

Native youth in resource management seminar



William Pilot of Galena receives an award from Ken Poynter, executive director of the Native American Fish & Wildlife Society.

Alaska Native students had a taste of careers in natural resources at a summer seminar offered by the Native American Fish & Wildlife Society.

Six students from Alaska attended this year's Environmental Awareness Summer Youth Practicum from July 24 - August 3. They were Benny Semaken, Galena; William Pilot, Galena; Tasha Hotch, Haines; Mary Kalen, Anchorage; Cana Welm, Kotzebue; and Amanda Bouffieux, Kotzebue.

Sessions were taught by Native American professionals on a wide variety of natural resource topics. The presentations included: tribal wildlife management, fisheries management, tribal bison herds, careers, water quality, and resource management. Traditional story telling and coping methods were included in the students ten day agenda. The students also spent time with tribal elders when they visited different reservations.

The students competed in an essay contest about their experiences at the practicum. This year's winner was Amanda Bouffieux,

an Inupiaq Eskimo from Kotzebue. Her prize was a print by Dyanne Strongbow, a Native American Artist, entitled 'Five Walk With Her.'

In her essay, Amanda said, "Natural resources have always been a part of our ways of life. From the beginning of time until now. People who lived in traditional times didn't have a store to go to, or synthetic material, all they had was what grew or lived around them. So they used what they had, and didn't waste much. Natural resources are a very important part of our culture and we have to keep them a part of the culture to survive." Amanda said the practicum helped her to choose a career in natural resources, because she wants her people to "enjoy our beautiful land, and help make it better for future generations."

The 32 students who participated in the practicum visited the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Indian Reservations, among other places.

While in Ignacio, the students helped with the installation of a

wildlife guzzler, a water catchment system to collect water from rain and spring run-off for wildlife to drink. It allows wildlife to have access to water where there are no rivers or streams. Wildlife biologists with the Southern Ute Wildlife Conservation Department directed the installation of the wildlife guzzler.

It was the observation and hands-on learning that the students enjoyed the most. The students acted out situations that a conser-

vation law enforcement officer may encounter. They participated in demonstrations on how to handle different situations, i.e., field tactics, interview techniques, officer safety, take down techniques, and vehicle stops.

Terry Roy, Chief Enforcement Ranger for the Oglala Sioux Parks and Recreation Dept. said, "For the presentation, we tried to have the students experience all aspects of law enforcement." This in-

volved a lecture, a role playing scenario, then the students evaluated each other's actions.

Benny Semaken, an Athabascan from Galena, is interested in a career in law enforcement. He said, "Galena has only one state trooper." Cana Welm, an Inupiaq Eskimo from Kotzebue, said the session on law enforcement was "great fun," and described the police chase scenario as "particularly fun."