

Tribal member Tyanna Smith gives back

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

"My whole life," says 20-year-old Tribal member Tyanna Smith, "I've always been an outdoor person. Even when I was little, I always said, 'I'll never work behind a desk.'"

Her father, Robert Smith (Yakama), used to take the family—including her mother, Marcia Gustafson, Smith and her three sisters; all the siblings are Tribal members—camping and hiking. And he was a hunter on his own time.

So, Smith's volunteer job at the Natural Resources Department is a perfect fit. Fulfilling a requirement for a biology class, she has been driving out to the Tribe since March for an afternoon every other week.

Tribal Biologist Rebecca McCoun, her supervisor, notes that she works with "a positive attitude in a wide range of weather conditions."

Smith assisted with surveying the rotary screw smolt trap on Agency Creek in Grand Ronde, assisted with radio tracking collared Columbian black-tailed deer on the Grand Ronde Reservation and helped plant native plants on the Tribe's Tyee Nature Reserve.

She also works with plants, day to day, back in Portland.

Smith said she has "a really small lawn" at her place in Portland, but "it's crowded with ferns, bleeding hearts (that are native to the Northwest) and tulips."

Living in Portland, she says, is terrific, but, "It's nice to get away from the city every once in awhile."

Smith is finishing her last year at Portland Community College's Rock Creek campus. Next year, she transfers as an environmental science major/botany minor to Portland State University.

The volunteer work in Grand Ronde gives her valuable experience in addition to country air.

