

National Hispanic Environmental Council



FACT SHEET

THE 9TH ANNUAL

NYC MINORITY YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING INSTITUTE

An Environmental STEM Program

“8 Days of Learning, A Lifetime of Experience”

JUNE 26—JULY 3, 2014

HELD AT WAGNER COLLEGE, STATEN ISLAND — AND—

AT NATIONAL PARKS, NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES, AND OTHER SITES IN/AROUND NYC AND LONG ISLAND

SUMMARY



FS & NRCS role models with students at Gateway Nat. Park

The National Hispanic Environmental Council (NHEC) is accepting applications from New York area students, aged 17—19, to attend its upcoming 9th annual, regional “New York City Minority Youth Environmental Training Institute”. The Institute is an intensive, residential, strongly science-based, 8 day long environmental education and environmental career program for top students (competitively selected) demonstrably interested in the environment. The Institute will be held June 26—July 3, 2014 at a variety of city and national parks, wildlife refuges, and other sites in the New York City area.

Students will be housed and fed, and classroom instruction held at Wagner College in Staten Island. Wagner is located on a scenic campus high on a hill overlooking NY Harbor.

NHEC runs three Institutes each summer—our national in New Mexico, and two regionals in NYC and S. CA. All use the same model and have the same broad goal – through classroom and outdoor nature settings, using a rigorous Environmental STEM curriculum, plus active participation of minority science role models — **build the next generation – especially scientists — of environmental/conservation professionals.**

NHEC Institutes inspire, engage, and educate academically achieving, high GPA students, especially Latino/minority, on a range of environmental and natural resource issues. Our Institutes also give detailed information on the **many college and career opportunities in the environment/natural resources**, and actively assist students to pursue these careers. For the NYC Institute, this is **especially with the U.S. Forest Service, the Institute’s major sponsor.**

The NYC Institute is funded primarily by the U.S. Forest Service Eastern Region, with some support from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. FS and NRCS are sister agencies in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and are

among the premier natural resource agencies in the country. NHEC and our sponsors work closely on the planning of the Institutes.

Further – **the Forest Service (FS) is seeking qualified NYC Institute students deeply interested and active in the environment to work for them this summer (and beyond) on 5 forests and research stations in the Eastern Region.**

If selected **NHEC will provide a full scholarship to the NYC Institute that covers all your major costs to attend** the 8 day program, including housing, 3 meals a day, academic materials, environmental science equipment, camping gear, and more. There is no fee to apply, and only a \$25 registration fee if accepted.

DAY-BY-DAY INSTITUTE OVERVIEW

In addition to Wagner College, the NYC Institute will be held at sites in the New York area, including Fort Wadsworth on Staten Island, the headquarters of Gateway National Park; Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge; Wolfe’s Pond, a NYC park; Fire Island National Seashore and Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge, both on Long Island. Students will also camp overnight one night at Fire Island National Seashore.

The Institute will begin on Thursday, June 26. Day One, Two and Three will be held at Wagner, with classroom presentations and field studies conducted on campus and at nearby historic Fort Wadsworth, located at the entrance of NY Harbor.



Students use the DELTA X-ray Soil analyzer in their field studies

On Days 4–8 students travel by chartered bus for field trips to other environmental sites. Students continue their field studies, including air, water, and soil testing/monitoring; biological assessments; vegetation inventories; forest ecology studies; and birding. Additional sites to be visited for field studies include FreshKills Park; Clay Pit Pond/Gericke Farm; and Oakwood Water Treatment plant, all on Staten Island. On Day 8 (Thurs, July 3), students will return from Long Island to Wagner College by 10 pm, where students will say goodbye and the Institute will end.

Students are transported by chartered bus to each day’s sites, including to and from Fire Island on Long Island. Students are accompanied by NHEC’s instructors, as well as FS, NRCS, and other federal/other agency staff. Instructors teach the curriculum, with assistance from FS and NRCS.

Also participating are “role models” — environmental/natural resource professionals (often minority) from every discipline — but especially from the sciences — and who are volunteering their time, technical expertise, and heritage to help students learn the curriculum, plus share their hard-won environmental career, college, research, and job/internship knowledge.

We wish to be clear with students – this is not summer camp. The Institute is an academically challenging, science-focused, Environmental STEM program for mature students with strong GPA’s and a deep interest in the environment. You will definitely have fun, but you will have work to do too.

But if you have a passion for the environment, and especially if you seek to work in this field this summer, then we promise you will have one of the best experiences of your life. Past Institute alumni – several of whom are returning to speak to students at the NYC Institute – will attest it is truly **“8 Days of Learning, A Lifetime of Experience”.**



FS role models helping students with biological assessments

YOU CAN GET A JOB WITH THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE THIS SUMMER!!



