



# Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment

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Our Web Site: [www.wise-edu.org](http://www.wise-edu.org)

W I S E

## Copper River Country Nature Tour

By Janelle Eklund

Our first full season for the Copper River Country Nature Tour was a big success. WISE is a vendor of Princess Tours and tours operate three days a week, with two tours available each of those three days. Independent travelers are also targeted so tours have the potential to operate more than three days a week. For 2008 there were a total of 279 guests. The program operated 45 out of 52 tour days and the program grossed \$3,472. For its first year we consider this program a big success, thanks to the dedicated naturalists, Beth Cender and Doris Ivory. Beth Cender and Doris Ivory were very popular guides with all of our guests. With 98% of the evaluations returned, the program was rated high quality and exceeded expectations or high quality and worthwhile. Comments included:

*"The guides were great, very knowledgeable and thoughtful.*



*Thank you for a super tour." "Great trip. One of the best I have been on." "The tour was the most informative, best prepared and extremely well paced of all the tours we have taken. The two guides were exceptional in their*

*knowledge and enthusiasm." "Loved it! It was nice to experience the 'true Alaska' not the normal tours that are so preplanned and almost commercial." "Our guides are so knowledgeable and personable – it made learning a pleasure!!"*

WISE recognizes the importance of knowledgeable, dedicated, personable guides for the success of the Natural History Tour. That is what we strive for as we seek naturalists for this season.

With reports of tour bookings being down this year, because of the economic downturn, we are cautiously optimistic about the 2009 season.

The Rasmuson Foundation was instrumental in the success of this program through a grant that enabled us to purchase a 15 passenger van. The van was used throughout the season and was also used for our other youth programs. We would once again like to thank the Rasmuson Foundation for this generous contribution.

## WISE Hires Staff

By Janelle Eklund

In February of 2008 WISE hired an Executive Director, Beth Cender. Beth organized Earth Discovery and Changing Seasons Programs, as well as helping with other outreach programs. She helped develop an employee manual and worked on other documents. Beth was also hired as a Naturalist for our new fee based Copper River Country Nature Tour. We were very impressed with her abilities and accomplishments as both Executive Director and Naturalist while she was with us. And so we were sorry when she resigned in September due to personal reasons.

We are now seeking to replace Beth. The Executive Director reports to the WISE Board of Directors, and is responsible for general oversight of WISE operations. The Executive Director provides staff support to the board of directors, manages programs, and conducts fund-raising and grant-writing. This position has the potential of becoming a full time position depending on donor funding and success of fee-based programs.

In May, 2008, WISE hired a naturalist for the Copper River Country Natural History Tour, Doris Ivory. Doris came from Eagle River with a certificate as a Naturalist from the Campbell Creek Science Center. Doris brought to the program a wealth of knowledge on Alaska natural history, a desire to research more subject matter, and a personable rapport. WISE will be hiring a naturalist and Intern for the 2009 season.



2009 WISE TALES

ENLIGHTENED CITIZENS MAKE WISE DECISIONS

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If you might be interested in either of these positions, a full position descriptions and employment application can be found at [www.wise-edu.org](http://www.wise-edu.org): click "Employment". For further information email or call Janelle Eklund at [jeklund@cvinternet.net](mailto:jeklund@cvinternet.net), 907-822-3282 or Dave Wellman at [welm@wellwoodcenter.com](mailto:welm@wellwoodcenter.com), 907-822-3418.

## Enthusiasm for Learning Evident at Earth Discovery Day

By Beth Cender

May 1, 2008 began and ended with the sun warming the faces of 109 fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students gathered for the sixth annual Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment Earth Discovery Day held at the Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve Visitor Center.



While the rest of the day was cloudy and cool, students remained enthusiastic and engaged.

Presenters exposed students to topics that underlined

basic environmental principles, encouraged creative thinking and problem solving, and introduced skills needed to enjoy the outdoors safely. Presentations met standards set by the State of Alaska for science education. Teachers will often expand upon the day's learning with additional assignments once they are back in the classroom. Students from the Copper River School District, Mentasta, SAPA, and Home School rotated through four stations according to their grade level.

Fourth Grade students experienced "Don't Dunk the Junk" with Arlene Rosenkrans of Resource Conservation and Development and Cliff Eames of Copper Country Alliance, Planetarium with Ted Hesser of SAPA, Silent Hunter – Great Horned Owl with Ed Podgorski of Alaska Wildbird Rehabilitation Center, and "Funky Fish" with Lin Perry-Plake of Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Fifth grade stations offered map and compass "Where's Waldo" with Marnie Graham, Joe Hart, and Lauri Jones of BLM; "Learning to Look, Looking to See" with Smitty Parratt of National Park Service; Stories in Rock Crystals with Dave Wellman of WISE; and Songbirds, and How They Sing with Vic and Trisha Bruss.

