



WILDERNESS
AWARENESS

S C H O O L

S  NGLINE

AN INTRODUCTION TO
WILDERNESS AWARENESS SCHOOL'S
NATURALIST TRAINING PROGRAMS

JON YOUNG

**This expanded description of
Wilderness Awareness School and its programs is taken
from *Songline*, the first book of Kamana Two.**

**Songline also contains the Tourist Test,
available as a separate PDF on our web site.**

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Naturalist Training Programs
Third Edition

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Most of humanity throughout history has said prayers to the powers of surrounding nature, which they have recognized as their source of life. Surely it is not too late to recover this ancestral wisdom.

– Richard K. Nelson

OHEN:TON KARIHWATEHKWEN ; THE “WORDS BEFORE ALL ELSE”

—from the Thanksgiving Address,
as shared with Wilderness Awareness School by Chief Jake Swamp,
sub-chief of the Wolf Clan of the Mohawk Nation

“The first thing that’s done is you give thanks to everything. You thank the waters beneath the Earth, the stones, the soil, all the way up to the stars. It’s just a reminder of where we are. We should never forget that..”

—Kahionhes John Fadden, Turtle Clan of the Mohawk Nation.

“If all of the children of the world were to be a part of this kind of Thanksgiving each day, I believe that the problems of the world would start to go the other way.”

-Mohawk Sub-Chief Tekaronieneken Jake Swamp

Today we have gathered and have come from many different places. We have all arrived safely at this place to share with each other our gifts from the Creator. So we bring our minds together as one in Thanksgiving and Greetings to one another.

We send greetings and thanksgiving to our Mother the Earth who, like our own mother, continues to give for our well-being. She continues to care for us and has not forgotten her instructions from the beginning of time. We now bring our minds together in Thanksgiving for the Earth.

Now, as one mind, we turn our thoughts to the Waters of the Earth, that continue to flow beneath the ground, in little streams and in rivers, in lakes and wetlands, and in the great seas. They quench our thirst and help us to keep clean. We now bring our minds together in Thanksgiving to all the Waters of the Earth.

With one mind, we send our Thanksgiving and Greetings to all the Beings that dwell in the Water which provide for us in many ways.

Now we direct our thoughts to the many kinds of plants that live low upon the Earth—the mosses, the grasses, the herbs, the food plants and the flowers, for they too have not forgotten their Original Instructions. There are many members of this Nation who sustain those who walk upon this Earth and take away the sicknesses of the human family. With one mind we send our thoughts and Thanksgiving to the Plant Nations.

We now gather our minds together and send Greetings and Thanksgiving to all the Animal Life in the world, for they continue to instruct and teach us even today. We are happy that many still walk with although their natural world has been changed and life has become very difficult for them at times. Sometimes we may see a fox or a deer eye to eye and we are reminded of that feeling of kinship we get when we see the animals. With one mind we send our Thanksgiving to all the Animal Life in the world.

With one mind we now think of the Trees. According to their Original Instructions the Trees still give us shelter, warmth, food and keep the air clean. When we see the trees we are reminded of the beauty and power of the natural world. With one mind we send our Thanksgiving to all the members of the Tree Nation.

We now bring our minds together to send our Greetings of Thanksgiving to the Birds. At the beginning of time the Birds were given a very special duty to perform. They were instructed to help lift the minds of the Human Family. Many times during the day our minds are lifted by their songs. With one mind we send our Thanksgiving to all the Birds of the world.

We are thankful to the Four Winds who continue to blow and cleanse the air in accordance with their Original Instructions. When we listen to the Winds it is as if we are hearing the Creator's breath, clearing our minds as it blows through the Trees. With one mind we send our Thanksgiving to the Four Winds.

Now we turn our attention to the Thunderbeings. They welcome the springtime with their loud voices. Along with the lightning, they carry the waters of Spring on their backs. With one mind we send our Thanksgiving and Greetings to the Thunderbeings.

Our minds are one as we send our thoughts to our oldest brother the Sun. Each day the Sun continues according to his original instructions, bringing the light of the day, the energy source of all life on Earth. With one mind we send our Thanksgiving and Greetings to our oldest brother the Sun.

We now gather our minds together and give Thanks to our oldest Grandmother, the Moon who holds hands with all of the women of the world, binding all of the cycles and rhythms of the Waters. With one mind we send our Thanksgiving and Greetings to our Grandmother the Moon.

With one mind we send our thoughts to the Star Nations who continue to light our way during times of darkness to guide us home, and who hold the secrets of many forgotten stories. With one mind we send our Thanksgiving and Greetings to the Star Nations.

With our minds as one mind we think of the Four Spirit Beings who live in the Four Directions. We know that they are helping us when we are moving through life and a feeling tells us not to go a certain way, or that we are on the right path. And now we gather our minds together as one and send our special Thanksgiving Greetings to the Four Spirit Beings.

Now we have arrived in a very special place where dwells the Great Spirit that moves through all things. As one mind we turn our thoughts to the Creator with Thanksgiving and Greetings.

We have now become like one being, with one body, one heart, one mind. We send our Prayers and special Thanksgiving Greetings to all the unborn Children of all the Future Generations. We send our thoughts to the many different Beings we may have missed during our Thanksgiving. With one mind we send our Thanksgiving and Greetings to all of the Nations of the World.

Now our minds are one.

WELCOME



WE GATHER OUR
MINDS TOGETHER AS
ONE TO SEND
THANKSGIVING TO
THE PEOPLE

THE FIRST WORDS ARE “THANK YOU”

Wilderness Awareness School and I have been richly blessed by our association with many wonderful people from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, from the four corners of the world. From each, we have received priceless gifts of traditional wisdom, native awareness of the land, and skills for building community and interpersonal relationships. With these teachings and our own knowledge gained from experience, we have gained a “world view” of what it means to be at one with the Earth.

To all these people, we say, “Thank You!” There is no way we can repay the debt we owe you, except to pass forward to the future generations the knowledge, skills and wisdom you have shared with us.

To you, the reader, we also send our special Thanksgiving Greeting, for by picking up this book, you have also picked up the torch which can only be passed on through other hands. We give you our thanks, for through you, the work we have begun will be carried forward and placed in the hands of the generations yet unborn.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jan Young" followed by a flourish.

SONGLINE

The Songline, an Introduction

“There was a time when you journeyed on foot over hundreds of miles, walking fast and often traveling at night, traveling nightlong and napping in the acacia shade during the day, and stories were told to you as you went. In your travels with an older person you were given a map you could memorize full of lore and song, and also practical information. Off by yourself you could sing those songs to bring yourself back. And you could maybe travel to a place that you’d never been, steering only by songs you had learned.”

–Gary Snyder, “Good, Wild, Sacred,”
in *The Practice of the Wild* Berkeley: North Point Press, 1990

Where has Native Intelligence Gone?

If we were to take a long wander in the Kalahari with a natives of the land, and we asked them to identify the most common plants, animals, tracks, and trees we encountered, they would do so with 100% accuracy, men, women, and most of the children alike.

If I were to take you, a resident of Metropolis, USA, on that same walk in the Kalahari and ask you the same questions, you would not do so well, I’m afraid. “Of course,” you would say. “I’m not from around *here!* I live in Metropolis.”

But what if I asked you the same questions about *your own* neighborhood?

I had a funny experience with some local 1st, 2nd and 3rd graders recently.

I asked them what we would call those who don’t know anything about the natural world.

Usually they eventually come out with “aliens” because they have already realized what “natives” can do! This time they came out with “tourists!” That’s a thought, eh? Tourists of our own backyards?

When I give people a test about plants and animals in their own region, they fail as badly as if they were walking in the Kalahari. *What does this mean?*

Are We Aliens in our Own World?

If a “native” is in harmony with his or her environment and the natural world, what can we call the rest of us who are unable to pass even the simplest identification test? There is only one word that fits—we are “aliens” in our own world.

This condition and feeling of alienation from our own world, I refer to as the dread disease of “Alienitis.” Its symptoms are a lack of knowledge about our world, and with that, a lack of appreciation, understanding and concern. For many so afflicted, the natural world consists of grass—something that is a pain to mow every week, but *must* be greener than their neighbors’—and the neighbor’s dog who uses our patch of green as a waste recycling station.

In advanced stages of Alienitis, many people do not recognize that the natural world even exists. They move from back-support mattress to drip-grind breakfast to heated garage, then on to a bumper to bumper commute on a cement-smooth roadway, into another heated garage, and up to the 32nd floor in an inertial-damped elevator. After staring at a computer screen and manipulating numbers for several hours, they dash down to the ground floor where they hurriedly throw down a few mouthfuls of pale lettuce and imitation texturized meat, held together by two pieces of white bread, which was made from wheat that had been sprayed with chemicals, harvested by machine, bleached, baked and denuded, then labeled as "enriched." Is it surprising that many of us have succumbed to Alienitis?

