

Sacred Rok

2010 ANNUAL REPORT



October 2010



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On behalf of the Sacred Rok Board of Directors, we are very excited to share our 2010 Annual Report, representing Sacred Rok's first year of operation. We are proud of what we have accomplished with Sacred Rok in our first year, and also excited about our future activities. We are thankful to our supporters and donors for helping us to make this possible.

Spearheaded by the vision of Executive Director Ron Kauk, the Sacred Rok mission is help young people learn to respect nature and through that, to respect themselves. Ron wants to connect young people to nature and help them learn to value the natural world. Our motto is "Education Nature's Way." Our approach is to slow down and focus on the basics - water, air, breathing, learning to walk again.

We accomplish our mission through day trips and camping trips with youth, as well as educational presentations, our newsletter, and our web site www.SacredRok.org. Our first Annual Report is an opportunity to share our accomplishments and plans for the future.

Sacred Rok Board of Directors:

Ron Kauk, Executive Director

Nancy Goodban, Board Chair

Kenji Hakuta, Secretary/Treasurer

Brian Cooley

Lamar Henderson

Lucy Snyder

Sacred Rok Annual Report

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Sacred Rok Accomplishments

We incorporated in July 2009 and finished our first fiscal year in June 2010, with annual revenue of \$35,000. During the year we built our infrastructure through our website (www.SacredRok.org) and monthly newsletter. We completed the administrative basics: our tax exempt status, financial reports, and insurance. The Merced County Human Services Agency provided customized training to our volunteers and staff regarding the emotional and behavioral impacts of child abuse, mandatory child abuse reporting, sexual harassment prevention, domestic violence, and bullying. We adopted anti-abuse, harassment, and bullying policies for adults and youth participants, as well as other basic policies including background checks and confidentiality.

We set up a website, www.SacredRok.org, and publish a monthly newsletter online. Donations can also be made via the website; Ron commissioned the design of "Midnight Lightning" Sacred Rok t-shirts which we send to anyone who makes a \$50 donation. The t-shirts are black with the Midnight Lightning logo in gray.

We reached out to the outdoor industry and foundations, and were grateful to receive cash or equipment donations from the Clif Bar Family Foundation, Patagonia, The California Endowment, Kleen Kanteen, Camelback, Kelty, Sierra Designs, North Face, REI, and Slumberjack. Executive Director Ron Kauk gave educational presentations including at the Stanford University Alpine Club and to REI staff at Yosemite National Park as well as to several REI venues in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Best of all, we took Probation and foster kids, as well as middle and high school youth from Planada, on trips to Yosemite National Park. One of our most exciting and meaningful activities is introducing youth to the natural beauty of Yosemite, often for the first time. In 2010, Ron led ten trips -- 3 day trips for Probation youth, 3 day trips for Planada kids, 2 camping trips for Probation youth, and 2 camping trips for foster youth.

The purpose of the trips is to provide at-risk youth with a safe and supportive outdoor experience in order to develop teamwork skills, self-confidence, leadership skills, and the ability to make positive choices by helping them to become familiar with the outdoors, start to feel comfortable being in nature, and become more self-confident in their outdoor and camping abilities.

The goal of Sacred Rok is to expose these teens to nature through camping trips and hikes, helping them to learn to respect and value nature and to understand their own role, to empower them to make positive choices in their lives and to help protect and preserve the natural world they are experiencing and learning to value. The best moments have come in listening to the water, taking in expansive views of the high Sierras, or encountering a Mountain King snake. In the presence of natural beauty, we appreciate the power of slowing down and having the time to recognize the senses, clearing them out in order to gain balance.

Camping and Day Trips

In 2010, our ten trips included:

- **Three day-trips (March, April, and June) with Merced County Probation youth who are incarcerated in Iris Garrett Juvenile Justice facility.** Executive Director Ron Kauk led the day trips. The youth were driven up to Yosemite in a county van by their Probation officer, and spent the day walking and hiking around Yosemite Valley. Sacred Rok provided a picnic lunch, and the youth returned to Merced at dinnertime. Ron describes one of the trips below:

We met in the morning at the El Portal Market, where I supplied them with backpacks and Patagonia parkas which were donated to us. We picked up some sandwiches, and went to the Cookie area, which I call my *dojo* where I work on my breathing going up familiar climbs. We walked slowly up to the cliff, and then I showed them my practice routine of moving up the rock. They quickly began feeling comfortable in the surroundings, moving some loose logs to sit comfortably while I went through my short demo. I went up, came down, and we talked. We could hear, as always, the sound of the Merced River down below, even though the sound is different depending on the time of year.