Sixth grade students learned about Tree ID and Leaf Hunt Relay with Mike Trimmer and Van Waggoner of Alaska Division of Forestry, Leave No Trace with Glenn Hart of National Park Service and Janelle Eklund of WISE, Watershed/Enviroscape with Doug Vollman of Kenny Lake Soil and Water Conservation, and Buteo Basics – Red Tailed Hawk with Jeanette Hanneman of Alaska Wildbird Rehabilitation Center.

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Students shared some of the things they learned during the day – "I will try to keep from throwing away stuff I just used once", "I will listen and watch birds and know what they are", and "I will be a better camper and will have more knowledge about the environment."



Many people and organizations helped make this day possible. WISE would like to thank the presenters and their agencies/organizations, the volunteers who helped keep the day on track, the teacher and parent chaperones, and Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve for the use of their

beautiful setting. WISE thanks the WISE membership and sponsors Alaska Conservation Foundation, ConocoPhillips, Municipal Energy Assistance Program, Rasmuson Foundation, Studebaker Environmental Education Fund, and Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve for their generous support. Conservation and Development and Cliff Eames of Copper Country Alliance, Planetarium with Ted Hesser of SAPA, Silent Hunter – Great Horned Owl with Ed Podgorski of Alaska Wildbird Rehabilitation Center, and "Funky Fish" with Lin Perry-Plake of Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

## A Change in Seasons

By Beth Cender

After a cool, rainy summer hopes were high that the changing colors of fall would bring nicer weather for the 6th annual Changing Seasons, a program for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in the Copper River School District and Mentasta School.



While the skies didn't quite cooperate, spirits remained high and excitement was evident as students and presenters gathered. Students met at Slana School from Chistochina, Slana, and Mentasta on September 9 under cloudy skies and sprinkles of rain; at Glennallen School on September 10 with rain all day; and at Kenny Lake School from Kenny Lake and Copper Center on September 11 under cloudy skies with the sun peaking out as we said goodbye to the students.

Students observed the rain shadow effect on the Copper River Valley demonstrated by Doug Vollman from the Kenny Lake Soil and Water Conservation District and Heidi Veach of the Cooperative Extension Service. They dove into the behavior and habitats of local fish with Molly

WISE PROGRAMS

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McCormick, Lucas Stumpf, and Tamara Harper of the National Park Service. They explored which animals migrate, hibernate, or adapt for the winter with Marnie Graham, Merben Cebrian, and Chad Cook from the Bureau of Land Management. And they experienced the connections between plants, animals, and the rest of the earth with Glenn Hart and Lori Beauchamp of the National Park Service, and Doris Ivory, WISE Naturalist.

WISE thanks all the above presenters and agencies for their efforts and contributions in making this program a huge success. Our thanks also go out to Bev Oatman and Sandy Williams who give of their time to help make the days run smoothly. We are thankful for grants from ConocoPhillips, the Studebaker Environmental Education Fund, Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska Conservation Foundation, and Municipal Energy Assistance Program (MEAP).

## Copper River Stewardship Program

*By Janelle Eklund*

The Copper River Stewardship Program is a new name for the Watershed Leadership Program implemented in 2007. Applicants that may apply for this program are grades 8<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>. WISE is working in partnership with Prince William Sound Science Center and the Copper River Watershed Project to offer the program to five students from the lower (Cordova) and five from the upper (Copper Basin) watershed. The trip will be on the Copper River from the town of Chitnato the Million Dollar Bridge with pre and post lessons in both the upper and lower watersheds. Students would learn about salmon as the 'red thread', geology, flora and fauna, Gulkana Hatchery Tour, subsistence, cultural history, oil spill impacts, LeaveNoTrace, landownership, wildlife tracking, human use data, river dynamics and rafting techniques, commercial fisheries, salmon escapement, journaling, and public presentations. Students will also be able to interact and discuss the differences, similarities and connections of the upper and lower Copper River Watershed.



Our goal is to raise \$15,000. As of January 15 we have raised \$6,000. We need \$9,000 to reach our goal. Please consider donating to this worthy and important program. Students that took the 2007 program have told us about the benefits they received from their experiences. One student used information he learned during his summer job as a student interpreter. This student has grown up in the Copper Basin and he wants to make a positive contribution to his community through the experiences he gains as a student. This program grows informed young people so that when they graduate they can work and continue to live in the place where they grew up and love.

## Spruce Bark Beetle Education *by Dave Wellman*

In July, WISE board member Dave Wellman presented photos, specimens, and a talk on spruce bark beetles at the Kenny Lake Library Summer Youth Camp. The presentation was well-received by a group of about 20 active and interested young campers.

