



Environmental Education Association of New Mexico - EEANM
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For immediate release

Please post to related listservs and distribute at summer workshops for teachers!

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Spanish Speakers Have Options at 2005 NAAEE Conference

A greater presence by Spanish speakers will be felt at the 34th Annual North American Association for Environmental Education Conference, to be held this year in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from October 25 through 29, 2005.

Because Albuquerque has a rare blend of Hispanic, Native American, and Anglo history, NAAEE's International Commission and Diversity Committee are showcasing over 20 speakers from or working in Latin America this year. Highlights include a welcome session for Spanish speakers on October 26, and a keynote address by Tiahoga Ruge, head of Mexico's Center of Education and Training for Sustainable Development (Cecadesu), on October 27.

Conference participants who understand primarily Spanish should check in at the registration table for assistance from a volunteer. To serve as a volunteer interpreter for Spanish speakers, please email brian@dayinternet.com.

[all the above information should be provided in Spanish]

Sessions in Spanish are not just an effort to help build a more diverse membership for NAAEE as a professional organization. They are a direct reflection of the increasing need for Spanish-speaking teachers in U.S. schools. Often a Spanish-speaking teacher will receive additional pay for having enhanced language skills. The growing Hispanic population in the United States has led to an increase in people whose primary language is Spanish. Currently, ten percent of the population speaks Spanish, making the United States the fifth most Spanish-speaking country in the world.

Throughout North America, bilingual students have been shown to have cultural and linguistic advantages over monolingual students and can offer schools and communities a greater appreciation for various cultures. These students have been shown to have increased cognitive abilities and literacy skills. Certainly, bilingual students are better prepared for a greater variety of professional opportunities after graduation.

Attendees can also learn more about the Hispanic and Native American culture in the Southwest through field trips to various historic sites in New Mexico. For more information on the interpreters, field trips or the conference, please visit www.naaee.org.

CONFERENCE FIELD TRIP HIGHLIGHT

Sustaining a River

Tuesday, October 25

8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Cost: \$65.00 (box lunch provided)

As a desert river, the Rio Grande is a blessed and contentious treasure. Its modern story is one of cultural, community, and ecosystem survival. This tour goes streamside to see first hand how native Pueblo people, traditional Hispanic farmers, city dwellers, and activists are working to sustain a valued river.

Albuquerque is a city of about 600,000 people and is centrally located in New Mexico along the banks of the Rio Grande. A gateway to the rich and diverse cultures of the American Southwest, it is home to numerous historical, cultural, and ecological places of importance. At an altitude of over 5,000 ft and at the junction of Interstates 25 and 40, Albuquerque is uniquely situated to host visitors wishing to explore the dynamic cultural and natural treasures of New Mexico.