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## **Urban Teens Rehabilitate and Map Bronx Woodland in Wave Hill Forest Project Summer Collaborative**

Bronx, NY—Thirty-four New York City high school students will participate in a rigorous, seven-week internship program at Wave Hill, a public garden and cultural center, beginning June 28, 2004. Through **woodland rehabilitation work and academic study**, Forest Project Summer Collaborative interns strengthen science skills, gain leadership and work experience, and increase their awareness of urban environmental issues. The students also learn about career opportunities in the field of environmental science.

The Forest Project interns are charged with rehabilitating sections of a 60-acre urban woodland, embattled by invasive plants and erosion, **working towards a healthy woodland featuring vegetation native to the northeast**. Working with foresters in Wave Hill's Abrons Woodland and the neighboring Riverdale Park, they plant **native trees, repair trails, clear invasive vines and fortify hillsides, gaining an overview of forest ecology along the way**.

The program also enables high school students to experience college first hand. Through a partnership with Lehman College's Department of Biological Sciences, the interns complement their woodland work with a Plant Science Course at the Lehman labs, where they work closely with graduate students exploring topics including morphology and seed germination. Interns receive four college credits upon successful completion of the class, as well as an hourly stipend for their woodland work.

In 2004, returning Forest Project students will have the opportunity to learn **Geographic Information System (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS) technologies** in natural resources management. These returning students will use these skills to map the perimeter, trails, and restoration sites in the northern end of Riverdale Park, producing publication-quality, informative maps.



All interns will visit other urban ecology projects where they meet scientists, environmental stakeholders and community activists. This summer, they will work with local environmental justice advocate Christine Forman on Seton Falls Park, which is a wetland and woodland in the East Bronx and the Natural Resources Group of the NYC Parks & Recreation Department. Rocking the Boat, a nonprofit organization in the South Bronx will also engage Forest Project students in a water quality research project with the Gaia Institute.

The Forest Project continues working with its students throughout the school year with intern reunions and extra-curricular trips that reinforce connections with peers and mentors. For many public high school students in under-served communities, college study may seem unattainable, or has never been considered. The Collaborative makes college a viable option by bringing these promising teens to college campuses during the year, familiarizing them with admission requirements and procedures, financial aid packages and course offerings.

**The Forest Project Summer Collaborative** is a program within Wave Hill's Forest Project. Now in its 23rd year, the Forest Project is one of the oldest urban woodland rehabilitation programs in the nation, focusing on urban forest conservation, community education, and youth development.

**Lehman College** is an independent liberal arts college of the City University of New York. Located on a historic campus in the northwest Bronx, the college is a cultural and recreational center for the region with its Center for the Performing Arts, Lehman College Art Gallery, and the APEX, a major new center for sports and health education.

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Wave Hill is a 28-acre public garden and cultural center overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades in the Bronx. Award-winning gardens, greenhouses, and woodlands offer people of all ages the opportunity to explore their connections to the natural world. Programs are offered in horticulture, environmental education, woodland management, landscape history, and the visual and performing arts.

Wave Hill is operated by an independent non-profit organization. Its buildings and grounds are owned by the City of New York. With assistance from Bronx representatives in the City Council and State Legislature and the Bronx Borough President, Wave Hill's operation is supported with public funds through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquariums Grant Program administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the New York State Council on the Arts—a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Foundations, corporations and individuals also contribute vital support.