It is not only our life-style that makes Alienitis such a virulent disease. The only kind of education that the average citizen receives about the environment is a frightening digestion of the issues concerning its destruction, misuse, or degradation. Little or no opportunity exists to learn about the positive side of our natural world or to learn to appreciate its gifts to life. Is it any wonder there is such a sense of hopelessness among our young people today, or that we have so many overwhelming problems involving the environment?

Who Are the "natives"?

There are many studies indicating that the indigenous people from many natural areas around the world, are capable of identifying, harvesting and using for medicine, food and craft, hundreds of species of wild plants over all four seasons. The knowledge possessed by these people, common average citizens of their societies, includes similar information about trees and their uses, bird and animal language and its significance, weather patterns indicated by clouds, and animal behavior indicated by track and sign.

The ability of these people to read the ground through tracks and sign left by humans and animals is astounding. Tracking, as an art, is unknown to most people in the modern world, yet indigenous trackers are quite capable of seeing and interpreting incredible information from what appear to be random marks on the ground.

So what does all this add up to? These people are perfectly at home in the natural world. They understand everything about their surroundings that they need, not only to survive, but to live in cooperation and harmony with the other elements of Creation.

Does this mean that only people who sleep on the ground, dress in skins and eat food that they themselves have caught or gathered

"Nature and I are two," filmmaker Woody Allen once said...He does not go in natural lakes because 'there are live things in there.' Allen's aversion to nature, what can be called biophobia, is increasingly common...Biophobia ranges from discomfort in "natural" places to active scorn for whatever is not manmade, managed, or air-conditioned. At the other end of the continuum of possible orientation toward nature is "biophilia," which E.O. Wilson has defined as "the innate urge to affiliate with other forms of life."

Is it OK that Woody Allen feels little or no sympathy or kinship with nature? Does it matter that a growing number of other people do not like it or like it only in the abstract as nothing more than resources to be managed or as television nature specials? Does it matter that we are increasingly separated from the condition of nature?...To what extent are our biological prospects and our sanity dependent on our capacity for biophilia? To that degree it is important that we understand how biophilia comes to be, how it prospers, what competencies and abilities it

requires of us, and how these are to be learned.”

*David W. Orr, Earth in Mind, On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect.
Washington DC: Island Press, 1994.*

Native or native?

Throughout this book, we observe the following conventions with respect to our use of the words native and Native:

Native: *refers to a person or persons from a specific indigenous cultural background, and will most often be prefixed to a description of place, as Native American or Native Australian.*

native: *refers to a person of any cultural or ethnic background who is on a first-name basis with the natural world, a person who has the knowledge, a spiritual feeling for and therefore the mindset of being a part of the land, not separate from it.*

can be called natives? Does it mean that only hunting and gathering people who were born and raised in a particular location, whose parents, grandparents, and ancestors, back to the beginning of recorded time, have lived in that same location, can be called “natives” of that place?

One of the most important parts of being in harmony with the natural world is a deep understanding and appreciation of nature, and that promotes the ability to solve current problems and to prevent future problems by care-taking the environment on behalf of the future generations. This comes quite naturally to people who are personally knowledgeable and spiritually bonded with the natural world, and who consider the other elements of Creation to be their honored relatives.

It is not place of origin, nor skin color, nor family tree that makes a native—it is bonding with and having a deep and abiding love for the natural world. It is an understanding between the natural world and ourselves that goes so deep as to approach the realm of the spiritual. It is an attitude of thankfulness, and actions taken with consideration for their effects on the future generations. And most of all, it is the willingness to set aside our own preconceived notions about reality, our technologically oriented patterns of thinking, and to see the Earth as it really is—a natural system, a whole, with all the elements interdependent upon each other.

THE MISSION OF WILDERNESS AWARENESS SCHOOL

Our mission at Wilderness Awareness School is to revive native awareness so our students will work for the preservation and ultimately the restoration of the natural world. "We will preserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand." This is the governing principle behind Wilderness Awareness.

We believe in:

Fostering People's Understanding of Their Native Environment

This is Wilderness Awareness School's central mission. We place emphasis on the importance of learning our backyards in the way a native would. We assist people in penetrating the Wall of Green. We develop Scout awareness.

Mentoring

Our strategy is to inspire as many as we can reach through both teaching and publications, to train a committed core of naturalists and mentors, and to coordinate all our students to be mentors and leaders in their own communities.

Embracing Living Fully In Two Worlds "

The worlds of science and spirituality, the primitive and modern, the ancient and new, the mind and body, the focused and expansive, the past and future are combined in our programs. We believe in embracing both worlds fully, to learn to walk in balance. We believe in the power of the awareness of a "scout-trained" student who has the language of modern ecology!

Training Self-Sufficiency

We recognize the true power of a burning desire to know something deeply. We all have a subject or subjects that energize us when we study, and we like to honor that in our students, for it leads them to their own gifts and further self-reliance, self-esteem and self-awareness.

Developing Community

To establish order in our communities, we must first begin in our families, and ultimately in ourselves. Our mission is to spread peace and to build loving relationships through the celebration and study of our common heritage, the natural world within and around us.

Awakening a Spiritual Relationship With Nature and Strengthening Hope

By helping people realize the spirituality to be gained through nature, we try to teach a way of life in harmony

with nature's ways. Through this we strengthen the roots of hope for our earth's healthy future.

Addressing the Mainstream

We teach with a mainstream approach attractive to a wide range of audiences and ages. We operate from the belief that we must honor the people we are working with, and that we have something to learn from everyone.

Doing Business in a Sacred Way

We try to model a deeply ethical infrastructure for our business of educating. Our organization maintains regular patterns of bringing our minds together as one, thanksgiving, and mutual mentoring, and our school strives to offer excellent customer service, convenience, curriculum support, and communication.

Spreading the Word

Our goal is to bundle these teachings and reach them out nationally until there's a sparkle in every eye, a mentor on every corner, and a field guide on every living room table.

My Land and Lineage

It is important for you to know something of me, and why I have devoted my life to creating such a school. My background, though ordinary in many ways, is also very rare: I was a bit on the lucky side.

I was born in 1960 in a hospital in Red Bank, New Jersey, on the banks of the beautiful Navesink River. For the first decade of my life I lived just a few miles away in suburban New Jersey. I had many interests, but my first love has always been nature study, adventure in the wilds and anything that has to do with being out of doors.

My naturalist training began very early and was guided by two remarkable elders. Looking back, it appears that Aunt Carrie and Nanny Cecil conspired to keep me in training to be a naturalist.

My mother's aunt, Carrie Rozek, was influential in helping my young mind pattern on the natural world. A devout Catholic from Poland, she encouraged me to love the land in a spiritual way. Still living a life based on faith, prayers to guardian angels, and dreams of her Ancestors speaking to her, she talked to birds and heard messages from God. She taught me to walk quietly and to love and appreciate the beauty of Nature. She and I were very strongly connected and she dreamed of me whenever I was ill.

My mother recognized Aunt Carrie's spiritual gift and often reminded me of her teachings and special concern for me. Aunt Carrie was always sending me clippings from the newspaper about naturalists or people working with animals, with notes of encouragement attached.

At an early age, my father's mother, Nanny Cecil, taught me to read from the little Golden Nature Guides, which in those days only cost about seventy five cents. These books had wonderful color illustrations that really fed the curiosity and imagination of a young child.

This woman, Cecilia McCormack, also taught me to collect and to care for small wild animals which I could easily capture at that age. My menagerie included small mammals, snakes, frogs, toads, salamanders, turtles, fish, insects, spiders, moths, butterflies and other creatures which I would catch, keep for a while, study with the help of my guides, and then release.

In 1971, my family moved to a rural area only a few miles away from my first home. By this time I had quite a collection of tanks, artificial ponds, books and treasures from nature. This area around my new home had all manner of wonders to make a young naturalist's blood race, and put a sparkle in his eyes. The first day I visited the new house, my father and I discovered a kind of toad I had never seen, and several new snakes.

There were over three thousand acres of undeveloped land around this new home at that time. There were old forests on the hillsides with springs giving birth to little creeks which flowed into bigger creeks. There was plenty of diversity, for there were old fields, horse pastures, second growth forests, swamps, ponds, lakes and sandy barrens.

We lived near the bayshore, so there were plenty of waterfowl and a great diversity of fish. There were eels that made their way up the streams each year. There was adventure everywhere, endless acres of new territory to explore, and the fishing was great. Had it not been for my love of fishing, I might never have become anything more than a talented amateur naturalist and weekend fisherman. As it turned out, one remarkable fishing trip cemented my path in life and, in the end, it was this trip to the old fishing hole that, as my mother has said many times, changed my life forever.

