

Work Study Program Still Has Rough Spots, But Students Staying

by Cynthia Stowell

Twenty-six high school students have traded classrooms for job sites as the third year of the B.I.A.-funded work study program gets underway.

More ambitious than ever, the program has a couple of new twists this year, but administrator Ernie Weber admits that it needs "tightening up." Having launched the program in a hurry last month to "salvage" students on the verge of dropping out, Weber is now busy tying up the loose ends and providing the follow-up needed to make the experience meaningful for students.

In its first two years, the work study program was geared to the advanced student who was bored with school. This year the target is the potential drop-out whose attendance record and transcript are borderline. As a result the size of the program doubled, "almost more than we can handle," according to Weber.

Instead of being administered solely by the Tribes' CETA-Personnel department, this year's effort is intended to be a cooperative venture between the school district and the Tribes. The result has been some confusion in responsibility and a minimum of monitoring.

Weber is determined not to let management problems interfere with the work experience of the students, however. So far, none of the 26 placed or 16 pending students have dropped out of school even though Weber felt that 90 per cent of them were headed in that direction.

The work study program, one of three work experience opportunities available to high



AFTERNOON WORK - Joey Macy (right) and fellow students George Aguilar, Jr. and Jim Miller learn responsibility in their daily work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Instead of going to afternoon classes, they can be seen burning brush, raking leaves or otherwise sprucing up the community. CDS Photo

school students, is tied closely to the new first period class designed to rekindle the interest of failing students in their education. The apparent contradiction between re-involving kids in school and pulling them out of school every afternoon does not bother Weber.

Half a day in classes is better than dropping out, he reasons, and a student must attend school regularly to stay in the program. There is little danger of the student being further alienated from school, he added, because

the work experience can do one of two things: convince a student that he should finish his education to get the job he wants or prove to the student that he is not ready for the work world and that school is preferable.

Career education is a large part of the work study program.

Students become aware of the variety of job opportunities on the Warm Springs Reservation and the skills required to perform them. "There are a lot of things to do out there," said Weber, "most of which require education."

Incentives for the working students are an hourly stipend of \$2.90 and the opportunity to earn one and a half credits — half of what they would receive if they attended their afternoon classes. The students are assigned to work four hours a day and are not paid for missed time. Credit will be figured on the basis of attendance and performance.

Once a week students attend a "two-way communication seminar," according to co-administrator Danny Martinez of the CETA program. Tribal experts are called on to present such

topics as alcohol and drug abuse and the functions of the tribal court system to work study students.

To qualify for the program, a student need only be an Indian between the ages of 14 and 18 who is enrolled in school or pursuing a GED program. Although this year the program is focusing on the high risk students, there are several advanced students who have enough credits to graduate and are beginning to think seriously about life after high school.

Senior Ray Moody expects his work in the accounting department to help him decide what he wants for a career and whether college should be the next step. He chose not to work until he caught up with his credits last semester. "Now I can afford to go to work — but for freshmen and sophomores it's very important that they finish up their requirements," he noted wisely.

Students have been placed in a variety of Tribal and B.I.A. settings, from administrative offices to plant maintenance. They are assembling electronic components, caring for children, typing and filing, chopping wood for senior citizens, and landscaping. Not yet underway is a forestry training component to be offered by the Bureau.

Assignments are made in consultation with the students, and transfers are possible if placements don't work out. "Employers" and "applicants" are encouraged to role play job interviews to expose the students to the realities of job seeking.

Departments participate voluntarily and for the most part welcome the extra help, finding the added supervision to be no problem. High school community liaison Anna Hurtado, who picks up time sheets and checks on students, has found supervisors to be a bit unsure of their training responsibilities to the students. Weber is working on some guidelines to help them understand and carry out the program's objectives.

While the supervisors are pleased with the attitudes and performance of their students, the common complaint has been that their attendance is irregular. Students are disappearing somewhere between the shuttle bus, which drops most of them at Macy's store everyday at 1:00, and their work sites. Parents have complained that their kids are often unaccounted for and community members see students wandering about with pop and popcorn in hand at odd hours in the afternoon. Weber admits that the bus driver did not get specific instructions for drop-offs and the job sites have not been monitored closely enough.

Students have reacted variously to their work experiences. Some are thrilled to be away from school but one girl assigned to the grade school counseling office could not tolerate the youngsters and asked to go back to her own school full time. Some are clearly bored but others feel they've found a possible career. Still others have no particular lesson to learn from their work — one boy admitted he just wanted to earn money for the rodeo season.

The work study program has tackled a critical problem at the schools and made it visible to the community. As the fine points are being worked out, those in charge hope that at least a few students rediscover the value of their education.

Steelhead Tagged For Spring Release

by Donna Behrend

With their hands in 45 degree water, ten Warm Springs women recently finished clipping and tagging 145,000 steelhead yearlings that will soon be planted in the Warm Springs River. They tagged an average of 30,000 fish per day at the Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery. The common complaint among the women about the job was the temperature of the water.

The tagging process helps fisheries departments determine the fish's life history, the right month and size to release for best return rate, whether vaccination against disease helps fish, hatchery origin, date of release and fish size at release time. When a fish is caught, the snouts are cut off so that the tags can be extracted.

The mobile tagging trailer, operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fisheries Assistance Office in Olympia, was brought to the hatchery during the first week of March for the counting and tagging of three-inch steelhead. These steelhead are the first to be spawned and tagged at the hatchery and it is estimated that they will be turned into the river later this spring when they are ready to migrate downstream.

For tagging, fish were brought into the trailer by the netful and dumped into sinks. There, five clipping and tagging stations each manned by two

women, awaited the tiny steelhead. The fish were then transferred into small sinks of anesthetic to temporarily relax them for clipping. Clipping of the adipose fin is only for identification purposes and shows only that the fish are tagged. Then, after clipping, the tiny coded tags were inserted painlessly into the fish's snout. The quarter-inch long tags are marked with information that will be read under a microscope when the fish are caught. As each fish was tagged, it was dropped into a sink-like device which returned them to the exterior holding tanks.

Later this spring, the fish will be turned into the river to travel to the ocean — which could take from three weeks to over two months. It is expected that about three per cent of the fish will return to the Warm Springs River in about three years.

Everett Shue, who is a part-time employee of the Olympia office, was proud of the work done and said the death rate of the fish after tagging was low. "One day, I found six dead fish out of 30,000. That's pretty good." Shue expects that the tagging process will be done twice a year from now on.

So, all of you fishermen be patient, for in a few years you may be able to hook a "local" fish.



CUT THAT FIN - Ada Sooksoit, who was recently employed as a fish tagger at the Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery, use special scissors to clip the adipose fins of yearling steelhead. The steelhead were spawned and hatched at the hatchery and will be released later this spring. Spillyay Tymoo photo by DB