

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: November 2, 2006
Contact: Lacy Kelly, San Bernardino National Forest Association - Children's Forest
P. O. Box 350, Skyforest, Ca 92325
(909) 382-2776, Fax (909) 337-1104, lacykelly@fs.fed.us

Corporate sponsors band together for *Children In The Outdoors!*

SAN BERNARDINO, California. November 2, 2006. Mitsubishi Cement Corporation and Burrtec Waste Industries have banded together to support *Children In The Outdoors*, an environmental education program provided by the conservation education professionals at Children's Forest, a program of the San Bernardino National Forest Association (SBNFA). Mike Jasberg is EVP of Mitsubishi Cement as well as Vice President of the SBNFA Board of Directors. "When Children's Forest staff explained the need for funding outdoor education programs, we had to get involved," said Jasberg. Mitsubishi Cement has provided funding for 10 classes from the Lucerne Valley School District to come up to Children's Forest for a full day field trip of hands-on, environmental education in the forest.

Last year, Jasberg asked Burrtec Waste Industries to partner with Mitsubishi, and fund a portion of the program to help sustain the Rim of the World Unified School District program. Burrtec agreed to help, and has provided matching funds the Rim of the World's Pathways to Stewardship Program, a year long conservation curriculum, aligned with state science standards, with two field trips for every 6th grader in the district, materials for field work, and class visits throughout the year from Children's Forest education professionals. The Children's Forest Pathways to Stewardship program has been an active part of 6th grade curriculum in Rim of the World Unified School District for the last 13 years. The matching funds from Burrtec help the district fund the program.

"We are very proud to partner with our local industries," said Sarah Miggins, Executive Director of the San Bernardino National Forest Association. "Their support is critical to fulfill our mission for conservation education, which helps to protect our national treasure, the San Bernardino National

Forest,” Sarah explained. “The students of Lucerne Valley Elementary School are very fortunate to have such a wonderful opportunity. When the appreciation of the outdoors begins at an early age, there is a greater chance that it will continue for life,” added Suzette Davis, Principal of Lucerne Valley Elementary School.

As the partnership was developing, Children’s Forest had been trying to fill another gap that had emerged as a challenge to continued programming; transportation costs. “As gas prices and insurance premiums increase, it becomes harder and harder for districts to fund transportation. We have found a way to address this issue,” said Lacy Kelly, Deputy Director of SBNFA. To respond to the need, the Sierra Club - Mountains Group agreed to fund busing scholarships for the Rim of the World Unified School District. When the group found out about the transportation cost problem, Dave Barrie, Chair of the group, played a key role in securing funds that would allow district children to participate in the field trips. “There are lots of good reasons to support Children's Forest and this is one of them. If you value kids and the environment, you are really going to like the idea of *Children in the Outdoors*,” explained Dave Barrie.

As the publicity for the partnership grew, other corporations wanted to help. Specialty Minerals, Inc. and Omya California have joined the partnership through funding in support of transportation for the Lucerne Valley Unified School District. Specialty Mineral, Inc. is also donating minerals kits and lesson plans to add to the Children’s Forest geology curriculum.

The *Children In The Outdoors* Partnership now involves seven partners that are taking the responsibility to ensure good education opportunities for our children. The partnership also demonstrates a commitment to giving children the information and experiences they need to protect our natural world as they prepare to take the reigns of society and the environment in their adult lives. The seven *Children In The Outdoors* partners are the San Bernardino National Forest Association/Children’s Forest Program, the USDA Forest Service, Mitsubishi Cement Corporation, Burrtec Waste Industries, Inc., Specialty Minerals, Inc., Omya California, Inc., and the Sierra Club – Mountains Group. The partnership will allow 750 children to participate in Children’s Forest outdoor environmental education activities in 2006/2007.

A press event and kick-off celebration is planned for Thursday, November 16, 2006, at 9:30am at the Children’s Forest Visitor Information Center on Highway 18, in Running Springs, 1 mile east of downtown Running Springs. All of the partners will join together along with 3 classes, 2 from the

Lucerne Valley Unified School District, and 1 class from Rim of the World Unified School District to speak about the importance of the partnership and see the classes off on their forest adventure. All are invited to attend and help celebrate ***Children In The Outdoors!***

Children's Forest is one of 6 programs managed by the San Bernardino National Forest Association (SBNFA) a 501 c 3 nonprofit. The mission of Children's Forest is to give youth a legitimate voice in management of the forest and to instill stewardship values. Children's Forest partners with the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and is funded through grants, donations and corporate sponsorships. For more information or to find out how you can support Children's Forest or SBNFA, contact Lacy Kelly at (909) 382-2776. For volunteer opportunities, contact Charlotte Melson at (909) 382-2778.