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Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network Announces 2nd Annual “Spotlight Stewardship” Course

The Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network, a coalition of 21 large landowners in the Santa Cruz Mountains allied to support good land stewardship on both public and private lands, today announced the second year of an initiative to educate local community leaders about unique environmental issues facing the region.

Called “Spotlight Stewardship,” the initiative will begin accepting applications immediately for its second class of participants. The curriculum will include field studies on a variety of topics spread over five day-long classes. The cohort will include up to 20 participants.

“Spotlight Stewardship is a way to communicate the complex realities of land stewardship”, said Dylan Skybrook, manager of the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network, “and the need for collaboration between members of the Network to address those complexities. It’s really useful to have community leaders come out and spend some time on the land to understand stewardship issues and to see how the cooperation of Network Members is essential to the effort to care for the land.”

“Spotlight Stewardship” topics include timber and forest health management; fire prevention and management; water quality and supply; sensitive species, wildlife corridors and working lands; agricultural, ranching and environmental resources; responsible recreation and public access; and cannabis cultivation.

“Spotlight Stewardship was a well-organized, deep-dive tour of the challenges facing landowners, conservation groups, researchers and regulators in the 21st Century”, says past participant Craig Wilson, Chief Deputy of the Santa Cruz County Sheriffs Office. “I knew issues surrounding land use and management were complex, but I had no idea how the problems were interrelated, close to the point of being insurmountable. Land use is a highly and hotly conflicted environment for everyone who cares about our planet. Spotlight helps provide a little light to help us get through pick our way through the maze of perspectives and interests.”

Spotlight Stewardship is just one program of the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network which works to enhance water quality and watershed health, protect habitat and biological diversity, provide access to public land and build citizen engagement throughout the Santa Cruz Mountains, and promotes a wide range of beneficial uses of the land, including ecological, economic, recreational, aesthetic, cultural and spiritual.

For more information about the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network and a list of members, visit www.scmsn.net.

