



CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

**JACK O'CONNELL**  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

September 15, 2009

Dear Educators:

I would like to introduce you to Robert Bateman's Get to Know Your Wild Neighbors Program. The Get to Know Program is a supplemental educational program and contest that encourages students to learn about the species in their local environment and connect with the natural world around them.

Famed naturalist and artist Robert Bateman founded the Get to Know Program in 2000 as a means to encourage youth to experience the outdoors and foster awareness and understanding of wildlife. Mr. Bateman believes that spending time outdoors not only develops healthy practices for physical activity, but a greater understanding nature and the importance of conservation.

This year, the Get to Know Program is expanding in California through partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Wildlife Federation, and other organizations. Students and teachers will have the opportunity to participate in the program by integrating the lesson plans into life sciences classes and by entering into the 2009 Get to Know Contest. The lesson plans are aligned to California's high standards and are designed to supplement field trips. The contest invites youth to get acquainted with their wild neighbors, and then share their experience through an original work of art, photography, or writing. The winning entries will be featured in the 2011 Robert Bateman Get to Know Contest Calendar, on the Get to Know Web site, as well as with the contest partners.

I invite you to consider adding this contest to your school's activities and participating in the lesson plans. If you would like to access the materials or learn more about the program, please visit the Get to Know Web site at <http://www.gettoknow.ca/us/> (Outside Source).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack O'Connell".

JACK O'CONNELL

JO:dr