



Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment

WISE | LEARN. GROW. GET OUTSIDE.



www.wise-edu.org

Volume 21 Winter 2023/24



Welcome!

Welcome WISE friends!

As I dug through photos looking for the perfect cover shot for this newsletter, it was quickly apparent that my quest was futile. The theme this year is "We are ALL Teachers." There were so many great photos, and so many great teachers. No way could I pick just one.

Settling on a collage was the only possible solution. I felt emotion welling to the surface often as I revisited past programs, and the people who made them come alive.

I ran across a favorite picture of Marnie, who mentored me through the overwhelming first few years, and offered the best advice: "You just need to be a good parrot! Watch someone do a lesson, then copy them. You don't have to be an expert, you just need to be enthusiastic."

Here's a great shot of Kate, crouched down at the same level with a preschooler, exploring a slimy bucket full of fascinating pond life. Kate also took me under her wing those first years, patiently encouraging me to be prepared, flexible, and spontaneous.

Amanda was a program participant who now teaches third grade in the winter and works for the BLM in the summer. She loves to geek out over macroinvertebrates and makes us all laugh with her creative, ever changing safety briefs.

And what can I say about Diane, who approaches everything with her heart on her sleeve? She told me once "the naughtier the kids are the more I love them!"

Finally, there are the youth who are also our teachers. This summer I had the honor of working with several young people who are overcoming big challenges to follow their dreams. I've learned to be more accepting and less judgmental, and to be extra thankful for all the privileges that have shaped my life.

By now the photo collage is spilling over onto the back cover of the



A highlight of my summer was visiting a herd of "glacier mice," moss balls which grow on the surface of Root Glacier.

newsletter, and there is still no way I can include everyone. And then there are all the helpers behind the scenes, or behind the camera.

From the beginning, WISE has relied on a network of people from a wide variety of professions to be front line teachers for our programs. A big day like Earth Discovery Day involves several dozen people leading the learning stations. The amazing thing is, the vast majority of them have little or no formal training in teaching.

In this newsletter, I invite you to learn more about "We are ALL teachers," our new two-year project with Wrangell-St. Elias National Park which will support and celebrate all these amazing people who are willing to stand up and share their knowledge, enthusiasm, and heart.

I also invite you to travel along in "Baby Beluga" on my 5 month sabbatical last fall. Learn about the Nic'anilen Na' management plan, spend a day with a Youth Conservation Corps crew, and meet our summer staff and board members.

Nonprofit will always be a team sport, we simply cannot do this alone. For environmental education there is no substitute for people with their boots on the ground, fully engaged in learning together. Hats off to all the people, at WISE and around the world, whether volunteers or "volun-told," who show up for our kids and set a shining example of what it looks like to care for the world.

We are all teachers, every day. Sometimes we are standing in front of a group doing a formal lesson, sometimes we are just getting through our day, meeting challenges with grace, taking a moment to pick up a piece of litter or offer a kind word.

Thank you for being here for WISE, it takes every one of us to make this dream a reality.

Respectfully,

Robin Mayo, Executive Director

This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Kenny Steck

Kenny was a place-based, hands-on teacher who wasn't afraid to chase big ideas and take chances. His enthusiasm for the world was contagious, he was the epitome of a life-long learner.

Kenny, you always signed your emails "Carry On," and that's what we are doing. We miss you!



Thank You!

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2023 Program Highlights

Winter Fun Day was held at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Visitor Center during winter break. It was a day of chilly fun from skiing and quinzee building to a warm retreat indoors exploring pelts and microscopic investigations.

WISE Annual Meeting in February was a chance to reflect on the past year, visit friends and neighbors, and enjoy an Alaska-grown feast.

In-Class Science Lessons were expanded to include fun interactive chemistry experiments. We taught 19 classes in all, in classrooms from Slana to Valdez.

Camp Chosen Frozen was held at 2 mile lake near Chitina, where we ice fished, snowshoed, and practiced winter survival skills.

Family Ice Fishing Day at Silver Lake was held for the first time in several years. We enjoyed art projects as well as fishing. Find the link to AKWild1's video at www.wise-edu.org/family-ice-fishing-day.

Discovery Packs continue to be popular resources, with 24 packs stationed at 3 local libraries.

Earth Discovery Day brought out 60 local students and a talented posse of outdoor educators on a beautiful May day. This is our longest running program, every year since 2003!

Science Lecture Series included Bi-Polar Microbiology, Bird Migration, Conservation Photography, and a field trip to track migrating raptors.

Outdoor Leadership Skills helps the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Youth Conservation Corps team have a safe and productive summer. Learn more on page 4

Copper River Stewardship Program in June had a macroinvertebrate theme. We found and recorded tiny critters from glaciers to the ocean, and many habitats in between.

