

ABOUT WPHPA AND THE EXPANDING ENVIRONMENTS SUMMER JOB PROGRAM FOR KIDS

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Introduction to the Western Plains Historic Preservation Association (WPHPA)

WPHPA traces its beginnings to 1980 when an 1860's cemetery was accidentally unearthed during a land-leveling project near Lingle, WY. The site contained numerous human burials and thousands of artifacts. After learning that no state or federal agencies or funds were available to help, a group of interested local residents organized to document and recover the site. After an additional find was discovered nearby, the group decided to incorporate as a chapter of the Wyoming Archeological Society in an effort to explore and preserve the history and pre-history of the Goshen and Platte County area. The region has significant fossils, including a large mammoth site, and has a record of human habitation from 11,000 years before the known historical era. It also has a rich recent history given its location on the Oregon Trail, with forts, trading posts and stagecoach routes close by. As the group grew and expanded its activities, it formally incorporated as an independent 501(c)(3) organization in 1990 as the Western Plains Historic Preservation Association.

WPHPA's mission is **to discover, preserve and memorialize the history and prehistory of Goshen County and Platte County, Wyoming and their surrounding areas.** Our goals include increasing interest and knowledge in archeology as well as expanding the self-esteem, knowledge and employability of our area's youth. We are able to fulfill this goal through the operation of the WPHPA Western History Center, the Expanding Environments (EE) program and associated activities. WPHPA carries out a wide range of historic preservation and education activities, including:

- Maintenance of a museum and interpretive center (the Western History Center) in Lingle, Wyoming. The Center displays hundreds of artifacts found in the nearby area, in addition to housing a town meeting room, classroom and laboratory.
- Stabilization and salvage excavation of historic and prehistoric sites in imminent danger due to natural erosion or land development.
- Curation and analysis of artifacts from numerous sites.
- Maintenance of a repository for artifacts, documents and other data.

- Advising local agencies, boards and businesses on the status of cultural resources in the area and about cultural resource laws.
- An ongoing oral history program.
- Education – Members present numerous programs to schools and interested groups, conduct tours at various sites, and hold a field school each summer.
- Operation of the Expanding Environments youth program.

Relationship to other Agencies

WPHPA has developed strong collaborations with other organizations. We work closely with school systems throughout eastern Wyoming, parole offices, and social service agencies for referrals to our program. We've also developed good relationships with agencies who also work to expand scientific knowledge to young people. Each summer our youth spend the night in the Denver Museum of Natural History, and receive personal training by Dr. Steve Holen or Dr. Donald Brandburg. Dr. George Frison with the University of Wyoming comes to talk with our participants about the use of Early Man Weapons and Tools. A member of a Nobel Prize winning team, Dr. Richard Blake helps teach our children about Astronomy and Astrophysics. A cadre of eminent volunteers from various Universities assist us in conducting our annual summer program (a full list of lecturers is included under the specific activities section of this proposal).

Governance, Workers and Volunteers

WPHPA has a Board of eight Directors, no full-time paid staff, approximately 22 part-time paid staff (including participants in the Expanding Environments Program) and 65 volunteers.

WPHPA is a bona fide 501(C)3 nonprofit organization in good standing. WPHPA is in sound financial condition and has not faltered for the past 26 years.

FUNDS NEEDED TO MAINTAIN THE EXPANDING ENVIRONMENTS YOUTH PROGRAM

Situation. The Board of Directors started Expanding Environments (EE) in 1990 as a way to address two pressing local needs: the lack of meaningful employment for young people in the

region, particularly for those from low-income families, and the abundant number of historic preservation projects in need of skilled labor to advance the work of exploring, recording and preserving their finds.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national unemployment rate for teenagers aged 16-19 is 15.5 %, compared to an overall unemployment rate of 5.9% (November 2003). Oftentimes, jobs that teenagers are able to procure don't provide practical or technical training that prepare them for future employment. They frequently are not challenged by their work and the work experience does not increase their confidence in their skills and abilities.

In addition to high unemployment and underemployment, there are many pressures, demands and temptations on today's youth. The process involved in developing one's core values and personal goals can be complicated by the threat of violence, the availability of drugs and alcohol, and an overburdened school system as well as through the passivity of television watching, video game playing and Internet surfing. Decisions and values that guide a young person's life are best developed through the intelligence that active, direct experience brings. The transition from childhood to responsible adulthood is a time when young people need strong support to manage this transition successfully and to develop their capacities for developing their full potential.

