

Trip Preparations

- **Passport:** Be sure your passport is valid and will not expire for 6 months AFTER the project ends.

Note: If you do not have a US passport, visit the Thai consulate website for visa information / requirements:
<http://www.thai-la.net/visa/visa-index.htm>

- **Medical:** Discuss the travel plans with your personal physician and make sure your routine vaccinations are up-to-date.
- **Complete an Application / Waiver / Release Form:** The group must have 20 volunteers to keep the individual basic price based on double occupancy (except for village home stays).
- **Send a non-refundable deposit** of \$200 to hold your place. Make checks payable to Earth Systems Science, Inc., and mail them to PO Box 8042, Van Nuys, CA 91409-8042
- **Trip Departure / Return** will be through Los Angeles International Airport.
- **Check the RTC-TH website** for announcements and updates.
www.neighborhoodlink.com/org/rtcth
E-mail: rtc2k5@gmail.com
- Post questions to the Discussion Area of the RTC-TH website so the answers are available to the group.
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Rural Training Center-Thailand
c/o Earth Systems Science, Inc.
PO Box 8042
Van Nuys, CA 91409-8042
USA

REEEPP

Rural Environmental
Education Enhancement
Pilot Project

Winter 2007
Volunteer Trip
Jan 10 – 28, 2007

Nan Province
Northern Thailand



**Rural Training Center-
Thailand**

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Rural Training Center- Thailand

Mention Thailand and images of temples, elephants, sandy beaches, and shopping may come to mind. Northern Thailand can be quite different from what you know about Bangkok and the Thai beaches of Hollywood movies.

The Rural Training Center-Thailand (RTC-TH) is the culmination of a dream started in 1998 to provide environmental education to small rural Thai farm families. Gregory and Saifon Lee co-founded the RTC-TH after launching the concept under Earth Systems Science, Inc. (ESSI; a California educational non-profit that Gregory co-founded in 2002). As the RTC-TH activities expanded, the Lees left ESSI to devote their time and energy to the RTC-TH. This volunteer trip is a collaboration between the two groups.

REEEPP

The Rural Environmental Education Enhancement Pilot Project (REEEPP) is an innovative community-based education model to improve rural Thai public education. Math, science, English, geography, and technology are integrated in an interactive curriculum on a foundation of environmental science, sustainable agricultural practices, and frugal financial skills.

The Lees created REEEPP while they were in ESSI. It was started in Nan Province, Thailand in summer 2004 at Ban Na Fa Elementary School. There are three components to REEEPP: **Green School** deals with basic environmental awareness through the

Trash Bank (a recycling program where students earn money).

Habitat is an adaptation of the National Wildlife Federation habitat programs to make students aware of the need to protect wildlife and biodiversity.

NASA CERES S'COOL is the primary technology component for REEEPP. It connects a small rural school to the realm of international near-Earth space programs.

REEEPP is also combined with the three other elements under the RTC-TH:

Home Stays are a critical part of the RTC-TH program as there are no hotels in the area. Volunteers get to see and experience rural Thai family life by living and taking meals with their host family.

Sustainable Agricultural Practices (SAP) is one of the main RTC-TH goals. Various SAP topics are selected for the project and taught to host families and used in REEEPP.

Volunteer Training will be done in the US for the current project topics either through self-study or hands-on training with ESSI.

REEEPP training at Na Fa Elementary School is done in English to give students the chance to hear and practice with native speakers. Teachers provide Thai translation as needed and conduct lesson reviews in Thai so the students are sure to understand. Teach Backs are an important part of all RTC-TH training. REEEPP volunteers are trained, then Na Fa teach teachers and students. Practice and repetition reinforce the lessons. Then Na Fa teachers teach others while being mentored by the

volunteers. The Teach Back is the proficiency “test” for the lessons.

Volunteers

The ideal volunteer has a positive attitude, a willingness to learn and to share, and the ability to work on the basis of mutual respect, mutual benefit. Field conditions can change rapidly presenting challenges to any plan. Flexibility is essential for international travel and for volunteers.

The RTC-TH is a volunteer driven organization operating on a cost-recovery basis and makes no profit. The RTC-TH fundamentally believes in solving problems by empowering people through education not by money. ***This is a “people-to-people” volunteer project.*** It is not a commercial adventure travel tour. It does not involve government agencies or outside grant funding.

All volunteers pay their own expenses. In exchange, they learn about the culture of northern Thailand, learn about rural northern Thai farmers through home stays while working on volunteer activities involving sustainable agricultural practices and English teaching in a rural elementary school.

Optional Stay Behind

Volunteers can extend their stay in Southeast Asia by opting to stay behind for independent travel after the project. Certain restrictions may apply depending on the original international air ticketing.

Note: RTC-TH staff volunteers need to resume their normal work after the project. They are not available for assisting volunteers staying behind.