Canyonlands Field Institute is an outdoor education nonprofit organization in Moab, Utah, established in 1984.
From the Director

Hello CFI Friends,

I hope that this finds you immersing and refreshing in the healing power of springtime! We experienced a year of significant transformation in 2023. That transformation guides us as we row methodically and strategically toward meeting the needs of Generation Now, who are navigating the 21st century digital and AI revolution just like peers their age in the 20th century had to wrap their minds around the Industrial Revolution.

We hope that you will be excited about our new Youth Desert Access Program (YDAP), and that you will save the date of October 5, 2024, to celebrate our 40th anniversary, prescient co-founders, and CFI staff and interns from 1986 up to our 2024 First Year Naturalists.

As I like to say in a heartfelt way, Aloha for now and Mahalo nui loa (thank you so very much) for your CFI support, encouragement, and feedback as we transform and evolve to meet the need of Generation Now to learn in ways that impact all 5 of their senses, and imbue in them a desire to take care of the lands and waters in their homes throughout the US.

Michele Jordan Johnson
Interim Executive Director

Site Updates

CFI continued to improve accessibility at the Professor Valley Field Camp. We improved ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) trail access with rope handrails and directional signs. We also added privacy and safety fencing. We aim to continue making the site safer and more comfortable for groups with special needs members. These improvements helped us initiate programs with the National Ability Center.

CFI also completed a conceptual design process with MHTN Architects from Salt Lake City to replace the barn and build caretakers quarters. The new Environmental Learning Center will include a larger indoor teaching space and an indoor kitchen at Professor Valley Field Camp. We plan to break ground in November 2024!
**Native Teen Guide in Training (NTGIT)**

Native Teen Guide in Training celebrated increased tribal representation and new connections with inspiring Indigenous educators. In addition to all Indigenous educators for the 2023 program, we celebrated two former participants who stepped up to become mentors themselves. Jade and Naaniba came to the Native Teen Guide in Training program as participants, and with strong mentorship, continued on to become guides and leaders in environmental education. **CFI is committed to creating paths into outdoor education for Indigenous youth, as well as long-term continued support in training.**

Learn more: This program was featured on the River Radius Podcast!

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**Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility**

We made progress in working towards a more equitable future. CFI strongly affirms that as with ecosystem health, humans thrive in diverse and vibrant communities. We honor and embrace all of the expressions of human diversity, and are committing to a more proactive role in achieving that value by establishing, growing, and nurturing relationships.

CFI completed our participation in the University of California Berkeley Lawrence Hall of Science “Working Towards Racial Equity” research project and workshop series. Through this project, we were able to acknowledge both our successes and areas to improve. We are honored to have been selected for the cohort and are grateful for the systems change guidance and support.

You can read more about our progress on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility in our Outdoor CEO report.
Youth Desert Access Program (YDAP)

Every child deserves to learn outside, so we created the Youth Desert Access Program (YDAP), a scholarship dedicated for Title I schools. Title I is a federal aid program designed to support schools and students that face conditions statistically consistent with academic struggle, such as poverty and food insecurity.

Our standard school fees represent about 60% of the actual cost to run these programs, but those prices are still out of reach for many schools in the US. The YDAP is designed to remove financial barriers so that ALL students have an opportunity to develop a deep connection to nature through CFI’s place-based environmental education programming.

First Year Naturalist Educators

CFI stepped up our commitment to training and accessibility for the First Year Naturalist Educator (FYNE) position. In 2023, we provided Wilderness First Responder Certifications, Swiftwater Rescue Certifications, free housing, and an increase in pay—changes that will continue into the future. Environmental education is a traditionally exclusive field, and we are working to reduce the barriers to entry.

After our month-long training at the beginning of the season, we intend to continue providing opportunities for FYNE to learn throughout the entire season. CFI’s thoughtful approach to teaching has created outdoor environmental educators who have gone on to have inspiring careers, like Rachel Grabenstein.

Rachel worked for CFI as an educator in 2017. Her favorite memory of her season in Moab was the time she spent with her coworkers and making friends she remains close with today. Rachel recently began working as a lawyer with the Department of the Interior solicitor’s office, representing land management agencies on issues pertaining to endangered species and water law on the Colorado Plateau. When asked about how her time at CFI inspired her career, Rachel said, “It solidified my love of water and water policy. I really care about our natural resources and being outside.”

An oddly common ice breaker question at CFI recently has been: if you could have anything come out of your belly button what would it be? And Rachel responded as any lawyer would, “It depends.”
**Mental Health Hikes**

CFI expanded our Mental Health Hike series and is committed to providing regular programming to the community of Moab. Thank you to the Grand County Economic Development department, Wabi Sabi, Moonflower Community Cooperative, and The Synergy Company for supporting this program. **In 2023, we went on 9 hikes with 50 individual people, 13 of which came on more than one hike.** We look forward to increasing community connections in the field of mental health and providing more access to licensed mental health counselors in 2024.

