



University of California  
Agriculture and Natural Resources

# UC CALIFORNIA NATURALIST PROGRAM

Annual Report  
FY 16/17



CUMULATIVE RESULTS SINCE THE START OF THE PROGRAM

↑ 37  
PARTNERS

↑ 1,864  
NATURALISTS

↑ 103,798  
VOLUNTEER HOURS

↑ 52,950  
PEOPLE REACHED



## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

This year UC California Naturalist (CalNat) offered its 100th course! The UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) California Naturalist Program is designed to introduce Californians to the wonders of our unique ecology and engage the public in study and stewardship of California’s natural communities. The program mission is to foster a diverse community of naturalists and promote stewardship of California’s natural resources through education and service. In 2012, we officially launched the program with five intrepid institutional partners and today we are a network of 37 partnering institutions — local nature-based centers, community colleges, land trusts or natural resource focused agencies such as California State Parks and cooperating “friends’ groups.” An experienced group of instructors at these institutions, supported by UC ANR staff, offer the California Naturalist certification courses that combine classroom and field experience in science, problem-solving, communication training and community service. Together we form a community of practice that fosters social learning, environmental efficacy, and civic engagement.

ADINA MERENLENDER

Surveys show that California Naturalists feel more empowered to address environmental challenges after their training and knowing they can lean on their fellow naturalists. With a new Volunteer Management System, we are learning more about the many ways Naturalists are becoming involved in issues that affect their communities. Thanks to support from the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, we’re collecting stories to learn what activities Naturalists are doing that will help communities and natural ecosystems be more resilient to climate change.

As Jon Christensen (UCLA) noted, the 2016 statewide conference illustrates that “UC California Naturalist is creating a vibrant, thriving, inclusive environmental movement for the 21st century.”

ADINA MERENLENDER  
*Director*

## OUR TEAM

Each member of the California Naturalist team brings a unique set of strengths, skills and interests. Although the team members are separated by location they are connected by the shared mission to foster a diverse community of naturalists and promote stewardship of California’s natural resources through education and service.



SABRINA DRILL  
*Associate Director*



GREG IRA  
*Academic Coordinator*



BROOK GAMBLE  
*Community Education Specialist*



MARISA RODRIGUEZ  
*Community Education Specialist*

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The new California Naturalist strategic plan outlines five strategic objectives that address the needs identified by the program, and the opportunities that lay before us. Over the next five years, these strategic objectives and the 17 strategic goals associated with them will guide California Naturalist as it moves in scale from a “start-up” to a self-sustaining program with significant statewide reach and impact.



### EXPAND KEY INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

*Engage institutions who could benefit from a well-trained corps of volunteer naturalists.*



### BUILD A NATURALIST COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

*Facilitate and support collective, voluntary and purposeful learning among our growing network of naturalists.*



### IMPROVE DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION AT ALL LEVELS

*Establish an inclusive environment at all levels of the program, celebrate diversity as a strength and eliminate socially constructed barriers to participation.*



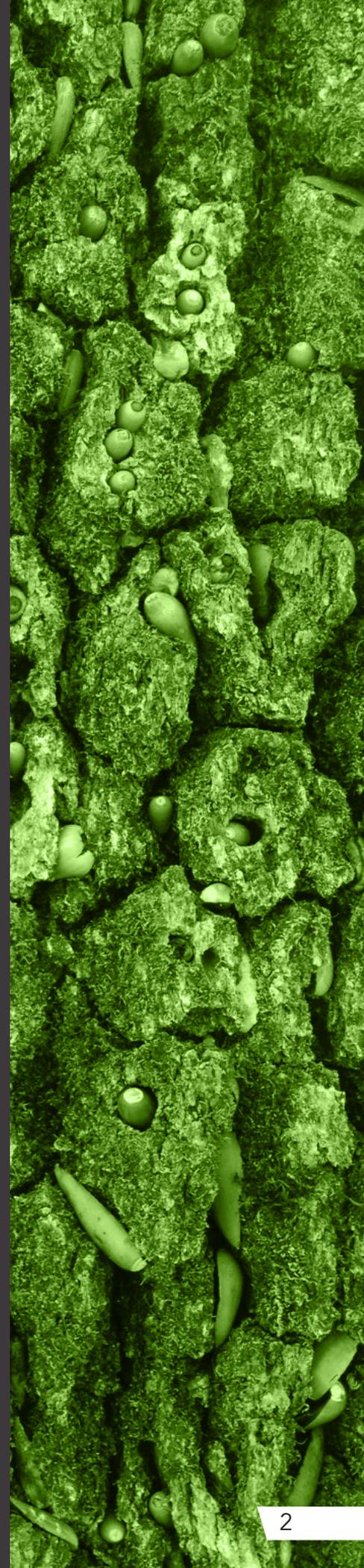
### DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP IN CITIZEN SCIENCE & SCIENCE IDENTITY