You'll Know Your Student by the Sign That He Carries

One day, not too long after we moved into this new home, my friend Steve and I caught a huge snapping turtle at the local fishing spot. Together, we had managed to get it all the way up to the corner of my road. But there Steve's mother collared him, and I was left alone with a turtle that weighed almost as much as I did. I was a slightly built ten-year old, and this creature was starting to look awfully big. I stood and stared at this enormous turtle, and as the thrill of the hunt wore off, the turtle's eye began to look a lot like the eyes of the pet turtles I had in my tanks back home.

The turtle was no longer quarry, but a pitiful creature awaiting my decision for its future. I was sad and frustrated for I couldn't release it with the hook in, nor could I take the hook out of its mouth without risking losing a finger or two.

After what seemed like an eternity, a Toyota Landcruiser sailed up to the corner and stopped. A roofless, red, well-used back country vehicle with a sun-tanned young man at the wheel was rolling slowly to the stop sign at the corner. He looked over his shoulder at me and did a double take when he saw the turtle. He backed up and said, "What you got there?"

"A common snapping turtle," I replied rather smugly. All that book learning had paid off, I thought.

"What are you going to do with it?" he asked with an amused smile.

"I'm gonna make soup." I said matter-of-factly, as if I were going to pull out a kettle and get to it right then and there.

One corner of his mouth twitched up ever so slightly. "Where do you live?" he asked.

I told him.

"Do you know how to kill it? Does your dad? Does he know how to clean it?" To all of these questions I had to respond in the negative, and he realized that the half mile to my house was insurmountable for this half-pint fisherman.

In a letter Tom Brown, Jr. wrote to me many years later on my twenty-first birthday he said, "When I drove up to the corner that day and saw a boy with a turtle, I thought of something my teacher had told me: 'You will know your first student by the sign that he carries.' And I wondered 'could this be him?' The boy knew it was

a common snapping turtle, but that was only half an answer. I wondered if he knew of its significance as a symbol of Mother Earth and our sacred duties as human beings, living in harmony with nature, the native teachings. These were the other half of the answer and I knew that I would teach that young naturalist. I had found my first student.”

Tom Brown, Jr.’s interest in me forever changed my life.

Tom lived only five houses from me, and his nature museum, his taxidermy lab, his wall displays, artifacts, crafts and field guides, as well as his incredible knowledge of everything I longed to know were not going to get away from me. He adopted me as his younger brother, and I adopted him. We saw one another nearly every day and traveled into the Pine Barrens for days on end. He became a part of my family, and I a part of his. On that day I began a seven year personal apprenticeship with Tom Brown, Jr., now known around the world as “The Tracker.”

The Scout

Tom had been raised in the Pine Barrens under the tutelage of an Apache elder who came to be addressed by Tom as “Grandfather,” though this remarkable man was actually the grandfather of Tom’s best friend. Grandfather was a master tracker and scout. From an early age, he taught Tom to read the ground, to hear wisdom in the silence of the woodlands, to understand the language of the birds, the messages of the weather and the ways of the forest.

In the life of the hunter-gatherer cultures of the world, the role of the scout has always been critical. A scout had to remain apart from the tribe or village, wandering alone and living from the land for a good portion of his life. The scout hunted his own food, but his purpose in life was to be a gatherer—of information. The scout had to find food, water, shelter and safety for his people. In the ways of many such tribes, love of the land and treating the land with great respect and honor were foremost in the scout’s mind.

This meant that when the land was nearing the point of noticeable impact, where there was danger of permanently scarring the land, the tribe must move on. A scout would pride himself on his ability to become so much a part of the flow of life as to become invisible, not even disturbing the birds from their feeding as he passed. This took great skill and knowledge of the birds and their ways.

The scout also had to know all of the food plants that the people relied on and the sources of water and how to care for them. The scout needed to be able to read the ground with unerring accura-

cy, for a strange moccasin track could mean that an enemy had learned the location of the people.

In the late 1800's, the life of the scout became extremely difficult. To the various bands of Apache people living in the southwest from Mexico to Arizona along the edge of the plains and into the mountains, it must have felt as if their lives had been turned inside out. Their traditional enemies were no longer on foot, but had taken up the horsemanship of the Great Plains tribes. And they had taken up the guns of the white man. The buffalo in their enemies' territories had been decimated, and now these tribes headed deeper and deeper into what had always been Apache country.

Though certain bands and tribes were peace loving, they were "Indians" nonetheless and the white settlers' policies looked unfavorably at any Indian. So the Apache scout had to not only elude the white soldiers and settlers, but also the ever more dangerous Native enemies whose food and lands had been taken away. These were desperate times. Any small error could mean death to the entire village.

According to Tom, "Grandfather" was such a scout. He successfully navigated his small band of Apaches through these hardest of times.

The scouts were out of a job when the western frontier was settled. The early part of this century found Grandfather without a purpose, yet his heart and life were deeply patterned by solitude in the wilderness. His lifeways were the ways of Sacred Invisibility, not just to avoid danger, but to protect and care for the land which he knew and loved so well.

The Grandfather and the Tracker

Alone, without his traditional purpose in life, he left his home in the southwest to go in search of the knowledge and wisdom of other wild places. Eventually, his wanderings took him to a New Jersey suburb to live with his son. There, his young grandson introduced him to his buddy, twelve-year-old Tom Brown. For nearly a decade, Grandfather mentored the two boys in the ways of the wilderness and the traditional skills of the scout.

Grandfather's knowledge of plants and their uses, his survival skills, and love for the land were unsurpassed. He loved the Pine Barrens and all wild places deeply, and rejoiced in the revitalizing solitude found in nature. His amazing tracking skills, his ability to read the landscape and the voices of the birds, and his deep love and commitment to honoring the land in a Sacred Manner were passed on to Tom, and through Tom to me.

Tom is a fantastic tracker, and his many books on the subject of tracking, nature skills and native philosophies are well known today. But way back then, I was his only student, and for seven years after our meeting on that street corner, he trained me in the ways of the Apache scout. When Tom wrote his first book, *The Tracker*, and was catapulted to national attention, I became his first instructor at his Tracker School.

A turtle on a string on a street corner in New Jersey, a brief instant of time, Tom and I met, and now there are two schools—Tom’s, which teaches tracking and survival lore through week-long intensives, and mine, which is directed at recreating the mentoring experience for those who wish to take this knowledge to its highest expression in the language of the scout—and in the language of today’s world.

College as a Means to an End

After working with Tom for a while, I returned to school and earned a Bachelor of Environmental Science degree from Cook College, Rutgers University, in a combined study of Anthropology and Classical Natural History. My vision was to recreate the experience of the mentoring process for students in today’s society, giving them advanced understanding, self-awareness and leadership qualities in the area of environmental awareness and education—both critical for the coming years.

From Tom Brown I had learned the native approach to life—a way of observing, living and thinking in harmony with the natural world. I had spent ten long, fun years apprenticed to a modern-day Apache scout. What I needed was a way to translate this experience into tracks and trails that my students in the modern world could follow on their own, whether or not I was around.

One thing Tom tells his students over and over in every class he teaches is: “Your job is to prove me right, or prove me wrong...and I’ll bet you can’t prove me wrong!” I set out to prove Tom right, to find references from modern scientific literature and thought which pointed to or supported the ancient teachings and wisdom I had learned from him. And I succeeded beyond my wildest expectations! Everything from the work now being done in quantum physics to current thinking in social anthropology supported what I had learned in the woods. I now had a bibliography for my own students to pursue.

The Test That Made a School

I had some ideas about what and how I needed to teach. I needed to create a way to pass on the incredible knowledge I had been given. But where to begin? I had a name, Wilderness Awareness School, but not much more.

Not long after I graduated from college I began to work with a small group of students from a local high school. When I faced my first class and looked out over the room full of young faces, I wondered where I should start. I had no idea what to say to these young people. What did they know? What did they want to know? What would interest them?

I needed to come up with a test to find out the answers to these questions, so I went out with a camera and a tape recorder to record some common sights and sounds from the wild places around our area. The slides included such shots as a chipmunk's eye peering out from a wild rose bush, wildflowers in winter and other common sights, shown in an obscure way. All the slides were of common things, but only partial views, or distant shots. I deliberately left out the obvious rabbit and deer tracks. The audio part of the test included the calls of very common forest species such as the Wood Thrush, Ovenbirds, and a little frog that used to be found there by the millions, the Spring Peeper.

