

Officials mull issue of safe-sex materials

OLYMPIA (AP) — The difficult question of how much safe-sex material must be included in AIDS education to meet Washington state requirements may be answered by officials this week.

Darcy Lee of the equity office of the Washington superintendent of public instruction is reviewing Stanwood school policies and sex education materials that stress abstinence.

The approach makes almost no mention of sexual practices which minimize the risk of AIDS transmission.

In addition, revised ninth and tenth grade programs developed by Teen-Aid Inc. of Spokane under a \$300,000 federal grant are being checked for medical accuracy by the state office of HIV-AIDS.

An earlier version of the programs was rejected for depicting condoms as an unreliable way to prevent AIDS, said Pam Baldwin, AIDS prevention supervisor for Washington's state school superintendent.

Teen-Aid's seventh and eighth grade materials were approved on the first try, she said.

Teen-Aid materials, which advise adolescents to abstain from sex outside marriage and say almost nothing about safe sex, form the sex-education curriculum in five school systems in the state, said company director LeAnna Benn.

Opposing such programs are parents and health educators who assert that teen-agers need as much information as possible on sex.

They cite statistics like those compiled by the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department showing 40 percent of all girls in the state will become pregnant at least once by age 20.

They also noted a report two months ago from the Center for Disease Control showing 2,394 teen-agers in the nation had contracted AIDS, compared with 201 in December 1987.

"AIDS is rising among teen-agers, and with teen-agers you have the most risk," said Gayle Lloyd, a spokeswoman for the CDC in Atlanta. "Teen-agers experiment with sex and may be influenced to use drugs, which makes them susceptible to high-risk behavior."

Baldwin noted that state law requires instruction on AIDS in public schools and allows the use of any materials that are medically accurate, emphasize that sexual abstinence and avoiding intravenous drug use are the only sure ways to avoid AIDS, and teach that condoms can fail.

Study charges rare plant abuse

PORTLAND (AP) — Environmentalists released studies Monday charging the U.S. Bureau of Land Management has shirked its responsibility to look out for rare plants before logging the forests of western Oregon.

Acknowledging that the BLM could have done a better job in the past, BLM spokesman Ed Ciliberti said the agency has improved its performance greatly in recent years.

Studies by Jim Stickler, technical assistant for the Oregon Natural Resources Council, found that between 1983 and 1987, 44 percent of BLM's timber sales in western Oregon weren't surveyed by botanists for threatened or endangered plant species before they were logged.

"Logging without such surveys blindly destroys rare plants and their habitats without either being adequately documented," said Stickler. "Such loss is contrary to common sense and federal law under the endangered species act."

Stickler said he found cases where BLM timber managers signed off in the office on survey work that was never performed.

In some cases, BLM botanists were asked to survey timber sales for rare plants at times when the plants weren't flowering, making it harder to identify them, he added.

Wendell Wood of the Oregon Natural Resources Council said BLM has failed to produce a mandated list of sensitive plants in Oregon, despite directives in 1985 and 1988.

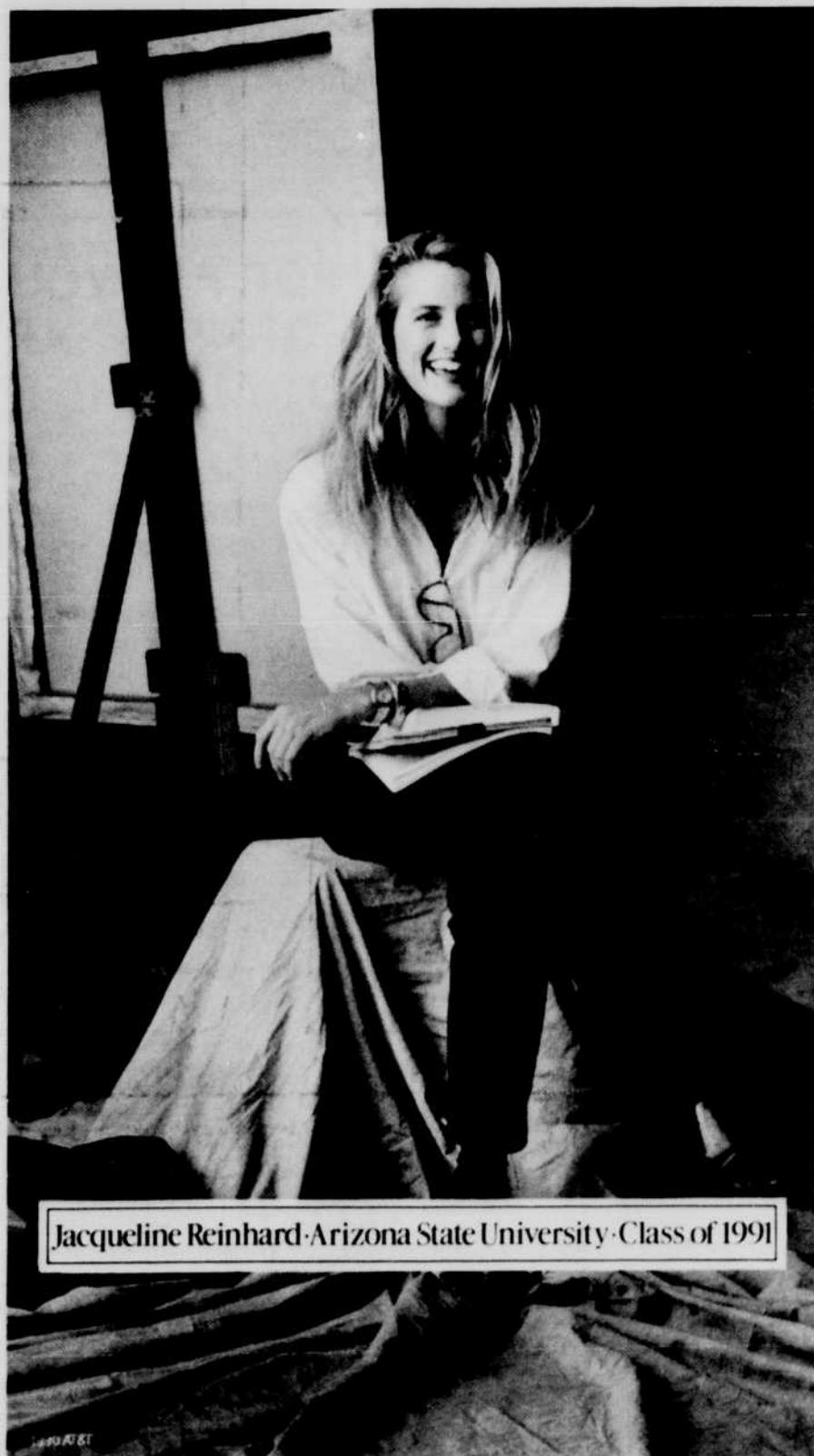
"The Bureau, in effect, has sought to have it both ways by publicly taking credit for a sensitive species program, while in reality no such program is now, or ever has been, in effect," Wood said.

Ciliberti said most of the timber sales lacking sensitive plant clearance cited by environmentalists were from between 1982 and 1984.

"Frankly, in that time frame, for any number of reasons, botanical plants weren't a very high concern on our overall agenda," Ciliberti said. "Circumstances over this past decade have heightened our awareness of that. We expect to get better in the future."

By 1987, only about a quarter of timber sales lacked a rare plant clearance, said BLM state office botanist Cheryl McCaffrey.

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