Expanding Environments provides a place where young people can go beyond their preconceived ideas of their limitations. They develop excellent work habits, carry out meaningful and interesting work in historical preservation, and become prepared to further their educational interests and join the work force with a better idea of what they are capable of achieving. EE allows them to gain direct experience and learn new habits that provide them with the perspective and skills they need to create a fulfilling and positive life.

Each year EE serves between 14 – 25 youth between the ages of 14 - 19 in an intensive learning and jobs program. Participants are recruited and referred from area high schools and social service professionals. Most participants are classified as at-risk teenagers who come to the program from a low-income family, the court system, or are referred by mental health counselors.

Specific Activities . Youth involved in EE spend five days a week living in tipis at a privately owned ranch north of Fort Laramie, Wyoming. They are transported daily to a large archaeological dig site and work 40 hours/week (for \$5.50/hour) excavating, mapping and cataloging artifacts. On Friday afternoon the participants are returned to their homes and they report for work Monday morning. Each day is very structured and begins at 5:30 am with a one mile walk/run and breakfast preparations. The work day includes morning and afternoon time at the digging site, lunch and snack breaks, and an hour of mandatory reading. After some free time and dinner, participants spend one hour working on math and English lessons and participate in at least two on-site educational programs each week. Other evening activities include recreational activities and camp chores. Lights out and quiet time begins at 9:30 p.m.

EE follows this schedule for the first six weeks of the program. The remaining three weeks are spent largely at a Pueblo Indian site known as San Lazaro, located near Santa Fe, New Mexico. A similar daily routine is established at this site, with the exception that young people stay for the duration and do not go home on weekends.

Extensive additional learning activities include map reading, lectures given by eminent archaeological experts, tours of other interesting archaeological sites such as Mesa Verde, Colorado, and Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, CPR certification classes, basic life skills classes, swimming and rock climbing.

To give you detailed information on what is involved in the nine-week summer program, here is a list of activities from our 2005 course:

Activities from the 2005 Expanding Environments Youth Program

Job Training

Excavation of archaeological sites, curation of artifacts, taking field notes, drawing site maps and keeping a daily journal, camp and equipment maintenance, meal planning and food preparation. Emphasis on developing good work habits and ethics and understanding employer expectations.

Map Reading

Twelve hours of instruction is given covering types of maps, map symbols, map grids, compass designations, distances, location of points on maps, practical application of topographic maps. (12 hours is spent on this activities with a volunteer teacher)

First Aid/CPR

Each student trains and becomes CPR certified.

Lectures

(delivered in person to allow for discussion and questions)

Science

History and Prehistory of the Western High Plains

George Zeimens (formerly the state archeologist, program director of EE)

Experimental Archeology, the Use of Early Man Weapons and Tools

Dr. George C. Frison, University of Wyoming, member of the National Academy of Sciences

Current Research on Mammoths

Dr. Larry Agenbroad, University of Northern Arizona,

Importance of Education and Good Work Ethics to Current Research Projects at Princeton University

Dr. George McLendon, Chemistry Department Head, Princeton University

The Evolution of Mammals

Dr. Russell Graham, Denver Museum of Natural History

Current Research in Early Man Studies

Dr. Steve Holen, Denver Museum of Natural History

Geology of Rocks, Mineral and Meteorites

Dr. Donald Brandburg, Denver Museum of Natural History

Current Research in Astronomy and Astrophysics

Dr. Richard Blake, renowned Astrophysicist

Paleontology, Geology and Museum Displays

Dr. Alan Keimig, Denver Museum of Natural History

Pictographs and Petroglyphs of Wyoming, Native American Hide Tanning Techniques

Larry Adams, Cheyenne, WY

Identification of Plant Species and Their Significance to Studies of the Past
Wayne Tateman, University of WY Extension Service, Steve Brill, Goshen County Weed and Pest Control

Navigation by the Stars

Pete Gardner, former fighter pilot, USAF

Life Skills & Personal Growth

Banking, Checking Accounts, Saving Accounts, Credit Cards, Computation of Interest Rates

Earl Warren and Corie Martinez, Platte Valley National Bank, Torrington, WY

Stress Management

Kathy Vasko, RN, Torrington, WY

Kids and the Law, Purpose of Laws in Society, Importance of Honesty

Harley McKinney, Attorney at Law, Rock Springs, WY

Sites where participants excavate

Fort Bernard, Early Trading Post, Goshen County, Wyoming

Hageman Narrow, Stratified Early Man site, Goshen County, Wyoming

Meyers Ranch, stratified Late Archaic site, Goshen County, Wyoming

Jewett Mammoth Kill site, Platte County, Wyoming

San Lazaro Pueblo site, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Historic Fort John, Scottsbluff County, Nebraska

