



Syllabus and Description: September 15, 2026 – October 27, 2026

Instructor: Kathi King, kking@cecmail.org

Teaching Assistant: Maeve Merwin, maevemerwin@gmail.com

Course Start & End: 09/15/26-10/27/26 (Wednesday evenings)

CEC Climate Stewards website: <https://cecsb.org/climate-stewards>

UCANR website <http://calnat.ucanr.edu/cs/>

Registration Information:

Course Fee: \$360. 50% scholarships are available. Diverse participants are encouraged to apply.

Scholarship Eligibility: Priority for a 50% reduced fee scholarship will be given to those residing in Santa Barbara or Ventura Counties and who are **firmly committed** to completing the course.

Special Scholarship Opportunity in 2026: We have grant funding to provide full scholarships to nine K-12 teachers in Santa Barbara County.

Course Location: Course sessions will be held online via Zoom, and field trips will be held in person.

[Course Zoom Link](#)

Course Schedule: Tuesday nights for 7 weeks from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.. Total coursework is an approximate **40-hour time commitment**.

Course Overview

The Climate Stewards course seeks to foster a committed corps of volunteers and professionals ready to engage in local solutions to promote community and ecosystem resilience in a changing climate. The Climate Stewards course will introduce you to social-emotional learning and trauma-aware practices, climate change communication, climate science, and community

resilience planning. The course will combine communication, engagement, and science curriculum with guest lectures, field trips, and interactive class sessions to immerse you in the dynamics of your local community.

The course will focus on work being done on the Central Coast to address and alleviate climate impacts, and provide resources and opportunities for becoming part of the movement. Students will become well-versed in the Community Environmental Council's mission for rapid, equitable, local solutions to the climate crisis. This Climate Stewards course will guide participants toward making greater community connections, understanding the psychology and science behind climate change, and how to effectively communicate the climate crisis.

This is a college-level course. All assignments and quizzes are pass/fail.

Discussion and activities will be on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm via Zoom. Field trips are in person. Attendance for at least two field trips and 6 out of 7 class sessions is required to qualify for certification. Independent field trip options will be offered for those who have specific challenges with the field trip schedule.

CLASS SESSIONS

Tuesday, September 15 - Intro to Course - 2-hour Zoom, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Tuesday, September 22 - Unit 1 - Community Connections - 2-hour Zoom, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Tuesday, September 29 - Unit 2 - Climate Communication - 2-hour Zoom, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

- **Guest Speaker:** Arya Nantarajan, Sr. Communications Manager, iNaturalist

Tuesday, October 6 - Unit 3 - Climate in Context, Part One - 2-hour Zoom, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

- **Guest Speaker** - Penny Owens, Director of Outreach and Education, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper

Tuesday, October 13 - Unit 4 - Climate in Context, Part Two - 2-hour Zoom, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

- **Guest Speakers** - Ethan Maday, 805 Action and Michael Chiacos, CEC Policy Advisor
- Stewardship Project Proposals **due today**

Tuesday, October 20 - Unit 5 - Community Resilience - 2-hour Zoom, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

- **Guest speaker** - Em Johnson, Sr. Director of Climate Programs, CEC

Tuesday, October 27 - Unit 6 - Community Engagement, Stewardship Project Presentations and

Graduation - 3-hour+ Zoom, 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. (approximate end time). **Note the longer class session timing to accommodate presentations.**

FIELD TRIPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Saturday, September 19, 9 a.m. to 11am. Coastal Clean-up Day, 9 am to noon at West Beach, across from Chad's restaurant. We will be on the Santa Barbara Channelkeeper team. Those who are out of the area may participate in a CCD near them.

Saturday, October 3, 10am to noon. Guided hike at the [Arroyo Hondo Preserve](#). Travel time from Santa Barbara is about 30 minutes. Moderate level hike.

Wednesday, October 7, 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Tajiguas [ReSource Center](#) and Landfill. This is a 90-minute tour (not including travel time to and from the Gaviota Coast location) of the Santa Barbara County Materials Recovery Facility and Anaerobic Digester.

