

Climate Stewards of the Sierra Nevada Foothills



Instructor

Phone

530-621-1224

Email

Course Start & End

09/17/2025

11/19/2025

UC Environmental Stewards Website

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

Registration

Course Fee

\$415

Course Location

Classes via Zoom or
In-Person at Wakamatsu
Farm

And 3 in-person field trips

Course Schedule

Wednesday evenings from
4:00 to 6:30

Course Overview

General. The UC Climate Stewards seeks to foster a committed corps of volunteers ready to effectively engage in transformative local solutions to promote community and ecosystem resilience in a changing climate. The UC Climate Stewards course will introduce you to social-emotional resilience and trauma-aware practices, climate change communication, climate science, and community resilience planning. The course will combine communication, engagement, and science curricula with guest presenters, field trips, and project-based learning to immerse you in the dynamics of your local community.

This UC Climate Stewards Course will focus on the Sierra Nevada Foothills and on the greater Sacramento region.

Learning Outcomes

- Increase access to up-to-date and locally relevant climate science to improve climate literacy
- Improve participants' self-efficacy and agency by fostering climate change communications skills development, civic engagement, and local conservation and 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

- **Contact Time:** Each UC Climate Stewards course consists of a minimum of 43 educational hours (online/in-person, classroom, and field time), which includes a minimum of 12 hours in the field.
- **Required Reading and Online Work:** Read the entire UC Climate Stewards Handbook. Participants must complete all materials and activities in the online Canvas course modules Units 1-6. The deeper dive material in Canvas modules is not required material. Please always access the Climate Stewards Canvas materials using this link: <https://login.uconline.edu/stewards/>.

- **Stewardship Project:** Climate Stewards course participants are required to complete a Stewardship Project that includes 8 hours of volunteer service. Their project must fit under one of the following six categories designated for Stewardship Project activities in the UC Volunteer Portal:
 - Stewardship Project (Community Resilience & Adaptation), or
 - Stewardship Project (Conservation/Restoration), or
 - Stewardship Project (Education/Interpretation), or
 - Stewardship Project (Environmental & Climate Justice), or
 - Stewardship Project (Participatory Science), or
 - Stewardship Project (Program Support)

An important aspect of the Stewardship Project is the concept of service learning, in which participants contribute to community welfare by addressing locally identified issues and at the same time gain insight into their local environments. The project provides an opportunity for participants to combine what they've learned in the course with their personal interests and support the work of an organization or agency that is benefiting their local area, while also making deeper connections in their community.

Participants are encouraged to work in groups, but it is not required. Participants must have their Stewardship Project pre-approved by their instructor during the first two weeks of the course and record project information and ongoing volunteer hours in the UC Volunteer Portal. Please log into the Volunteer Portal using this link:

<https://apps.ideal-logic.com/ucanr>.

Participants will share their individual or group Stewardship Projects at the end of the course. Each participant will have 5 minutes to present their project to the class.

- **Class Attendance and Field Trips:** Participants must attend all Wednesday evening classes. If an evening class is missed, the participant will be expected to complete make-up activities on their own time at the direction of the instructor. Please talk to the instructor if you are going to miss a class. Only one evening class session can be missed. Because of the unique aspects of field trips, participants need to attend all field trips. Field trips may include hiking/walking on uneven terrain for several miles, often on non-accessible trails or environments. Please discuss any mobility limitations you may have with the instructor ahead of time.
- **Class Community Science Project:** Each participant must contribute to the community science project adopted by the class. Our class citizen science project is using the ISeeChange app to record observations of our local environment. Each participant must:

1. Register for their own ISeeChange account at this link:

<http://www.ISeeChange.org/>

2. Record 10 observations on the ISeeChange platform that include at least two sentences and at least one photo for each observation.

- **Evaluation:** Completion of the online post-course evaluation survey is critical for the ongoing success and improvement of the course. You will be provided with a link to the evaluation survey toward the end of the course.
- **Volunteering and Volunteer Portal (VMS):** Participants will be provided with an online account to track their volunteer hours, including hours spent on their Stewardship Project. Tracking volunteer hours is an essential way to participate in the course and to document the impact of the UC Environmental Stewards.

Required Text

- Climate Stewardship: Taking Collective Action to Protect California, Brendan Buhler and Adina Merenlender. (Included in course fee. Shipping in mid-August)

Recommended supplemental reading

- The Thinking Person's Guide to Climate Change, Robert Henson.

Course Materials

Required: Access to internet connected computer or phone and an email account for communication and Volunteer Portal access. Please notify the instructor immediately if you do not have an e-mail account.

