

YOLO BASIN FOUNDATION



Our flagship environmental education program for K-12 students, *Discover the Flyway*, provides meaningful outdoor experiences that leave students with a lasting appreciation for the wetlands, wildlife and agriculture of the Central Valley. Students engage through hands-on learning activities and then visit the 16,000-acre Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, located between Davis and West Sacramento, for a time of discovery in nature. In the over twenty years of this program, close to 73,000 children have experienced the excitement of a Discover the Flyway field trip.

For many students, this is their first real experience with nature and our dedicated staff and volunteers strive to make it an exciting, memorable and impactful experience. Students come alive when they see and learn about the animals and plants so close to their homes. They are thrilled to learn about our Native American culture and inspired to become scientists and take care of our natural world. One third grader, Leonoka, illustrates our success - *"My favorite part was when we went fishing. I learned that people are trying to save the wetlands. I had the most fun I ever had in my life!"*

The return of students to the classroom is likely to look different this year. Physical distancing and a combination of in-class and remote learning is expected. Reducing the risk of Coronavirus infections combined with proposed funding cuts, make field trips unlikely. As a result, *Discover the Flyway* is preparing virtual, flexible options to continue providing important wetland science and social studies learning activities to inspire students.



Our plan includes:

- **Virtual Live Field Trips:** Teachers can invite *Discover the Flyway* into their classrooms or students' homes with interactive, virtual science or social studies learning activities led by an education team member and docent live from the Yolo Demonstration Wetlands.
- **Recorded Learning Activities:** Teachers can access recorded versions of *Discover the Flyway's* "What is a Wetland?" introduction and learning activities any time that is convenient for them and their students.

Funding from 100 Women Who Care will allow us to provide free, virtual live field trips to Title 1 classes in Yolo County and develop recorded learning activities. Over 40% of our field trip students come from Title 1 schools which are defined by a large percentage of children from low income families. For our in-person field trips, we ask for a \$10 donation per student, covering our cost of putting on 120 field trips each year, including staff time, teacher and docent training, and program supplies. We are proud to say that no classroom will ever be turned away because they can't cover the cost of a field trip. Right now we ask schools to cover as much of the costs as they can afford, but with the influx of these 100 Women Who Care Funds, we would be able to offer to cover the costs upfront for all Title 1 classes coming from Yolo County, taking the fundraising burden off teachers, parents and PTO volunteers.

Additionally, your combined contribution will allow us to develop recorded learning activities that offer Yolo County teachers the flexibility to enhance their lessons at school or in homes. Creating meaningful, recorded environmental education videos requires an upfront investment in equipment including a quality camera and microphones as well as staff time to transform our effective *Discover the Flyway* in-person activities into a video-ready format. Funds from 100 Women Who Care will help cover these upfront costs for recorded learning activities that can be a resource to Yolo County teachers for years to come.

In a typical year, our *Discover the Flyway* program serves over 1,700 Yolo County students, teachers and chaperones. Through these virtual opportunities, we hope that even more Yolo County students will have the opportunity to learn about the wetlands that are right next door! And, the impact reaches beyond the kids. It's a gift to teachers who need new, flexible options to engage learners in their classrooms or homes. It's a gift to parents who are juggling work and home schooling. It opens the world of wildlife conservation to curious young minds.

Especially in these challenging times, our goal continues to provide meaningful experiences that will create an appreciation for the wetlands, agriculture, and wildlife of the Central Valley and contribute to a lifetime of healthy outdoor activities and the development of a land stewardship ethic.

We thank you for your time and consideration to make a collective impact to Yolo County's youth through Yolo Basin Foundation.