



LA RIVER EXPEDITIONS FOUNDER INVITED TO WHITE HOUSE ‘CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE’ EVENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — March 20, 2014

Washington, D.C. — LA River Expeditions Founder/President, George Wolfe, was invited to the White House on March 18, 2014, as a nominee for the ‘Champions of Change’ program. Titled ‘Engaging the Next Generation of Conservation Leaders,’ the event, co-sponsored by the White House Council on Environmental Quality, honored and celebrated the work of those who, through innovative approaches, “are creating opportunities for the next generation of Americans to take part in outdoor recreation and physical activity.”

The White House Champions of Change Program holds conversations on specific topics in particular fields throughout the year. The Obama Administration views their program as “an opportunity for the White House to feature individuals doing extraordinary things to empower and inspire members of their communities.”

Speakers included Sally Jewell (Secretary, U.S. Dept. of the Interior), John Podesta (Counselor to the President), Bob Perciasepe (Deputy Under Secretary, Environmental Protection Agency) and Michael Boots (Chair, Council on Environmental Quality).

There were 14 ‘Champions’ finalists, including: Parker Liautaud, a 19-year-old polar adventurer and climate change campaigner who has undertaken four polar expeditions; Anthony Ciocco, who works with Navaho youth to rebuild damaged eco-systems while helping participants reclaim their well-being, and; Tristan Persico, a former Afghanistan combat veteran who now serves as Veteran Outreach Coordinator for the Montana Wilderness Association, creating healing experiences for vets through shared wilderness outings.

“We were humbled and honored to hear such inspiring stories by these finalists,” says LA River Expeditions’ Wolfe. “There is incredible innovation and teaching going on every day in the quest to engage our country’s youth with the great outdoors. We also witnessed a side of Washington rarely seen: inspiring leaders like Ms. Jewell and Mr. Perciasepe who work tirelessly on behalf of the environment and the American people. And, of course, the White House is to be commended for their progressive leadership at the top.”

LA River Expeditions has been a leading force in reconnecting people with the LA River, through recreational boating and environmental education. Over the past three years, they have been involved with taking thousands of people on the river in guided kayak tours, including underserved populations and youth.

“We all love our own kids,” noted Champion Stephen Lockhart, chair of the Oakland-based NatureBridge, “but these types of programs really show us how to truly love and care for other people’s kids.”

Los Angeles River Expeditions’ 501c3 nonprofit partner is the Electric Lodge, in Venice, California. For further information, contact: Joel Shapiro at Joel@ElectricLodge.org or 310.306.1854. See also: www.LARiverExpeditions.org and www.whitehouse.gov/champions.