*Harness growing interest in citizen science to engage the public in scientific inquiry and foster environmental stewardship.*



### APPLY ENTREPRENEURIAL SOLUTIONS TO EXPAND PROGRAM REACH

*Tap into and support the entrepreneurial spirit of local conservation organizations to efficiently deliver educational programs over the long term.*





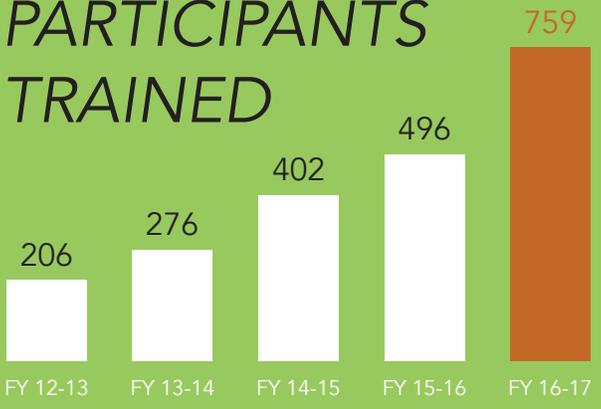
The CalNat program delivery approach combines elements of three different models. As a train-the-trainer model, it trains facilitators who themselves go on to deliver the California Naturalist course. As a collective impact model, it serves as the backbone organization to a wide range of partner organizations around the state who are connected by shared goals around naturalist certification. In this capacity it provides the core content, infrastructure and coordination for the program, allowing partner organizations to utilize their unique strengths and local knowledge to deliver the course locally. Finally, the CalNat program adopts elements of a social franchise model which establishes a unique cost recovery mechanism that not only helps sustain the program but helps fuel its expansion.

# GROWING IMPACT

*The demand for the California Naturalist program continues to grow.*

With each new partner organization, we see the power of collective impact and the value that diversity brings to the CalNat community. Thanks to the dedicated instructors and the California Naturalist staff who support them, 759 naturalists were trained this past year – for a total of 1,864. Each one now has a special connection with nature and the University of California.

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS TRAINED



~1 IN EVERY 4 PARTICIPANTS (24%) RECEIVED SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

## UC CALIFORNIA NATURALIST PROGRAM

### PRODUCT & SERVICES

- Curriculum
- Training
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Volunteer Mgt. System
- Branding & Marketing
- Communication
- Convening



