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Local educator accepted to Global Master's Program

Provided by Liz Drake

A local educator has been selected to join the inaugural year of a global master's degree that includes travel this summer to study conservation and marine ecology in the Central American country of Belize.

From July 9 to 18, Pleasant View Elementary educator Natalie Hines of Sheridan, 46069, will travel to Belize, where the group of 20 U.S. educators will explore diverse terrestrial, coastal and coral reef communities at the Belize Zoo and Tropical Education Center, Gales Point and Tobacco Caye. While there they will join local scientists investigating conservation programs for such species as harpy eagles and jaguars, and they will also explore manatee population dynamics within Belize's rich coastal environment with members of the Wildlife Trust.

Hines is one of 150 U.S. and international educators accepted to the first year of the Global Field Program (GFP) from Project Dragonfly at Miami University.

As part of the program, all GFP students will engage in field conservation work this summer in Africa, Asia or the Americas. Groups of GFP educators will also study cheetahs in Namibia, research the world's last wild horses in Mongolia, tag leatherback sea turtles in Trinidad, explore tropical rainforest ecology in Costa Rica, research marine and terrestrial ecosystems in Baja, and study species reintroduction and ecosystem restoration in Trinidad. Throughout, the master's students will engage with international colleagues and scientists to work together to bring about local and global change.

The GFP master's degree is based on the successful Earth Expeditions program from Dragonfly and the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden. Since 2004 when Earth Expeditions began engaging educators in firsthand educational and scientific research at conservation hotspots around the world, more than 750 educators have been selected from 43 states and several international countries.

More information is located at www.ProjectDragonfly.org .