

# WISE 2021 Annual Report

2021 was a year for WISE to stand true to our commitment to provide science and environmental education programs for Alaska's Copper River Valley by drawing on our resilience. It was a year of opportunities, chances to try new things and attend to important internal projects.

A big success was the growth of our Science Lecture Series. With plenty of technical support from program partner Prince William Sound College, we made a full pivot to online, which resulted in a dramatic increase in audience size.

One of the biggest challenges was weathering a second year without our revenue-producing tour programs. We had our tour guides serve as summer program staff, which turned out to be a win-win solution.

## Programs

### In-Class Science

We visited local classrooms with In-Class Science lessons, including testing a wildfire curriculum developed at University of Alaska Fairbanks.

### Discovery Packs

Supplementing the In-Class Science Program, we filled 24 backpacks with materials and books for exploration, and placed them at 3 local libraries.

### Alaska Forum on the Environment

WISE helped organize a session on using partnerships to creatively deal with adversity for the online Alaska Forum on the Environment in February.

### Science Lecture Series

We hosted a total of 8 science lectures in 2021, and due to the online format were able to feature speakers from all over the country and welcome new audience members. In October we co-hosted a talk with Tazlina Village on Ahtna place names featuring Geolinguist Dr. James Kari as well as an archaeologist and geologist who tied in the significance of Ancient Lake Atna. As well as the first time this research had been presented together, it was our first attempt at a "hybrid" lecture with both online and in-person audiences.

### Camp Chosen Frozen

Along with partners Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Bureau of Land Management, we hosted a series of winter field trips for classes. Kenny Lake School 2nd through 8th graders enjoyed a day at Silver Lake, while Glennallen Elementary 5th graders and Upstream Learning families went to Tex Smith Lake. As well as



WISE/BLM Summer Hikes



WISE/BLM Summer Hikes



Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Youth Conservation Corps



Castner Glacier Ice Cave



Discovery Packs

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## **Camp Chosen Frozen cont.**

We learned about winter ecology and predator/prey dynamics, skied, snowshoed, and had a cookout lunch.

Upstream Learning families also trekked up to Castner Glacier Ice Cave in the Alaska Range for a truly unique experience, and a chance to learn about glaciers first hand.

## **Family Ice Fishing Week**

Instead of Ice Fishing Day, we coordinated a week of activities with the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Prince William Sound College. This included a live streamed ice fishing lesson, loaning out sets of gear, chances to meet with fishing mentors in small groups, and making holes available on local lakes.

## **Earth Discovery Day**

We held Earth Discovery Day at Glennallen School with 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students from Kenny Lake School, Glennallen Elementary, and Upstream Learning. 12 Learning Stations were set up in the sports field and school garden areas. With a few bumps and adaptations, it went very well. Because some out of town presenters were unable to travel, we even had some new stations, as Alaska Dept of Fish and Game, Alaska Division of Forestry, and Ahtna Inc. stepped up with cool new lessons.

## **Prince William Sound College Teacher Training Course**

We joined a group of teachers in Valdez for a day searching for Macroinvertebrates as the teachers learned how to incorporate outdoor experiences into their classroom plans.

## **WISE/BLM Summer Hikes**

Hikes were held weekly throughout the summer with the help of staff from the US Bureau of Land Management Glennallen Field Office.

Tour Guides Jolene Nashlund and Judith Lorenz filled in as summer program assistants, bringing great new energy to the summer hikes.

## **Copper River Stewardship Program**

A cohort of 7 Copper Basin students and 4 from Cordova spent 11 days exploring the Copper River Watershed from top to bottom. The focus was on furthering research on the northernmost habitat of two species of trout: Rainbow Trout in the Copper Basin, and Cutthroat Trout on the Copper River Delta. For the northern half of the trip we based out of Wellwood Conservancy Camp at Kenny Lake, with a raft trip on Paxson Lake to the mouth of the Gulkana River. Students also camped and explored on the Copper River Delta.



Camp Chosen Frozen



Family Ice Fishing Week



Earth Discovery Day



Willow Mountain Hike

# WISE 2021 Annual Report

## **Aquatic Ecology Camp**

We enjoyed three days of Aquatic Ecology Fun: One at Wrangell Mountains Center, one at Tex Smith Lake, and one at our property at lower Tonsina, Nic'anilen na'. The youth climbed into chest waders to search for macroinvertebrates, check traps for juvenile fish, and enjoy experiencing the aquatic environment up close.