Per participant fee to support program infrastructure

## PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

### COURSE DELIVERY

- Registration
- Instructors
- Courses



Pays fee for naturalist training

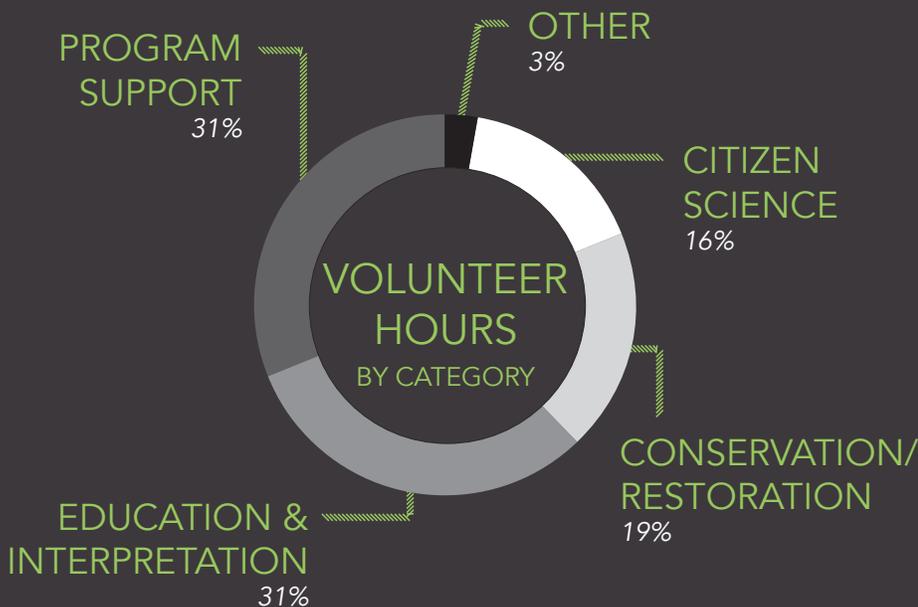
## PEOPLE REACHED



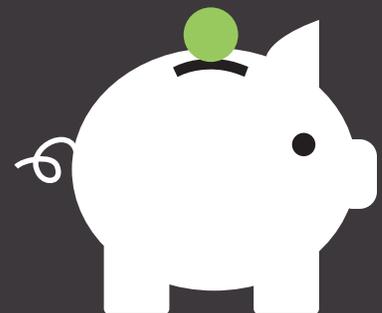
## NATURALISTS

### VOLUNTEER SERVICE

- Environmental Education
- Restoration & Conservation
- Citizen Science
- Program Support



**\$941,000  
VALUE**



TO CALIFORNIA  
FROM VOLUNTEER SERVICE

## A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

California Naturalists share a passion for learning together and providing service to nature and environmental science. The 2016 California Naturalist Biennial Conference exemplified what a community of practice could accomplish. Together with the Southern California Mountains Foundation and numerous volunteers we hosted over 275 participants including 60 who received partial scholarships. Through presentations, advanced trainings, field trips, awards, and fellowship opportunities, our community of naturalists demonstrated the capacity of our social network to foster discovery, promote action, and support stewardship on behalf of nature.



Naturalists participate in a field trip during the 2016 CalNat Conference



## A COMMUNITY OF PARTNERS

The challenge of coordinating a statewide program made up of independent partners is maintaining continuity while taking advantage of the unique strengths and local knowledge every partner organization has to offer. Below are a few examples of the ways in which our partnering organizations have taken the core California Naturalist course and tailored it to their strengths and the needs of local communities.



Offering courses in Marin County, the Salmon Protection and Watershed Network SPAWN has trained 106 naturalists to date. SPAWN recently offered a unique

course designed specifically for educators and community leaders from the Bay Area. This two-part course concluded with a public outreach event led by the teachers at Tomales Bay State Park to celebrate California Coastal Clean-up Week with the public.



Camp Ocean Pines (COP) offered its first course in 2016 and has quickly become a leader in the delivery of the residential immersion model of the California Naturalist course. Now offering two courses a year, COP has trained 70 naturalists.

Located on the beautiful Central Coast of California, near Morro Bay, participants engage in experiential learning through extensive field activities to learn all the required natural history basics of the California Naturalist program with an emphasis on marine science.



In its second year of training naturalists in southern California, National Forest Foundation (NFF)

has directly supported 84 naturalists with scholarships (matched by scholarships from the California Naturalist program). These young adult leaders participate in a full workforce development program and move into summer work assignments as interpreters and stewards with the US Forest Services. They ultimately serve in some of the most heavily used public open spaces in Southern California building skills and knowledge that prepare them for college and natural resource careers.

