Safeguarding Natural Heritage 2020: Strengthening American Agriculture by Investing in Youth

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Program Aid No. 2250
Who Sponsors Safeguarding Natural Heritage?

USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) partners with various educational institutions to deliver SNH. The agency funds SNH each year, and partner universities host program participants on their local campuses.

In 2020, six partner schools are participating in SNH: Diné College, Navajo Technical University, the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, the College of Menominee Nation, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, and Salish Kootenai College.

Each institution’s SNH program focuses on a specific area of interest to its Nation’s agriculture, such as plant health, entomology, veterinary science, animal care, biotechnology, and agribusiness.

SNH is a unique opportunity for students to gain firsthand looks at the many career paths open to them in the agricultural sciences, natural resources, and other science-related fields. For those interested in agricultural or natural resources careers, SNH is a great way to start.

Read on to learn more about this year’s program, including dates, locations, cost information, eligibility requirements, and how to apply.

Are You...

- a middle or high school student looking for a unique summer enrichment program with an opportunity to live and study on a college campus?
- a high school student looking to improve your résumé?
- a teacher looking for opportunities to expand your students’ knowledge of agriculture and natural resources?
- a parent looking for learning opportunities for your teen?

Look no further! The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers you an opportunity of a lifetime.

What Is Safeguarding Natural Heritage?

Safeguarding Natural Heritage (SNH) is a summer outreach program that helps students explore careers in plant and animal science, wildlife management, and agribusiness within and outside the environs of a Tribal community. Participating students live on a college campus and learn about agriculture from university professors, scientists, and administrative professionals who work for the U.S. Government in a variety of fields. They study the life cycles and habits of insects (entomologists); inspect and regulate certain genetically engineered organisms (biotechnologists); examine cells and tissues under a microscope to identify diseases (plant pathologists); work to conserve and manage wild animals and their habitats (wildlife biologists); carry out animal health programs (veterinarians); deal with the humane care and treatment of animals (veterinarians and animal care inspectors); and manage the business aspects of protecting plants and animals (agribusiness).

The program also introduces students to sustainable agriculture and farming, with a view to preserving their natural heritage and increasing their awareness of the harm invasive species can do. Additionally, students find out about potential job opportunities for college graduates—not only within their own Tribal communities, but possibly at USDA.

This 2-week summer program is designed for students aged 14 to 17. Students chosen to participate in SNH gain experience through hands-on labs, discussion groups, and field trips. They also participate in character- and team-building activities, and a variety of workshops.
Diné College
July 19–31, 2020
SNH application deadline: May 15, 2020

Diné College, a designated 1994 land-grant institution, was established in 1968 as the first tribally controlled community college in the United States. Based in Tsaile, AZ, Diné College is located 70 miles north of Window Rock, AZ, in the heart of the 27,000-square-mile Navajo Nation, and serves the Nation’s residents in New Mexico and Utah as well as Arizona. As a post-secondary land-grant institution rooted in Navajo language and culture, the college awards degrees and certificates in areas important to the economic and social development of the Navajo Nation.

For more information or an application, please contact:

**Benita Litson**
Director
Diné College Land Grant Office
P.O. Box C01
Tsaile, AZ 86556
Telephone: (928) 724-6940
Email: blitson@dinecollege.edu
School Website: www.dinecollege.edu
Initially established in 1979 as the Navajo Skill Center in Crownpoint, NM, Navajo Technical University (NTU) is the Navajo Nation’s first university. A highly respected land-grant institution, NTU offers technical, vocational, and academic degrees, as well as community education, in a student-oriented, hands-on learning environment with state-of-the-art classroom equipment. A highlight of the university’s curriculum is NTU’s Veterinary Technology program, which offers hands-on clinical and field experience as well as formal classroom instruction for students pursuing careers in animal health and other fields.

For more information or an application, please contact:

**Philip Beard**
Youth Development Program Coordinator
Email: pbeard@navajotech.edu

**Shawna Begay**
Program Assistant
Email: shawna.begay@navajotech.edu

Navajo Technical University
New Mexico State Highway 371 & NN9
P.O. Box 849
Crownpoint, NM 87313
Telephone: (505) 786-4150
School Website: www.navajotech.edu
University of North Carolina at Pembroke  
July 6–17, 2020  
SNH application deadline: May 15, 2020

The University of North Carolina at Pembroke (UNCP)—designated as "North Carolina’s historically American Indian University" by the North Carolina Assembly and home to the Southeast American Indian Studies Program—is an ideal setting for SNH. Founded in 1887 to train teachers from the Lumbee Tribe, UNC Pembroke confers more undergraduate degrees on American Indians than any institution east of the Mississippi River. Between 1887 and 1952, the institution’s student body was all Indian. From 1939 to 1953, the institution was the only State-supported, 4-year college for American Indians in the United States. Today, approximately 15 percent of the student body is American Indian, representing Native communities throughout North Carolina and beyond.