Recommended Resources

- **UC Environmental Stewards YouTube Channel:** View videos from UC Climate Stewards conferences, meetings, and more.
Url: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGBYG5ShV4VDiUiRbEmmObg>
- Climate Change in the Sierra Nevada - California's Water Future
<https://www.ioes.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/UCLA-CCS-Climate-Change-Sierra-Nevada.pdf>

Tracking Volunteer Service:

Tracking volunteer hours after completing the course is strongly encouraged as an essential way to document the impact of UC Environmental Stewards. Participants are encouraged to complete at least 40 hours of volunteer service in a calendar year. Unique nature pins are designed each year in recognition of the Climate Stewards and California Naturalists who meet this goal. The initial 8 hours of volunteer service spent on your Stewardship Project will count toward your 40



hours of service during the first year. The Volunteer Portal can serve as one location to track volunteer service with multiple organizations. Qualifying volunteer hours that may be recorded on another organization's platform can also be entered into the UC Volunteer Portal and count toward UC Environmental Stewards 40-hour annual pin and other recognition levels. Here is a link with more information about annual recognition pins: <https://calnat.ucanr.edu/pin/>

Qualifying Volunteer Activities:

Volunteer activities must relate to climate communication, education, interpretation, mitigation, adaptation, or community or ecosystem resilience in California. The activities should occur in association with an organization or natural resource agency, and be unpaid or part of a subsidized workforce development program such as the California Conservation Corps, Local Corps, AmeriCorps, California Climate Action Corps, National Forest Foundation, or Sustainability Service Corps.

Logging Volunteer Service after Certification:

When recording volunteer service after the initial 8 hours spent on your Stewardship Project, make sure to select the appropriate activity category that is not labeled as one of the six Stewardship Project categories reserved for participants during their course.

Volunteer Portal Help:

There are resources available to help familiarize yourself with the Volunteer Portal and commonly used features. Follow this link to view Instructional guides and videos: http://calnat.ucanr.edu/Resources/VP_Help/

Course Credit

After completing all course requirements, participants have the option to purchase 4 undergraduate credits for this course through UC Davis. The University processes the credits at the end of each quarter and credits may take several weeks to arrive. Follow this link to learn more about receiving UC credits after certification: https://calnat.ucanr.edu/Resources/UC_Credit/

Homework Policy

- Asynchronous learning and homework is expected to be finished as assigned and turned in prior to the class for which it is due. All assignments are required and must be turned in for credit.

Attendance Policy

- Participants must complete 40 hours of instruction during the class. Participants must attend all Wednesday evening classes. If an evening class is missed, the participant will be expected to complete make-up activities on their own time at the direction of the instructor. Please talk to the instructor if you are going to miss a class. Only one evening class session can be missed. Because of the unique aspects of field trips, participants need to attend all field trips. In the case of an emergency and the field trip is missed, participants may be able to arrange an alternative option at the discretion of the instructor..

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 that can successfully refer another student to replace their spot in the course prior to the first day of class will receive a full refund. Registrants that 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. No other cancellation, for any other reason, will result in a refund.

Instructional Methods

The course will integrate a range of instructional methods including online modules, presentations, peer-to-peer discussion, small group activities, hands-on and inquiry-based activities, experiential learning. Requests for reasonable accommodations for disabilities or limitations should be made a minimum of 30 days prior to the start date of the course. Please make such requests as early as possible by contacting the instructor.

Statement on Inclusion and Accommodations

American River Conservancy is committed to the principles of equity, inclusion, and diversity in our programs. We strive to offer options that allow everyone to become active participants in conservation, stewardship, and education about the land and rivers we protect. 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 send us a written request of what service you would require at least **60 days** prior to the start of the course. We do our best to provide positive experiences for our participants but there may be physical and financial limitations to what we can provide. Please be aware that the field trips for this course include moving across natural areas with rough or uneven surfaces. 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 if they exist.

Statement on Financial Accessibility Cost

Students are responsible for course fees, purchasing books, and transportation for the field trips. Students are also responsible for costs associated with any travel, meals and camping equipment. Two needs based scholarships are available upon approval of the course facilitator.

Class Schedule

WK	Date	Topic	Due Dates	Speaker (Title & Affiliation)
1	09/17/25	Class Meeting #1 Welcome to Climate Stewards! Introductory Webinar Class Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet fellow participants Introduction to course tools, flow and expectations Volunteer Portal Community resilience and education in fire country 		Nic Russo - In Person <i>Education Program Manager,</i> <i>American River Conservancy</i> Katie Reidy - In Person <i>UCCE Education Coordinator</i>
2a		Canvas Online Independent Learning Component Unit I – Community Connections *each Canvas unit is self-paced, complete units before the next Wednesday class meeting	Due 9/24	
2b	09/24/25	Class Meeting #2 Class Discussion Component Unit I – Community Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Agreements Perceptions of Climate Change Trauma aware practices Stewardship project overview 	Stewardship Proposal Due 10/8	Nic Russo - In Person <i>Education Program Manager,</i> <i>American River Conservancy</i>
3a	Sunday 09/28/25	Field Trip #1 – Climate Change, Meadows and Land Use Participatory Science at Leek Springs Meadow with iSeeChange app (more information below)		Cathy Mueller, <i>Stewardship Manager,</i> <i>American River Conservancy</i>
3b		Canvas Online Independent Learning Component Unit II – Interpretation/Communication/Education	Due 10/1	
3c	10/01/25	Class Meeting #3 Class Discussion Component Unit II – Interpretation/Communication/Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Messaging techniques 		Nic Russo <i>Education Program Manager,</i>

