

Field Trip Proposal

Framingham High School Science Department

Costa Rica through Ecology Project International, Pacuare Reserve and Tirimbina Reserve, April 13-21, 2023

<https://goo.gl/maps/fRiaUczCM5bEjp1A7>

<https://goo.gl/maps/MAKadg69k8Cx3eGo6>

“Pacuare Reserve is located between Tortuguero and Limón, on the Caribbean Coast of Costa Rica. The Reserve is surrounded by canals and the sea, and is only accessible by small boat.”

Advisors/Chaperones: Rebecca Maynard, Emily Rathmell, Andrew Foley

Ecology Project International (EPI) is a non-profit organization that offers educational student and educator travel programs to biodiverse areas. “EPI programs take place in remote locales. Not only do these sites provide an authentic experience of life as a researcher, they also play an essential role in the learning process. Active, student-centered learning is at the heart of EPI's programs.” Students are actively engaged throughout the trip, participating in data collection and conservation projects. “By working with wildlife and helping out researchers” students will “ignite a passion for science and conservation that will last a lifetime.”

EPI realizes the importance of supporting the local community where their travel programs operate. They have permanent offices and staff at their field locations. EPI also partners with local nonprofits to support the local community and the conservation issues at hand. “EPI is dedicated to building a brighter, more sustainable future for the planet. [They] believe that immersive education and conservation are key.”

EPI has offered to partner with Framingham High School to host an international trip every two years, in which three students in need will receive Rosenthal scholarships of \$3000 each, covering the majority of the cost of the program. The remaining students who sign up for the program will have to pay out of pocket. However, they can each apply for financial aid through EPI, which ranges from \$300-\$600. EPI also sets up a personal fundraising page for each student where people can donate directly. EPI is dedicated to helping as much as they can to provide students with this unique learning experience.

Day 1: San Jose, Costa Rica- EPI Campus/Bella Vista Ranch/ Villa Zirqui

- After leaving the airport the group will spend 1 night in San Jose either at the EPI campus just north of the city, or at another local hotel suitable for student groups.

Day 2-5: Pacuare Reserve

- The group will spend 4 nights conducting the sea turtle censuses, hiking in the rainforest, and exploring the sea turtle curriculum. The Reserve's website can be found [here](#).

Day 6-8: Tirimbina Biological Preserve

- The group will spend 2 nights inland at Tirimbina Biological Research Station doing some curriculum around water quality testing, insects, and rainforest ecology. Students stay at either the Research Station or the Lodge and that is determined about 2-3 months prior to the trip. [The website can be found here](#).

Day 8-9: San Jose

- The group will wrap up the course back at the starting point in San Jose.

1. Safety and Supervision of All Participants

The advisors of the Environmental Awareness Club, Rebecca Maynard and Emily Rathmell, science teacher Andrew Foley, along with Ecology Project International instructors, will be supervising the students attending the field trip. At this time we are hoping for a ratio of 7 students per chaperone. “Every EPI program has a minimum of two instructors. [They] hire instructors with prior teaching experience and background managing groups in outdoor environments. All instructors receive on-site, program-specific training. At least one instructor is required to have Wilderness First Aid or higher medical certification, and instructors at all Spanish speaking sites are bilingual. These are dedicated educators, invested in the care of our participants.”

Throughout the trip, the students and supervisors will be staying at field stations in close proximity. Transportation while in Costa Rica will be provided by Ecology Project International. “All third party vendors (transport, lodging, food services, etc) are reviewed to ensure the quality of service and appropriate attention to safety.”

“EPI maintains full-time staff, risk management staff, both domestically and internationally, with duty officers on-call 24 hours a day while participants are in the field. All of [their] medical protocols and emergency action plans are developed with a U.S. based physician, a wilderness medical advisor, and our local partners. They're re-evaluated every year. [Their] systems are in place and up to date.”

“ [EPI] expects responsible behavior from [their] participants, and [they] prepare them for the field with extensive medical review processes, environmental briefings from instructors, and clear policies for behavior. While EPI takes the lead on risk management, [they] recognize that we are all in each other's care.” Permission slips have been collected with emergency contact and medical information that will be with the supervisors on the trip.