Participants tour the following sites and facilities

Hudson-Meng 9,000 year old bison kill, Nebraska

Hot Springs Mammoth site, South Dakota

Pecos Pueblo, New Mexico

Fort Union, New Mexico
Santa Fe Trail Weapons Museum, Glorieta, NM
World College, Las Vegas, NM
The Ludlow Massacre site, Trinidad, CO
Spanish Diggings Quarries, Platte County, WY
Hell Gap Site, Goshen County, WY
Other Feather Legs Early Western Historic Site, Niobrara County WY

Additional Activities

The Learning Unlimited Program, Remedial Studies in Math and English, 60 hours total instruction during the summer program
Reading - 30 hours total
Journaling - 30 hours total
Swimming
Morning runs
Rock Climbing

2006 – An abbreviated program was offered last year because the TANF funds that we were using were transferred to other counties for political reasons. We propose to offer the full schedule in 2007 with the assistance of the Daniels Fund and donations from private parties and foundations.

Goals, Objectives, and Measures of Success

WPHPA's goals for the 2007 Expanding Environments program are to:

- Provide meaningful jobs for and teach exemplary work habits to at least 15 Wyoming youth.
- Increase participants' interest and knowledge base in science, archeology, history and historic preservation.
- Enhance participants' self-esteem and expand their life potential, especially for those who are low-income and at-risk of negative behavior and consequences in school and other societal institutions such as the welfare or prison systems.
- Increase participant's abilities in reading, math and English skills.

Short term objectives include:

- Over 85% of initial participants will complete the program, which allows them a job reference in the future, among numerous intangible benefits.
- Participants will earn wages above the Wyoming minimum wage, allowing them to contribute to their own and their families' economic well-being.
- Participants will increase their math skills an average of one grade level or more.
- Participants will increase their English and reading comprehension an average of one grade level or more.
- Participants will receive training in and carry out scientific activities including the ability to map, excavate, preserve, and record their progress in archeological sites in WY and NM, contributing to the current knowledge of the history, pre-history, and fossil record of those areas.

Timeframe

All activities will take place during the summer of 2007.

Impact of Activities This program has had dramatic effects on the lives of its participants. Young people who had no interest in attending college have graduated with Bachelor of Science Degrees. A couple of our participants are currently in medical school. From past experience we know that the self-esteem of participants will rise, and the youth will positively affect their family and communities to which they return. Two of our participants went from being classified as special education students to honor students after they attended our summer EE program. Although math, reading and English skills play a role in the summer, it is not the major focus. And yet, the *average* increase in math and English skills is remarkable. Participants raise their math scores by 1.3 grade levels and English skills by 1.8 grade levels!

Expanding Environments has received funds from the state of Wyoming for several years to conduct this program. In 2004 these funds were redirected to other communities in Wyoming. The Board and the Director of the WHPHA are working to build a strong base of support through personal donations, corporate giving and foundation grants to stabilize the program into the future. The program has a dramatic effect on those who attend and consequently on the staff that participate in operating the annual summer program. Through the efforts of the director, the

Board of Directors, and the staff, WPHPA will develop the means necessary to maintain and operate this program.

EVALUATION

WPHPA employs systematic data collection and evaluation that assists us in measuring program success. Staff keeps notes on baseline behaviors, changes seen, and growth and trouble areas. Meetings between staff members determine how to best help participants get the most out of their experience. Standard evaluations include formative or ongoing evaluations by staff as the program operates and summative evaluations and review by staff at the conclusion of each course. Participants also evaluate their experience through a written evaluation, daily journaling, and pre-and post-program testing.

WPHPA's Expanding Environment program is a prevention-based, experiential program. Its effect continues far beyond the nine-week course, which makes it difficult to develop detailed quantitative evaluation measures which measure the success of the program several years after its completion. For example, participation in this program has turned many a young person's life around who has been at risk of becoming entangled in the prison system or in a cycle of welfare dependency. While we can't know for sure that EE was the main factor that helped these youth move from potential long-term involvement with these high-societal-cost institutions, we do have fourteen years of extensive anecdotal indicators of success. These indicators include long term positive relationships with the participants, letters and calls from parents and teachers relaying tales of success and great improvements, examples of students moving from special education or remedial situations to honor roll students after participating in the program, and participants choosing to attend college, with many selecting to continue their education in the sciences. John Hattie, a professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the chairman of the department of educational research methodology, performed an exhaustive evaluation of experiential based outdoor learning experiences and found that these types of programs have a major impact on the lives of participants, and that this impact is lasting for 92% of participants.

End of the year staff and student evaluations are reviewed by the Director and the Board of Directors, and discussions take place to insure new information and needed changes are incorporated into the next year's EE program.