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NEWS RELEASE

# Spring Breakers Tackle Climate and Environmental Issues at Everglades and Joshua Tree

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American Eagle Outfitters and the Student Conservation Association help 120 college students conserve and protect two of the most vital habitats on Earth

CHARLESTOWN, N.H.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Mar. 2, 2012-- American Eagle Outfitters (NYSE: AEO) and the Student Conservation Association (SCA) today announced their fifth annual Alternative Spring Break program—the ultimate week-long educational and work experience for new generations of conservation leaders. AEO and SCA have doubled the number of volunteers and locations this year.

For the entire month of March, college students from around the country will descend on two of our most environmentally challenged and imperiled habitats for an expense-paid week of hands-on conservation at the Everglades and Joshua Tree National Parks.

“I jumped at the chance to spend my Spring Break protecting these awesome natural wonders,” states volunteer Oliwia Baney, a geography major at UCLA. “I can always go out and have a good time. My priority right now is to help save these national parks for future generations.”

Participants will help rid the parks of destructive invasive plants, repair eroded hiking trails, assess wildlife health, and more. And while they aid threatened ecosystems, the students will gain new skills, environmental knowledge, and leadership capabilities.

American Eagle Outfitters Foundation Director Marcie Eberhart says the vision and passion of the Alternative Spring

Breakers inspires all who love the outdoors. "These future conservation leaders set a tremendous example for all of us. American Eagle Outfitters is proud to partner with SCA for the fifth consecutive year in engaging young people in meaningful acts of volunteerism and environmental conservation."

This is the second year in a row that SCA Spring Breakers have brought their conservation prowess to Florida; last year, students extended a portion of the Florida National Scenic Trail outside Orlando. Through this and other SCA service programs, 150 SCA volunteers have rendered more than 94,000 hours of service to 36 natural and cultural sites across Florida in the past year alone. This service, valued at over \$2,000,000, includes protecting sea turtles at Canaveral National Seashore, mapping shipwrecks at Biscayne National Park, and providing environmental education at Apalachicola National Forest.

Founded in 1957, SCA has engaged more than 65,000 young adults in both urban and wilderness environments, and 60 percent of SCA alumni remain active conservationists through their careers and community activities. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly 22 percent of people ages 16 to 24 volunteered within the U.S. in 2010. A study by Tufts University has also shown that students who performed voluntary community service, such as alternative spring break programs, were 19 percent more likely to graduate than those that did not.

"Hands on service to nature builds powerful connections," says Dale Penney, SCA President and CEO. "Caring for a place directly leads to caring about it, and America simply cannot afford a citizenry that does not value these extraordinary natural resources. If we lose them, they are gone forever. These young people have a higher interest in spending their spring breaks as a movement for social change."

According to the National Park Service, more than half the Everglades have disappeared over the past century as water is diverted from natural wetlands. Development, air pollution and exotic plants pose substantial hazard to the Joshua Tree, which grows only in the American southwest.

## **Everglades National Park, Florida**

Session 1: March 4-10

Session 2: March 18-24

Thirty college students will team up each week to remove invasive Brazilian pepper plants from the infamous "Hole-in-the-Donut" and the Chekika area near the Nike missile base. Volunteers will also perform trail maintenance repair and remove an old farming fence near Long Pine Key campground.

## **Joshua Tree National Park, California**

Session 1: March 11-17

Session 2: March 25-30

Sixty college students, 30 per week, will eliminate thousands of tamarisk – an especially thorny invasive that steals

water from native species, disturbing the balance of the entire desert ecosystem – as well as Asian mustard, fountaingrass, and other exotics. Participants will also collect native seeds and conduct a raptor study.

During each of the four sessions, students will camp at or near their work site. The program also includes a day of environmental education as provided by national park rangers and SCA staff.

## About American Eagle Outfitters

American Eagle Outfitters, Inc., through its subsidiaries, ("AEO, Inc.") offers high-quality, on-trend clothing, accessories and personal care products at affordable prices. The American Eagle Outfitters® brand targets 15 to 25 year old girls and guys, with more than 911 stores worldwide, and online at [www.ae.com](http://www.ae.com). aerie® by american eagle offers Dormwear® and intimates collections for the AE® girl, with 158 standalone stores in the U.S. and Canada and online at [www.aerie.com](http://www.aerie.com). The latest brand, 77kids® by american eagle®, is available online at [www.77kids.com](http://www.77kids.com), as well as at 21 stores across the nation. The 77kids brand offers "kid cool," durable clothing and accessories for kids ages zero to 14. AE.COM®, the online home of the brands of AEO, Inc. ships to 77 countries.

Source: American Eagle Outfitters, Inc.

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