

Exploring Environmental Mentoring

Jessica Soule

EnvironMentors

National Council for Science and the Environment

Valerie Derouen

Louisiana State University

EnvironMentors Chapter

August 21, 2013

Today's Webinar



- EnvironMentors overview



- What mentoring means to EnvironMentors



- Benefits of environmental mentoring



- Getting started



- Q & A

EnvironMentors' Mission

EnvironMentors' mission is to mentor and motivate students underrepresented in the sciences as they plan and conduct environmental science research projects and acquire the skills that will allow them to build careers and to become more active stewards of their communities and the environment.



EnvironMentors' Core Model

Environmental Stewardship

Science Research

College Prep

Mentoring



EnvironMentors' Chapters

Alabama

Arkansas

California

Colorado

District of Columbia

Kentucky

Louisiana

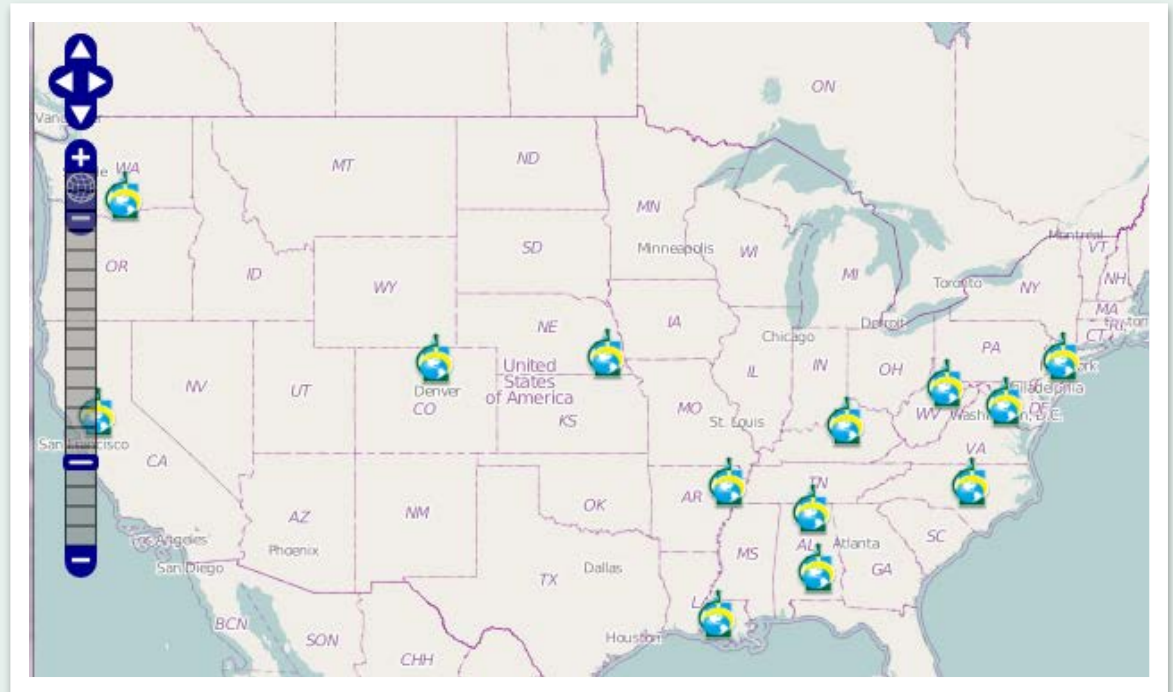
Nebraska

New Jersey

North Carolina

Washington

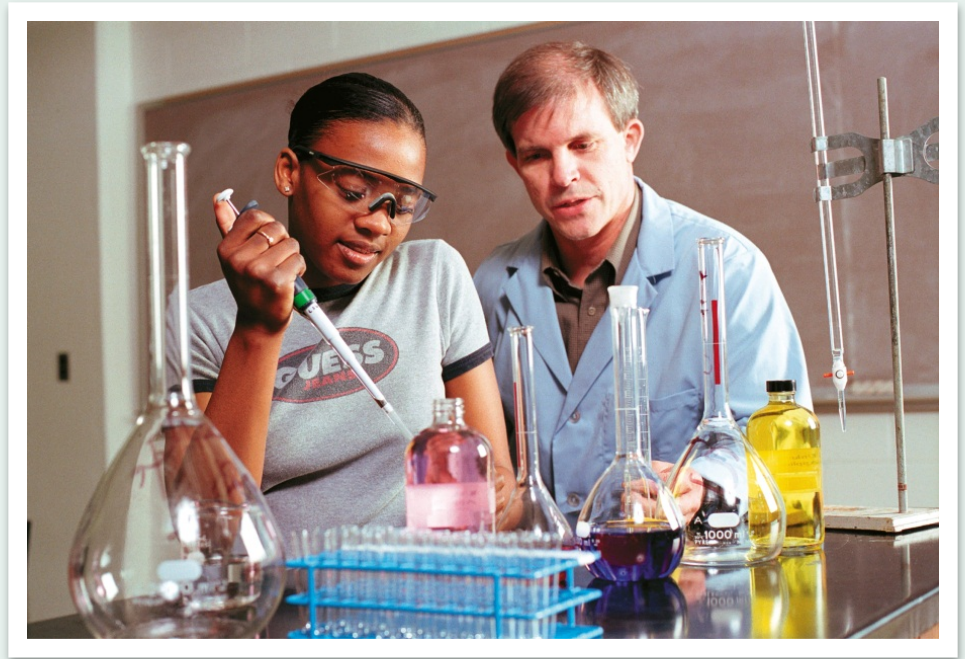
West Virginia



What is Environmental Mentoring?

Guidelines for EnvironMentors:

- 1 student + 1 adult
- 5+ months
- 3 meetings/ month
- 1+ hour meetings



Who Are EM Mentors?

- Undergrad students, graduate students, university faculty, professionals in the community
- Volunteers
- Working or studying environmental/ science fields



Who Are EM Mentors?

“I've learned that high school students are really enthusiastic about the environment and want to do things to protect it. Being a mentor is a lot of work, but it is worth it when you see the final science project in the end. Although it may not seem like it at times, having an adult mentor is a big deal for high school students. It makes a big impression on them to know there is an adult out there who cares about them.”

The Role of the Mentor

Mentors DO

- Serve as a guide/positive role model
- Facilitate students' environmental interests and scientific learning process
- Introduce students to college and environmental careers by “telling their story” and welcoming students on campus

Mentors DO NOT

- Direct students' research choices
- Conduct student research (or homework or college applications!)
- Expect students to share all of their views or interests

Setting Boundaries

National office

Mentors are required to undergo background checks

University or local chapter staff

Students may not be alone with mentors

Students may not travel in mentors' vehicles

Mentors, students, or parents

Student may only be paired with mentor of the same gender

Supporting Students and Mentors

A strong student-mentor relationship requires ongoing support

- Orientation to the EM program
- Mentor/Mentee training: reviews expectations among students and mentors, and communication skills
- Ongoing support from chapter coordinators, teachers, and other program partners



Benefits of Environmental Mentoring

Through focus groups, students consistently ranked the mentoring relationship as one of the top reasons why they stayed with the program and completed their research projects.