Saturday, October 10, 7-8:30 p.m.. UC Environmental Stewards and CEC Statewide Conference Gathering at the CEC Hub. This evening of reflection and connection is open to all current CEC Climate Stewards and alumni, in addition to conference attendees.

CEC Hub Events (qualify for independent field trip credit):

<https://cecsb.org/events>

COMMUNITY SCIENCE PROJECT - iNaturalist

Project details will be shared during a class session

INDEPENDENT FIELD TRIP OPTIONS

These require advanced instructor approval, documentation, and can include:

- Beach or neighborhood clean-ups
- Local botanical garden visit
- Attendance at local environmental lectures/workshops/activities
- Stewardship project connection/partnership

CANVAS Online Platform for Class Modules

Online self-guided chapter to be completed prior to each Tuesday session. Please come to that session with reflections to share.

Learning Outcomes

- Increase knowledge about current and locally relevant climate science to improve climate

literacy

- Foster climate change communications skills development, civic engagement, and local community action
- Establish an inclusive community of practice focused on stewardship, communication, and community solutions to advance resiliency
- Build statewide support and capacity to effectively advance state and local climate goals
- Meet all of the course requirements

Course Requirements

- **Time Commitment:** Each Climate Stewards course consists of a minimum of 40 educational hours (online, classroom, and field time), which includes a minimum of 12 hours in the field
- **Required Reading and Online Work:** Read the Climate Stewards Handbook, complete six (6) online course modules, and complete assigned homework.
- **Course structure:** This course will be taught with a combination of online self-guided modules, in-person sessions, and the Canvas platform. All participants will need access to the internet to listen to lectures and read course material.
- **Class Attendance and Field Trips:** Participants must attend all classes, with the opportunity to make up missed activities from one class session. The participant is expected to complete make-up activities on their own time at the direction of the instructor. Participants are required to attend at least 2 field trips.
- **Stewardship Project Topics:** Participants are required to create a Stewardship Project in one of six areas: Community Resilience and Adaptation, Environmental and Climate Justice, Conservation/Restoration (Stewardship), Participatory Science, Education/Interpretation, or Program Support.
- **Stewardship Project Details:** The Stewardship Project provides an opportunity for participants to integrate their own personal interests with the in-class material toward the development of a project that meets program guidelines. Participants must receive pre-approval for Stewardship Projects within the first four weeks of the course. Participants are encouraged to work in teams when appropriate. Participants will deliver an individual or group presentation (5 minutes per person) during the final course session. Participants are expected to spend a minimum of 8 hours on the Stewardship Project and will add hours spent on the Stewardship Project into the UCANR Volunteer Portal.
- **Course Evaluation:** Completion of the online course evaluation surveys are critical for the ongoing success and improvement of the course.

Homework Policy

Homework assignments will be due **before** the next scheduled class meeting.

Attendance Policy

Participants must complete [minimum of 40+] hours of instruction during the class. Only one class session (2 hours) can be missed. For some sessions, it's possible to watch a recording to receive attendance credit.

Required Text

Climate Stewardship: Collective Action Across California, Brendan Buhler and Adina Merenlender.

To purchase the handbook please visit: [Climate Stewardship: Taking Collective Action to Protect California](#) When purchasing the book through UC Press, use the discount code UCPSAVE30 to get a 30% discount.

We have a limited number of books in our CEC library for lending (first come, first served).

The handbook is now available as an **audiobook** too! It's available free on many library platforms and it's also free with subscription on Audible, Spotify, Amazon Prime and others.

Course Materials

Certain course materials are required:

- Access to internet-connected computer or phone and an email account for communication with the instructor and for Volunteer Portal access
 - For those in the Santa Barbara area, the Community Environmental Council's Hub offers occasional free working spaces, wifi and we have an extra computer for use in the building
- Course handbook
- Transportation to field trips (carpooling will be encouraged)

Statement on Financial Accessibility

Students are responsible for course fees, purchasing the book, and transportation for the field trips.