For more information or an application, please contact:

**Lawrence T. Locklear, Ph.D.**
Program Coordinator  
Southeast American Indian Studies Program  
University of North Carolina at Pembroke  
P.O. Box 1510  
Pembroke, NC 28372  
Telephone: (910) 775-4579  
Email: lawrence.locklear@uncp.edu  
School Website: www.uncp.edu
The College of Menominee Nation (CMN) began offering classes in January 1993 with 42 students enrolled in general education courses. As an institution of higher education chartered by the Menominee people, this land-grant college infuses education with American Indian culture, preparing students for a multicultural world. CMN’s Department of Continuing Education is committed to providing training and educational opportunities using the circle of life model, which equips and empowers the community—from youth to elders—to take ownership and responsibility to improve their lives.

For more information or an application, please contact:

**Brian Kowalkowski**
Department of Continuing Education
College of Menominee Nation, Keshena Campus
N172 Highway 47/55
P.O. Box 1179
Keshena, WI 54135
Telephone: (715) 799-5600, ext. 3007
Email: bkwalkowski@menominee.edu
School Website: www.menominee.edu
Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
June 8–19, 2020
SNH application deadline: May 29, 2020

Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College has a mission of providing education to the public through a union of cultures. A unique partnership between Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities offers all students the opportunity to learn in a comfortable and diverse environment. Founded in 1987, the College offers 2-year associate degrees and certificates across a wide range of program areas, including: law enforcement, human services, nursing, business, electric utility technology, clean energy, American Indian studies, child development, geospatial technologies, and environmental science. Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College is accredited by the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium as well as the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

For more information or an application, please contact:

Courtney Kowalczak
Environmental Institute Director
Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
2101 14th Street
Cloquet, MN 55720
Telephone: (218) 879-0862
Email: courtneyk@fdltcc.edu
School Website: https://fdltcc.edu
Salish Kootenai College
July 7–17, 2020
SNH application deadline: June 15, 2020

Salish Kootenai College (SKC) is a Tribal College founded in 1976, whose mission is to provide quality post-secondary educational opportunities for Native Americans, locally and throughout the United States. SKC seeks to promote community and individual development and perpetuate the cultures of the Confederated Tribes of the Flathead Nation. The college offers an associate degree program in natural resources and bachelor’s degree programs in forestry, hydrology, and wildlife and fisheries. The Natural Resources Department supports individual and community empowerment through meaningful partnerships that take many forms, including enhancing student-community research internship capacity. SKC also offers undergraduate degree programs in a number of other fields, including: nursing, psychology, business, information technology, and Native American studies.

For more information or an application, please contact:

**Rene Dubay**
Safeguarding Natural Heritage Coordinator
Salish Kootenai College
58138 Highway 93
Pablo, MT 59855
Telephone: (406) 459-3484
Email: rene_dubay@skc.edu
School Website: www.skc.edu
How Do I Apply?

Although SNH is focused on students between the ages of 14 and 17, students slightly younger or older may also be eligible to apply for admission, depending on the school. Most schools require the following materials:

- Complete application (including emergency contact and related information)
- Short essay (your general interests, hobbies, future plans, and specific interest in the program)
- Letters of recommendation
- High school transcript
- Brief biography (no more than 250 words)

For guidance on specific requirements, applicants must directly contact the school of their choice.

How Much Will It Cost?

Students selected for the 2020 SNH programs pay only the cost of transportation from their home to the university campus on opening day and back on closing day. APHIS covers the cost of tuition, room and board, and laboratory supplies.

Learn More

For more information about APHIS and the SNH program, contact:

**Terry W. Clark, DVM**  
Deputy Director, Office of the National Tribal Liaison  
Telephone: (301) 440-4388  
Email: terry.w.clark@usda.gov

**Carl Etsitty**  
Assistant Deputy Director, Office of the National Tribal Liaison  
Telephone: (970) 494-7573  
Email: carl.etsitty@usda.gov
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