

## **Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment Annual Report January 1– December 31, 2006**

### **Presidents Report**

WISE accomplished many of our goals but also has work to do on accomplishing others that were outlined in the 2006 Annual Work Plan. We fulfilled our goal of hiring a contractor for our Earth Discovery Day and Changing Seasons programs. Even though this was a part time position it helped relieve at least half the load on this president so she could concentrate on other programs and administrative responsibilities. The contractor, Lynn Grams, did an excellent job of coordinating these programs. Now that she knows the process we would be way ahead to do a full time contract for the 2007 Earth Discovery Day and Changing Seasons programs. Board members conducted nine in-school programs of the ten projected. The Salmon Project was completed. There was not much done on assisting in scientific research and providing education opportunities connected with it, nor a data base started with links to web site. WISE worked with students and teachers on the Kenny Lake trail project. The web site was completed and we need to add to it a list of resource for teachers (kits, curriculums, etc.). WISE was unable to assist in the Nabesna Day Camp as all board members were busy or gone. There were no CRNA camps this year. We met our goal of conducting two Leave No Trace classes. We also conducted a water quality/invertebrate class to girl scouts and participated in the BLM Public Lands Appreciation Day clean-up at Sourdough Campground. We met our goal of completing a pilot fee based nature walk program with Princess Tours tourists. The lecture series was a big success with six lectures during winter months and two during fall months, exceeding our goal of six per year. We received five grants out of our goal of four. We conducted one membership drive out of the two projected and one small fund raiser, which was more of an image builder at the Kenny Lake Fair. Our income goal was a little over half of the total projected. Our capacity to seek grants was down in 2006. The five grants we received were \$500 to \$1,500. We lost two board members and did not recruit the one projected. We did recruit one advisory board member with a legal background. As far as office equipment we met our goal of obtaining a good quality photo printer, quicken software for financial and donor data bases, file drawers, and other miscellaneous office supplies. We met our goal of publishing two newsletters and updating the brochure. We did not complete the article for the journal of the Arctic Institute of North America.

### **Programs**

#### Earth Discovery Day

This was the fourth successful year for this program held at National Park Service grounds, mile 106 Richardson Hwy. We were able to have three presenters from the Bird Treatment and Learning Center with three different birds for each grade. There were 102 students, 22 less than 2005. WISE received \$500 each from Alaska Conservation Foundation, Wells Fargo Bank, and Conoco Phillips for this program; \$1,300 from Alaska Community Foundation (received in 2005 for 2006); \$180 of tools for teaching from Leave No Trace, Inc.; and close to \$14,000 in-kind support. The contractor, Lynn Grams, did an excellent job helping to coordinate this program. It is important that this be a full time coordinator from now on.

### Changing Seasons

This was the fourth successful year for this program. This program is held at Slana School, Glennallen School and Kenny Lake School where 105 students attended. Other schools attended at the various locations. There were four stations that students rotated to. This year the weather was warm and the bugs were intolerable, mostly on the last day at Slana. The program was brought into the gym in Slana. It seems the weather is different every year and bug problems were the last thing on our mind for weather problems. WISE used the rest of the 2005 Alaska Community Foundation grant of \$4,000 for this program (\$2,700). We also received \$1,500 from the Studebaker Environmental Education Fund which was used for Changing Seasons. With these grants we were able to hire a part-time contractor, Lynn Grams, who again did an excellent job. As with Earth Discovery Day, it is important that this be a full time coordinator from now on.

### Leave No Trace

Three Leave No Trace sessions were taught by Janelle Eklund and Glenn Hart. There was a Leave No Trace station for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade group at Earth Discovery Day. Janelle Eklund traveled to Willow with the Bureau of Land Management to help teach a one day class to Gulkana River users. Janelle also taught a two day Train the Trainer class in May.