I wanted to take them next to the water, so we next stopped at Cascade Falls. One of them took a bold jump to a rock across the creek, made it, but then had a hard time trying to get back, eliciting laughter and reactions from the others. One simple lesson. It all felt natural, working to be themselves in this unfamiliar environment.

We next stopped at Fern Spring, where I always practice my ritual of honoring the Valley. I talked to them about the respect that I show for the place. We washed our faces, and drank the water.

El Cap meadow was next, where we stopped to have lunch. One of the guys kept leading us until we got to the riverbank in the shade of the trees. This was a relaxing

place to sit, eat, and visit. The light and air felt special, this being early spring – it is always different depending on the time of year. One guy talked about his residence, waking up in the small cinderblock walls with no windows. I said these are my walls that I live in. We kind of laughed about it, subdued because we acknowledged the reality.

Looking up at El Cap, George made a comment that everyone absorbed: “No matter who you are, rich or poor, good or bad, you still got this,” as he was looking at El Cap. We all resonated to his humble tone. His words spoke to me because I instantly remembered how as a youth coming into the valley, how we really had to approach the rock with humility and sense of awe to give yourself force and discipline to make it up that 3000 foot rock safely.

- **Three day-trips with middle and high school youth from Planada** (two trips in October and one planned for mid-November). These trips were funded by the California Endowment with matching funds provided by our Clif Bar Family Foundation grant. The California Endowment is sponsoring a Building Healthy Communities collaborative in South Merced. This is a ten-year commitment to build capacity among low income communities in South Merced, including LeGrand and Planada. Planada is 92% Latino, primarily farm workers. Thirty-eight percent of the children in Planada live below the federal poverty line of \$22,050 for a family of four. The California Endowment provided Sacred Rok funding to take 5 students from the El Centro after school program in Planada on a day trip to Yosemite, and Sacred Rok will provide funding for a total of 3 day trips. Ron describes the second trip:

We met at the El Portal store, and went on to Tuolumne, by way of a spring where we filled our bottles and appreciated that water. Our next stop was the west side of Tenaya Lake. It was a partially overcast day, but that did not prevent the guys from wading out in the water to the first set of exposed rocks. We then took a hike to the other end of the lake. At one point, one boy spotted an empty soda can on the water’s edge down a fairly steep gully, and he went down to pick it up. We kept going down the path picking up litter.

Along the way, I pointed out a climb that I had done early in my youth, Great White Book, across the way on the Stately Pleasure Dome. It was on the last day of a class with the Yosemite Mountain School, and I have such great memories of what that climb meant to me. And I really appreciated the potential of what Yosemite could do for these guys.



The other end of the lake was windy and cold, but we took pictures, and then decided to go hang out by the campsite at the Tuolumne Meadows campground where I had spent the past summer. The campground had been closed for a while, but I knew that we could build a fire there and hang out by the river. At the campground, we ate and went exploring in the river – several of them getting their shoes quite wet. We hung out by the fire, drying off, appreciating its warmth, and enjoying the food, company and setting.



They all wanted then to see the part of the river where they had seen me diving in my movie, *Return to Balance* – which they saw in the theater on the previous trip. Although it was already mid-afternoon, they were eager to keep going, so we hopped in our cars and went to Pothole Dome area and hiked along the river as it began its descent towards the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne.

We eventually made it down to the cascades, and then they focused on the water. It was cold, the sun was occasionally showing but it was breezy. But they all got in the

water, enjoying the company and the significance. After a lot of shivering and drying off, we walked back as the sun got very low.



We asked for silence on the return walk and listened to the water and the wind, the crunching of our footsteps, the smells of the trees. We could see the sky at the end of the day, the peaks around you capturing the day's last light, including Conness and Cathedral.