I kept thinking back to my training with "The Tracker." As I took the pictures I asked myself, "Would Tom Brown be able to identify this from this slide?" When I reviewed my material, I really thought I should have made the test a little bit more challenging. But, what the heck...I'd find out *something*, anyway.

Not One Correct Answer!

When I administered the first version of this test to 125 high school freshmen and sophomores, the results were mind-boggling. The test was simple identification, with 100 questions made up of my slides and sound tracks. When I collected the test papers, the pages were almost entirely blank, or filled with wise-guy answers. They were putting answers like: "bird" and "some tree." Really. Without exception, all the students had completely failed the test.

At first I questioned my own sanity. How could all these people be wrong? I must be living in a fantasy world or something. Then I checked over the test questions again. Perhaps this meant something. I decided to do a really easy version of it to see what would happen. I included pictures of a robin, clearly showing the eye ring, of dandelions in bloom and in leaf, skunk cabbage, poison

ivy in leaf, poison ivy in winter, poison ivy berries, and Canadian geese. I included calls of the robin and of jays. I included deer tracks and mole tunnels, fox droppings and starlings and gulls. I decided to accept the answer “hawk” for Red-tailed Hawk and “seagull” for Ringbilled Gull, even though “seagull” is technically incorrect. “Bunny” for Eastern Cottontail is an acceptable answer on this test, though any high school biology teacher would mark that one wrong.

I included so many urban and suburban species I thought for sure that they would all ace the thing—I would find out that there was no need for my school after all, and I’d have to get a job at the local convenience store. I finally got a few correct answers, but even with the suburban version, the results became quite consistent: people could not even identify the most common bird in the state with any certainty, by picture or by voice, even though I knew they encountered hundreds of these every day around our area. I was flabbergasted.

Even professional environmental educators, ecology professors and environmental leaders failed this easier version of the test. The average correct response rate was only about 10%. This is failing, really failing., Children of native people living close to the land know, by the time they are in their teens, how to read the ground like we would read a newspaper; they know the calls of the birds and local animals and even understand the significance of the various calls, songs and tones that the birds and animals are using; they know how and where to find drinking water, how to find food, what wood to burn and why. By the time they are adults, their knowledge of the world around them is so vast and intricate that they could teach college with several doctorate degrees. This is not an exaggeration...this is native knowledge. And this is the knowledge I knew I had to find a way to teach in my school. So it was that a test made a school.

Penetrating the Wall of Green

I have now administered the Alien Test to over 4,000 people around the country. After failing the Alien Test, almost everyone expresses a great desire to be able to pass such a test in the future. The answers to the questions, the lore about plants, tracks, bird language and animals are fascinating, and people long to recover this knowledge.

The most commonly expressed frustration is that people do not know where to begin. They look at the Wall of Green out there and throw up their hands. Students see the overwhelming array of

available books and field guides and have no idea which way to turn or which ones to begin with. They can't see the forest for the trees!

Wilderness Awareness School's unique approach to environmental education would respond to the need this test revealed. We would assist people to penetrate the Wall of Green. Our mission would be to foster native awareness by teaching people how to see forest *through* the trees. We would teach them how to pick and use the field guides so they acted like living mentors as they wandered through their studies. We would focus their eyes and widen them to mystery at the same time.

The Man Who ACED the Alien Test

Back east there is an environmental educators' network that meets regularly to work on areas of mutual concern, to sponsor seminars and to share information. These people are primarily teachers in local schools and colleges. I was invited to do a presentation for this group, an evening of lively anecdotes from the experiences of a rough-hewn "field naturalist" is what I imagine they were expecting. Instead, they got the Alien Test!

When I checked their papers, I was amazed to find that one man in the group had answered all the questions correctly. He *aced* the test! then proceeded to sing frog calls in my face and challenge me to identify them. I sang some back at him and soon we were in the middle of a frog-calling contest. It was a riot! In the end, I asked the group to give him a round of applause...He received a standing ovation instead.

That same night, Mr. Brown looked out at his peers and fairly berated them for their lack of knowledge of the most common wildlife and plants. He basically told them that no self-respecting environmental educator should fail such an *easy, really basic* test of the *most common* wildlife and plants, and how did they *da re* to call themselves environmental educators?

I came to their rescue. "No one in this room should feel guilty for not doing well on this test. No one here has been given the opportunity to study these things. There has never been a school in our country to teach these things, and no school has ever included this in their curriculum."

"The question I have, and that you all should have right now, is: 'How did this one man learn so much about nature that he managed to ace this test?'" We all looked at Mr. Brown, who turned out to be a high school science teacher.

“When I was a young boy,” he said, “I lived up the block from an elderly couple who gardened and worked outside most of the time. They knew so much about the land, and I spent all my free time with them. They had learned everything they knew from growing up among the Native Americans living around the Great Lakes.”

Once again, here were two generations who had been mentored by people with great knowledge and love of the land.

The Key is Mentoring

Mr. Brown’s explanation that night gave me the key to responding to the need out there for environmental education that really works: mentoring. We would teach people how to gain a deep knowledge of nature by replicating the situation Mr. Brown had experienced—by guiding them out into the woods with people who knew the area as natives do. We would replicate the experience Tom Brown had with Grandfather, and I had with Tom. We would learn from natives, and from Natives, how they taught their children and figure out how to do this as a school in the modern world.

The Story of Ingwe

Some years after I graduated from college and began to search for a direction for Wilderness Awareness School, another amazing teacher and elder entered my life. My first meeting with Ingwe was just as unlikely, and just as fortuitous, as my meeting with Tom Brown had been.

Ingwe is a grand old Englishman of British ancestry, the fourth generation of his family to be born in Africa, and a true native, in our sense of that word. Ingwe had grown up in the wilds of Kenya in the early part of this century. His only playmates and companions were the sons of the warriors of the Akamba tribe of that region. He grew up speaking Kikamba and Swahili, as well as his own English, while being mentored in the arts of survival and tracking and in the spiritual traditions that made the Akamba people so dear to him.

The Akamba’s love and knowledge of the wilderness were extremely rich, and offered Ingwe the connection with the land that led him to appreciate all that the natural world does for the benefit of mankind. Ingwe has worked closely with youth and nature for most of his life and strives to restore positive thinking, hopefulness, and a sense of self-awareness through connection with the natural world.

We invite you to take a version of the Alien Test we call the “Tourist Test” in Appendix B. It is the very same one our Kamana students take before they begin their program.

Ingwe's childhood was similar to Tom's, but his teachers were a respected medicine man and elder named Musami, and an Akamba youth named Ndaka—which means “Child of the Earth.” As Ingwe became involved with the local tribal village, the other Akamba also influenced him, especially the storytellers. These gifted people filled Ingwe's childhood with a sense of wonder and a spiritual love for the earth.

Ingwe's Hope

When Ingwe walked into a restaurant I was managing while teaching high school science nearby, I knew I had found someone who could make the school a reality. But Ingwe was old and tired. He loved the idea, but kept putting me off saying “I'm too old. I just want to stay home and paste my pictures into scrapbooks.” I tried and tried to urge him to throw his wisdom and energy back into the fray, but he resisted claiming he was finished living his life.

One day Ingwe took a tumble off a short ladder at his house and ended up in the hospital. When I went to visit him he looked pale and ashen, as if his life was ebbing away. He was wrapped in hospital sheets and tied into tubing in all directions. I was horrified, but he seemed calm, resigned to giving up the ghost. That day, I had just given my students a version of the Alien Test with some questions at the end asking for their ideas on how we could improve the world environmental condition. Their answers, one after another after another were depressed, reflecting the attitude of the next generation of suburban kid.. “There's nothing we can do. “There's no hope.” “It's too late.” As I left Ingwe (to get him some good Kenyan coffee for the next day, hoping that might jolt him back to life,) I heaved the sheaf of student questionnaires into his listless hands, saying, “Here, why don't you read these and I'll visit you again tomorrow.”

An hour later, back at the restaurant, the phone rang with a call from Ingwe at the hospital saying “Come back NOW!” I dropped everything and ran, fearing he'd taken a turn for the worse, that all the richness of his incredible experience would have expired before its story was told. When I opened the door to his room, instead I found him sitting bolt upright, all the tubes torn off, his face red and raging, ready to jump out of bed. “ This is intolerable,” he ranted, waving the sheaf of student questionnaires at me. “These students have no hope. We must start your school! We must teach them to hope again!”