“All participants must be covered by medical insurance while on course. When traveling abroad, [EPI] recommends that [each student] checks with [their]insurance carrier to confirm that [their] coverage is valid in the host country. If not, [they] request that participants purchase medical insurance specifically for this course.”

2. Safety of Transportation and Accommodations

Departure/Return:

Exact time for flight out of Boston to San Jose, Costa Rica and flight returning from San Jose to Boston is yet to be determined. Our preference for transportation to the airport would be that we arrange a bus to take us to the airport from FHS and a bus that will pick us up from the airport to transport us back to FHS. If this transportation does not work, we will ask a parent/guardian to drop off and pick up their student from the airport. “EPI will send [us] the travel itinerary as soon as it is confirmed with the airlines.”

Contact Info:

Ecology Project International: **Tyler Eisenhandl** Field Experience Coordinator [REDACTED]

Cell Phone for Supervisors:

Rebecca Maynard: [REDACTED]

Emily Rathmell: [REDACTED]

Andrew Foley: [REDACTED]

3. Anticipated Cost (estimated)

Item	Unit Rate # of Units	Total Cost
Costa Rica Travel Program: includes flights, lodging, all meals, and all transportation while in Costa Rica	\$3595 per student (22)	\$79,090
Three Rosenthal Foundation scholarships	\$3300 per student (3)	-\$9,900
Total		\$69,190

- Each student can apply for financial aid (\$300-600 awarded/ student)
- Each student is responsible for cost of passport, health insurance coverage, and travel insurance (if they elect to pay for it)

4. Expectation of Fundraising by Students

EPI will set up a fundraising page for each student. We also hope to receive money from the City of Framingham's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant. We received \$18,200 for the 2021-2022 school year through this grant. Kerry Reed from the Department of Public Works wrote the grant application for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school year. We would like to use a portion of this grant if awarded, for this EPI travel program.

In addition, according to Tyler Eisenhand, "...we do see a potential opportunity to work with the Rosenthal Foundation to get more funding for more students now that we have identified you as a 'partner' school. What we would need from you in order to move that potential forward is a better understanding of what kind of funding opportunities you might already have available to you in your community (grants, scholarships, donors local to your area). It would also be helpful to think realistically about how much money you and your students might be able to fundraise and get an estimate on that total price. With that information, the hope would be that we could then make a proposal to the Rosenthal's to help fill the gap between what you're able to fundraise, what families are potentially able to afford for a course, and what is still remaining in terms of course cost."

5. Time Away From School

Students will miss two days prior to April break: Thursday, April 13th and Friday, April 14th, 2023. They will give teachers adequate notice about their absence to ensure their work is done per teacher request.

6. Equity and Availability for Students

The Environmental Awareness Club works to bring awareness to environmental issues through education and outreach. It is open to any students at the high school who are passionate about the environment and interested in making the Framingham community more sustainable.

Environmental Science classes are available to juniors and seniors at the Advanced College Prep and Advanced Placement levels.

All students in both the club and classes have been offered the opportunity to attend this field trip.

7. Educational Value/Benefit

This is a life-changing opportunity for students. Students will be involved in conservation projects and data collection to help protect the biodiversity of Costa Rica. This will inspire students to make lifelong changes to promote sustainability and to educate others on the importance of protecting our environment . This experience may also motivate them to pursue a career in STEM. Finally, students will have the opportunity to learn about the local culture, helping them to develop cultural self awareness and sensitivity. Students will complete a total of 14 research and service hours and 30 coursework hours.

This trip follows the requirements of School Committee Student Travel Policies and Regulations (JJH and JH-R - STUDENT TRAVEL REGULATIONS INCLUDING OVERNIGHT AND OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL).

- All quotes are from the following website: <https://www.ecologyproject.org/>

8. Approvals

Carolyn Banach - Principal

Date

Dr. Robert Tremblay - Superintendent

Date

Framingham School Committee

Date