Hello,

My name is _______________ and I'm a teacher at _________________ teaching _________________(grade(s), class(es)). This year my class is taking part in a project called OPIHI (Our Project In Hawaii's Intertidal). OPIHI is a school-based long-term monitoring project. Middle and high school students all over the state are trained in species identification and ecological monitoring techniques in the classroom before embarking on field trips to intertidal sites throughout the islands. Through OPIHI, students gain valuable scientific skills while being involved in an authentic ongoing scientific research project. The data the students collect provides important information to resource managers on a virtually unknown area of Hawaii’s biota. Perhaps most importantly, students learn that science is fun!

On OPIHI field trips, a class is divided into groups of approximately 3-5 students. Each group is paired with a science assistant who helps the students collect data along a stretch of the intertidal using standard sampling techniques. The science assistant help the students keep focused and on track, and encourages meticulous data collection and good scientific techniques.

This year I have ____ (number of field trips) to _______ (locations) and I am in need of science assistants. I was hoping you/your organization would be interested in assisting on these OPIHI field trips. Rudimentary knowledge of invertebrates and limu is ideal, but it's more important for volunteers to encourage students to look closer at the environment and point out our interesting organisms than have a marine science background. When the students have questions with identifications the science assistant helps them work through the ID cards (does the limu look like this color or this one?) and look up creatures in a book, thus, it's more important a volunteer to just be excited (gets the kids excited) and remind them to be as accurate as possible. The protocols are equipment are easy to learn and understand.

I think this could be an exciting opportunity for you/your organization. Field trips are only _____ (number of hours) and volunteers can meet our class at the intertidal sites. The students are always excited to be out in the field, and it's very rewarding to help introduce them to the marine environment, yet still only get their shins wet.

(You can attach the OPIHI volunteer flyer and/or direct them to the OPIHI website – specifically the section just for science assistants. Make sure you list your field trips and include dates, locations, and times. If you class is planning to arrive at a site by 8:30am, have the science assistants come at 8:15am to ensure everyone will be there when you arrive).

I hope I made this opportunity sound exciting!

(Your Name)