Ingwe's Stories

That was 1984, and after that the school got off the ground, thanks to a revitalized Ingwe who poured his wisdom, love, and stories into both the development of programs and the individual students who trickled then poured in. Above all, Ingwe mentored the school in the importance of storytelling, the time-honored invisible teaching method so native to Native people. Always he began all conversations and all activities with relish in a story that captured students' curiosity and inspired their adventure and heroics as well as their resolve to delve deep and stick with explorations when they got sticky or scary, mosquito-bitten or — worst of all for itchy teenage kids—, boring. Ingwe brought to the school the secret of the old ways of teaching, full of honor, inspiration and a twinkle in the eye.

In October of 2001, Ingwe celebrated his eighty-seventh birthday, and his sixteenth year as “The Grandfather of Wilderness Awareness School.” His life is the subject of a book, titled simply *Ingwe*. He is a prolific author and poet, and a marvelous storyteller who remains busy even in his later years. Ingwe believes strongly in living for a dream of the future. His teachings and love have healed and inspired many people. We are deeply grateful for his contribution of great lore and wisdom to this program.

The Thanksgiving of Jake Swamp

Through my work with Ingwe and our little “community” of teachers and students, I met Tekaronieneken Jake Swamp, a sub-chief of the Wolf Clan of the Iroquois Nation, and his wife Judy. Jake leads the Tree of Peace Society in New York and has written a wonderful children's book, *Giving Thanks*, which has been translated into several languages and featured as a Reading Rainbow book on PBS. You will feel the presence of Jake throughout this program, for perhaps his most shaping contribution has been the Thanksgiving Address, which you will find pervading all aspects of our curriculum. When Jake comes to our gatherings we ask him to give the Ohen:ton Karihwaterhkwen; The “Words Before All Else” in the Mohawk language, and when he does this it seems that the eagles fly overhead funneling our feeling of gratefulness into the earth-encircling winds. We have learned invaluable lessons about giving thanks first of all things, at waking, at the beginning of meetings, in times of turmoil. Jake and his wife Judy have mentored the school in translating our love of earth and our tracking skills into good stewardship. They have taught us community, role modeling, peace-making and democracy.

The Spirit of Gilbert Walking Bull

In the United States in the last two hundred years there was a systematic effort to eliminate elders from the native tribes here. Boarding schools, various forms of punishment and discipline, and religious controls were placed upon the various tribes to remove their traditional knowledge. Children were taken from the elders and were not allowed to speak their language.

There were a few exceptions to this, and some small groups of Native people managed to maintain their language, their customs, rites and rituals—as well as the important knowledge of spiritual development and the “sacred path” of awareness. It is again, through much good fortune, that Wilderness Awareness School has been blessed to have in residence for the last four years, an elder from a small group of natives who were never separated from their ancient teachings.

Gilbert Walking Bull is a national treasure. He was raised in a community of pure Lakota speakers who were almost all holy men and holy women. When Gilbert was a small child, this small group of elders gathered together and moved out to a quiet district to escape religious persecution. There they maintained their sacred teachings and ceremonies, as well as their native language. Gilbert is now considered a holy man himself, and at the age of 70, he is just coming into his powers and deep wisdom. He is a traditional healer, pipe carrier, teacher, singer and ceremonial leader. He has taught us how songs, ceremony, mind-focus (“prayer”) and thanksgiving all fit into the larger scheme of things. He has shown us how energy influences nature and our experiences through our senses and intuition.

Gilbert has contributed not only to the deepening of my own knowledge of mentoring, coyote teaching, cultural teachings, awareness and sacred ways, but he has also mentored dozens of people in our community through the Inipi Society in Washington (Sweat Lodge). Through this, Gilbert has also spawned sister Inipi Societies in Vermont and New Jersey. It is indeed a great honor and blessing to have been able to spend these precious years with Gilbert. He is now back in South Dakota, where he will be running a special healing and retreat center.

A Long Line of Mentors

Through the work of Napawicemna Wanbli Nata’u, Tony Tenfingers, a Lakota teacher who works with our school, we have connected with the Warrior traditions and relationship-building

teachings of the Plains people. In Will Peters, who was one of Tony's mentors in singing—we have found a powerful friend, brother and role model to our staff and students—for his dedication to the Sacred Ones, the children of his reservation. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Dave Bald Eagle, an elder who has shared stories and good times with our staff and students while on visit to western South Dakota. We are also thankful to Chuck Derby of the Dakota People, who is a caretaker of the Pipestone quarry in Minnesota, to Joanne and Gordon Bird and so many other Native people of the central states who have shared stories, songs and good times with me, my family, and students who traveled with our wilderness tours.

Together with martial artists, naturalists, and teachers of Chinese wisdom, East Indian teachings, Celtic traditions, those of aboriginal Australia, and the writings and teachers from the Findhorn community, the school has compiled a world-wide perspective not only on the science of restoration ecology, but also the Original Teachings of traditional cultures from around the world.

The School and its Warriors

Over all these years, among all these Elders, the school has developed and grown and now we are international and financially viable. We are putting field guides on many tables, including yours.

Remaining to be thanked are the unsung warriors, my friends in the field. The people you see mentioned in the credits to this book have carried the torch through many trails, down many tracks through the hills and valleys of creating this school. *They are the heroes of our songline.* Frequently, as we have wandered together making this school, we have sat together over fires under the sky, singing it in an ever widening circle, like wolves calling in circles over the tundra to each other. They are the Anake, the young warriors. To each and every one of them I am deeply grateful.

The Importance of Environmental Education

Environmental Education is under attack nationwide for wrong reasons and some right ones. If environmental education is about learning about endangered species, the growing hole in the ozone layer, global warming, etc. it won't save the world. When I ask the children who should make decisions on behalf of the environment, there is wide agreement that it should be resource managers who love the land. The goal of all environmental education should be to make individuals aware of their own intimate connection to the workings of the earth. It must include an emphasis on under-

standing the living things around us and it must recognize that Nature itself is the best teacher.

Wilderness Awareness School's environmental education aims to create an environmentally literate population who will *naturally choose* to be more responsible in their actions on behalf of the environment. In order for us, as a nation, to come to grips with the larger problems facing our ecosystems, it is important for as many people as possible to be so educated.

But, suffice it to say, regular school systems are not well geared to succeed in this effort. Back in 1949, Aldo Leopold, a forester honored as "the father of the conservation movement in America," recognized this problem. In a wonderful essay called "The Land Ethic," he wrote:

We can be ethical only in relation to something we can see, feel, understand, love, or otherwise have faith in. Perhaps the most serious obstacle impeding the evolution of a land ethic is the fact that our educational and economic system is headed away from, rather than toward, an intense consciousness of land. Your true modern is separated from the land by many middlemen, and by innumerable physical gadgets. He has no vital relation to it; to him it is the space between cities on which crops grow...The land is something he has outgrown.¹

One of the requisites for an ecological comprehension of land is an understanding of ecology, and this is by no means co-extensive with education."

The Spiritual Dimension

Wilderness Awareness School teaches living ecology and *living ecology is spiritual ecology*. In the very old days, most tribes worldwide felt a spiritual connection to the land and so they shared vast and powerful sacred knowledge. (I use "spiritual" here to mean a natural phenomenon that occurs in human beings regardless of religion or race.) Today's children and grownups are fascinated by the stories of these native people, for through them they see the environment as a complex ecological system with many components in ever-shifting balance, as it was in the past, as it is in the present, and as it can be in the future. Native knowledge of the land is the language of survival; it is also the language of the human heart and soul. This is why Wilderness Awareness School teachings draw so eagerly from native traditions. Our students see, feel, understand, love, and have faith in the land's vitality. They find great healing in reconnecting with the natural world when it is offered in a positive manner with the guidance of native under-

standing. They find a feeling of meaning and belonging. They become motivated to do something.

This process is nothing less than sacred to me. How can looking at footprints or sitting under a tree quietly and journaling have such a profound effect on humanity?

Songline Analysis: What are our Secrets?

In our experience training naturalists with a native eye, I have been passionately driven to understand how and why people change as a result of this kind of training. I have discovered how awareness influences people's beliefs, feelings, perceptions, and ultimately their consciousness. There are clear ways in which people transition through different states of mind as they connect more fully and deeply with the natural world. These changes are consistent and follow a seemingly pre-programmed series of signs of growth in each individual. Though each person's experiences are truly unique, there are definitely patterns that correlate with other "deep" training systems—there are similar cycles of development in the study of acupuncture, in various forms of bodywork and counseling, as well as in the internal martial arts.

By profiling these clear developmental cycles, we have designed systems of learning that flow smoothly along the learning curve for people studying the art of nature awareness and tracking and help them evolve to a higher sense of empathy and compassion, as well as peace of mind.

People who know me know that you can't make me make a point, or answer a question directly, or give away a secret. But, what I have learned from Tom Brown Jr., college anthropology, the Man Who ACED the Alien Test, all our mentors, all our warriors, and all our experience are some technologies for learning, some medicine bundles to carry into the field..