My mentor...is an excellent teacher and has given lots of time to make sure I get the data I need to develop a great project and even more time going over things when I did not understand. [He] has taught me a lot about developing a feasible project, conducting it, analyzing the data, presenting it, and has given me the chance to do field research...I was able to learn so much with [his] guidance and help.

Benefits of Environmental Mentoring

In a 2012 longitudinal survey of student alumni, respondents with at least one mentor had more information about careers in environmental and STEM fields

I was able to learn a lot about her work and all the exciting things she gets to do as a plant biologist. I enjoyed seeing her enthusiasm for her work and it inspired me to follow my dreams of becoming a biologist in the future.

Benefits of Environmental Mentoring

When nominating their mentor for a Mentor of the Year competition, students say they'd like to emulate the following qualities of their mentors:

Her patience, dedication, organization, and a hard-working and teaching attitude

His work ethic

His honesty and hard work

My mentor is really kind, level-headed and fun all at the same time...She is really accommodating and always was there to help me with my project

Getting Started

- What would you like students and mentors to get out of the relationship?
- What age group you will work with?
- What type of mentoring relationship will achieve your goals? *There are benefits and limitations to each type (e-mentoring, in-person, group mentoring, classroom-based)*
- How long can you support the mentoring relationship (duration) *A short duration could result in negative outcomes for students*

Getting Started

- Understand the basic mentoring cycle
- Recruit students who understand/ want a mentor, and mentors who understand the commitment of having a mentee
- Remember mentor background checks
- Initial mentor and mentee training is key to a successful relationship

Getting Started

- Staff or volunteer time to provide ongoing support and guidance to pairs
- A plan for ongoing support
 - Frequency
 - Communication method
 - Eventual relationship closure
- Program evaluation
 - mentor / student surveys
 - tracking contact hours

Getting Started

- Estimate budget & line items for a program like this
 - Staffing
 - Programmatic (field experiences, training materials)
 - Food
 - Transportation
 - background checks
- Funding sources
 - University support (staffing)
 - Grants (from national office)
 - Grants (local funders or support)

Mentoring Resources

Education Northwest's National Mentoring Center

<http://educationnorthwest.org/nmc>

National Mentoring Summit

http://www.mentoring.org/summit_2013/

The Center for Evidence-based Mentoring

<http://www.umbmentoring.org/index.html>

Questions?

Jessica Soule

EnvironMentors Director

National Council for Science and the Environment

jsoule@ncseonline.org

202-207-2017

Valerie Derouen

Chapter Coordinator

Louisiana State University EnvironMentors vderou1@lsu.edu

337-212-2549