### Kenny Lake Trails Project

WISE board members met with Arlene Rosenkrans of Resource Conservation and Development and Kenny Lake school teachers to continue the work with students on the interpretive trail project for the schools new educational trail. Puppets were purchased and a puppet show was developed and shown to elementary students to give them ideas for interpreting their trail. WISE board members attended meetings to help decide benches for the trail, brochure and interpretive content and design, and interpretive layout along the trail.

### Lecture Series

Late winter, spring, and fall WISE, in partnership with Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Prince William Sound Community College, and High Active Auroral Research Project Science Outreach program, had many good lectures with speakers coming from all over the State as well as locally. Topics included Ice Depths and other Mysteries on Mt. Wrangell; Lake Ahtna; Alaska Ocean Film Festival; Alaska Weather Systems; Volcano Chasers; Bird TLC; Climate Change in Alaska; and Joint US and Russian Deep Ice Coring and Climate Change Expeditions on Mt. Wrangell.

### In-Classroom and Other Youth Visits

Board members conducted nine class room and outdoor visits to the various schools in the Copper River School District; NPS - Colony Middle School; and other youth groups from grades 1-8. Subjects included: Geology; Boreal Forest ecology; plant identification; puppet show; fire wise; ecosystem interpretive trail walks on the Aspen Trail; wetlands

exploration with Girl Scouts; animal tracks and Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve environmental scavenger hunt.

#### In the Shadow of the Wrangell Mountains Nature Walk/Talk

WISE advertised with Princess Lodge to take visitors on a nature walk/talk on Wellwood Property. Animal skins were borrowed from a local trapper and a skull kit was borrowed from Fish and Game, as part of the talk. Board member, Dave Wellman volunteered to conduct the tour. This was a pilot project and advertising was not done ahead of time, so sign-up was low, for a total of 10 for the 3 months we were in operation. A van was leased from SAPA and insurance was acquired for the program. Evaluation forms were filled out by clients and everyone that took the tour was very impressed and enjoyed the program. It was expected that WISE would not make any money this first year, which we didn't. We did go in the hole but decided it was worthwhile to pursue the project for 2008. The board decided to spend 2007 to become financially secure and raise money for 2008. We will need to have the ability to hire naturalists, purchase a vehicle, insurance and other items for the program. Estimated costs to get the program up and running is \$45,700. The idea is that this program be self-sustaining and make money for the organization.

#### Library Summer Camp

WISE presented two sessions at a library summer camp during July of 2006. WISE board member Dave Wellman did one presentation on furs of wild animals from the Copper River region, and a second presentation several days later about skulls of local animals. These both occurred at the Kenny Lake Library, and were well-attended and enthusiastically received by about 20 young people and 6 adults.

#### **Fish Watch Monitoring**

WISE board members Janelle Eklund, Paul Boos and Dave Wellman participated in the Copper River Watershed Project (CRWP) Fish Watch monitoring program during the summer. Once a month from May through August water samples were taken at Willow Creek and Kenny Lake. Tests were for dissolved oxygen, nitrogen, phosphates, turbidity, ph, and looking at invertebrates. Dave Wellman and Doug Vollman (Advisory Board member) also installed recording thermometers on Willow Creek at two locations, one on Wellwood property at the bridge and another further upstream near the Richardson Hwy. The CRWP monitors streams in the Copper Basin for healthy fish ecosystems.

#### **Adopt a Road**

WISE adopted a one mile section of the Richardson Hwy between mile 105 and 106. Board and family members picked up litter during clean-up day in May along this stretch of road. DOT is supposed to be erecting a sign stating 'WISE Adopt a Road' on it for that section of road.

#### **Image Building/Fund Raiser**

WISE had a booth at the Kenny Lake fair to showcase the organization and its programs. Near the booth a picnic table was set up with activities for children or adults. They could make note cards and bookmarks with leaves, plants and rubber stamps, and a nature

crown made with wildflowers. The nature crowns were a big hit. A puppet show was also developed by WISE board members and two shows were given throughout the day. A large crowd gathered to watch each time. WISE board members and volunteers helped with these activities. There was a donation box and we raised about \$30 to help cover expenses.