Montez Ashley with FS discusses FS mission and jobs

Like most federal agencies, the Forest Service hires students each year for summer jobs. NHEC is delighted the FS Eastern Region, partnering with NHEC now for the third year, will engage our students in the following way.

FS will be hiring a select number of students from the Institute! NHEC and FS staff will be evaluating your performance in the program, so you must do well. If you do, AND you want a great environmental job, **then the Institute is your path to a paid federal position at a national forest this summer.**

The Forest Service runs the “Youth Conservation Corps” (YCC), a federal employment program for teens. Utilizing YCC, FS will hire students from

the NYC Institute. FS recruiters will be on-site to meet students, assess your qualifications, and then discuss a potential YCC job **at one of 5 national forests or research stations**, all located in FS’s Eastern Region. These are:

1. the New York City Urban Research Field Station, located at Fort Totten, Queens;
2. the Northeastern Research Station in Delaware, OH;
3. the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire;
4. the Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont;
5. the Wayne National Forest in Ohio;

If selected you will earn the federal minimum wage and work 40 hours a week, 5 days per week. For those hired, FS will provide suitable housing at one of these sites for the length of your employment. Students will be hired in teams or at a minimum in pairs, so that if hired you will have at least one other fellow Institute student with you at your location.

Regarding these 5 sites, at the Institute FS staff will hold a briefing on each location and fully answer your questions, to enable students and parents to decide which forest or research station best matches your environmental, educational and career goals. **Students can express interest in one site, several sites, or all 5 sites** for your potential YCC job. Application forms and more information will be available at the Institute.

Per the FS, **there is an age requirement for this YCC position in a residential setting —students must have turned 18 years old by July 7, 2014.**

If selected, your YCC job will begin a few days after the Institute ends and continue through August, ending around August 15. FS is aware that students going to college this fall as freshmen may need to attend a college orientation session in August. If so, discuss this with FS staff so they can try to accommodate your needs. But do not let this deter you from applying.

Through your YCC job and a specially devised learning program accompanying it, and supervised by FS staff, you will undertake interesting and much needed environmental/natural resource work in fields that include the following: conservation and forestry management; land and animal resource protection; assisting visitors with recreation and educational programs; and more. **If you are especially interested in research, there are opportunities to do this too** at the forests, but in particular at the two research stations.

At each site students will work with FS professionals from a variety of scientific/technical fields. Thus you will have the opportunity to see, do and learn – up close and through hands-on involvement – significantly more about these professions and the related environmental and science work.

So if you want to maximize what you learn at the Institute, **then the YCC program and this amazing job opportunity is for you.** The Institute, combined with your FS summer job, will be a major way to gain invaluable natural resource/conservation experience. Take advantage of this unique opportunity to build your resume, now and for the future!

If you have questions about any aspect of this FS YCC opportunity, NHEC and FS urge you to contact us before the Institute. **For FS, please contact: Montez Ashley, EEO Specialist, U.S. Forest Service, Eastern Region Headquarters—Milwaukee, at 414-297-3150 or at mashley@fs.fed.us**

APPLICATION PROCESS, SELECTION, AND THE INSTITUTE SCHOLARSHIP

The NYC Institute is open to all students aged 17—19, and all are welcome to apply, although Latino youth are especially urged to do so given the severe under-representation of Hispanics in environmental and natural resource fields. **Ages 17—19 is typically a senior in high school or a freshman or sophomore in college.** There will be approximately 24 students in the Institute.

Applications will be evaluated as received and selection decisions made on a rolling basis, so applying as soon as possible is strongly encouraged. See the attached “Application Form” and other documents for how to apply. Students can also call or email NHEC for application materials, or go to our web page at www.nheec1.org However, while students can obtain application forms from the web site, you cannot apply on-line because you must include documents like your school transcripts in your mailed application package.

As this is a regional Institute, eligibility is limited to students from the NY tri-state area (that is, NY, NJ, and CT). Students will be competitively selected for the scholarship, based on a variety of criteria.

Selection criteria includes: 1. students’ maturity and seriousness of intentions; 2. an academic background containing environmental-related coursework; 3. if in college the student has declared in some environmental or natural resource major, or if not yet declared it is demonstrably apparent the student will do so; 4. **a minimum 3.0 GPA**; 5. proven background in some environmental experience, activity or job; 6. ability to show a strong/genuine interest in an environmental or natural resources field as a future career—especially in the sciences; 7. extracurricular and/or community activities; and 8. diversity—by age, gender, race, ethnicity, geography, environmental major, environmental experiences, and other factors.