Here is an incomplete list of hints.

Nature as teacher:	It's all about dirt time.
Circle of Life:	Orient to natural cycles.
Invisible Education:	Don't let them know they're "learning"
Mentoring:	Everyone teaches.
Capture Passion:	Incite the individual curiosity
Coyote teaching:	Ask, don't answer.
Pattern Awareness:	Imprint the mind's eye.
Storytelling:	Create heroes.
Tracking:	The ultimate technology
Thanksgiving:	The attitude
Peacemaker Principles:	The spirit

The Challenge of Mentoring

Our mentoring involves many, many things—spending our free time with eager students, making time, being patient, telling stories, asking questions instead of giving answers, inciting curiosity, tricking students into looking more closely, repeating key notes until patterns imprint in students' minds—many years' worth of teachings. But the basic approach involves someone who loves and understands the land spending a lot of time with someone who really wants to learn.

For years in New Jersey, we experimented with ways to mentor and stay afloat as a business. How can you spend a lot of time with a few students and make a living, or run a school/business? How can you spend a lot of time with a few students and get your message out to a lot of students? How can you make naturalist mentoring work in school where children can't get outside often or don't want to learn?

Well, we haven't entirely solved these problems yet, but we have hit on some approaches that work quite well:

- We trust that Mother Nature is indeed the best Mentor. Our job is to get our students out there, armed with field guides written by people who know and love the land, and teach them how to be truly aware. Then we wait for them to come to us with questions, which we answer with more and deeper questions.
- We don't just teach students. We teach students to become teachers. We train naturalists to train naturalists to train naturalists. We build into our systems a desire and sense of responsibility to pass on the mentoring to the next generation. So we build an ever growing cadre of mentors.
- And most of all, we instill in our students an insatiable curiosity about, and provide them with the opportunity to establish a deep bonding with, the natural world. Armed with these attributes and the self-sufficiency learning skills that our work provides, there is no limit to what they can offer to heal our burdened earth.

With All My Being

This Songline tells who I am, and what our school is about. It describes what I believe with all my being. I hope you find value in the teachings of, and in your association with, Wilderness Awareness School, as well as a renewed sense of hope, and your own vision for the future.

In Peace,
JY

WILDERNESS AWARENESS SCHOOL'S PROGRAMS

AN ARRAY OF PROGRAMS

Wilderness Awareness School is modestly headquartered in Duvall, Washington east of Seattle, a too-quickly growing small town on the edge of the Snoqualmie River nestled into the beginnings of the foothills of the Cascade Mountains.

Locally , we run youth day camps, programs for public schools and homeschools, a Community School for high school-aged students, a Tracking and Bird Language Club, weekend classes, and weekly Monday night programs on a variety of topics taught by the greater community.

Nationally , we coordinate Jon Young's intensive workshop series on all aspects of our curriculum – including Nature Awareness, The Mystery of Tracking & Scout Training Series, The Language of The Birds, The Art of Mentoring, CyberTracker, and The Original Teachings; and we set up expeditions in such wild terrains as the Smokey Mountains, the New Jersey Pine Barrens, the Alaskan forests, the Hawaiian valleys, and the Idaho mountainsides.

From our offices we run our Independent Studies Programs, develop programs in CyberTracker and the Art of Mentoring, and coordinate our national advanced instructor training program, W.O.L.F. Tracks, centered in Duvall, WA

Through our website , we explain all this in current detail. Visit us at www.WildernessAwareness.org You'll find announcements of current events, a discussion forum for our students, resources to order Field Guides, audio tapes, cool T-shirts, etc., as well as detailed explanations of all our programs. You can also join our e-mailing list and find out how to contribute financially to Wilderness Awareness School, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

KAMANA NATURALIST TRAINING PROGRAM

The core program of the school is called the *Kamana Naturalist Training Program* . Offered as a mentored, four level correspondence course, this program is introductory to everything we teach at Wilderness Awareness School. Its substance is our “core curriculum.” So, by understanding it, you can glimpse the seed of everything we teach. (See Appendix A for a complete description of our four-level Kamana program.)

The word “Kamana” is actually a Kikamba word. It comes from the Akamba Tribe of Kenya and translates to “the bearer for the Warrior”, and I decided that the name “Kamana” fit well for this program. Here is our reasoning.

The Warrior, or Anake, was not an aggressor, but a defender. In the Akamba tradition, the warriors protected the people against threats, especially those who could not care for themselves, namely the children and the elders. The Anake faced threats to survival by using through their deep knowledge of their land.

What threatens today’s people most is ignorance. So today’s warriors must face the environment’s more troubling issues, find ways to solve them, and then succeed in leading our people out of ignorance. The modern warrior, to be effective, must address our cultural ignorance about nature and how our human interactions affect it with a full arsenal of fact, compassion, and creativity.

The Kamana were the bearers for the Anake. In this way, they became apprentices to the warriors. In a sense, by carrying the burdens for these protectors of the tribe, a Kamana is demonstrating his worthiness to bear the knowledge of the warrior society.

Certified *Kamana Training Program* graduates possess skills that benefit the communities they serve, for they will have a good basic understanding of all aspects of the local bioregion they have trained in. They will know the true hazards, the important species and ecological features, the watershed resources, the native history, the land-use history, and the current status of wildlife and plant populations. These people will know the important topics for local restoration ecology and will represent good, sound leadership in these efforts. Therefore, they should all be recognized as belonging to a network of experts with similar skills and knowledge across the land. This is the purpose of our first level certification. Nationwide, many individuals and organizations already recognize the quality of our students at this level, and their skills and knowledge are in demand.

SHIKARI TRACKER TRAINING PROGRAM

Wilderness Awareness School’s path of focused training in the ways of the tracker is called the *Shikari Tracker Training Program* . This program contains all of the theory and routines of awareness specific to apprenticing as a native tracker.

Early on in the development of Wilderness Awareness School, Ingwe and I decided that the name Shikari fit well for this method

of training trackers. Here is our reasoning. The word “Shikari” is from India. Translated to the English language, it means “hunter” or “big-game hunter.” It was a title placed upon a man by the name of Jim Corbett, a friend of Ingwe’s, by the people of the villages in the country around him in India. He learned the tracks and signs of some of the local animals and learned to read deeply into them. He learned the voices of the forest and the birds, and thereby always knew when the tiger was near. Though he disliked the job, Corbett was also the only one around who could be called upon with certainty to put down the renegade man-eaters who terrorized the land, such as his self-taught skill at tracking.

When someone wants to become a tracker today, there are numerous schools, books, and other resources available to learn from. Because the path to becoming a tracker involves the need to pay simultaneous and rapt attention to multiple aspects of the environment, however, many who take the first step onto this path quickly step off.

In the Native cultures of the world’s deserts, where tracking reached its highest development, stepping off of the path to becoming a tracker was not an option. “Tracker” and “hunter” are often the same word among these peoples, for it was through tracking that one was able to eat and to live in such marginal and harsh extremes and to provide for their families. Thankfully, the world is again waking up to what its trackers can offer. In South Africa, thanks to the work of dedicated professionals, the Native trackers of the Kalahari have been used to bring in detailed and current reports about wildlife movements. Not only has this greatly impacted the management of game throughout the region, but it has set into motion a new wave of interest in tracking in the younger generation of the Kalahari Bushmen. Similarly, for several years Wilderness Awareness School has worked with biologists in North America to monitor the activities of wolves that have been reintroduced to central Idaho through the Federal government’s Endangered Species Act. We have also worked for agencies in Washington State to map wildlife activity, and the results of our work enhanced their ability to plan public use trails and create education materials and programs for users and school groups in the area. Other groups have done more to earn a greater respect for tracking and trackers through the fields of wildlife monitoring, research, and search and rescue as well. The experience of the trained tracker today is gaining worldwide attention.

As a Shikari, you are directly linked to the ancient knowledge of the nomadic trackers of old. Certified graduates of the *Shikari Tracker Training Program* possess powerful tracking tools. They are astute interpreters of the land, steeped in advanced knowledge and experimentation into the physiology and ecology of the animals, weather patterns, the history and development of soils, and how all of these things interact with each other along with the birds, plants, trees, insects, and people of a place to leave stories in the landscape. Because of the rigors of this training, certified graduates should be recognized as masters in the field of nature study.

The Shikari program represents a rebirth of tracking. Just as the world opens its eyes again to what the trackers have to offer, we invite and welcome you to join us on this exciting adventure.