### **Permafrost Monitoring Project**

During November, WISE assisted in a project conducted by a professor from UAF in which bore holes were drilled to monitor permafrost. The project seeks to involve local school children in the monitoring activities. This work is done by Dr. Kenji Yoshikawa from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Dr. Yoshikawa was assisted by Syosaku Kanamori, a doctoral student from Japan.

The Copper Basin is interesting because it represents a southern extent of the region where permafrost may be found. Permafrost is discontinuous in this region, being located only in areas where conditions are favorable.

Holes were drilled in the Kenny Lake area, near the school, but no permafrost was located. Dr. Yoshikawa plans to return in order to continue the search.

Facilitating the work of Dr. Yoshikawa were WISE members Dr. Daniel Solie, Dave Wellman, and Doug Vollman.

### **Training/Mentor**

In January WISE board members, Janelle Eklund, Dave Wellman, Paul Boos, and Glenn Hart met with Denali Foundation Executive Director, Willie Karidis in Fairbanks and traveled to their facilities near Denali. Willie shared information on how they grew the organization; organizational structure and development guidelines; program structure and development; job descriptions; curriculums; fundraising; and we toured their facility near Denali National Park on the Parks Hwy. This was a worthwhile mentoring trip, as we gained valuable information for WISE.

### **A Special Thank You to the following Sponsors, Partners, Members, and Volunteers for their time, resources, donations, and use of facilities:**

Grants: Alaska Community Foundation - \$4,000 (2005 grant used in 2006); Alaska Conservation Foundation - \$500; Studebaker Environmental Education Fund, \$1,500; Leave No Trace Tools for Teaching - \$180; Wells Fargo Bank - \$500; Conoco Phillips, \$500; Princess Tours \$500.

Partners, Members and Volunteers: Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game; Geoff Bleakley; Bob & Nancy Boos; Bureau of Land Management Glennallen Field Office; Barbara Cellarius; Cooperative Extension Service; Copper River Record; Copper River School District and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers; Gateway School District and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Teacher; Cliff Eames; Janelle Eklund and Paul Boos; John Creed and Susan Andrews; Kenny Lake Soil and Water Conservation District – Doug Vollman; Cheryl Gardner; Lil & Terry Gilmore; Kay Hackney & Fred Decicco; Glenn Hart; Jen Jolliffe; Karin Kozie and Bill Route; Wendy & Ronal Langseth; Mike Loso; Louise & Gordon Marshall; Suzanne McCarthy; Bonnie McLeod; Ramone McCoy; Marcia and Henry Milette; Mt. Sanford Tribal Consortium; National Parks Conservation Association; Bev Oatman;

Smitty and Shawn Parratt; Prince William Sound Community College; Resource Conservation & Development-Arlene Rosenkrans; Diane Rogers; Barbara Rudio; Carla Schierholt; Vicki Snitzler and Marshall Neeck; Dr. Daniel Solie; Barb & Will Tipton; Dave & Gay Wellman; Fred Williams; Sandy Williams; University of Alaska HAARP Education Outreach; Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve.

And thank you to all the numerous chaperones – parents and volunteers - that helped during Earth Discovery Day and the Changing Seasons Program.

**Financial Statement**

See attached WISE Profit and Loss with previous year comparison. Total income was \$12,956.65 (fee based programs \$1,531.65, Grants \$3,000, Membership \$3,200, Membership Dues \$4,745, Lecture \$270, Misc. \$179.90; total expenses were \$14,626.97; Balance for January 1, 2007 is \$9,119.89.

For day to day operations in-kind hours from board members and volunteers was about \$34,300. In-kind gas mileage from board members was about \$1,500. In-kind services from all other agencies, organizations, and volunteers were about \$30,000.