

National Hispanic Environmental Council



INVITATION LETTER TO NHEC INSTITUTE ROLE MODELS

Dear _____ :

On behalf of the National Hispanic Environmental Council (NHEC) **we would like to invite you to become a volunteer “Role Model” for NHEC’s upcoming “Minority Youth Environmental Training Institute”**. Your experience as an environmental professional, as well as your strong commitment to diversity, makes you an ideal candidate. We hope you will join us in northern New Mexico this August.

The Institute, to be held August 3–26, 2001, at the Glorieta Lifeway Conference Center, in Glorieta, NM, is an exciting, in-depth, motivational, and highly educational 10 day program for teens (especially Hispanic/minority youth) aged 13–18.

The Institute is designed to help create the environmental leaders of tomorrow by introducing youth to a range of environmental and natural resource issues. It is also designed to provide information on the many college and career opportunities in the environment, and to urge students to pursue these careers in the future. The Institute is open to all, but Hispanic youth are especially urged to apply, given the severe under-representation of Latinos in environmental fields.

For students selected, NHEC will pay all major costs to attend, including airfare, housing, meals, and other educational materials. There is no fee to apply, and only a \$35 registration fee (for the entire 10 days) if selected. The Institute is being funded by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (through the U.S. Forest Service) and the National Park Service, and their staff will play a key role.

A major element of the Institute is the active participation of Hispanic and other minority “role models”. These role models are like you —working professionals from every environmental and natural resource field. Confirmed role models include park rangers, superintendents, wildlife biologists, foresters, hydrologists, environmental engineers, toxicologists, lawyers, administrators, and many more.

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Currently, most environmental education programs for minority youth do not include minority role models. The Institute seeks to correct this omission by having role models whom Latino and other minority youth can relate to. Students will have their “own” to be inspired by, to learn from, and who have a success story to tell. In this way, the message to the students will not only be clear, but believable –“**I made it in this field, and so can you**”.

We are asking you to join us to share your environmental knowledge, career/life experiences, and your heritage with the students. Through the Institute, you can play a major role in helping change a young person’s life, and to steering them to a rewarding career in an arena where –as you know —they are sorely needed.

As a role model volunteer, we ask that you spend from one to three days in Glorieta. Together with NHEC’s paid instructors, you will help the students learn the Institute’s curriculum –essentially, to complement and supplement the training. Role models will be asked in advance to agree to certain requirements. One key condition is that you must spend the entire day –every day you are at the Institute –with the students. In other words, you cannot just “drop by” for an hour and then depart. Only by fully interacting with students from morning until night can role models truly have an impact.

Each day, several role models, all with different backgrounds, will be at the Institute. Because of this, we will review in advance your resume, time availability in August, the requirements of the curriculum, the number of students, and how many role model volunteers we receive for each topic. Our staff will call to schedule your visit and number of days, coordinate your role, and integrate your knowledge into the curriculum.

NHEC has funding to subsidize a limited number of role models. However, many role models have obtained support from their employers to cover their costs to the Institute. If you can do the same, it would help NHEC and the students a great deal. Costs at Glorieta will not exceed federal (or other) per diem rates for the Santa Fe area.

We hope you will join us for the Institute. **To volunteer, complete the attached “Role Model Form” and send it to us.** See the attached Fact Sheet, etc. for more information.

Please share this material with other colleagues who may also want to volunteer. In addition, feel free to tell interested students about the Institute. They (or you) can obtain complete application information by calling NHEC at 703-922-4640, or by going to our web page at www.nheec.org. See you in New Mexico!