

# National Hispanic Environmental Council



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## 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” at NHEC’s upcoming 8<sup>th</sup> Annual “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 September.

The Institute, to be held September 19–26, 2009, at the Glorieta Lifeway Conference Center, in Glorieta, NM, is an intensive, science-based, highly educational 8 day residential program for qualified teens (especially Latino/minority youth) aged 16–19.

The Institute is designed to create the environmental leaders of tomorrow by introducing youth to a variety of environmental and natural resource topics. 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 Latino youth are especially urged to apply, given the severe under-representation of Latinos in environmental fields.

**For students selected, NHEC will provide a full scholarship that will pay all major costs to attend the 8 day program, including airfare, housing, meals, and other educational materials.** There is no fee to apply, and only a \$25 registration fee if selected. The Institute is being funded by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the National Park Service, USDA National Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the National Park Trust.

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

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Currently, most environmental education programs for minority youth do not feature minority role models. The Institute seeks to correct this omission by having role models participate 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 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.** The minimum requirement is one full day. You can also spend more than one day, if your schedule will permit. Together with NHEC's paid instructors, you will help the students learn the Institute's curriculum—essentially, to complement and supplement the training students receive. Role models will be asked in advance to agree to certain requirements. One key condition is that you must spend the entire day 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, and how many role model volunteers we receive for each topic. Our staff will call to schedule your visit, coordinate your role, and integrate your knowledge into the curriculum. Of course, we will do our best to work within your schedule and time availability during September 19–26.

NHEC has funding to subsidize the travel expenses (not salary) of a small number of role models; typically these role models come from small non-profit organizations. However, the vast majority of role models obtain 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 the 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 mail or fax it to us.** Please be sure to read 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 703-683-3956, or by going to our web page at [www.nheec.org](http://www.nheec.org). See you in New Mexico!

Sincerely,

Roger Rivera  
President, NHEC

Manuel Hernandez  
Chairman, NHEC