INTRODUCING CYBERTRACKER

“Cyber-what? Did I hear you say, ‘cyber-*tracker*’? Those two words don’t fit in the same sentence!” Louis Liebenberg, a tracker from South Africa who learned tracking by spending many, many years in the wilds of that country. By working directly with the elder hunter-gatherer trackers, Louis quickly realized that they were the true experts in the knowledge of the wilderness and animal tracking. He knew their knowledge of place and their ability to follow almost invisible animal trails across hard-pan soil was almost unbelievable. But their “illiteracy” when it came to reading and writing caused them to be “unavailable” as participants in research except in rare cases where scientists employed them as guides. The field of ecology and the dominating viewpoints of most of the last century placed the Bushmen and other tribal peoples into the realm of “superstitious” and somewhat unrealistic in their views of ecology.

However, Louis figured out how to capture the knowledge of these amazing trackers by creating a “symbol” or “icon-driven” database program for handheld computers such as the popular Palm Pilot. With Louis’ database program installed in such a handheld unit and with a linking GPS unit, the Bushmen could follow game and make observations in the field—and Louis could track the scientific validity of their results. As Louis worked more and more with them, he was better able to evolve the program to reflect more of the depths of their observations to include behavior, ecological information, speed of travel and the identity of specific individuals. Working with fellow Afrikaner Lindsay Stevenson to create a user interface suitable to the Bushmen trackers, Louis created what we now know as *CyberTracker*.

Once the Native trackers were afield with the new system, they were able to gather amazingly detailed and voluminous data on the wildlife of Africa. They logged thousands of data points and really impressed the field scientists. When the work that they did was cross-checked, it turned out to be 100% accurate and *not* at all superstitious in nature, which only makes sense in the end. Thanks to the help of Louis Liebenberg, Lindsay Steventon, and *CyberTracker*, the Bushmen have taken their rightful place as the real experts in the wilderness ecology that they inhabit.

Shikari Tracker Training Program is currently developing a North American version of *CyberTracker*. Our vision is expanding, from “a field guide on every table,” to “a palm pilot equipped with a global positioning satellite system (GPS) in every pocket.” As we progress in this project, we are forming alliances with NatureMapping and its affiliates to train teachers and students in the public school system whose an field research will be downloaded into government scientific wildlife databases as a means of “mapping” the habitats and populations of fish and wildlife world-wide. *Our technology is developing and our alliances are growing daily. Stay tuned!*

W.O.L.F. TRACKS

The Wilderness Outdoor Leadership Fundamentals (W.O.L.F. Tracks) program is an advanced mentoring program with both ancient and modern roots. It is built from the extensive curricular foundation that Wilderness Awareness School has developed over the years to train naturalists, trackers, mentors, and community leaders. W.O.L.F. Tracks stems from the vision of Jon Young and Wilderness Awareness School to provide a program suitable to a variety of students’ needs that synthesizes all these elements into one program to train future leaders in the environmental field.

W.O.L.F. Tracks is designed to train well-rounded “coyote teachers”, trackers, outdoor skills practitioners, and mentors. In order to accomplish this, the program trains students in the arts of tracking, awareness, philosophy, survival, service and leadership. Graduates of this training will have both a deep relationship with the earth and confidence in their ability to safely and effectively teach others. All these elements are incorporated with the aspiration of developing dynamic leaders who will help caretake the earth, and aid others to establish healthy connections to people and the natural world.

Please visit
our web site
for current
and detailed
information
on all of our
programs.

WILDERNESS AWARENESS SCHOOL'S CORE CURRICULUM

Wilderness Awareness School's core is the Kamana program. The curriculum that runs through it is hitched to everything else we do. It is organized along two trails which are crisscrossed by six tracks and a resting place.

TRAILS

The two twin trails are designed to prepare you to be a skillful and fierce naturalist or tracker.

The Nature Awareness Trail

This trail focuses on developing your awareness in an expansive way. It is about using your eyes and ears and other senses in ways not often challenged in academic training. *Kamana One* through *Kamana Four* contain **Field Exercises** to practice. If you work on them every day, the result will be new patterns in your awareness, an increase in your "mind's eye" ability to visualize things, a strengthening of your gut feelings, and an ability to be in the right place at the right time.

The *Kamana Two* through *Four* Nature Awareness Trail also involves **Field Inventories**. They develop your depth of awareness. You will go to the same place every day and create inventories of what you observe in the surrounding environment throughout the four seasons. By keeping a journal and mapping your most vivid memories throughout the week, you will become conditioned to a sense of native groundedness in a place. It will get so you know this place like your own home. You will develop a very special bond with this place.

The Resource Trail

The second trail guides you into research to develop background skills using resources. Though this may sometimes seem like an academic exercise, trust me, it is not. There are elements of poetry, spirit, and power in the observational experience inherent in this exercise series. The goals on this trail are manifold. Most important, we want you to increase in your ability to use your "mind's eye" as a tool for field observation—while providing your mind's eye with a set of "mental file cards" to work in concert with your newly developed observation skills.

To do so, we'll guide you toward an overall sense of the patterns that define the various families and groups of plants and animals in your area. Through investigating all six tracks on this trail, you will gain an appreciation of the language of science, and you will develop self-

sufficiency in research. You will learn to sort through nature's overwhelming diversity to focus in on key species. With each Kamana level, you will go deeper with your investigations until you have finally built a foundation for awareness.

TRACKS

The following six tracks are imbedded in both trails throughout all levels Kamana. As you progress, you will be taken deeper into each of these subjects. (The other five tracks will become expanded Independent Study programs in the future.)

Kamana: Inspiration and Hazards (East)

Inspirational stories from native elders and people closely associated with the natural world; organization of resources; understanding the "mind's eye" technique for study; bringing books to life; self-sufficiency skills in using resources; foundations of taxonomy; hazards of the wilds.

Shikari: Mammals and the Arts of Tracking (South)

The Shikari is a tracker in the traditions of the Kumoan region of India. This track is named in honor of Jim Corbett, famed Shikari. This section focuses on the real basics of how tracking is learned through self-guided study. Natural history of mammals; physiology of animals; dominant sense patterns; survival strategies. *Kamana Training will give the basic knowledge needed for tracking skills: identification of sign, aging, event sequencing, ecological tracking; tracking as an interpretive art; using tracking skills in the modern world for environmental protection, preservation, and rehabilitation.*

Msafiri: Plants and the Arts of Wandering (Southwest/Earth)

The Msafiri is an Akamba who knows how to live off the land, one who specializes in the knowledge of plants for survival and use in medicine. Safe preparation for foraging; research skills in native use of plants in crafts and as a source of medicine; wild herbaceous plants and ecology; basic taxonomy of plants for field identification. *Kamana Training will give the basic knowledge needed for overland navigation techniques including aidless navigation; map and compass use for bioresource assessment.*

Ongwehonwe: Sacred Stewardship & Principles of Peace (West)

From the Mohawk language, “Ongwehonwe” simply translates to mean “people living in accordance with their original instructions.” This is a concept we need to revive in our modern world. This is a study of humans living with the environment in the past, present and future. Ecosystems and indicator species; interdependency of species in an ecosystem; ecology as a basis for prediction of animal behavior and plant species location; interplay of extremes and bird’s eye viewing of land features; invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles; conservation ecology; the history of the land and the native peoples’ staple resources; natural community dynamics; leadership in the field of environmental education, stewardship.

Tonweya: T rees and the Arts of Survival (North)

This section is named after the Lakota word for “scout.” A scout is one who knows the ways of survival and living off the land. Field dendrology (study of trees); “landmark” tree studies; ecological niches and tree communities; trees as they affect aspects of the landscape; use of trees for survival and in native lore. *Kamana Training will give the basic knowledge needed fo* learning to find and safely use water resources; safe use of fire and fire skills; shelter, from rock overhangs to Longhouses; procuring food in times of need; crafts for survival.

Dawa: Birds and Their Voices (Northeast/Sky)

Dawa is Kikamba for “Medicine.” Ingwe, Tom Brown and so many native teachers we have worked with have all expressed this understanding to us: Learning to use your senses to their fullest quiets the mind and opens the heart to the sixth sense and the spiritual ways of life so similar among all Human Beings the world over. This track focuses on those things which help us “Lose our Minds and Come to our Senses!” Taxonomy and physiology of birds; migration and range maps; understanding the language of birds; sensory development; invisibility: moving with grace and ease using birds and animals as teachers; finding solitude in the wilderness for self-development and self-awareness.

Wrapping the Bundle: Tying the Trails Together (The Final Synthesis of Kamana Skills)

Synthesis of the two trails of the Kamana program: 1) Nature Awareness Trail Field Exercises and Field Inventories and 2) Resource Trail Research. Review of background basics; tracking skills learned from study of mammals; self-sufficiency in plant skills; field ecology; review of tree lore for survival; review of bird language for awareness; overall closure for Kamana path. This assignment is sent after students complete *Kamana Four* .

