



Native American Fish & Wildlife Society, 1055 17th Ave., Ste. 91, Longmont, CO 80501
www.nafws.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Native American high school students learn about careers in tribal natural resources management in one week camp

DENVER, CO – JULY 28, 2016 – Native American high school students got a taste of the work that tribal natural resource managers do to conserve, manage, and protect their tribe’s natural resources at a one-week camp held in northern New Mexico in the month of June.

For 19 years, the Southwest Region of the Native American Fish & Wildlife Society and their partners have hosted the Southwest Regional Natural Resources Youth Practicum exposing students to and giving them hands-on learning of fisheries and wildlife management, forestry, range management, and water quality. More interest involves traditional knowledge and climate change.

“A unique thing about our summer practicum is that it brings the kids back to grassroots knowledge and it inspires them”, said Tim Smith, Pueblo of Sandia Environment Department who shared with the students’ traditional stories and traditional knowledge from his tribe about the healing properties of trees and plants which he added, “was an eye-opener for them.”

Many of the classes are held outdoors and hiking is part of the learning experience. “This means there is no time for cell phones, television, music or text messaging,” said Smith. “By our second day at the camp these kids were not looking for their technological gadgets and excitement takes over about what their learning. For example, they are discussing what they did in forestry class, how the water quality was fun, or when their families went camping.”

Another instructor and organizer of the practicum for 19 years, Joe Jojola, Southern Pueblos Agency biologist says he has seen the practicums grow and expand. “We’ve used fisheries, wildlife, forestry, and range management topics for years but now we are spending more time on climate change, pollinators, traditional knowledge, and cultural resources. This gives them adequate information in areas most important.

Tribes that manage natural resources play a large part in recommending students to the practicum. Jojola added that there seems to be opportunities for today’s youth for the future in the area of climate change although “things could change politically this year, but there are good resources available grant-wise, funding-wise, and the research is pointing toward more opportunities especially with tribes that are doing good work.

“Students that are interested in natural resources are ideal for the summer practicum programs said Jojola, and “we definitely would like to see more students applying to the practicums.”

One of the students who participated in the practicum was Dorsey Thom, Jr., from the Walker River Paiute Tribe who said that he not only enjoyed the field activities but also learned from seeing how the people who taught them liked their jobs as tribal natural resource managers. He added, "And they never really called it their jobs."

With much hands-on learning that is part of the practicums, the students especially enjoy experiencing types of work that biologists do when they go out into the field to do their work. "We did fish shocking and tracking the collars and learned how to track different types of wildlife using different types of traps and also trapping techniques by air and land," added Thom.

Christie Vigil from the Mescalero Apache Tribe said that being outside, exploring new territory, and the hands-on activities were ideal for learning. "I'm very happy that I took this opportunity."

The NAFWS Southwest Region plans the practicum well in advance and many in the Region are involved. Each year is built upon previous programs however, they too have experienced funding needs. If any one would like to be involved in the Southwest Region practicums, please contact Norman Jojola at: (505)753-1451.

The NAFWS, a non-profit organization provides conferences, youth education, and training for tribal conservation law officers. The organization's mission is to assist Native American and Alaska Native Tribes with the conservation, protection, and enhancement of their fish and wildlife resources.

For more information, contact: Karen Lynch, NAFWS, klynch@nafws.org, 303-466-1725, x. 5.

###