WISE/BLM Summer Hikes took us from Keystone Canyon to the Nabesna Road, in all sorts of weather.

Aquatic Ecology Camp at Silver Lake included macroinvertebrate sampling, fish dissection, games, swimming, and more swimming. Did we mention Swimming?

Geology Camp took a group of intrepid hikers all the way to Bonanza Mine. We are grateful to partner Wrangell Mountains Center for teaming up for this popular expedition.

Copper Country Discovery Tour had a record breaking season, with over 550 guests



The streamtable at Earth Discovery Day is true hands-on learning.

spending an afternoon learning with WISE. This revenue-producing program earns about 40% of WISE's yearly funds.

Nic'anilen Na' management plan is complete! Learn more on page 5.

Kids Don't Float is a state of Alaska program which establishes lifejacket loaner stations. We helped build our third station, at Mentasta Lake with the help of Pete Rand from Prince William Sound Science Center.



An exploration of Keystone Canyon was the beginning of a jam-packed schedule of WISE/BLM hikes. Our motto this year: There is no bad weather if you have the right gear.

Changing Seasons was held in late September at Kenny Lake and Glennallen Schools. The 2nd and 3rd graders learned about Fall Gathering, Birding, Watersheds, and the Boreal Forest.

We are ALL Teachers got off to a good start with focusing meetings and a workshop at Youth Environmental Summit. Learn more on page 4.

WISE also assists with partner programs throughout the year. For details see the 2023 Annual Report at www.wise-edu.org.



Copper River Stewardship Program youth learn to paddle whitewater on the Kennecott River.



A proud fisherman brings his catch to be measured at Family Ice Fishing Day



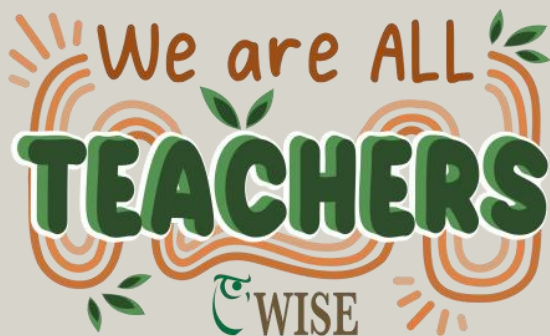
The Patinka family took care of the Pippin Lake and Squirrel Creek Kid's Don't Float Stations for the summer

Mission Statement

WISE provides science and environmental education, supports scientific research, and shares the natural wonders of Alaska's Copper River Valley.

Core Values

Stewardship - Grassroots Involvement - Partnerships
Integrity - Sense of Place - Mentorship



The seeds of our new two-year project with Wrangell-St. Elias National Park were planted when I was brand new to this job, in way over my head, and trying to learn nonprofit management and program implementation in one giant leap. I was checking in with the Visitor Center manager on Earth Discovery Day, and asked which ranger would be presenting the “Wonderful Wrangells” station. “Oh, I have to be really careful with that assignment,” they replied. “Those fourth graders will eat you alive.”

At the time I was surprised. Who knew my new job was so dangerous? But a few months later I found myself close to tears after facing a particularly tough group of second graders, and understood what she was talking about.

With no formal training in education, my journey has involved lots of trial and error, improvisation, and big ideas that didn’t quite turn out as planned. With the help of some wonderful mentors the job got easier, but there is always so much more to learn.

The truth is, almost every person who leads a lesson for WISE is in the same position. They are scientists, resource managers, administrators, community volunteers, and others with little or no real background in education. They stand up bravely, give it their best shot, and so far no actual cannibalism has occurred. But it’s a risky business from start to finish.

Over the years, I’ve pitched the idea of a training course for non-teachers to anyone who would listen. Everyone agreed it would be a great thing, but nothing ever quite got off the ground.

Last winter, the awesome interpretation and education team at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park found some funds to bring the project to life. We convened a brainstorming session right after Earth Discovery Day, and discovered that

our amateur educators were indeed eager for resources to be better teachers. In that conversation and a survey, we asked what support would look like to them, and what topics they would like to learn.

The ideas flew thick and fast, and soon we had a list of meaty topics. Unsurprisingly, behavior management was at the top of the list, joined by age level expectations, making lesson plans, timing, and public speaking. We want our passionate ideas to fall on receptive ears, and we really, really don’t want to waste our time.



Teen presenters give a lesson on ATV safety at Earth Discovery Day 2013

We are kicking off the program this fall with a half-day workshop which will include creating a lesson plan, time to reflect on the past years triumphs and challenges, and collaboration on the schedule for upcoming seasons. We will also have an online session in December with educators from Prince William Sound Science Center on the topic of planning age-appropriate activities. More workshops are planned throughout the winter season.

