

Boots, Barbed Wire and a Brighter Future

■ Tribal youth Torrey Wakeland changed his life for the better by following his father's advice and joining the Oregon National Guard's challenge program.

By Peta Tinda

Tribal member Torrey Wakeland is in the army now.

Well, the Oregon National Guard Youth Challenge Program, to be exact, but it would be hard to spot the difference. The cadets snap to attention, march with practiced precision and keep their boots polished to a high gloss.

The program is for "at risk" teenagers ages 16 to 18 that are drug free, unemployed or underemployed. The Challenge is designed to be an intervention program rather than a punitive measure. The goal is to provide work skills and learning opportunities, all in a military-like setting, nestled in the hills outside of Bend in Central Oregon.

"I really like it here," said Wakeland. "And the food is pretty good, too."

Cadet Wakeland plans on joining the Air Force after he finishes the program.

"Then a S.W.A.T. team after that. I also want to get a degree in criminal justice, that's my main goal," he said.

Before Wakeland went to the program, he was a sophomore at Sprague High School in Salem, and by his own account, wasn't doing very well.

"My grades started to slip, I was skipping classes and mostly just hanging out," said Wakeland.

Then his father, Pete Wakeland, Natural Resources Manager for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, found out about the program and suggested it to his son, who liked the idea from the start.

"It seemed awesome," said Wakeland.

Now that he's in the program, Torrey's classroom performance has improved greatly.

"I'm doing much better. The difference between here and regular school is that you learn at your own pace here," said Wakeland. "As far as what we're taught, it's just like regular school - science, literature, history. And they really want you to succeed. I feel a lot better about my educational future."

Wakeland has adapted well to his new militarized life.



"We sleep in barracks, like the movies. Every morning we get up at 6 a.m., when an instructor wakes us. We all line up, then get dressed. After that we raise the flag and then its time for breakfast," said Wakeland.

"We go to class most of the day, except when we have P.T. (physical training) or when we run the obstacle course. That's my favorite, the obstacle course. It's one and a half miles long and you jog through it. There is ladders, obstacles to crawl over, a pit with a rope swing and the long, low crawl. That's the hardest - the long, low crawl. You have to crawl on your belly in a shallow pit that's covered with barbed wire. You have to stay close to the ground and crawl 50 or 75 yards. You get tired really quick," said Wakeland. "The best obstacle is the high wire obstacle. There is two wires strung between two trees. They are about four feet apart and you have to shimmy 20 yards between the two trees. It's so fun. I love running obstacles," said Wakeland. "And it builds self confidence."

When the cadets aren't in class or doing P.T., they can often be found working in the community.

"We go into the community and help people out. We help out at the humane society, or the thrift store. The base has miles and miles of trails, so sometimes we maintain the trails, clean out the rocks and make it look nice. The work crews are pretty relaxed and it feels good to help out," said Wakeland.

Despite the marching, saluting and uniforms

of the program, the cadets never handle weapons or firearms.

"There is no weapons," said Wakeland. "Except the drill team and all they learn is how to spin their rifles around. Instead of fighting, it's more like school."

Wakeland says he feels good about his future since he joined the program.

"I feel better about myself nowadays. I went home for spring break and it's nice when people say that they see a big improvement in me. People have said I'm more disciplined and that's how I feel. I used to procrastinate, but now I get done what needs to be done."

The worst part, Wakeland says, is being away from family and friends.

"The first week I was pretty home sick. You can't help it. We're always in contact, but not being able to see your family is the worst. So you get to know the people in your squad really well. I've made some really great friends since I've been here. It's pretty close-knit."

Like any cadet stationed away from his family, Wakeland is kept afloat with support from home.

"My dad is very proud of me, I always get letters from him about how proud of me he is. It's good to hear him say that," said Wakeland.

That pride is evident when talking to Torrey's Father, Peter.

"I'm very proud of him," explained Dad. "Things are going great, he's got all the credits he can have and he's making his mind up. I think it took a really drastic environment change for him to realize he was on the wrong track, but he's responded well. It's been really tough on Bonnie (Torrey's mom and Pete's wife) and myself to have him gone, but it's been the best for him and we feel good about that."

Cadet Wakeland seems to feel pretty good about it too.

"I feel better suited to handle challenges now. Before, I was just hanging out," he said.

"This has been a life changing experience. I have more confidence; more skills and I feel more self-assured. I feel like I'm just getting my life started, and this is going to help me a lot."

New Natural Resources Manager Sees A Balance Between Timber Harvesting and Forest Protection On The Grand Ronde Reservation

■ Tribal member Pete Wakeland will succeed Cliff Adams.

By Peta Tinda

Tribal member Peter Wakeland enjoys the challenges of his new job as Tribal Natural Resources Manager.

"It presents a professional challenge and opportunity that I have'nt had yet," said Wakeland.

Wakeland has worked for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in Natural Resources in different capacities since June of 1995. He has also worked in the office of Oregon's senior Senator Ron Wyden and with the Legislative Affairs office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Washington, D.C.

He also serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors for Spirit Mountain Development Corporation (SMDC).

"I very much enjoyed the fact that the work we were doing was the planning phase for our corporation, nailing down our policy and procedures," said Wakeland of his time at SMDC. "It was challenging to be part of the development stage of our investment strategy."

Wakeland likes the idea of working close to his Tribe and community.

"I think it's unique to come work for the Tribe. This really means something because it's happening right here at home," said Wakeland.

As Natural Resources Manager, Wakeland will

work with all of the Natural Resources departments.

Wakeland believes he can attain a balance between the Tribe's timber interests and its environmental concerns.

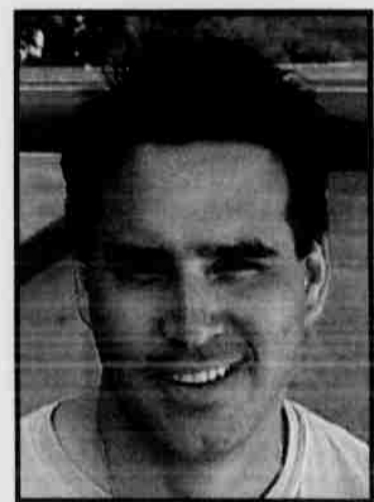
"I'm a believer that we can make it work up there for everybody. We're able to protect our water resources, our riparian habitats, our fish and wildlife habitats, and still harvest timber. I also think we can provide recreation opportunities for Tribal members," said Wakeland.

Wakeland said he looks forward to meeting the challenges of his new position and maintaining the high standards of his predecessor, Cliff Adams, who held the position for 14 years.

"I certainly appreciate all the support I've received over the years and the opportunity to learn from Cliff. I've a lot of respect for him. I look forward to towing the line and meeting that mark he set," said Wakeland.

Wakeland also said that he wants all Tribal members to know that his door is open and they should feel free to stop by talk about any concerns or questions they might have.

When asked what he thought the most important aspect of his new job is, Wakeland said — "It's twofold. First, we need to produce revenue



Pete Wakeland,
Natural Resources Manager

by cutting timber. In my estimation, because you harvest timber, you must protect the resource. My most important job is providing revenue and protecting the environment.

"As a manager, I want people to feel that they're doing meaningful work," said Wakeland. "That's very important." ■