A limited number of 50% reduced scholarships are available. We are seeking a large and diverse group of students. Please contact the course instructor at least 14 days prior to the first day of class to inquire about scholarship opportunities, application procedures and commitments.

Recommended supplemental reading, listening, and doing

[Community Environmental Council](#) (CEC)

Receive updates, including webinar invitations via our newsletter. [Sign up here.](#)

Podcasts we like:

- [Climate One](#)
- [A Matter of Degrees](#) (co-hosted by UCSB's Dr. Leah Stokes)

- [The Climate Question](#) from the BBC
- [What if we get it right?](#) From Dr Ayana Elizabeth Johnson
- [Imagine If](#) from Bluedot Living

Books

- [The Carbon Wave](#), Leah Stokes (September 2026)
- [Climate Wayfinding](#), Katharine Wilkinson
- [Human Nature](#), Kate Marvel
- [The Sixth Extinction](#), Elizabeth Kolbert (Pulitzer Prize)
- [A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety](#), Sarah Jaquette Ray
- [What if We Get it Right](#), Ayana Elizabeth Johnson (also a [podcast](#))

Websites and newsletters

- [Boiling Point](#) newsletter (published weekly by Los Angeles Times; might require a subscription).
- Climate science site: <https://www.climate.us/>
- [Yale Environment 360](#) A free website and/or newsletter with current climate information.
- [Canary Media](#): Covering the Clean Energy Transition (free)
- [The Carbon Almanac](#) A source for “reliable and easily understandable knowledge on climate change that you can share to create a meaningful impact.” (free)
- [Climate Central](#) Provides research and communication tools on climate impacts and solutions. Designed for meteorologists with applications for everyone. (free)
- [RMI](#) (formerly known as Rocky Mountain Institute). Focus on transforming global energy systems.
- BBC Future Earth [newsletter](#)

UC Environmental Stewards Resources

- [CalNat YouTube Channel](#): View videos from Climate Stewards conferences, meetings, and more.
- [CalNat Mapping Tool](#): The California Naturalist Program provides a GIS-based map-producing tool you can use for both content delivery and logistics. Choose from multiple base maps and layers to explore bioregions, compare and contrast field sites, create maps to field trips and capstone projects, and more.

Volunteering and the Volunteer Portal

- Participants are encouraged to complete at least 40 hours of volunteer service each year. Pins are awarded each year for participants who meet this goal, and the pins differ from year to year.
- Volunteer activities must relate to climate communication, education, interpretation, mitigation, adaptation, or community or ecosystem resilience, occur in California, be sponsored by an organization, and be UNPAID.
- Your 8-hour Stewardship Project will count toward your first year’s volunteer hours. You will log these hours into the [Volunteer Portal](#). A welcome email will be sent to you after

instructors add your information to the system. Notify your instructor if you do not receive that email. You will be provided with a username and password in the introductory email after the start of the class.

- The portal website is <https://apps.ideal-logic.com/ucanr>
- There are resources available to help you familiarize yourself with the Climate Stewards volunteer portal and commonly used features. Check out the [help guides and videos](#).

Cancellation Policy

Registrants may cancel up to two weeks before the first day of instruction for a full refund, minus a \$50 administrative fee. Registrants who experience a verifiable medical emergency personally, or in their family, between the two weeks of class before and after instruction has begun may re-enroll in the following year's course at a 50% discounted rate, with priority for early registration. No other cancellations, for any other reason, will result in a refund.

Instructional Methods

The course will integrate a range of instructional methods, including online modules, presentations (in-person and virtual), peer-to-peer discussion, small group activities, and experiential learning.

Statement on Inclusion and Accommodations

If you have a learning or physical need that will require special accommodations in this class you will need to notify your instructor in writing of your accommodation needs. Please notify us at least 30 days before the first class if you require special accommodations. This will allow us ample opportunity to provide suitable accommodations. We make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Materials will be available in alternate formats (Braille, audio, electronic format, or large print) upon request.