The educators requested a site visit and time to practice before Earth Discovery Day. We’ll also plan on another brainstorming session right after the students leave, when things are fresh on everyone’s mind.

Warm thanks to Carrie, Russ, and the NPS team that brought this dream to life. We are all teachers, and none of us should fear for our lives when we choose to share with youth.

Robin Mayo



Meet the WISE Board of Directors

- Gay Wellman, Chair
- Margie Steigerwald, Vice Chair
- Felicia Riedel, Secretary
- Paul Boos, Treasurer
- Janelle Eklund
- Dave Wellman
- Sarah Gallt Linnell
- Cassidy Austin-Merlino
- Cheryl Bowers

May we always have the wisdom to learn from each other, irrespective of our ages. *Cheryl Bowers*

It doesn't matter who you are or what your formal education is, we are all teachers. It's not so much the words we use as our behavior and actions that do the teaching that lasts. The trick is to be sure what we model is something that will make our world a better place. When I think of who I look to as my teachers, they are all people who speak from their hearts; all people who live what they preach so to speak. *Gay Wellman*

Having a natural history and wildlife background has helped me enlighten many of WISE students to the natural wonders of their world. It is always great to see students get that excited "now I understand look" after learning about the world around them. *Paul Boos*

"We are all teachers." This concept fits with the interconnected nature of things. Our actions affect others, and we are affected by the actions of others. We are teachers, and also learners. As we are aware of this, we can act in ways that increase the goodness in our world. *Dave Wellman*

We as human teachers are conduits connecting students to the lessons that all the teachers inhabiting this earth are communicating to us every day. Our students are also teachers in a reciprocal sort of way. They pass their experiences on to their teachers, parents and peers. In these experiences are lessons that give us inspiration.

Observing and listening are two tools essential to learning. What are the plants, wildlife, mountains, waters, clouds, soil, all the creatures of the earth saying? How are they interacting? How do they relate to us humans? What are the gifts they give to us and how do we reciprocate?

In 'Braiding Sweetgrass' Robin Wall Kimmerer talks about the harvesting of natural resources and adhering to the rules that shape our relationships with the natural world so that it is rich for future generations. She observes the wisdom of the natural world in order to participate in the Honorable Harvest. She says:

"I am a student of this way of thinking, not a scholar. As a human being who cannot photosynthesize, I must struggle to participate in the Honorable Harvest. So I lean in close to watch and listen to those who are far wiser than I am. What I share here, in the same way they were shared with me, are seeds gleaned from the fields of their collective wisdom, the barest surface, the moss on the mountain of their knowledge. I feel grateful for their teachings and responsible for passing them on as best I can."

This is how We Are All Teachers. *Janelle Eklund*



WISE board members Janelle Eklund, Cheri Bowers, and Paul Boos explore the old cabin at Nic'anilen Na'. *Cathy Hart Photo*

The theme "We are all teachers" reminds of my favorite part of being a supervisor in the NPS (before I retired): the opportunity to mentor professionals as they grow in their careers as interpreters and education specialists, as they themselves grow as teachers. I especially enjoyed working with interns who were often new to Alaska and having the time of their lives far from home. WISE also has internships each summer and it is amazing to be part of an organization that offers such a transformative experience to college-age students who are exploring the possibilities while expanding their resumes. *Margie Steigerwald*

One Day on Willow Mountain

We gather early, sleepy teens tumbling out of vans, gathering around maps, filling their backpacks with food, water, and warm layers. Once we start hiking, we quickly divide into the speedy, the steady, and those who will be taking a lot of breaks. I am grateful that there will be several others keeping me company at the back of the pack. This is only the second week of work for this Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) team from Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, and the second day of outdoor leadership and skills lessons. My goal for the week is to get them up to speed on practical outdoor skills, and also help them find their equilibrium as a team. Today our goal is the summit of Willow Mountain, a 3500' hill along the Richardson Highway.

Joining us for the week are student interns and staff members from Ahtna Cultural Center, who are also setting out on a summer-long journey of learning and service.

To reinforce a short lesson on reading topographical maps, I use a ballpoint pen to draw contour lines on my fist, creating "Knuckle Mountain." Flattened out, the lines help us learn to visualize hills, ridges, and valleys from the lines on a map.

One of the first lessons we tackle is how to hike as a group, being respectful of everyone's hiking style. We practice avoiding the dreaded "Yo-Yo Hiking," when the fast group takes a break, then zooms away as soon as the slower hikers catch up. There's a lot of UP on this trail, over 2000' feet of elevation gain in just a couple of miles, and we are all feeling the pull.

Several of the students are somewhat lacking in motivation, flopping down their packs and taking undeclared rests just a few minutes after breaks. But as we go upwards and the views start to unfold, their attitudes slowly shift to steady determination.