An essay is also required (no more than 2 pages max), where applicants describe their qualifications; their interest in the environment; their future academic/career goals; and how they can make a difference to our environment. **This essay will be especially important in selecting students.** As stated, selected students will have all major costs covered by the NHEC Institute scholarship. NHEC will also waive the \$25 registration fee for any student who is selected but unable to pay the fee due to proven financial hardship.

CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION

The Institute uses a rigorous Environmental STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) curriculum taught by NHEC’s skilled Instructors (all of whom are educators and working environmental professionals). It begins by covering principles in environmental and conservation topics, progressing to more advanced topics as each day builds on the one before. The Institute combines daily classroom instruction with science-based field studies such as air, water and soil testing that complements the classroom presentations. Since a major Institute goal is to expose students to nature, students spend much time outdoors in closely supervised field studies in wetlands, forests, streams, beaches, tidal pools, and more.

Classroom instruction will explore a range of ecological, physical, biological, and chemical principles/methods, and high level presentations will examine a number of environmental —conservation issues. To conduct their multiple field studies, students use a variety of professional-grade environmental science equipment, ranging from low to very high tech, so students gain invaluable hands-on field science experience.

Following breakfast the Institute will begin at 8:30 am and continue throughout the day, with breaks for lunch and dinner. The Institute operates like school: students must be on time; participate fully in indoor



Students using a high tech multi-parameter water analyzer

and outdoor learning; be respectful of instructors, role models, and fellow students; and follow instructions, especially regarding safety. There is also coursework and activities in the classroom every evening after dinner until 8:30 pm.



Students conduct soil analysis as well as air and water testing

The Institute also includes sessions on environmental career paths, and gives students — through interaction with role models from our sponsors and others — a strong sense of how these jobs are done in the real world. In addition to NHEC’s Instructors, **role models help with the curriculum, and also “chart their environmental journey” to and in these natural resource jobs.** Many role models are Latino or minority. Role models are an essential element of our Institutes model.

Role models are environmental/natural resource professionals from many different fields, but especially the sciences – foresters, wildlife biologist, fish biologists, ecologists, botanists, soil scientists, hydrologists, geologists, environmental engineers, and more. There are a minimum of 4—5 role models present each day.

Thus students have their “own” to interact with, to be inspired by, to learn from, and who have a success story to tell about working in the non-traditional environmental arena. The message conveyed to students is not only clear, but believable – **“I made it in this field and so can you”.**

WAGNER COLLEGE—NYC INSTITUTE SITE

The NYC Institute will be held at Wagner College, a private, co-ed, liberal arts college founded in 1883 with about 2,100 students. Located atop scenic Grymes Hill, one of the highest points in Staten Island, Wagner has commanding views of New York Harbor, the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, and lower Manhattan. With historic buildings, large trees, and green quads, the Wagner campus is beautiful and serene, with an old-world feel.

Students will be housed in newly built (2011) Foundation Hall, a beautiful, modern, all-suite residence hall. Each suite has 2 bedrooms with their own locking doors, a common area with extra sinks, plus 2 bathrooms. Foundation Hall has full internet access.

Except when on field trips, students will eat breakfast, lunch and dinner in Wagner’s main Dining Hall, which is also a modern facility with amazing views of NY Harbor. Academic buildings are adjacent to Foundation Hall, where the Institute’s classroom instruction will be held.

Regarding housing arrangements, male and female students are separated, with female students in suites at one end of the floor and male students at the other, with NHEC Instructors located in suites in-between. Supervised by instructors, students will follow the Institute Code of Conduct at Wagner and in Foundation Hall, including the lights-out policy at 11 pm.

Wagner College is located at One Campus Road, Staten Island, NY 10301. Residence Programs can be reached at 718-390-3283. For more information on Wagner, go to www.wagner.edu

SAFETY FIRST—ALWAYS

The Institute is designed to not only be highly educational and fun, but also safe. NHEC has a “safety first” ethic, and safety is paramount for NHEC during the Institute. For example, when students are at national parks we will have full access to NPS’s medical/safety system, and park and law enforcement rangers are nearby whenever students are doing field work. Further, one of NHEC’s instructors is a Certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).



Properly supervised, students using the Electro-shock fish survey backpack unit

INSTITUTE CODE OF CONDUCT

All students must follow the Institute “Code of Conduct”. This code is a set of reasonable rules that govern student behavior with Instructors, role models, and fellow students. NHEC enforces appropriate behavior and dress at all times during the Institute, especially since this is a residential program. If selected, all students and their parents must read and sign the Code prior to the Institute, and agree in writing to abide by its terms. Failure to follow the Code can result in a number of penalties, including being dismissed from the Institute and sent home. NHEC is happy to state that given the caliber of our students, this has never happened.

