The new UC Climate Stewards course of the UC ANR California Naturalist Program is a model education and service initiative. The course prepares participants to engage within their communities in integrated climate solutions, community science, and communication to advance community and ecosystem resilience. The 40-hour course provides training on the skills Stewards need to effectively communicate and engage in transformative local solutions. Our vision is for a California with engaged communities and functioning ecosystems that are resilient in a changing climate.

**APPROACH**

UC Climate Stewards employs a systems thinking approach to understand climate change in its wider ecological and social context. The place-based orientation focuses on community level transformative interventions that leverage other ways of knowing and being. This holistic pedagogy considers root causes of climate change and the associated issues of environmental and social justice. The course emphasizes human interconnection, interdependence, and embeddedness within the rest of the community of life. Vision, positivity, commitment, agency, courage, creativity, and practical skills are promoted and fostered within individual UC Climate Stewards and the wider UC Climate Stewards community of practice.

**COURSE PARTICIPANTS**

The UC Climate Stewards course uses up to date science materials geared toward a general audience of diverse adult participants. The course benefits from a multi-disciplinary team of social and natural scientists with relevant climate science expertise, ensuring access to the most recent and appropriate science materials. UC Climate Stewards is currently available in English for Californians with participants ranging from youth corps, park employees, indigenous groups, teachers, state agency personnel, community college students, retired individuals, and inner city and rural community members.

**THEORY OF CHANGE:** Through coursework, communication, and a community of practice that promotes learning and relationship building, UC Climate Stewards will enhance their motivation, confidence, and capacity to participate in short-term and long-term stewardship behaviors that build their local communities’ resilience in a changing climate.
PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- **Increase access to up-to-date and locally relevant climate science** to improve climate literacy through a UC certification course for the public.

- **Improve participants’ self-efficacy and agency** by fostering climate change communications skills, development, civic engagement, and local conservation and community action.

- **Establish and support inclusive communities of practice** that develop and share knowledge generated through the experiences and ongoing work of climate stewards.

- **Build statewide support and capacity** to effectively advance state and local climate goals.

COURSE CONTENT

Courses are delivered throughout California by partner organizations with expertise in informal science education. Trained instructors combine in-person, online, and field experience in science, problem solving, communication training, and community service into a 40-hour course. After certification, UC Climate Stewards are encouraged to volunteer in activities ranging from community and citizen science, land and water stewardship, civic engagement, and education and interpretation activities. Each unit builds upon the previous; the units in order are as follows:

- **Community Connections** – In Unit 1, participants connect through their experiences with climate change focusing on relationships, social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed practices.

- **Communication, Interpretation, Education** – In Unit II, participants learn to communicate about climate change with the appropriate interpretation, communication, and education tools for various audiences.

- **Climate in Context** – Participants learn the science behind climate and earth systems, climate change, and the role of humans with examples from California. Unit III focuses on the basics of climate science. Unit IV focuses on the local aspects of climate science as they relate to California concerns.

- **Community Resilience** – In Unit V, participants learn to leverage community connections and resources for climate resilience efforts focusing on resilience assessments and collective solutions to climate change.

STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES and EXPECTATIONS

UC Climate Stewards prepares participants to effectively engage in a wide range of community level stewardship activities. Participants are expected to attend all classes and complete all course assignments, building their capabilities, capacity and commitment to climate work. All participants undertake a capstone project, often with a local nonprofit(s), to initiate their climate stewardship activities. During the course, participants are introduced to local climate-oriented groups and provided with a list of possible efforts to engage with. Upon graduation, UC Climate Stewards are encouraged to be active in diverse place-based, community-level stewardship, and incentivized to commit 40 hours (or more) of volunteer service each year and remain an active member of the UC Climate Stewards Communities of Practice.

BENEFITS OF CLIMATE STEWARDS CERTIFICATION

Certification through the University of California provides the following benefits:

- **Optional academic credits** through UC Davis Continuing and Professional Education for an additional nominal fee (non-community college programs) *in process.

- **Future discounts and invitations** to CalNat statewide conferences and continuing education opportunities.

- **Connections to science institutions** across the state.

- **Community of Practice**: Statewide fellowship and collaboration with other certified UC Climate Stewards through the UC Climate Stewards Communities of Practice.

For more information, please visit the Climate Stewards webpage - [http://calnat.ucanr.edu/cs](http://calnat.ucanr.edu/cs)