

Pete

NATURAL HISTORY of WESTERN WASHINGTON

A Group Contract - Summer 1972

This program was developed as a group study for the summer period. Definite objectives and activities were set down (See Appendix I) and appended to the contract form the students signed. All interested students were shown the detailed contract and were not signed into the program until they were satisfied that this is what they wanted to do. Nine students entered the program. We could easily have handled 15, but the manner in which registration for the summer program was handled probably was a big factor in the small number of students we had. More than 15 would have been difficult to handle because of physical space limitations in the Geoduck House where we worked. Large groups are also more difficult to handle on field trips.

There were three main components to the program: familiarization with the shore invertebrates, birds and plants of the area, field trips in the Western Washington area, and field projects. The keeping of field and journal notes and reading related material were also important and required parts of the program.

The first two weeks were devoted to a study of marine shore invertebrates and birds under Pete's direction. He also introduced the students to field note taking. The following three weeks involved a detailed study of campus vegetation and learning how to identify plants. Then the sixth through eighth weeks were given over to field projects. These projects were fairly intensive studies of limited scope, making use of the knowledge gained in the program. There were six field trips, taking up a total of eleven days. By dates, these were:

- 21,22 June - Kitsap County Beaches
- 27-29 June - Lummi Aquaculture Project, San Juan Island, Friday Harbor Laboratories, Skagit Flats
- 12 July - Mt. Rainier
- 26-27 July - Willapa Bay, Leadbetter Point
- 2 August - Simpson Timber Company, Shelton
- 14-17 Aug - Olympic Peninsula: Hurricane Ridge, Hoh River, Quinault Tribal Reservation

Overall, student participation was quite satisfactory with the usual variation from very enthusiastic, active individuals to those who were somewhat inclined to do what was necessary, but little more. Interest in the field trips was high, and these were important and successful parts of the program. With the college picking up perhaps two-thirds of the cost of the transportation, the student got off with a relatively low \$20. in costs (each). However, more efficient field trip vehicles could reduce costs substantially. Carryalls or

vans would be more suitable, and for camping trips, these should be fitted with roof top carriers. We tried to keep driving time to a minimum, but available time frequently dictated lengthy drives. Frequent stops are necessary, but there should also be sufficient time allowed to thoroughly explore interesting places. The best field trips for programs of this nature are the result of many years experience in knowing where to go and how to interpret what is seen.

Most of the students came into the program with little or no background in biology, but with a strong interest in the natural world around them. They did very well in the laboratory and field work dealing with marine invertebrates, birds and plants; and for the most part came a long way in developing their ability to recognize and identify these various organisms. We did not sense, however, that the students did much in the way of field observation and study on their "own time", although we did indicate that we expected this.

Also we were somewhat disappointed in the general quality of most of the field notes and journals. The importance of taking adequate notes in the field did not seem to be acknowledged to any great extent. The journals tended, with a few exceptions, to be rather minimal and somewhat poorly organized. This aspect of any future program of this nature will require much more emphasis. Even more disappointing was the very small amount of reading that seemed to occur in the various books we provided. We saw very few notes on reading and hardly any indication that the books were being used. We felt this reading to be a very important part of the program, and we continually encouraged the students to read, but there was little apparent response.

Overall, we probably feel that the students skimmed a bit on time dedicated to the program. Being only nine weeks long, and requiring "full-time" involvement, we think we could have expected more. (However, it should be pointed out that at least two or three of the students did put in a lot of work.)

When it came to field projects, there was more a feeling of needing to get things done, and a lot more time was put into the work. Three weeks was just barely sufficient to carry out the work and more time would have been helpful. The projects were all practical in nature and provided information about the Evergreen campus that will be of future value. These projects were:

1. Marine algae of the Evergreen beach.
2. Vegetation study on an old field (across from Day Care Center).
3. Vegetation study of Experimental Structures Project area.
4. Study of edible plants.

In spite of our perhaps "traditional hang-ups" about the volume

of work expected, we did enjoy working in the program and with the students. We had no "goof-offs", but people who were interested, who asked questions, who cooperated and helped out, and who were nice to be with. We felt we skimed ourselves in time involvement. Al had contacts with 10 other students. Peter had other college responsibilities, but he was by no means on full time status with the college, so there were other things he wanted to do. Whether one has five or 15 students, the involvement requirement is going to be essentially the same; full-time. This poses no problem if little else is expected of one, but few of us have this luxury anymore.

Given the students lack of background, the experimental atmosphere of Evergreen's academic climate, and our own inability to get around the way we would have liked, we think the program went very well indeed. Everyone worked together and pretty much tried to attain the program objectives. What shortcomings there were could be attributable to many reasons, some resolvable, some perhaps not. We think the program represents another step in the evolution of the group contracted studies mode of instruction.

Al Wiedemann

Peter Taylor

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

SSN \_\_\_\_\_

These are the terms of the group contract, Natural History of Western Washington. All individuals in the group will be expected to work toward the listed objectives by participating in the activities specified.

I. Objectives

1. Know characteristic plants, animals, setting and physiography of representative western Washington terrestrial and marine habitats. Emphasis will be on macroscopic vegetation, marine invertebrates and birds.
2. Know basic concepts of descriptive ecology applied to terrestrial, shoreline and nearshore marine habitats.
3. Be able to use taxonomic keys and field guides for the identification of land plants, marine animals and birds. Know uses of microscopes for this purpose.
4. Know typical distribution patterns of plants and animals in selected habitats through the use of transect and quadrat survey methods and other field census techniques.
5. Know proper methods for collecting and preserving biological specimens. Be able to use a plant press, marine plankton net, marine bottom sampler, etc., for these purposes.

II. Activities

1. Lecture-discussions will be held on basic principles and techniques of field ecology and terrestrial and marine habitats of western Washington.
2. Participants will read literature pertinent to the natural history of western Washington and to general ecology.
3. Group sessions in the laboratory and the field will deal with the identification and taxonomy of representative plant and animal groups, and techniques of ecological analysis.
4. Group field excursions will be made to observe plants and animals in representative habitats. Local sites will include the TESC campus, the Nisqually Delta and other nearby sources. Longer trips will be made to the western Cascades, north to various locations in the Puget Sound basin, the Long Beach Peninsula, and around the Olympic Peninsula.
5. A journal of field and laboratory observations is expected of each participant. From these notes a list of species observed, where, in what habitat, and doing what, will be accumulated.

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II. Activities (Cont'd)

6. Participants will undertake (in pairs or individually) a special project to survey or census the distribution and examine the biology of some particular plant or animal species, or study some reasonably limited biological system.

III. Evaluation - Will be based upon satisfactory completion of the following:

1. Field and laboratory journals.
2. Written summary of field notes.
3. Report of special project (may be multi-media).

IV. Miscellaneous

1. Transportation costs for the field trips will be approximately \$35.
2. Food and camp ground costs will be in addition to transportation costs. Everyone should have a basic set of personal camping gear.
3. Personal cameras and binoculars would be useful. (Some cameras and binoculars will be available through Media Loan.)
4. It would be desirable to have access to biological field guides (such as for plants, birds, marine shells). Local libraries have only limited numbers of copies of these.

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