*"The California Naturalist course provides us with an established framework for our curriculum, a built-in evaluation, and a volunteer management system to help quantify measurable outcomes. This allows us to focus on our strengths which include our knowledge of our local communities and active conservation efforts."*

— **Catie Clune, California Naturalist Instructor**

*"Having the lecture, followed up with group activities, then further followed up by applying those lectures and activities to the field was tremendously helpful in making sure there was a full understanding of the material presented and then how to use it."*

— **Course Participant Feedback**

*"Training a cadre of world-changing naturalists is important to us. We provide education to all ages, but the CA Naturalist program is a trusted UC brand for adult education. Our organization runs an intensive program where graduates make lifelong friends and become part of an effective statewide network of naturalists."*

— **Chris Cameron, Executive Director & Course Instructor**

*"The social community of naturalists was amazingly fruitful, and the way the content was presented, especially when the content was re-enforced through exploration and field trips, created lasting knowledge."*

— **Course Participant Feedback**

*"The California Naturalist Program complements our Young Adult Leadership Development program by providing participants with skills and knowledge in preparation for both college and careers."*

— **Edward Beldon, Southern California Program Manager**

*"Going on field trips for me was about having access to spaces that low-income communities of color don't have access to and they are transformative because it then has us take responsibility of how to further these opportunities."*

— **Course Participant Feedback**

# EVALUATING OUR IMPACT

The California Naturalist program examines learning outcomes in a variety of realms and scales using a wide range of instruments. In general, the program is designed to measure changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior. These measures are captured at the individual and programmatic levels.



## OUTCOME AND IMPACT AREAS

- KNOWLEDGE** // 87% of evaluation respondents responded correctly to content related questions\*
- SKILLS** // 95% of course evaluation respondents in 2016 agreed or strongly agreed that they had the skills necessary to use binoculars and a hand lens; an increase of 19 percentage points than before the course. (n=235).\*
- MOTIVATION** // In 2016, close to 42% of the course evaluation respondents selected "Career Development" as one reason why they chose to participate in the course. This includes many of the 55 naturalists trained through workforce development programs, 23 naturalists trained through community college partners, and at least 57 teachers trained as naturalists.\*
- ATTITUDES** // 97.5% of course evaluation respondents in 2016 indicated they plan to volunteer as a California Naturalist in the coming year (n=239).\* 49% of course participants "strongly agreed" that they were capable of making a positive impact on the environment after completing the course. More than double the number prior to the course (n=227).\*
- BEHAVIOR** // 559 naturalists recorded 33,000+ volunteer hours, worth \$941,000 in FY16/17.
- STEWARDSHIP** // 700,000+ acres of partner land available for improved management and interpretation by CalNat trained volunteers.

*"Survey data revealed that participants' ecological knowledge, scientific skills, and belief in their ability to address environmental issues increased after training."*

\*Based on calendar year 2016 evaluation data.

## STORIES OF DISCOVERY, ACTION, AND STEWARDSHIP

People become a California Naturalist for different reasons but all share in the joy of discovery, the act of sharing and the rewards of stewardship.

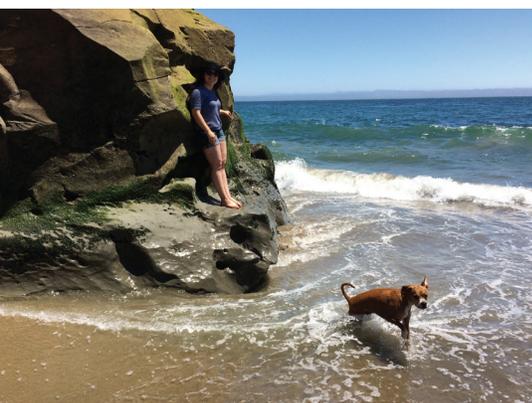


Cedric Lee, California Naturalist

### *Over 18,000 iNat observations and counting*

Being a naturalist is relevant to me because I have a lifelong mission to learn as much of the natural world as I can. There are so many ecological connections between organisms that we have yet to understand. I would advise someone considering a California Naturalist course to prepare to HAVE FUN! The experience of being in the field and learning about plants and animals in their natural habitat cannot be replicated inside a classroom.