- **Two camping trips with Merced County Probation youth.** The May camping trip included the youth who came on the March-April day trips. They all camped at Yellow Pines in Yosemite Valley. The July trip included the Probation youth who came on the June day trip. They camped at Tuolumne Meadows Campground in Tuolumne Meadows. It provided the opportunity to get away from the relative bustle of Yosemite Valley into the serenity and isolation of Tuolumne Meadows, camping by the river and rising with the sun. Food was a highlight on the camping trips. Camp manager Katie Lambert provided organic, wholesome, fresh cooked meals. Breakfasts included oatmeal with diced fresh apples and cinnamon, strawberry/banana buckwheat pancakes, egg sandwiches on muffins with bacon, or breakfast sausage. Lunch was prepared for the trail: sandwiches or turkey wraps along with chips and trail mix. Dinner included chicken and sausage jambalaya, tacos, Italian sausage or meatball pasta with tomato sauce, and fresh baked brownies or cookies for dessert.
- **Two camping trips with foster youth from Merced County Human Services Agency Independent Living Program (ILP).** ILP is designed for teenagers in foster care to help prepare them to "age out" of the foster care system at age 18. The June camping trip was at Indian Flat Campground in El Portal. The foster youth took trips around Yosemite Valley, including experiencing the water at Fern Spring, hiking to Vernal and Nevada Falls, and exploring the Miwok Village. The August camping trip was at Tuolumne Meadows Campground in Tuolumne Meadows. Mario, age 17, stepped out of the van and said, "I want to get rich so I can live here." Throughout the trip, he discussed his desire to live and work in Yosemite, and the commitment was made to help him find work once he graduates from high school in June 2011. The ILP program sent staff as adult chaperones, including

two young adults who had just aged out of the foster care system. The youth participants built strong personal connections with Ron and the other adults, including friending on Facebook. On Facebook, tough young Mario said after the trip, "I am crying because I miss you all." Here is what Ron says about the August trip:

Every day we took a hike or walk, and had a chance to swim in the river. We hiked up Lembert Dome, we walked by Pothole Dome to the river, and we walked to Cathedral Lakes. We also walked over to Soda Springs where the kids tasted the soda water. They were fascinated by the mineral taste, and the tiny carbonated bubbles rising from the reddish stone.

At Soda Springs, one camper filled an extra canteen to take home for her foster mom to drink. On our last night around the campfire, Juan shared that he learned something about how people are scared of water and nature. He recounted that when he bent down to fill his water bottle at Soda Springs, there was a family nearby who watched him in shock. They couldn't believe that he would actually drink water straight from the spring. It made him realize how distant people are from nature.

It meant a lot to hear Juan say, at the campfire circle on our last night, that this trip had been the highlight of his life. It's been a pretty amazing time for me, too. The experiences we had with the campers were both ordinary and extraordinary, and that's the beauty of it. In these days of the commercial promotion of extreme experiences, it's great to realize that calmness and connecting to our indigenous nature is where it's at. That is the extraordinary.

The kids loved the chance to slow down and learn about nature their own way, by experiencing it. They loved the food – Katie's egg and bacon sandwiches for breakfast on a cold morning, or banana pancakes, all made with care and love. Slowing down, walking, swimming, sunning, breathing, eating – all such ordinary experiences -- truly amazing when you have the chance to appreciate the experience, opening our senses to let nature be the healer.



Outcomes for Youth

We identified five outcomes for youth who participated in our trips:

1. Increased teamwork skills. All campers helped to set up their own tents and helped others as well. They worked together as teams by staying together and supporting each other on hikes and helping with camp chores. During the self-reports at the campfire the last night of camp, the majority of participants reflected that they valued the relationships they had developed and being able to work together.
2. Increased self-confidence. All campers took part in skill-building opportunities, for example setting up tents, helping to prepare food, getting water, or helping to build a campfire. Adult chaperones as well as youth noted that they learned new skills and felt more confident in the out of doors.
3. Increased positive choices. All campers were accountable for signed behavioral expectations. For the most part, all campers adhered to the expectations, and talked about how they valued the chance to be in a safe setting where positive choices were expected.
4. Increased understanding of good food choices. Campers helped to prepare (chop vegetables, set table), serve, and clean up after well-balanced nutritious meals using organic ingredients. Campers appreciated the healthy food and identified food as one of the highlights of camp.
5. Increased leadership skills among mentors. We selected three returning foster youth as mentors for the June trip. They were expected to support and stay with their assigned campers. However, in spite of previous experience these youth were not fully prepared for the leadership role, and we realized that we need to develop a more structured set of expectations and training for mentors.