APPENDIX A: KAMANA LEVELS & GENERAL INFORMATION

Kamana One: Exploring Natural Mystery

How long it takes to complete: Two to six weeks

Includes: *Kamana One: Exploring Natural Mystery (Introduction, Nature Awareness Trailhead. Resource Trailhead)* No student services support. Letter and Certificate of Completion and sent upon submission of Field Pack (extra fee).

Resources to buy: *Readers Digest: North American Wildlife, Seeing Through Native Eyes*(6 cassette series) with Jon Young.

Kamana Two: Path of the Naturalist

Prerequisite: *None*

Includes: Binder, *Songline* book, *Nature Awareness Trail Two Resource Trail Two* Field Journal pad.

How long it takes to complete: Minimum of 4 months

Length of Student Services support (optional): 12 months

Student Services support options for those who choose it:

1) Full servicing (includes review of all four Field Packs, phone and email support, one year of *Foxprint* quarterly newsletter (will add a year if already receiving it), Certificate of Completion) or **2)** Certification option (includes one review for all four Field Packs and a Certificate of Completion).

Structure: Resource Trail: Field journaling from each of the 6 Resource Trail tracks; Nature Awareness Trail: 3 monthly Field exercises, 12 weekly Naturalist Inventories. Total of 4 Field Packs must be handed in to complete.

Additional Resources: Books/Tapes : *Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message* (children's book) by Jake Swamp, **Either** *Spirit of the Leopard* (cassette) by Ingwe **OR** *Ingwe* (book) by Ingwe

Field Guides : *Peterson's Field Guide to: Mammals, Birds* (your region), *Tracks, Venomous Animals & Poisonous Plants, Wildflowers* (your region) or a good local plant guide; *Birder's Handbook* (Ehrlich, Dobkin, Wheye); *Audubon Guide to Trees* (east or west); *Newcomb's Guide to Wildflowers*, *Golden Guides to: Insects, Pond Life, Reptiles & Amphibians*

Kamana Three: Deepening the Roots of Nature Awareness

Prerequisite: *Kamana Two*

Includes: Binder, *Resource Trail Three, Nature Awareness Trail Three*, field journal pad, **Student services support.**

How long it takes to complete: Minimum of 5 months

Length of Student Services support: 18 months

Structure: The Resource Trail will now look at your journals from "a broader perspective." Valuable taxonomy skills and fami-

ly studies will precede more involved journaling. This is the beginning of your ecological view. Nature Awareness Trail: 4 more Field Exercises, advanced routines for weekly inventories (16 more). Total of 5 Field Packs must be handed in to complete. **Additional Resources:** Required: *Botany in a Day* (Tom Elpel); *Skulls & Bones*(Searfross); *Skeleton* (Eyewitness Books); *Peterson's Guides: Medicinal Plants, Edible Plants*, a college level Biology textbook

Kamana Four: The Complete Naturalist

Prerequisite: *Kamana Three*

Includes: Binder, *Resource Trail Four, Nature Awareness Trail Four*, field journal pad, *Trails/Wrapping the Bundle* assignment (sent when level completed), **Student services support.**

How long it takes to complete: Minimum of 8 months

Length of Student Services support: 24 months

Structure: The Resource Trail is now taken from a complete ecological perspective after making master and focus lists. Over half the field journaling in the entire course is done at this level. A tracker in any field will now see how natural communities work together. You're now ready to understand focus and the key to efficient learning in this field of study that can be perceived as infinite and overwhelming. Nature Awareness Trail: 5 more Field Exercises, advanced routines for weekly inventories (24 more). Total of 6 Field Packs must be handed in to complete the level, in addition to *Wrapping the Bundle*, which ties all your experiences from both trails together. *Kamana* certification is granted upon submission of this assignment.

Additional Resources : *Stoke's Animal Tracking & Behavior*, Bird call tapes; *Peterson's: Reptiles & Amphibians*(your region), *Forests* (your region); *American Wildlife & Plants: A Guide to Wildlife Food Habits* (Martin & Nelson); other resources such as survival and local ethnobotany books.

Note about Required Resources: We try our best to only require books and guides that will be lifelong friends, not books you stick on a shelf and never look at again after you're finished. If you're short on cash you can always find most of them at a public library. Guides you buy for earlier levels will be used throughout the entire program. All resources are for sale at our web site.

Foxprint is Wilderness Awareness School's quarterly newsletter that comes as a benefit to those who contribute to the school, which is a non-profit organization. One year of *Foxprint* comes with the purchase of Full Student Services support for *Kamana Two*. After that, students may continue to receive it yearly by making an annual contribution to Wilderness Awareness School. Those who currently receive it when joining *Kamana Two* servicing will have a year added to their subscription. **Please call Wilderness Awareness School or visit our web site for details and to receive a free sample.**

How long will the *entire* course take? It's up to you.

The time length we give is based on our experience with the student who has a job, a family and maybe even is going to school part time. Some may finish in half that time and some may take long breaks between each level. The important thing is that you are consistently working on the *Kamana* routines while you are enrolled in a class, whether you finish in half the time we give or the full amount of time. *Kamana One* is designed to give you an idea of what life might be like with *Kamana* as part of it. It is wise to begin *Kamana Two* after you know you can devote an average of an hour a day toward study if you want to complete it in four months.

How Field Packs and Time Limits Work

If you are given 12 months to complete *Kamana Two* for instance, that means all four Field Packs must be completed and sent in before your deadline. If you go over your deadline, you must include a \$25 late fee per Field Pack in order for us to review, respond and give you credit. Let's say you hand in two of the four Field Packs for *Kamana Two*, it is June 1 and your deadline was April 15. Whenever you send in your last two Field Packs, each must include a \$25 late fee.

Kamana Two Student Services Option

When you purchase *Kamana Two*, you are purchasing all the materials you need to take yourself through the course (minus the required field guide resources). For an additional fee, you can sign up for Student Services through Wilderness Awareness School, which includes written review of work, phone and email support for the duration of the program, a year of our *Foxprint* newsletter, and a certificate upon completion. A second option for *Kamana Two* allows you to receive a certificate with one response upon completion. *Kamana Three* and *Four* are only available with full servicing.

We recognize *Kamana Two* as being a very important level in Kamana Training. It is in *Kamana Two* that you are introduced to core routines that you will continue to practice throughout the remainder of the Kamana Program. Knowing this, our instructors review your work in *Kamana Two* with the intention of guiding you down the path of least resistance, so to speak.

For very expanded information on Student Services including all the important details on the options and tuition fees, please visit www.WildernessAwareness.org. This information is also included in Kamana Two's *Getting Started with Student Services* guide.

College Credit

Continuing Education credits are available for all levels of Kamana. For details on how this works and for the current forms, please visit our web site. We also have information that may help you to get credit from your existing college or university.

Internet Community

Please visit www.kamana.org for information on joining the Kamana list server, a chat room and more!



WILDERNESS AWARENESS SCHOOL

Foxprint's mission is to provide a touchstone for students and friends of Wilderness Awareness School, to foster a sense of community, to provide the type of support found in community through shared experience and strong lines of communication, and to create a vehicle through which the student also becomes the teacher by sharing with others what they have learned.

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Foxprint

The Voice of The Wilderness Awareness School Community

Becoming A Tracker

by Jan Young

This article is dedicated to the memory of all the great trackers who have ever lived on this earth.

When I was ten years old, my life changed due to meeting a tracker on a street corner. Many of you will know him as Tom Brown Jr. On that day, I began a journey that is still continuing. In this issue of *Foxprint*, I'm going to tell you some stories from my childhood, and a little bit about how Tom taught me to become a tracker. I hope that those of you who are studying to become trackers will appreciate this journey.

I had already made quite a good start when I met Tom, thanks to the encouragement I received from some elders in my family. These elders gave me nature books as Christ-

mas gifts. They encouraged me to catch frogs and snakes and keep them as pets and learn about them. There were other little kids in the neighborhood who came over to hang out with me whenever they wanted to develop that side of themselves, but then they'd disappear back into their sports world. I just never went that way: nature was always my thing.

I really believe that this is the way that most children are. I've worked with lots of children over the years, and seen their fascination with all that's natural and beautiful and wild. So I believe that an interest in nature and in tracking is simply an expression of our internal blueprint, our internal genetic memory of what life was like before "civilization" took hold.

I also loved fishing. My father and my god-mother encouraged me, and pretty soon I



Foxprint is a quarterly newsletter that comes with the *Kamana Two* Student Services Option. You can also receive it for a year by contributing \$35 or more to Wilderness Awareness School. Visit www.WildernessAwareness.org to download a free issue and to contribute!