



Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

Two Ilwaco High School Seniors Receive Scholarships from Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge

Ilwaco, WA, June 9, 2005 -- Tom Browning and Jason Wirkkala, both seniors at Ilwaco High School, were each awarded a \$500 college scholarship from the Friends of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge during Senior Awards Night.

"Tom and Jason's academic record, work history 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 their submissions and we are honored to have them as recipients of our scholarship program."

Tom Browning worked on the YCC crew at WNWR headquarters last summer, enjoyed outside activities in Boy Scouts, volunteered at Sea Resources, hopes to have a career in either forestry or fisheries, believes that "monitoring of the environment" is important for the future. Kristine Massin, Outdoor Recreation Planner, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, shared that Tom is "a hard, dedicated worker," "got along well with ...crew, staff, and volunteers." He will be entering Clatsop Community College this fall to major in Natural Resources.

Jason Wirkkala: worked with U.S. Fish & Wildlife for his senior project, enjoys the natural environment around his home in Chinook, became a team leader and teacher's assistant in the Natural Resources course, volunteered 90 hours of Community Service at Sea Resources, would like to "find better ways to protect wildlife and its habitat." Carolyn Kayate, Ilwaco High School Counselor, commented that Jason is an "energetic, enthusiastic and dedicated young man". He will be entering Clatsop Community College this fall to major in Forestry.

Scholarship recipients plan to pursue careers in forestry and natural history, which is in line with the Friends of Willapa NWR mission to enhance awareness and appreciation of the Willapa NWR. These educational programs continue to be a large part of the Friends' efforts in accomplishing that. Bev Arnoldy continued to state "we are very fortunate to have Friends volunteers who have developed a solid scholarship 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. In its initial year is an expanded curriculum for middle-school science programs wherein the Refuge will be used as a laboratory for the study of mudflats ecosystems. Both programs are recognized by educators as effective in increasing student awareness about conservation and ecology. Additionally, "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> and <http://willapa.fws.gov/>.

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