Future Plans

With the experiences of this past year, Sacred Rok is now really starting to mature. We have a nice cadre of young people with whom Ron feels that he has a lifelong relationship, and from whom we have learned much about how to receive from nature.

We will continue our relationship with Merced County leaders. The Merced County Chief Probation Officer has been a strong supporter of Sacred Rok. Because of his County position, he was not permitted to join the Board officially but was a nonvoting advisory member. He retired in September and officially joined the Board. The other five Board members also remain on the Board.

We are excited about our new partnership with the Building Healthy Communities community-building initiative in Merced funded by the California Endowment. BHC has also asked Sacred Rok to participate in future youth development strategies being developed as the planning process winds down.

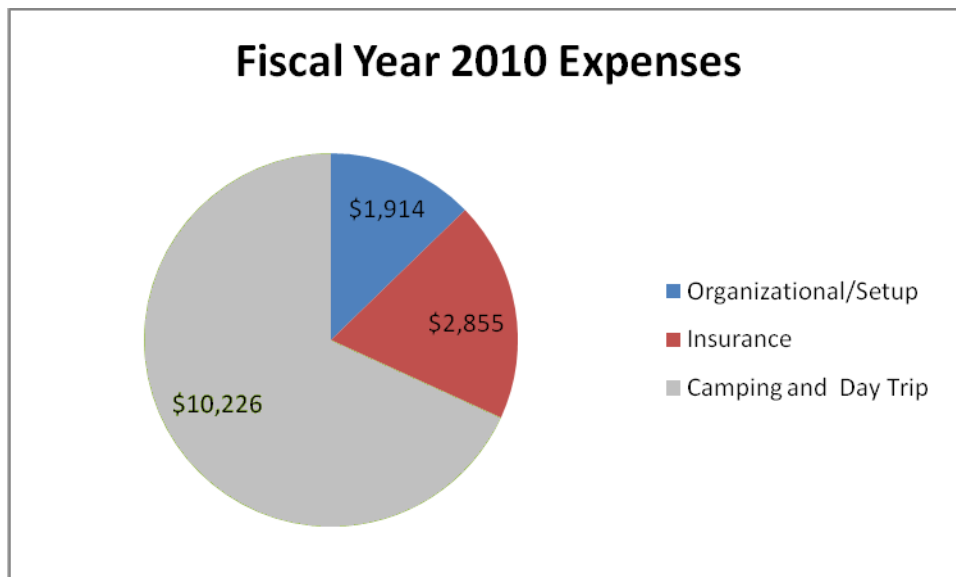
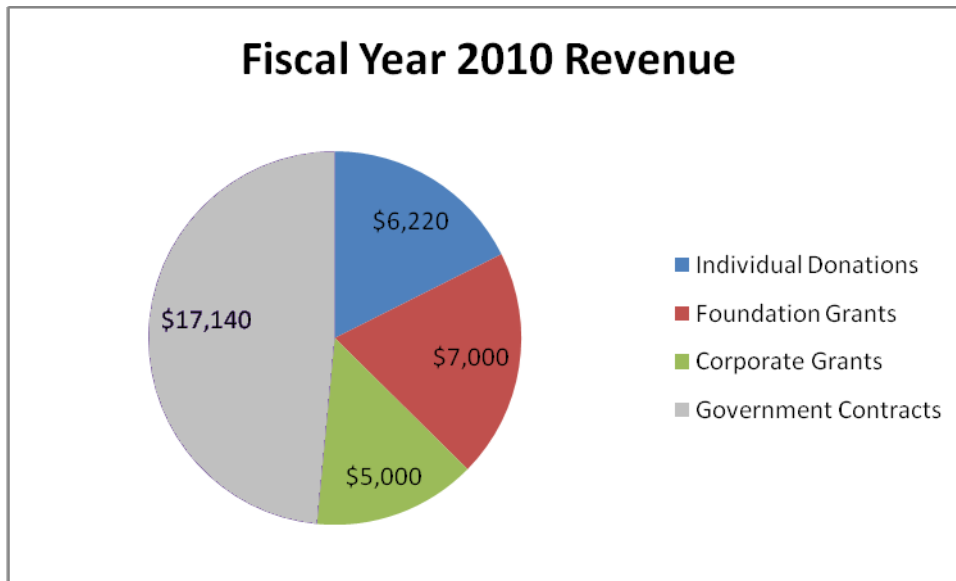
Ron continues to do educational presentations, including a series of presentations to REI throughout the Bay Area. We would like to develop a book as well as a short video.