— *Cedric Lee, California Naturalist (2013)*  
*Pasadena City College*



Enjoying time at Mitchell's Cove Beach

### *Connecting youth to the natural and cultural history*

I'm inspired to create outdoor experiences that are culturally relevant because of the Native American history of this land. Growing up I felt confused why their history and practices were not being fully acknowledged and honored in school. Integrating a deeper connection to our land by teaching about the culture of those who have been here before us is very important to me. Becoming a Certified California Naturalist has enriched my life greatly; the community is supportive, insightful and inspiring. It provides a space where I can follow my curiosities and intrigue freely.

— *Sandra Corzantes, California Naturalist (2017)*  
*Salmon Protection & Watershed Network*



Future generations

### *Driven by thoughts of future generations*

Having grandchildren gives one the connection to the future that is otherwise tenuous. Climate change will impact them in ways my generation won't see. I can't conscientiously sit back and do nothing for them and generations to follow. Working with the Sierra Club, our local team lobbied our city council to join a regional Community Choice Energy (CCE) group. We collected letters of support from more than 600 residents and 70 business owners through house parties and public outreach. It gives me a sense of purpose and I feel more connected to my community and the natural environment.

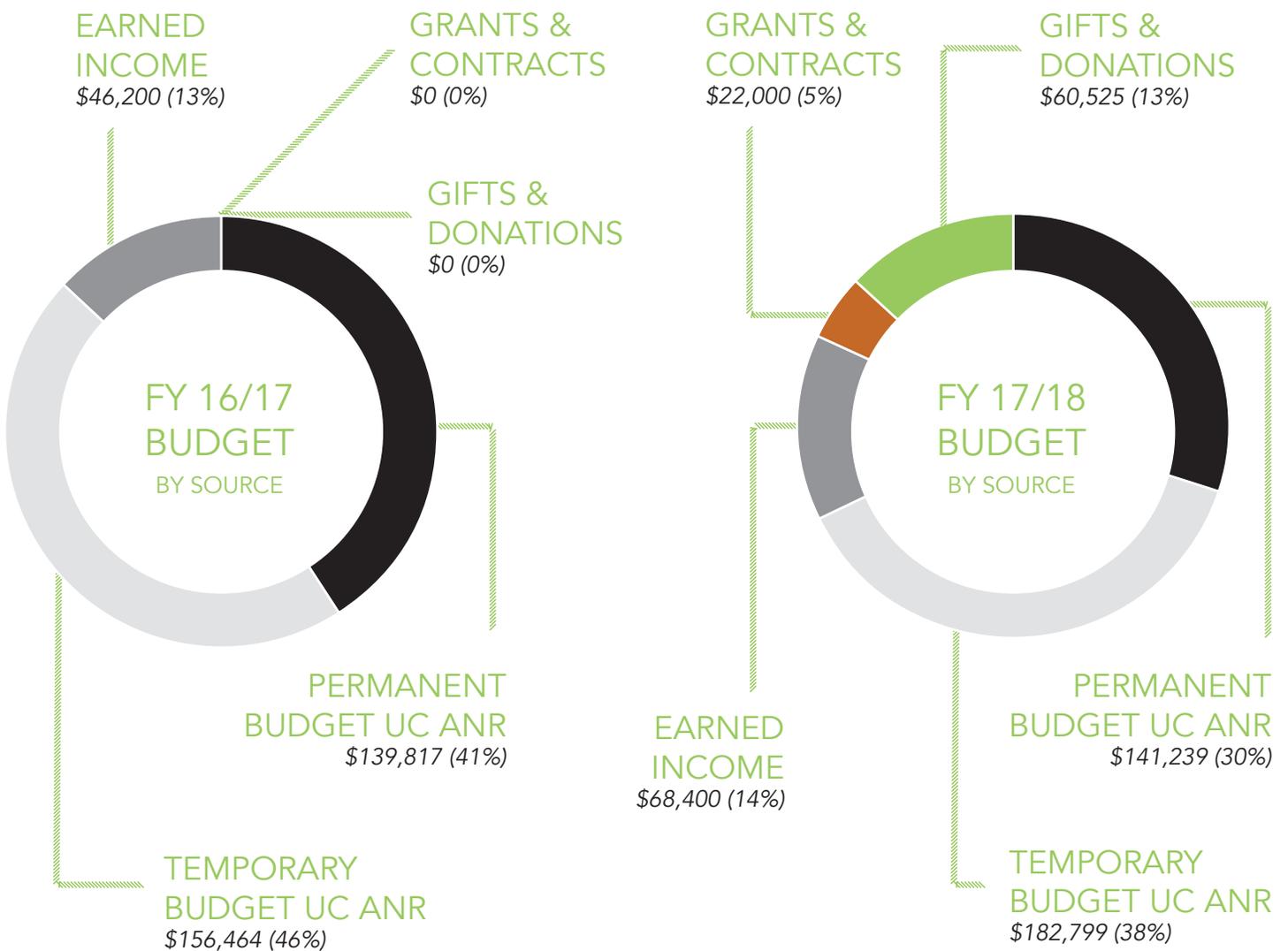
— *Paige DeCino, California Naturalist (2016)*  
*Preserve Calavera*