"It's an opportunity to get some

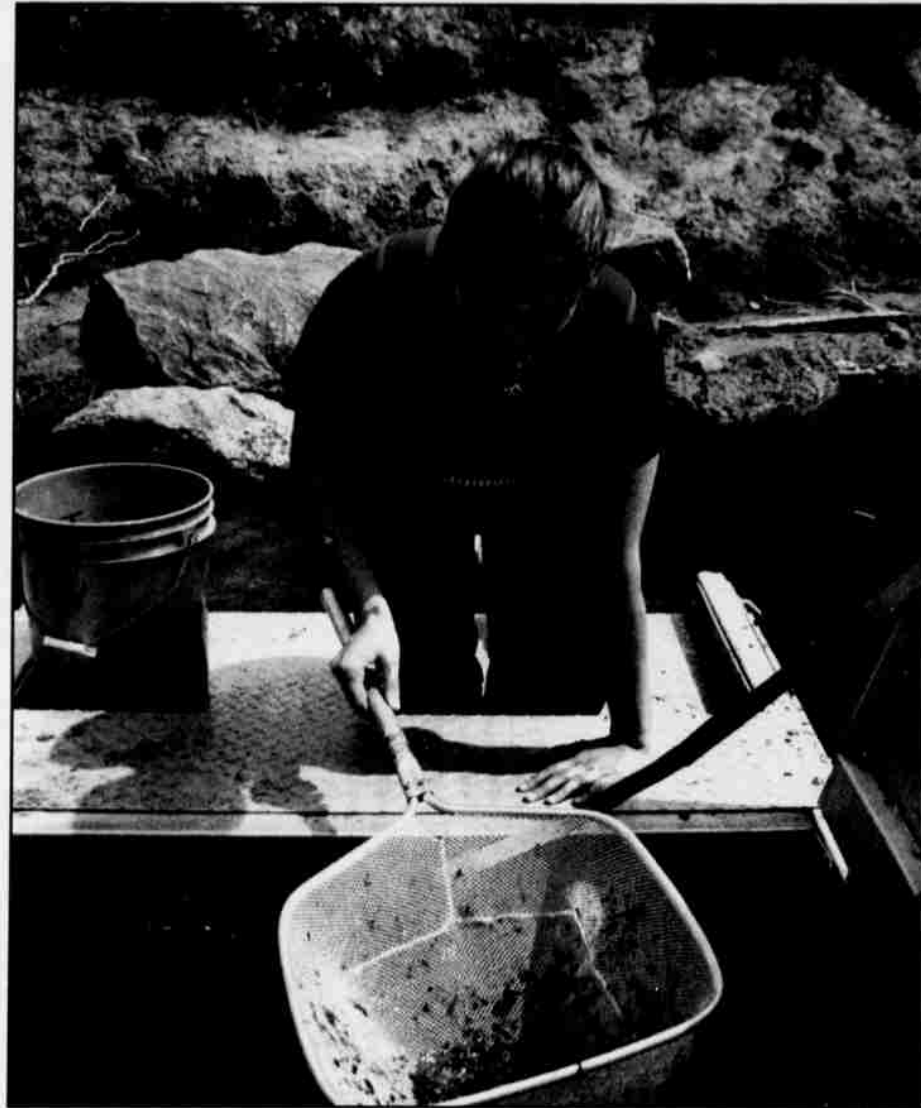


Photo courtesy of Rebecca McCoun

Tribal member Tyanna Smith assists with surveying the rotary screw smolt trap on Agency Creek in Grand Ronde. Smith has driven out to Grand Ronde from Portland this spring to volunteer with the Tribal Natural Resources Department and also complement her major in college, environmental science and botany.

experience that had to do with my major," she said.

Also, "It was Grand Ronde, my Tribe, so I wanted to work for them."

The Tribe has funded her education, including tuition and living expenses, and Smith has taken these gifts very seriously.

In addition to her success with

school and volunteer work, earlier this year Smith was awarded a research internship at Portland State for this summer and she was recently approved for the Environmental Protection Agency's Greater Research Opportunities Undergraduate Student Fellowship, an Environmental Protection Agency-paid internship for summer

2012. EPA is also partly funding tuition expenses for her junior and senior years.

"I love school," she says, "especially now that I'm getting into upper level biology, chemistry and environmental science classes. The subjects are interesting and challenging, and I need to be challenged or I'll get bored. These classes make me work hard."

Of an Environmental Science class, she recalls the challenges of writing a report on a field study: analyzing all the data, finding legitimate references and "just writing the report," she said. "I liked it, though. It's kind of amazing because it's tedious and you're constantly searching for something, but I felt good when I completed it. Now I have something for my portfolio."

Smith also is a dedicated biker. "All the time, all over the city," though school, she adds, "pretty much consumes my life."

Her sisters are Jennifer Smith, who is studying English at Oregon State University; Kayla Smith, who wants to study biology after studying at the Oregon Coast Culinary Institute; and Amanda Smith, who just graduated from high school.

The girls trace their Tribal heritage through their great-grandfather on their father's side, former Tribal Elder Leonard Vivette.

"I have his old Chemawa jacket," said Tyanna. "I wear it all the time. I love it."

"Tyanna drove down an hour and a half from Portland to Grand Ronde volunteering a total of 20.25 hours of her time from March 10 to May 13," said McCoun. "With gas prices so high, I was very impressed with her willingness to come so far to volunteer. Tyanna is very driven and I am very excited for her future."

Both have hopes that part of that future includes Smith volunteering again in six months for the fall Coho run. ■

MOVIE NIGHT

Youth Prevention and Community Awareness

Friday, June 17

Bar-B-Q dinner

Hamburgers
Hot Dogs
Chips
Potato salad
Water and
Juices
Snacks too!

4 door prizes
too! Our last
months winners
were;

Ray Duran,
Mae Townsend,
Helen McDaniel,
Kayla Young,
Nakoa Mercier,
Michael Rogers

Gnomeo & Juliet

Thank you for respecting Grand Ronde's Tribal community and our culture by not displaying gang affiliation or by bringing drugs, alcohol or weapons to this event.

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The Grand Ronde Avenue of Flags is an opportunity to honor the Tribal veterans in your family.

A donation of \$100 will go toward the purchase of an American flag. A rawhide feather, with the name of your veteran, will be attached to the flag.

The flags will be proudly displayed on Veterans Day and Memorial Day and at the Marcellus "Marcoe" Norwest Veterans Memorial Powwow each year. It is an opportunity to honor your family veteran.

To purchase a flag and feather please complete the application form and submit it, with your check, to the CTGR Public Affairs Dept. Please make checks payable to CTGR Avenue of Flags Project.

Name of Tribal Veteran: _____

Branch of the Service and Date of Service _____

Your Name: _____

Your contact information: (For office use only)

Address _____

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A special tribute to our Tribal Veterans

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