We have developed a curriculum which outlines our philosophy, approach, and activities including learning outcomes and objectives as well as a logic model. In addition, we will be clarifying the roles and expectations for mentors.

The Board has also identified the value of having an identified site for camping and other activities. It is heart wrenching to meet the young people in foster care or Probation, who are at or near maturity, and want to provide a safe haven for them to return to at any time. Our vision is a small facility on one or more acres in or near Yosemite, where young people can come at any time once they have graduated from foster care or Probation. We are not sure how to make this happen, but are working towards it. Our door will always be open. Over the years, we will build a larger and larger web of relationships with and among the young people we serve.

Financials

Sacred Rok was incorporated in July 2009. As of fiscal year-end June 30, 2010 we had \$35,360 in fiscal year revenue and \$14,995 in fiscal year expenses for a net fiscal income of \$20,365. The pie charts below show our revenue sources and our costs. Our primary cost is the camping and day trips. Our primary fixed cost is insurance. The Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet are shown on the following pages.



Sacred Rok Fiscal Year-End Profit and Loss Statement

Unrestricted Income			
	Individual Donations	\$6,220.00	
	Corporate Grants	<u>\$5,000.00</u>	
Total Unrestricted Income			\$11,220.00
Restricted Income			
	Foundation Grants	\$7,000.00	
	Government Contracts	<u>\$17,140.00</u>	
Total Restricted Income			\$24,140.00
Total Income			\$35,360.00
Administrative Costs			
Organizational/Setup Costs			
	Ca Assoc of Nonprofits	\$66.00	
	IRS tax exempt application	\$750.00	
	Secretary of State registration	\$25.00	
	Business License fee	\$30.00	
	Required notice for bus license	\$75.00	
	Web site development	\$750.00	
	Web hosting	\$132.00	
	PayPal fees	\$19.86	
	Bank checks/fees	<u>\$66.17</u>	
Total Organizational Costs		\$1,914.03	
Insurance Costs			
	Broker fee	\$275.00	
	Directors and Officers	\$825.00	
	Liability	\$1,187.00	
	Insurance Certificates	<u>\$567.74</u>	
Total Insurance Costs		\$2,854.74	
Total Administrative Costs			\$4,768.77
Camping and Day Trip/Program Costs			
	Probation	\$7,299.00	
	Human Service Agency	\$2,599.00	
	Misc (gas, supplies, etc)	<u>\$328.37</u>	
Total Camping/Day Trip Program Costs			\$10,226.37
Total Expense			<u>\$14,995.14</u>
Net Ordinary Income			\$35,360.00
Net Income			<u><u>\$20,364.86</u></u>

Sacred Rok Fiscal Year-End Balance Sheet

July 1, 2010

ASSETS:

Current Assets

Checking/Savings	\$20,009.10
Accounts Receivable	\$0.00
Inventory	\$1,000.00
Supplies	\$0.00
Prepaid Insurance	\$800.00

Total Current Assets \$21,809.10

Other Assets \$0.00

TOTAL ASSETS \$21,809.10

LIABILITIES:

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$6,000.00
Fees Payable	\$0.00
Taxes Payable	\$0.00
Unearned Revenue	\$0.00

Total Current Liabilities \$6,000.00

Long Term Liabilities \$0.00

Total Liabilities \$6,000.00

TOTAL LIABILITIES \$6,000.00

Current Ratio 3.63

(Ratio of current assets/current liabilities)