



TULARE BASIN WILDLIFE PARTNERS
Creating Opportunities for Nature and People

Atwell Island Project Work-based Learning (AIP-WBL) Program

AIP-WBL Program Description: Work-based learning addresses the misalignment between conventional education and what is needed in the workforce. Work-based learning is learning ABOUT work, THROUGH work, FOR work. The AIP-WBL Program is envisioned as a permanent four week summer work-based learning program for 10 - 20 11th and 12th grade high school students from the rural underserved communities of Allensworth and Alpaugh in SW Tulare County, California.

As soon as funding is available in 2017, the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP) will collaborate with American Conservation Experience (ACE) to hire an intern (annual cost \$60,000) to coordinate the AIP-WBL program year-round and work with the Allensworth and Alpaugh School principals and selected teachers to ensure implementation of the program. The intern will be housed at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) AIP and will be supported by BLM staff services for the equivalent of one day per week.

Students chosen to participate in the summer 2017 AIP-WBL Program will be given a focus topic upon which to design a project -- a problem to grapple with that is region-specific and natural resource-focused. Local/regional focus topic experts will lay the foundation for the summer program by giving a series of presentations in classrooms and assemblies throughout the school year, introducing the focus topic from several perspectives. (Note: this will provide an opportunity for Ag Leadership participation.)

Participating students will choose a "pathway" through which to approach the focus topic and then design and complete a project stemming from their pathway. Possible pathways and projects include but are not limited to:

- **Hands-on:** native plant identification, cataloguing, and seed collection for the utilization of land restoration
- **Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM):** exploring and examining land use in the Tulare Lake bed area through data accumulation, dissemination, and GIS mapping
- **Historic:** examining and exploring the evolution of the Tulare Lake bed landscape throughout its settlement
- **Artistic:** examining and exploring existing landscapes through photography, drawing, painting, etc.
- **Topics suggested by Ag Leadership participants**

The four-week summer WBL program will culminate in a "Project Symposium" to showcase the students' projects for Allensworth and Alpaugh school students /future program applicants, families, regional higher education institutions, and industry/ agency partners.

Because many of the 11th and 12th graders who are likely to apply for and participate in the AIP-WBL program typically take on field work during the summer and because their wages are needed to supplement household income, participating students will receive a stipend of \$500 upon completion of the program. The number of students participating in the program is expected to be 10-14 in 2017, 14-20 in 2018, and 20 in 2019 and subsequent years. By 2018, the Allensworth and Alpaugh school principals expect to arrange for AIP-WBL Program participants to receive high school or college credit upon completing the program.

The summer 2017 program will commence June 5 and end on June 30, running concurrently with the Allensworth and Alpaugh summer school sessions. The Program will be conducted at the BLM AIP and contiguous Ton Tache Wetlands, with opportunities for field trips appropriate to project focus.

BLM began the AIP-WBL Program in the summer of 2016. The continuation and growth of this program will enable Allensworth and Alpaugh high school students to develop career readiness and the technical skills needed to address drought, flood, and other climate adaptation issues. Students who have participated in this program will be able apply these skills to the Allensworth-Alpaugh-Atwell Island Trail (AAAT) project (see below) and to the natural resource management careers of the future.

Over-arching Vision: During the past two years the TBWP, BLMAIP, and Allensworth-Alpaugh community advocates have collaborated on three interdependent projects (programs) of which the AIP-WBL described above is one. The other two are the AAAT and the Allensworth-Alpaugh Restoration and Conservation Collaborative (AARCC). Together, these three programs comprise a holistic local-regional demonstration project – a model for rural communities throughout the Central Valley.

Under the AAAT and AARCC, with TBWP coordination during the 2016-2019 start-up phase, AARCC community advocates are guiding development of a nature education and recreation trail to connect the communities of Alpaugh and Allensworth with one another and with the two unique local-regional historical attractions -- the Atwell Island Project-Ton Tache Wetlands and Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park (CASHP).

The AAAT will provide opportunities for AIP-WBL participant hands-on project applications, as well as youth and citizen science education to advance drought or flood readiness and climate adaptation. The AAAT will nourish community environmental stewardship, youth leadership development, and youth career readiness.

Guided by the highly experienced and trusted Tulare County United Way Executive Director (Ernie, Hernandez, retired), and coordinated by the TBWP, AARCC community advocates are preparing to assume management and fiscal responsibility for the AIP-WBL and AAAT. In the process, they will develop governance capacity to undertake additional resource-sharing community benefit projects in future, enhancing the ecological and economic sustainability of their communities for the short and long-term.