# PROGRAM BUDGETS

The CalNat program has prioritized diversification of funding sources and reduced reliance on UC ANR central funds as a percentage of the program’s overall budget. As a result of increasing grants and contracts, expanding earned income from a growing base of participating partner organizations, and growing recognition of the program’s value by individual donors, the program is expected to reduce the percentage of central funding from 87% in FY 16/17 to approximately 68% in FY 17/18.

## From FY 16/17 to FY 17/18 the California Naturalist Program Budget:

- 39% increase in total budget from FY 16/17 to projected FY 17/18
- Decreased reliance on ANR funds (from 87% to 68%)
- Increased funding diversity (added two new categories)



#CALNAT   

California Naturalist interacts with an engaged and growing community of naturalists on several social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter (3,193 and 956 followers, respectively, since 2013), and most recently Instagram. Our bi-monthly e-newsletter reaches an audience of 4,610 with an engagement rate over 28%, higher than the industry average.

## ON THE HORIZON

If current demand for the program is any indicator, the California Naturalist program will remain relevant and will continue to flourish in FY 2018/2019. To meet this demand and better serve our partner organizations, the program will add a third Community Education Specialist in 2018. Also, new for 2018 is a planning initiative for an advanced training module for community climate stewards. Finally, a recently funded assessment of Citizen Science within UC ANR may lay the groundwork for the systematic integration of more California Naturalists with UC-led citizen science initiatives.

## JOIN US

The California Naturalist program provides opportunities for: 1) aspiring naturalists, 2) new entrants into the natural resource workforce, 3) educators and interpreters seeking to enhance their knowledge and skills, 4) partner organizations interested in administering and delivering the course to their local community, 5) statewide and institutional partners whose efforts rely heavily on a trained cadre of volunteer naturalists, and 6) sponsors who share in the mission of the program and want to ensure it continues to grow in an equitable and inclusive manner. Whether you're interested in taking a course, delivering the course to others, or supporting participants through scholarships and program support we welcome your assistance. Together we can achieve our shared goals and continue to grow our community of naturalists across the state. For more information on how you can support the program, please visit us at <http://calnat.ucanr.edu/support>.





## CONTACT US

California Naturalist Program  
UC Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources  
2801 Second Street, Davis, CA 95618-7779  
(707) 744-1424 ext 104