

Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment Annual Report January 1– December 31, 2008

Presidents Report

WISE had a very promising year for our new fee based Natural History Tour program and continuation of our youth programs. We hired an Executive Director/Naturalist, Beth Cender, and a Naturalist, Doris Ivory. These two employees were instrumental in the great success of the Copper River Country Natural History Tour. And Beth did a great job in organizing Earth Discovery Day and Changing Seasons Programs. Guests that took the Natural History Tour gave excellent evaluations on the delivery of the program and the friendly, knowledgeable guides. Two four hour tours were available three days a week from Princess Tours guests. There were a few down days where no one signed up or only two to three people. Only one guide would work the two people tours. Beth and Doris kept meticulous records and notes on suggestions for improvements. This information will guide us for the 2009 season.

Beth sent a letter of resignation in early September and left us after Changing Seasons was completed. This was a sad time for us as we were impressed with her abilities and accomplishments as an Executive Director. She had forgotten the amount of paperwork that comes with such a job and decided she wanted to concentrate her time on her farm.

We appreciate Beth and Doris for getting WISE off to a good start on our fee based tour program and organizing/helping with our youth programs.

Programs

Earth Discovery Day and Changing Seasons

This was the sixth successful year for Earth Discovery Day held at the visitor center grounds at Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve. There were 109 students that participated, 23 less than 2007.

It was the fifth successful year for Changing Seasons program. This program is held at Slana School, Glennallen School and Kenny Lake School where 68 students attended, 11 students less than 2007 due to lower enrollment in these grades. Other schools attended at the various locations. Executive Director, Beth Cender, did an excellent job coordinating these programs.

Leave No Trace

There was a Leave No Trace station for the 6th grade group at Earth Discovery Day taught by Janelle Eklund and Glenn Hart. Glenn and Janelle also gave a Leave No Trace trail walk with 20 youth at the Youth Environmental Summit. The Leave No Trace Camp Oh No was presented by Janelle at the BLM Public Lands Day on July 26. There were about 10 participants.

In-Classroom and Other Youth Visits

WISE helped plan and participated in the Youth Environmental Summit in Gakona in May. The puppet show, The Circle, was performed with youth participating. WISE helped at other stations, as well as leading the Leave No Trace trail walk. There were approximately 45 participants.

In June WISE had a booth at the Rural Cap Conference and led two interpretive trail walks on the Aspen Trail in Glennallen. There were a total of 30 adults and youth that participated. Beth Cender, Doris Ivory, and Janelle Eklund led the hikes.

In early June WISE set up a puppet show booth at the Fireweed festival in Copper Center. Doris Ivory and Janelle Eklund put on the show. The wind played havoc with the puppet stage and only one showing was completed, after almost getting swept away. Decided the puppet stage is better used indoors – or when the wind isn't blowing.

Dave Wellman gave two presentations for the Kenny Lake High School biology class on the Spruce Bark Beetle complete with specimens.

Paul Boos, Glenn Hart and Janelle Eklund set up learning stations for Colony Middle School on November 18 at the Park Service Visitor Center. Paul gave a presentation on bears in Katmai; Glenn on animal identification; and Janelle on wilderness safety jeopardy game. This program is sponsored every other year by WISE and NPS. Ninety students participated

Kenny Lake Trails Project

In August Janelle Eklund helped install the new interpretive signs on the Kenny Lake Trail. Paul Boos helped put together the kiosk for the trailhead sign.

Lecture Series

The night before Earth Discovery Day in May there was a lecture on live birds: Great Horned Owl and Red Tailed Hawk presented by Alaska Wild Bird Rehabilitation Center. In February Dan Solie came from Fairbanks with the new telescope and we had a star party at the HAARP site. Clouds rolled in and we didn't see much but we got to get a glimpse of what the new large telescope can do!

Copper River Country Natural History Tour Program

Tours began May 18 and ended September 14. There were a total of 272 paying guests. We had the potential for 936 guests. There was about 175 hours of volunteer time that went into hiring, training, pay periods/bookkeeping, etc. The program grossed \$21,552 and netted \$2,990.

Library Summer Camp

Dave Wellman gave a presentation on spruce bark beetles complete with specimens at the Kenny Lake Library.

Nabesna Day Camp

Beth Cender and Janelle Eklund each presented a station on moose to different age groups the end of July at the Nabesna Day Camp. They also helped with the arts and crafts and games. There were about 25 participants.

Adopt a Road

On May 10 we picked up litter along our section of the Richardson at mile 105-106.

Fundraisers

We had a fundraiser in Anchorage in March at the Wild Berry Theater. Thirty to thirty-five people attended. Net Income was \$3,643.65. The second fundraiser was in Copper Center and held at the NPS Visitor Center. About 25 people attended which included about eight children. Net income was \$1,560. Many donations were made and about 310 volunteer hours went into preparing and implementing these events.

Conferences and Classes

Janelle Eklund and Dave Wellman attended the Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Conference in Anchorage in February. Sessions and networking helped provide information to help us in our Natural History Tour.

Janelle and Paul had a conference call with Lorie Wolf of the Foraker Group called Ask the Expert. We talked with her about our fundraising efforts. She said we put a lot of time into organizing the fundraisers and the amount that was brought in wasn't worth the time it took. She suggested having a open house/thank you event and continue with the membership drive.

Dave took the Preparing Employee Manuals and one other employee class from the Foraker group in November. These classes were worthwhile and helpful as we prepare our employee handbook and employee agreements.

Specimen Collection

The WISE collection of furs now consists of red fox, cross fox, winter and summer lynx, caribou, bear, river otter, and beaver. These furs were all either donated by Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game, or were road kill. WISE has a US Fish and Wildlife Service collection permit for dead and salvaged species. Specimens collected this summer from accidental deaths and reported to USFWS: Common redpole, Nest in hollow log, Northern Hawk Owl, Nest in box, 3 Swainson's Thrush, Yellow-Rumped Warbler, Varied Thrush and Dark-eyed Junco. These are in freezer storage waiting for mounting and display.

Thank You to Our Sponsors and Partners

Grants: Alaska Conservation Foundation - \$1,400; Conoco Phillips, \$1,000; Studebaker Environmental Education Fund, \$1,500; Municipal Energy Assistance Program \$5,000 Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game; Alaska Division of Forestry; Bureau of Land Management Glennallen Field Office; Cooperative Extension Service; Copper River School District and 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Grade Teachers; Prince William Sound Community College; Resource Conservation & Development; University of Alaska HAARP Education Outreach; Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve. And thank you to all the volunteers and members.

Financial

Total income was \$43,870, which was \$2,578 less than last year. Total expenses were \$38,055.25; Net income, \$5,814.75. A full financial report is available upon request.

For day to day operations in-kind hours from board members, partners, and volunteers was about 1,695 hours - \$59,600. In-kind gas mileage from board members was about 3,847 miles - \$1,732. Total in-kind services: \$60,832.