Two months later, in September, Dave visited the Kenny Lake biology classes of science teacher Mark Proch with a similar, though more in-depth, presentation on *Dendroctonus rufipennis*, the spruce bark beetle. Mr. Proch's students are doing a project on this important little denizen of the boreal forest and Dave was invited to share some of the knowledge gained during a similar project 10 years ago. At that time Dave was the science teacher at Kenny Lake and the spruce bark beetles were doing a great deal of damage to spruce forests in the Copper Basin and in other areas of Alaska. Dave received a grant for his students to do research on the beetle and the epidemic. His classes produced a poster that is still used to illustrate the life of the beetle and potential effects of its activities.

In these presentations, theories about the possible causes of the beetle epidemic were discussed, tying the beetle in to broader topics of ecology. These were welcome opportunities to share a bit of local science with Copper Basin young people. WISE wishes great success to Mr. Proch and his students in their current studies of this small creature with a big impact.

## Pick.Click.Give.

### PFD Charitable Contributions Program

Wrangell Institute For Science and Environment is pleased to announce that we are part of the new PFD Charitable Contributions Program for 2009. The Alaska Legislature passed a law in 2008 making this new a way to give contributions for all Alaskans filing for their PFD on-line. We are excited about the opportunity that it provides all Alaskans to give to their favorite nonprofit organizations. This program provides a safe, secure and easy way to make a donation and help support our educational programs. By giving through this program, you join others to become an important force in bettering our communities and our state. For those of you who already give to the Wrangell Institute For Science and Environment, we appreciate your gifts and hope you will use this option to make an additional donation.

### *How to Donate*

When you go on-line to sign up for your dividend, you will see the option called "The Gift of Giving." Search for us by choosing Region (Judicial District 1) and Wrangell Institute For Science and Environment. Click and follow the instructions to make a new donation, or an additional gift. At the same time, please take the extra step you will see after you make your donation to provide your contact information to us. We want to acknowledge and recognize your generous support, and this is the only way we will know it's you making the gift. Please click the box that shares information with us, so we can keep you informed of WISE's future programs.

You can find more information about the program, including frequently asked questions at [www.PickClickGive.org](http://www.PickClickGive.org). Or you may call us at 907-822-3282.

ENLIGHTENED CITIZENS MAKE WISE DECISIONS



## A *WISE* Thanks To Our Generous Donors

Wise is making a positive impact on citizens of the Copper Basin thanks to contributions from you. This revenue helps fund programs and works towards developing others.

### MEMBERS

Tom Banks, Caren Barlow, Edgar and Elaine Begy, Melissa Blair, Geoff Bleakley, Bob & Nancy Boos, Barbara Cellarius, Dana Bruden, Jeff and Christine Brune, Beth Cender & Jeff Yarman, Copper River Record, John Creed & Susan Andrews, Mary Ann Dempsay, Eric Downey and Cathy Hart, Cliff Eames and Ruth McHenry, Janelle Eklund & Paul Boos, Lil & Terry Gilmore, Marnie Graham and Doug Vollman, Lynn & Craig Grams, Kay Hackney & Fred Decicco, Nick Hardigg, William & Betty Harryman, Glenn & Suanne Hart, Brendan Harry, Jen Jolliffe, Julie Jessen, Arnold & Krystyna Kamen, Karin Kozi and Bill Route, Paula & Bruce Kaye, Wendy & Ronal Langseth, Louise & Gordon Marshall, Chuck Maas, Suzanne McCarthy, CD & Kathy McCurry, Bonnie McLeod, Ramone McCoy, Mike McQueen & Meg Jenson, Marcia and Henry Millette, Jeremiah Millen, Trish Miller & Chip Hamann, Jan Myers, Bev Oatman, Smitty Parratt, Matt Rafferty, Kim Roeske, Barbara Rudio, Carla Schierholt, Jake Schlapfer, Roger & Marilyn Schnittjer, Tim & Dorothy Sine, Tracy Smith, Dr. Daniel Solie, Mark & Carla Somerville, Vicki Snitzler & Marshall Neeck, Marci Thurston & Ben Shaine, Barb & Will Tipton, Paul Twardock, Lynn Wegener, Mark & Mindy Weisenbloom, Dave & Gay Wellman, Bonnie Westland, Deborah Williams, Fred Williams, Kay Wilson, Kris & Michael Winter, Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Andy & Sue Zajac.

### GRANTS 2008

Alaska Conservation Foundation; Conoco Phillips; Studebaker Environmental Education Fund; Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Municipal Energy Assistance Program.

### IN-KIND HELP

Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game; Alaska Dept. of Forestry; Alaska Wildbird Rehabilitation Center, Bureau of Land Management; Cooperative Extension Service; Copper Country Alliance, Copper River School District; Gateway School District; Doris Ivory, Kenny Lake Soil and Water Conservation; Prince William Sound Community College; Resource Conservation & Development; SAPA; Bev Oatman; Sandy Williams; University of Alaska HAARP Education Outreach; Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve; and numerous volunteers from throughout the Copper Basin.

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