## **Geology Camp**

We spent a day on the banks of the Copper River with 10 avid geology buffs, exploring a wide range of topics, from the composition of the earth's core, to how rivers form. One of the best things about geology lessons is they often seem to involve food! For example, we investigated and chewed the layers of Milky Way candy bars to understand the processes that form igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks.

## **Kid's Don't Float**

We teamed up with Copper Nuggets 4-H Club to install a Kid's Don't Float Lifejacket Loaner station at Squirrel Creek Campground, a popular spot for swimming and boating. The youth worked hard to dig holes, mix concrete, and construct the sign, and also enjoyed paddling on the lake and learning about boating safety.

## **Changing Seasons**

A surprise September cold front and snowstorm caused us to delay the Changing Seasons program for 2nd and 3rd graders. We were able to reschedule, and present outdoor lessons on birdwatching, fall gathering, and the Boreal Forest at three local elementary schools.

## **Youth Environmental Summit**

Native Village of Gakona and the partners for Youth Environmental Summit (YES) decided to hold YES virtually, as an online event during the winter school vacation. WISE staff made a video about Leave No Trace, with skilled help from Gakona Village staff.



Copper River Stewardship Program



Aquatic Ecology Camp



Geology Day Camp



# 2021 Annual Report

## Education Partners

Copper River School District  
Prince William Sound College  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Valdez City Schools  
Campbell Creek Science Center

## **Mission**

*WISE provides science and environmental education, supports scientific research, and shares the natural wonders of the Copper River Basin*

## **Core Values**

**Stewardship — Grassroots Involvement**

**Integrity — Partnership**

**Mentorship — Sense of Place**

**Enjoyment - Sustainability**

## Government and Tribal Partners

Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission  
Ahtna, Inc.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Alaska DNR Division of Forestry

Copper River Native Association

Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium

Native Village of Gakona

Native Village of Gulkana

Native Village of Kluti-Kaah

Native Village of Tazlina

Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance

US Bureau of Land Management

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

## Nonprofit Partners

Copper River Watershed Project

Copper Country Alliance

Copper Valley Community Library

The Foraker Group

Greater Copper Valley Chamber of Commerce

Great Land Trust

Kenny Lake Community League

Kenny Lake Public Library

Prince William Sound Science Center

Project Healing Waters Alaska

Wrangell Mountains Center

Willow Creek Water Consortium

Wellwood Conservancy



# WISE 2021 Annual Report

## INCOME

Earned Income	
Program Fees	\$1297
Rent	10,950
Merchandise	\$60
Investment Income	\$712
Nonprofit and Foundation	14,130
Government	46,777
Corporate	5,664
Donors and Events	17,791
Misc. Income	\$1506
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$98,872</b>

## Balance in Bruce James Memorial

Scholarship Fund	\$2134
Balance in WISE Reserve Fund	\$7,116
WISE Fund at Alaska Community Founda-	\$10,641

## EXPENSES

Payroll incl. Taxes and Insurance	\$57,984
Supplies	\$4,657
Insurance (except workers comp)	\$5,568
Travel	\$1,669
Stipends, Honorariums	\$182
Professional Fees	\$1,884
Vehicle Fuel and Maintenance	\$956
Staff Training	\$3,559
Advertising, Printing, and Postage	\$1,228
Facility Rental	\$327
Maintenance & Utilities	\$12903
Other	\$13

**Total** **\$90,030**



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# 2021 Annual Report

## 2018 Funders

**US Bureau of Land Management Glennallen Field Office**

Youth Initiatives Agreement

**Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve**  
Cooperative Agreement

**Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council**

Youth Involvement Partnership

**Alaska Conservation Foundation**

Studebaker Family Environmental Education Fund

**Murie Science and Learning Center/Alaska Geographic**

Internship and Science Camp Grants

**Copper Valley Electric Association Community Foundation**

In-Class Science Grant

**Copper Valley Telecom**

In-Class Science Grant

**Alyeska Pipeline Service Company**

Lecture Series Funding

State of Alaska Community Assistance Program

Copper River School District

Amazon Smile

Fred Meyer Community Rewards

And 80+ Individual and Family Donors

Earned Income from:

Copper Country Discovery Tour

Field Sketching and Watercolor Tour

Merchandise Sales

Program Fees

Rent of WISE facilities

## In-Kind Donors

Copper Valley IGA

Beryl Wardlaw and Victor Bailey

Copper Country Alliance

Ruth McHenry and Cliff Eames

Janelle Eklund and Paul Boos

Cory and Becky Schwanke

