

The Wilderness Program was set up to help kids who don't feel good about themselves. Steve Bekofsky told the nearly 200 people gathered at the open house October 12. "This is an place where they can start to heal themselves and learn some basic skills while living close to Mother Earth." Bekofsky is director of the alcohol and drug program.

Assembled outside the old Schoolie Ranger Station where the camp is located, the guests listened as Bekofsky and Health Branch Manager Bob Jackson spoke of the need for such a program and its intent. Jackson noted that being isolated from peer pressures should be a help to the kids but that they will need support when they go back into the community.

Tribal elders, seated on a row of benches, were the guests of honor at the open house. Following traditional prayers led by Matilda Mitchell of Simnasho, elders Felix Wallulatum and Herb Stwyer spoke of work, difficulties, survival, and the history of that area along the Warm Springs River.



An Open House — Wilderness Style



Throughout the talks, Prunie Williams and Felix Wallulatum continued fixing salmon which was cooked on spits over an open fire pit. The tasty fish was donated by the Confederated Tribes.

The call to dinner came after Stwyer and Williams cut the ribbon on the gift triangle which dangles from the porch roof. With four clangs, a huge line worked its way to the feast.

Photos by Sandy Rangila