



RIO GRANDE BOTANIC GARDEN HERITAGE FARM GUIDE BIOPARK EDUCATION VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION 2008

PURPOSE

The mission of the Botanic Garden's Heritage Farm exhibit is to connect visitors with agriculture and help them realize its impact on our society. Crops and animals are important components of the Farm. By taking a historic approach (circa 1925-1935), the Heritage Farm engages visitors in a simpler time when agriculture was part of many people's daily lives. The objective of Farm Guides is to *involve* visitors, helping them realize the connections between agriculture, our environment, and their lives. Heritage Farm Guides also teach about the culture and history of the Rio Grande valley in the early 20th century.

REQUIREMENTS

Anyone over 18 years old is eligible. Skills needed include enthusiasm, a commitment to teaching about agriculture, a sense of responsibility and patience. 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

Heritage Farm Guides perform a variety of duties, depending on their personal interests. Duties include, but are not limited to leading tours, teaching Discovery Stations, demonstrating farm chores or traditional crafts, and guiding visitors through the animal barn. Persons interested in planting or tending crops can become Horticulture Volunteers. Heritage Farm Guides work only at the farm and not in other areas of the Botanic Garden.

MINIMUM TIME

Volunteers create their own schedule. They may work anytime the Rio Grande Botanic Garden is open, 9:00am-5:00pm, seven days a week, year round. The most popular visitor hours are 10:00am-2:00pm. A regular weekly schedule is encouraged, but not required.

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 Farm Guide; the remaining 30 hours may also be spent working at the Heritage Farm or doing support work (monthly meetings, continuing education classes, research and writing, event preparation, general BioPark projects, etc.). Volunteers are responsible for tracking their own hours on an honor system.

If you are 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

Farm Guide training includes a day of class and several shadowing sessions with experienced Farm Guides. Farm Guides are also asked to read the background information included in the training manual. Finally, new Farm Guides take a simple assessment (written or oral) to complete training. Upcoming training dates are: Saturday, June 14; Thursday, September 11.

UNIFORM

The Farm Guide uniform is based on the time period of the exhibit. **Male Farm Guides** wear pants in solid-colored khaki, brown, black, gray or denim and a solid-colored, button-up shirt with a collar. Denim overalls may also be worn. **Female Farm Guides** wear a dress or skirt that falls below the knees and is fitted or belted at the waist. Skirts should be paired with a button-up shirt with a collar. Fabric should be solid colored, gingham or printed with a small floral pattern. Aprons are optional and can be borrowed from BioPark Education. Both male and female Farm Guides may wear a straw hat. Photographs and examples are available upon request. It is the responsibility of the Farm Guides to acquire the clothing or have it made. Uniforms must be approved by the Botanic Garden Education Coordinator or the BioPark Program/Volunteer Specialist. Volunteers must also wear their BioPark ID and nametag.

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

BioPark Education Volunteers are responsible for acquiring their own uniform.

STRUCTURE

Heritage Farm Guides currently report to the BioPark Program/Volunteer Specialist, Cathy Wylie. Cathy reports to the Acting BioPark Education Curator, Allyson Zahm. The AQ/BG Education Clerk, Kim Woodhouse, is also available to provide 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, www.cabq.gov/biopark