“I’ve found so much meaning through CFI’s Mental Health hikes about myself, new friends, and the natural world around me. I couldn’t be more grateful!” - Mental Health Hike participant

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**Adult Seminars**

From exploring granaries in Range Creek to eating home-cooked meals at the foot of Navajo Mountain, our year of Adult Adventure Seminars was a confluence of academic exploration, community building, and deepening connections to the landscape.

We have a brand new seminar this October: Art in Nature. This multi-day oil painting workshop centers around expert instruction from Nathan Florence, an accomplished painter based in Salt Lake City. Oil painters of all skill levels—beginner to expert—are welcome on this art-based adventure seminar.

Check out our 2024 seminar lineup:

**Tuesday, April 23 - Saturday, April 27**
Walking in Beauty: Navajo Mountain Hiking and History

**Tuesday, May 14 - Friday, May 17**
Nine Mile Canyon Archaeology

**Friday, August 23 - Sunday, August 25**
Range Creek Archaeology

**Tuesday, September 24 - Saturday, September 28**
Women and Water: Reflections on the San Juan River

**Sunday, October 13 - Thursday, October 17**
Art in Nature: Oil Painting on the San Juan

**Tuesday, October 22 - Friday, October 25**
Cedar Mesa and Bears Ears Cultural History

You can find more information on these seminars, spots available, and sign up, on our website.
Clay Artisans of Moab

The CLAM selected CFI to be the recipient of funds from the annual Soup Bowl Fundraiser. The event was a success! We filled the MARC with members of the community, unique handmade ceramics, and gallons of tasty soup. Each ticket purchase came with a choice of a handmade bowl, access to the silent auction, and all you could eat soup. The proceeds from this event will be used to subsidize summer camp tuition for the 2024 camp season. Thank you to the many volunteers, ceramicists, and soup makers that came together to make this event so successful.

Science Moab

CFI guides are now “Science Certified” thanks to Science Moab: Professor Valley Field Camp was used to host the Science Certified program. Science Certified is a series of courses and modules in ecology, geology, and natural history, designed specifically for the guide community. As Naturalist Educator guides, we are ambassadors to the natural wonder of the Colorado Plateau area, and Science Certified gives outdoor environmental professionals the tools to connect visitors to the landscape on a scientific level.

FOACP

The Friends of Arches and Canyonlands Parks sponsored the Native Teen Camping Program. Over the course of a four day stay at Professor Valley Field Camp, Native teens from all over the Colorado Plateau explored, learned environmental science, and built connections. The camp included a day of hiking in Arches National Park with a park service ranger as well as a whitewater rafting float on the Moab Daily. This partnership is expanding in 2024, with FOACP supporting four different programs throughout the season for youth traditionally excluded from place-based environmental education.

Clay Artisans of Moab

Our heartfelt thanks to our community partners!

Clay Artisans of Moab
Friends of Arches and Canyonlands
Grand County Public Schools
Moab BLM Office
Moab Charter School
Moab Museum
Rim to Rim Restoration
Science Moab
Seekhaven Family Crisis and Resource Center
The Heron School
The Wellness Collective
U.S. Forest Service
Utah Conservation Corps
Utah Department of Natural Resources
Utah State Historic Preservation Office
Youth Garden Project
2023 Financial Statement
Fiscal year ending September 30th

Revenue: $1,105,462

Expenses: $1,180,761

55% Contributions and Grants
41% Program Revenues
4% Other

*Includes rental income, sale of goods, and investment income. Expense figures include depreciation. CFI’s Federal Identification Number is 87-0418027.

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Thank you to our Board Officers and Trustees for your invaluable service and continued support of CFI’s mission.

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Red Cliffs Lodge
The Synergy Company

2023 Report to Members | cfimoab.org

Save the Date: CFI is turning 40, and you’re invited!
October 5, Professor Valley Field Camp
Disconnect to Connect

CFI is unapologetically unplugged. This means that we require students to leave their phones behind for the duration of a CFI program. According to Common Sense Media, teens aged 13 - 18 spend an average of 8 hours and 39 minutes on screens each day. While kids may struggle with the concept of being phone free for a few days, we have seen countless examples of students who express gratitude for the time spent away from their phones. Thank you for helping us give kids the tools to build real world connections!

Mission
CFI provides quality outdoor education on the Colorado Plateau to inspire care of wild places and renew the human spirit.

Vision
A world where the people, wildlife, plants, and waters of the Colorado Plateau are healthy and vibrant.

Values
Respect:
For each other and for the natural world.

Reciprocity:
Awareness of our interdependence.

Experiential Education:
Empowering children and adults.

Teamwork:
Creating tomorrow’s leaders.

Reverence:
For the beauty and mystery of the Colorado Plateau.

Responsibility:
For each other and for the planet.

Diversity:
Is essential to understanding.

Stewardship:
Living lightly upon the land.