

Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

Willapa Valley Senior Receives Scholarship from Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

Menlo, WA - Monday June 6th - Rodney Spoor, a senior at Willapa Valley High School, was awarded a \$250 scholarship from the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge during graduation commencements on Saturday evening, June 5th.

Rodney's academic record, work history, sports participation, and community involvement are very impressive and set a wonderful example for all of us, commented Bev Arnoldy, President of the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge. "The Friends group was thoroughly delighted with Rodney's submission and we are honored to have him as a recipient of our scholarship program," she went on say.

Accolades from Rodney's principal, Bob Friese, and teacher Jay Pearson included words liked "excellent investment," "truly an all-around student," and "good sense of humor." These positive traits were touted throughout all his references. Rodney has compiled an impressive list of awards and achievements, including Honor Roll and National Honor Society, which will serve him well next year at Grays Harbor Community College.

Rodney plans to pursue a career in forestry industry and fisheries, which is in line with the Friends of Willapa NWR mission to enhance awareness and appreciation of the Willapa NWR. These educational programs are a large part of the Friends efforts in accomplishing that, commented Arnoldy. "We want to further encourage students to enter these fields of study through this scholarship program." Rodney is one of the first recipients of the newly created Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Scholarship Program.

Bev Arnoldy remarked that "we are very fortunate with the caliber of volunteers the Friends group has as a resource. These volunteers have developed very large and successful scholarship programs elsewhere; it's great to have volunteers who can develop a solid program that can be sustained for many years."

For more information about the program, please write to: Scholarship Committee, Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge P. O. Box 1130, Ocean Park, WA 98640. Each year, students of Pacific County are able to apply for this grant to support their continued education in environmental sciences.

The Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge presently sponsor a successful elementary education program for 4th graders throughout Pacific County. Four

in-class sessions and a field trip to the Refuge are recognized by educators as effective in increasing student awareness about conservation and ecology. Additionally, an expanded curriculum for middle-school science programs is under development by Friends volunteers wherein the Refuge will be used as a laboratory for the study of mudflats ecosystem. "Developing appreciation for environmental stewardship both locally and globally is an important mission of the Friends," noted Shawn Stern, Friends' director and science educator in the Ocean Beach school district. For more information visit <http://www.willapabay.org/~fwnwr>.



Rodney Spoor and Bev Arnoldy, president of Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge.

About Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

Willapa Bay is the largest estuary in the northwest United States region outside Puget Sound, covering approximately 88,000 acres at high tide with over 100 miles of shoreline. The Bay is the defining geography for the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, which comprises nearly 14,000 acres of upland forest, tidelands, beach dunes, freshwater marshes, diked grasslands, and other wetland habitat.

Aquatic habitats and grasslands on the Refuge support migratory populations of literally hundreds of bird species such as black brant, trumpeter swans, Canada geese, scaup, canvasback, bufflehead, scoters, and American wigeon. The

Refuge also hosts some of the largest concentrations of shorebirds on the Pacific Coast and provides habitat for the threatened western snowy plover and a threatened seabird, the marbled murrelet. Black bear, black-tailed deer, Roosevelt elk, bats, bobcats, and grouse can be found in the forests and upland habitats. The cool, wet climate of Willapa Bay makes the area a "hotspot" of amphibian and fish diversity, where Refuge habitats support over half of the 24 native amphibians that occur in the state and provide spawning grounds for chinook, coho, and chum salmon, steelhead, and cutthroat trout.

Willapa is one of over 500 national wildlife refuges in the United States operated by the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife. The National Wildlife Refuge System is the only national network of public lands in the world set aside specifically for the conservation of fish, wildlife and plants. Encompassing 93 million acres, the Refuge System boasts more units than the National Forest System and more acres than the National Park System. The Refuge system celebrates 100 years of conservation success in 2003, its Centennial Year.

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