer back to participants’ daily lives, helping build a smarter, healthier and happier community.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our dedicated volunteers and supporters. Because of you, we are poised for another great year in 2012.

Gratefully,

DAN FONTAINE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MISSION
Wilderness Youth Project fosters youth and their community to become smarter, healthier, happier and more likely to care for the environment by creating a connection to nature through active outdoor mentoring.

VISION
Wilderness Youth Project envisions a community of peaceful, respectful and confident stewards of our world.
RESEARCH

Research has shown that time in nature has many benefits, among them improving children’s cognitive flexibility, emotional stability, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, use of imagination, self-esteem, and self-discipline.

WYP Participants Grow In These Areas:

- **Individual**– Self-confidence
- **Interpersonal**– Respect for others and conflict resolution abilities
- **Physical**– Competence and agility
- **Environmental**– Respect for the natural world

Our Programs Create Nature Connection With:

- Safe, well-facilitated, age-appropriate time in nature
- Individualized mentoring
- Exploration and curiosity
50% of our budget is contributed by supporters like you.

2011 Actuals:
- Total Income – $557,989
- Total Expenses – $551,020

Key Statistics and Accomplishments for 2011:
- 39 weeks of summer camp
- 21 weekday programs
- 64% of participants receiving scholarships
- 3 full-size vans plus 3 mini-vans
- 20 staff members (10 full-time and 10 part-time)
- 70+ volunteers
- Implemented Acteva online camp registration software

467 Total Unduplicated Youth:
- 36% Paying Program Fee
- 30% Partial Scholarship
- 34% Deep/Full Scholarship
Nature play stimulates creativity and improves problem solving. Children who participated in outdoor education programs raised their science test scores by 27%, improved their conflict resolution and problem-solving skills and experienced better self-esteem and motivation to learn.

Nature play increases self-esteem and reduces stress. Children learn self-discipline and are more cooperative with others. Children feel more capable, confident and connected to nature.

Americans are suffering from an acute case of “nature deficit disorder,” and the effects are showing. American children spend 90% of their time indoors, resulting in increasing severity of health challenges including ADHD, obesity, depression and stress.

Smarter
Healthier
Happier
"Wilderness Youth Project changed our son’s life. He’s an out-of-the-box kid who struggles to fit in at school. This was a boy who didn’t like getting sand into his toes, and wanted to spend all day everyday indoors. Now, through WYP, his connection to nature has given him the self esteem that he didn’t have."

— EVE, MOTHER OF ETHAN (Age 15)

"I never imagined [my daughter with Down Syndrome] would be able to last 2 weeks of full day camp. It was the easy flow and ‘let every child be herself’ atmosphere that supported who she is. I think the very fact that she was able to move in and out of participation as she felt comfortable gave her a sense of security, independence/self-control, and freedom… a unique combination which she does not frequently experience. I also saw her go up to others to talk to them, and I saw her playing with others at drop-off and pick up times; it was not at all as if she were a loner."

— NANCY, MOTHER OF CHRISTINE (Age 11)

"[My son] is happy to sit under a tree and *be*, connecting with his surroundings and himself. As he approaches the teenage years, I would say that my son definitely has a strong connection with himself. What more can I ask for? It makes him calmer, more centered, and more likely to make decisions that he can live with."

— ANONYMOUS, SUMMER CAMP PARENT