



# RIO GRANDE BOTANIC GARDEN

## RAILROAD GARDEN VOLUNTEER

### BIOPARK EDUCATION VOLUNTEER

#### JOB DESCRIPTION 2008

#### **PURPOSE**

The objective of the Railroad Garden Volunteer is to operate the Botanic Garden's miniature G-scale train at the Railroad Garden, help maintain the tracks and villages, and answer the public's questions about the trains in operation.

#### **REQUIREMENTS**

Anyone over 18 years old is eligible. Skills needed include a friendly attitude, good communication skills and the ability to answer visitor questions. Before running trains, volunteers must be comfortable with their operation and understand the significance of the plant collection. The required knowledge is taught. As a safety precaution, all applicants are required to submit to a City of Albuquerque background check before they can begin volunteering.

#### **DUTIES**

Railroad Garden Volunteers work in the Botanic Garden's Railroad Garden exhibit. Volunteers add to our visitors' experience by sharing details about the trains and G-scale railroad system. General duties include maintaining the villages of Railroad Hill, operating trains, notifying staff if any problems occur, and answering visitor questions about the trains and the BioPark in general. Questions about plants should be directed to Botanic Garden Docents or garden staff.

#### **MINIMUM TIME**

Volunteers create their own schedule. They may work anytime staff is operating the trains—usually Wednesday-Sunday, 10:00am-4:00pm; however, hours may vary based on the season and staff availability. The most popular visitor hours are 10:00am-2:00pm. A regular weekly schedule is encouraged, but not required. Experienced railroaders from the NMGRR Club may also work (are encouraged to work!) Monday and Tuesday by getting permission from Jon Stewart, Curator of Plants, 848-7148; [jstewart@cabq.gov](mailto:jstewart@cabq.gov).

A minimum of 60 hours a year is required to receive recognition as a BioPark Education Volunteer. At least 30 hours must be spent working as a Railroad Garden Volunteer; the remaining 30 hours may also be spent working in the Railroad Garden or doing support work (monthly meetings, continuing education classes, event preparation, general BioPark projects, etc.). Volunteers are responsible for tracking their own hours on an honor system.

If a Railroad Garden Volunteer is active in another BioPark Education Volunteer program, the minimum number of required hours does not increase. The total of 60 hours may be divided between both or all jobs.

#### **TRAINING**

Training to become a Railroad Garden Volunteer begins with a required half day class that provides orientation to the facility and staff, volunteer and staff responsibilities, history of the program and information on trains and plants in the collection. Trainings are currently scheduled for Friday, June 13, and Thursday, August 28, 9:30 – noon. Logistical training is completed on-the-job, working with staff and experienced volunteers to learn about the operation of trains and maintenance of the exhibit.

- UNIFORM** Railroad Garden Volunteers are encouraged to wear a train engineer hat and neckerchief, but no uniform is required. Volunteers must wear their BioPark ID.
- BENEFITS** BioPark Education Volunteers have the opportunity to do meaningful and gratifying education work with thousands of visitors to the BioPark, an important intangible benefit. Tangible benefits are also available. Upon completion of the training and a commitment to give the minimum number of hours, BioPark Education Volunteers receive an identification badge, which allows free regular admission to all BioPark facilities (Zoo, Aquarium, and Botanic Garden). While on duty, volunteers receive a discount at the food and gift concession stands. After the end of each calendar year, volunteers are awarded recognition items for their service. Volunteers are offered discounts to all fee-based BioPark Education programs and are invited to special volunteer-only events.
- SUPPORT** Resources exist throughout the BioPark to help volunteers fulfill their duties. Education staff can provide assistance, and small Education Libraries are available. Monthly education meetings are generally held on the first Thursday and first Saturday of each month, and all volunteers are encouraged to attend. The Aquarium/Botanic Garden meetings are at 11:00am in the AQ/BG Education Building. Current BioPark happenings and facility-specific information are discussed. Volunteers are also invited to attend monthly Brown Bag Seminars following the meetings. Mid-month, a written update is mailed to all BioPark volunteers. Information on current happenings is also available in the Volunteer Communication Room at the AQ/BG Education Building.
- COSTS** There are no costs associated with volunteering for the Railroad Garden.
- STRUCTURE** When reporting to work, Railroad Garden Volunteers report directly to the Railroad Garden staff. The Railroad Garden staff reports to Jon Stewart, Curator of Plants, who reports to Catherine Hubbard, Botanic Garden Manager.
- Like all volunteer programs, the Railroad Garden Volunteers are managed by BioPark Education. At this time, there is no Botanic Garden Education Coordinator. The Acting BioPark Education Curator is Allyson Zahm. The AQ/BG Education Clerk, Kim Woodhouse, and the BioPark Program/Volunteer Specialist, Cathy Wylie, are also available to provide education program assistance.
- HOW TO APPLY** Fill out the Education Volunteer application and return to Albuquerque BioPark Education, Attn: Cathy Wylie, 903 Tenth Street SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102. You will be asked to complete a separate background check form at the orientation session.
- CONTACT** For more information, contact BioPark Education:  
(505) 764-6245, [cwylie@cabq.gov](mailto:cwylie@cabq.gov)  
[www.cabq.gov/biopark](http://www.cabq.gov/biopark)



Martin J. Chávez, Mayor