	Date	Topic	Due Dates	Speaker (Title & Affiliation)
WK		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community characteristics Climate opinion maps 		<i>American River Conservancy</i>
4a		Canvas Online Independent Learning Component Unit III – Climate in Context, Part 1, Week 1		
4b	10/8/25	Class Meeting #4 Class Discussion Component Unit III – Climate in Context, Part 1a <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community action and agreements Climate Change and Fire Trends in the Sierra Due: Stewardship Project Proposal Form		Jacqui Moore Ed.D - <i>Community Organizer</i> Becky Estes, PhD <i>Central Sierra Province Ecologist</i> <i>US Forest Service</i>
5a		Canvas Online Independent Learning Component Unit III – Climate in Context, Part 1, Week 2	Due 10/15	
5b	10/15/25	Class Meeting #5 Class Discussion Component Unit III – Climate in Context, Part 1b <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change conversation framing Exploring the ways we can reverse course on carbon in the atmosphere. 		Nic Russo <i>Education Program Manager,</i> <i>American River Conservancy</i> Christian Theuer <i>Heirloom Carbon Capture</i>
6a		Canvas Online Independent Learning Component Unit IV – Climate in Context, Part 2, Week 1 <i>Unit IV is a large unit. We will take 2 weeks to complete it and will not be meeting on October 29.</i>	Due 10/22	
6b	10/22/25	Class Meeting #6 Presentation Component Climate in Context, Part 2, Week 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing forests, agricultural land, and groundwater 		Safeeq Khan, <i>Assistant Cooperative Extension Specialist,</i> <i>Water and Watershed Sciences, UCANR</i>
7a	Sunday 10/26/25	Field Trip #2 Climate Change and CA Forests (More information below)		Jessica Wright, Ph.D., <i>Research Geneticist, USFS</i>

	Date	Topic	Due Dates	Speaker (Title & Affiliation)
WK				
7b		Canvas Online Independent Learning Component Unit IV – Climate in Context, Part 2, Week 2 <i>Unit IV is a large unit. We will take 2 weeks to complete it and will not be meeting on October 29.</i> Check in: Stewardship project updates - log into Volunteer Portal	Due 11/5	
8a	11/5/25	Class Meeting #7 Presentation Component Unit IV – Climate in Context, Part 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local climate change effects on waterways in California. 		Sarah Yarnell, PhD <i>Research Hydrologist</i> <i>Center for Watershed Sciences UC Davis</i>
9a	Sunday 11/9/25	Field Trip #3 Sara Sweet, Project Ecologist, The Nature Conservancy Cosumnes River Preserve (more information below)		Sara Sweet <i>Project Ecologist, The Nature Conservancy</i>
9b		Canvas Online Independent Learning Component Unit V – Community Resilience <i>No class meeting ton November 12 in order to prepare for Project Presentations</i> Course Evaluation link	Due 11/12	
Wk 10a		Canvas Online Independent Learning Unit VI - Stewardship Presentation Preparation <i>Please complete your project presentation and practice by Monday 11/17 to allow for addressing technical difficulties prior to presenting on 11/19</i>		
10b	11/19/25	Class Meeting #9 Class Discussion Unit VI - Stewardship Presentations and Graduation (Course Evaluations)		

Field Trip Schedule (Detailed schedules provided the week prior to each field trip.)

Wk	Date	Subject/Topic (time, emergency contact)	Mtg. Location/Time (map link)	Speaker (Title & Affiliation)
4	9/28/25	Climate Change Sierra Meadows (9:00-4:00), 916-671-4519	Leek Springs Meadow (Meet at Placerville Raley's at 8:45 AM) Directions	Cathy Mueller, <i>Stewardship Manager, American River Conservancy</i>
6	10/26/25 NOT CONFIR MED	Climate Change and CA Forests (10:00-3:00), 916-671-4519	Institute of Forest Genetics, 2480 Carson Road, Placerville Directions	Jessica Wright, Ph.D., <i>Research Geneticist, USFS</i>
8	11/9/25	Climate Change and Watersheds (9:00-4:00), 916-671-4519 Actual tour is from 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Cosumnes River Preserve Specific Meeting Place Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center Directions	Sara Sweet, <i>Project Ecologist, The Nature Conservancy</i>