Students and parents must also understand that when on federal land (such as national parks and wildlife refuges) students are governed by federal law, and can be prosecuted for any violation of civil and/or criminal laws, should that agency choose to do so.

The Code of Conduct is a vital tool for a group of teens in a residential program. NHEC uses it, you must follow it, and it is not up for discussion on-site. **If you have a problem obeying rules, then the Institute is not for you and you should not apply.**

ABOUT THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE

For the last three years the Eastern Region of the U.S. Forest Service has been the NYC Institute’s major sponsor. FS is a large, multi-billion agency in the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, and manages America’s national forests in a sustainable, multiple-use way. There are 155 forests in our national forest system, plus 20 national grasslands, and science research stations and labs.



Students use seine, dip and plankton tow nets and more for their field studies

The FS Eastern Region is comprised of 20 states – from Minnesota in the west to Maine in the east, from New Hampshire and New York in the north to south to Missouri, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. **There are 18 national forests in the Eastern Region.**

Unlike Western forests that were carved from virgin territory, Eastern forests were salvaged from overdeveloped lands that were once badly damaged due to excessive farming, logging, and mining. Once the “lands nobody wanted” these are now the “lands everyone wants”, due to the high demand for its recreation and natural resource uses. The Eastern Region’s 18 forests have become “**islands of green in a sea of people**”.

Encompassing major cities like NY, Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia, the Region serves millions of Americans. As such the Region is truly the gateway to FS, and thus a wide range of opportunities. These include recreation, tourism, hiking, fishing, biking, and hunting, plus jobs, internships, education, business contracting, and more. FS is also a major leader in natural resource science, technology, and policy development, and is leading research on key issues like climate change, forest management, carbon sequestration, invasive species, and fire ecology.

With over 33,000 full, part-time, and seasonal employees (including students) hired each year, FS is a great path to a great environmental career, especially if you like being outdoors and especially science.

NHEC is proud to partner with the Forest Service. FS welcomes participants to the NYC Institute, urges you to get involved in their mission, and is eager to hire students to join them in this work.

ABOUT THE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is another sponsor of the NYC Institute. Like the Forest Service, it is a large, multi-billion agency in the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, and with a complementary mission.

When Americans are asked about federal conservation agencies, most often mentioned is the National Park Service or Forest Service and the parks and forests they operate. However – **the reality is that 70% of all land in the U.S. is privately, not publicly owned**; this includes everything from the huge farms/ranches out West to the suburban backyards of Long Island. Thus, stewardship by private landowners is vital to the environmental health of America.

NRCS is the only federal agency whose mission is to help preserve and protect private land. First created to address soil erosion, NRCS has evolved into a conservation leader that ensures private lands are conserved, restored, and made resilient to various environmental challenges. NRCS not only tackles clean water and healthy soil, but works on clean energy, climate change, and new science technology. Through conservation planning and technical assistance, **NRCS works with landowners to help them make science-based decisions** to benefit soil, water, air, plants, and animals, and to help ecosystems remain or become healthy.

NRCS's 12,000 employees work at field offices in nearly every county in the nation, assisting farmers, ranchers, conservation districts, government agencies, Tribes, non-profits, and others. Like FS, NRCS hires students every summer to work at their field offices, helping staff help private landowners across America. **NHEC is proud to partner with NRCS, and like FS, NRCS looks forward to engaging students from our programs.**

ABOUT THE NATIONAL HISPANIC ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

The National Hispanic Environmental Council (NHEC) is a national, non-profit membership-based organization founded in 1998 and headquartered in Alexandria, VA (just outside Washington, D.C). With over 4,000 members, NHEC is the oldest and largest national Latino environmental and natural resource organization in the country, and we advocate for policies and run programs that further our mission.

NHEC seeks to educate and engage Latinos and people of color on environmental and natural resource issues; encourage Latinos and especially youth to actively preserve and protect our environment; provide a voice for Latinos before federal and other national environmental decision-makers; and assist our community to pursue the many career, educational, programmatic, and policy opportunities in the environmental and conservation arena. Our guiding credo is: **"....because it's our environment too"**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON NHEC AND OUR INSTITUTES

Call or write us at:

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P.O. Box 1003
Springfield, VA 22151

At NHEC:

Office—703-683-3956
Fax—703-256-8288

Or visit our website at www.nheec1.org

For questions about NHEC but especially the Institutes, please contact Juan Rodriguez, NHEC Programs Coordinator at jrodriguez@nheec1.org or at 703-861-6064