

RESOURCE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS (RAPS)

History:

The Resource Apprenticeship Program for Students (RAPS) was initiated by the Bureau of Land Management in 1987 as a cooperative education program designed to expose Alaska Native high school students to professional job opportunities in natural resource disciplines. RAPS was initiated in Wyoming in 1992, and has employed as many as 35 students with five Federal agencies in 16 different Wyoming communities. In 1999 there were 16 students who participated in RAPS throughout Wyoming.

Primary Goals:

- * To provide a hands-on-work experience in a natural resource management agency.
- * To provide an awareness of the resource management career opportunities.

Program Objectives:

- * To increase basic work skills .
 - * To encourage completion/continuation of a formal education program.
- * To promote RAPS as the "stepping stone" to other Federal student employment programs.

Program Benefits To Host Agency:

- * Little cost to the host agency.; student wages, equipment, clothing, etc. paid with State funds.
- * Creates a stimulating and caring work environment.
- * Develops and strengthens partnerships between Federal, State, and local agencies and the communities.
- * Creates a link between school and the work experience.
- * Adapts to one person or crew size projects.
- * Creates applicants for other Federal Student Employment Programs (i.e. STEP and SCEP).

Program Benefits To Participating Students:

- * Only the best applicants are selected.
- * Produces positive and practical work experiences to youth.
- * Opportunities for other Federal employment programs.
- * Offers a "hands on" work experience.
- * Work with natural resource professionals in their area of interest.
- * Paid above the minimum wage (GS-1 Step 1).

Student Eligibility Requirements:

- * Must be 16 to 21
- * Must be willing to work 8 to 10 weeks during the summer. In 1999 some students were able to work throughout the school year.
- * Must have an interest in natural resources or related field.
- * Must be willing to work with other people.

How RAPS Works:

- * Fosters a greater understanding of natural resource management and career opportunities in resource management.
- * Builds an appreciation of differing cultural perspectives in the use and management of Wyoming's natural resources.

Attachment 1 (3 pp)

- * Provides disadvantaged youth with a paid work experience and the opportunity to learn the basic skills and behaviors which will help them transition from school to the work place.
- * Relies on a willing work-site supervisor or mentor who trains the apprentice in job related specific skills, and relates those skills to academic and other 'real world' applications.
- * Strengthens self-esteem and self-confidence of student participants through accomplishments.
- * Creates an understanding for completing an education beyond the high school level.
- * Develops leadership qualities, a spirit of teamwork, and a healthy self-discipline.

Agreements and Partnerships:

Wyoming RAPS relies mostly on funding from Federal partnerships (in-kind services, equipment, etc.), and State funds [Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Title IIB block grants]. Grant requests have been submitted to private and corporate foundations with no success. In 1998 RAPS was directly affected when the Wyoming Department of Employment restricted the use of JTPA Title IIB funds to students who were at or below the Junior level in high school. However, the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 will be fully implemented in 2000 and will combine all programs funded under the JTPA. Employment periods vary between summer only to year-long under the Workforce Investment Act. Employment of participants in RAPS has been established through agreements between BLM, other Federal agencies, Wyoming Department of Employment, and non-Federal entities, and non-profit organizations. BLM has contracted with non-profit organizations and business entities to serve as the employers of RAPS participants and provide payroll administration for RAPS throughout the State. The host agencies provide the work site, mentor/supervisor, required paperwork and evaluations.

Program Requirements:

Participants Must Complete:

1. Eight to ten week (minimum) of work experience (with successful performance evaluation).
2. Complete RAPS Student Educational Handbook or Life Skills Training.
3. Complete remediation skills if required.

Participants May Receive:

1. Certificate of Successful Completion.
2. Credit hours from school.
3. Recognition awards.
4. Consideration for other Federal Student Employment Programs.

Program Accomplishments: (1996 - 1998)

Program Results	<u>1996</u> Accomplishment <u>s</u>	<u>1997</u> Accomplishment <u>s</u>	<u>1998</u> Accomplishment <u>s</u>	<u>1999</u> Accomplishment <u>s</u>
Number of Students	16	26	17	16
Positive Termination (Tot. Eval. 28/40 points)	94% (15)	81% (21)	88% (15)	94% (15)
Work Maturity (Achieved work skills)	81% (13)	81% (21)	82% (14)	94% (15)
Return to School	81% (13)	96% (25)	100% (17)	88% (14)
Basic Skills Improved	60% (3 of 5)	57% (4 of 7)	88% (15)	94% (15)
Student Handbooks Completed	56% (9)	73% (19)	88% (15)	88% (14) All units except 2 repts.
Natural Resource Career Interest	50% (8)	43% (11)	59% (10)	63% (10)