

## *2. Student Selection*



SELECTIONS FROM:  
INTERPRETING FOR CONSERVATION  
A MANUAL FOR TRAINING  
LOCAL NATURE GUIDES

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

The Nature Guide Training Program has developed a series of well-defined criteria for the selection of participants. Although only a few of them are non-negotiable, the probability of obtaining good quality guides depends on the application of these criteria.

### **Basic Criteria (Non-Negotiable)**

The Candidate Must:

- Be able to read, write, and communicate well in the candidate's native language
- Be a member of a community in the buffer zone of one of the identified protected areas and/or work in one of the organizations that manage or have projects in one of the areas

### **Basic Criteria (Negotiable)**

The Candidate Should:

- Be between the ages of 18 and 40
- Have completed elementary school but not be a college graduate unless he/she can promise permanence (under strict criteria) in the area for many years after the training course
- Be charismatic and have strong communication and teaching abilities (good "people skills")
- Be courteous, an extrovert, and have an interest in learning
- Be in good health
- Have an interest in conservation and community development
- Be familiar with the area where he/she will be working

### **Other Non-Essential Preferred Characteristics**

The Candidate Should:

- Have worked in a field related to natural resources (guide, park ranger, hunter, farmer, fisherman, etc.)
- Have a good knowledge of nature and natural processes

## **BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE NATURE GUIDE TRAINING COURSE IN SOUTHEASTERN MEXICO**

(Sample Document Provided to Potential Students and Potential Partner Organizations)

### **Course objectives:**

Train individuals working as tourist guides (or those who will assume that role in the future within their communities or organizations) in the following subjects:

- Conversational English
- Natural and Cultural History of the area
- Tourism Services
- Environmental Interpretation
- Conservation

Another objective of this course is to train people that collaborate with local organizations (community development and/or conservationist) to play the role of “supervisors” in charge of the short- and long-term monitoring of the work the guides will be doing in their communities and organizations.

The training will take place in three different sites in the States of Chiapas and Quintana Roo. The objective in choosing such sites is that the students work in areas where the isolation and the distance from their daily routine activities allow them to focus their attention and effort to assimilate and practice the skills acquired. At the same time they will become familiar with different ecosystems, thereby increasing their knowledge of the natural history of the area. Similarly, throughout the course of the training and on each site, the number of tourist will increase, allowing the students the opportunity to practice the skills acquired according to the above-mentioned curricula.

Since this is a training course for bilingual guides, the students will work in an environment of “English Only”. The students will learn the basic vocabulary related to tourism, Natural History, and conservation in order to be able to effectively communicate with tourists.

### **Dates and Places**

The tentative date for the training course is August 13–December 15 for a total of 10 weeks in the field and one month of monitoring. The students will live with the teachers and coordinators in three protected areas. The program has study periods lasting 3 to 4 weeks with a rest period of 4–5 days in between. Classes will be given from 8:15–1:00, 3:00–6:00, 8:00–9:30 in addition to other sessions and individual study periods. Students will have to abandon completely their daily activities for the duration of the course.

The planned sites for the training are:

August 13–September 13  
September 18–October 16  
October 19–November 3  
November 3  
November 15–December 15

Site I: Blue Mountain Park Training Center  
Site II: Coral Reef Reserve Center  
Site III: Blue Mountain Ecological Center  
Graduation Ceremony  
Monitoring (WorldTeach teachers)

### **Schedule**

Vision Workshops<sup>1</sup>  
Presentation of applications from selected candidates  
Selection of candidates and orientation workshop<sup>2</sup>  
Signing of agreement letters with RARE Center      June 19<sup>th</sup>

May 14–16<sup>th</sup>  
June 5<sup>th</sup>  
June 19–20

<sup>1</sup> In this workshop, NGTP (with the participating organization) will build the vision and the role that the guides and community development promoters will have in their communities and organizations.

<sup>2</sup> In the selection and orientation workshop, NGTP will give a clear explanation of the course and its rules, describe the necessary items for the course, collect basic data to form the baseline of each selected student, and assign tasks to be completed before the beginning of the course.

### **Selection of the Candidates**

The pre-selection of candidates will be done by the sponsoring organizations. A committee of collaborators and RARE Center will coordinate the final selection. This committee will review the applications, interview the candidates and select the final participants.