At a rest stop, two of the instructors get into a silly argument, staged for the purpose of teaching conflict resolution. I step in and lead them through the steps of "VOEmPing," giving each side chances to Vent, Own their part, show Empathy, and make a Plan to prevent future conflict. These teens will be camping, working, and travelling together for 11 weeks, and will need these skills.

After two hours of climbing, we break out onto the summit, rewarded by a brisk wind and expansive views from the Chugach Mountains to the Alaska Range. We quickly put on layers, then share a classic hiking lunch of crackers, hummus, peanut butter, cheese, apples, and dried fruit. As we eat we talk about the fuel our bodies need, and how to feed ourselves with non-perishable items from the grocery store.



Yesterday we went over operating camp stoves safely while cooking a simple lunch on the trail.

After several hours at the top it feels good to head back down. The steep trail is somewhat treacherous, with stones that roll underfoot. We talk about risk management, and how many accidents come from complacency when you get comfortable in a dangerous environment.

By midafternoon, we are all back at the vehicles, lounging on the grass with another round of snacks. As we rest one of the YCC leaders demonstrates different methods of water purification. We talk about the plan for tomorrow, when we will spend the day on the water in canoes.

Could we have covered all this in a classroom? Sure, but what a bore! On the trail we can find spontaneous teachable moments while enjoying the beauty that makes being outdoors so rewarding.

Fast forward to the end of summer. In the auditorium at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, the teens share photos, funny stories, and inspiration from their summer. The difference in their bearing and confidence from that day in June is palpable. Walt Whitman knew what he was talking about when he said "Now I see the secret of making the best person: it is to grow in the open air and to eat and sleep with the earth."
Robin Mayo



YCC Crew Leader David Fink teaches a lesson on Leave No Trace at a trailside stop at Wellwood Nature Preserve. David works for the Student Conservation Association (SCA)

Partner Focus:

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

The National Park Service has been a key partner for WISE from the beginning, hosting Earth Discovery Day, lending educators and experts, and being our safety net in case of emergency. In the last several years we have increased the partnership to include outdoor leadership training, and the We are ALL Teachers program.





Robin's Point of View:

In the fall of 2021, I learned I had been awarded a sabbatical from the Rasmuson Foundation. It seemed too good to be true—enough money to take a very long vacation with full pay and funding for travel! Was I dreaming? There must be a catch somewhere...

This started me on an extraordinary journey which I am still processing. I decided to convert a tiny cargo van into a simple camper for a road trip. This project occupied me at home, while at work things got serious.

Of course, the goal of the Rasmuson Sabbatical program is not just fun and games. The core purpose is to strengthen Alaskan nonprofits and nonprofit leaders. This is especially important for small organizations where much of the institutional knowledge is held by a few people.

Jolene quickly agreed to be the Interim Executive Director, and together we started to get things in order so I could totally step away from August through December 2022. After a lengthy and surprisingly painful process, at the end of July I walked out of the office, leaving a bulging binder with the contents of my brain, and a WISE board and staff determined to help me follow one of the strict rules of the program—you must totally cut contact with work for the entire time.

The very next day, I headed out on a 5 week backcountry trip in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park with my partner, boating, backpacking, and sheep hunting. Far from any wifi, data, or phone signal, it was a perfect time to re-train my brain to accept peace and solitude, while getting in great shape by lugging a heavy pack up steep mountains.

In early October my dog and I set out in the van, now named "Baby Beluga" to catch the ferry south. I spent the next 3 months exploring the desert southwest. We quickly settled into a routine of long hikes, lovely campsites, and cozy evenings with the tiny woodstove glowing. We visited many of the iconic national parks, but ended up spending more time in state parks and national monuments where the rules on dogs are more lenient. Every day we were amazed by shapes and colors of the desert.

This journey was a lesson in serendipity. Since much of my job involves meticulous planning, I decide to plan as little as possible on my sabbatical. We followed our whims, took random detours at the slightest provocation, and learned to feel at home wherever the van was parked for the night. It's hard to pick a favorite, but Death Valley really entranced me with sublime desert sunsets and endless canyons to explore. Driving on interstate highways was my least favorite part, but I learned to trust the guidance of the "Google Maps Lady" and ignore the dirty looks as I was passed by an endless stream of faster vehicles.

In December I headed northwards, a little nervous about how it would feel to leave behind the fantastic desert landscapes and the freedom of the road. As I drove back into Alaska on a stunningly beautiful and very cold day, it was a relief to feel joy in the untouched northern wilderness.

Back at the office, I was delighted to find that things had gone smoothly in my absence, with Jolene and our wonderful WISE volunteers managing programs and producing a beautiful newsletter. The first few weeks were messy, but I was able to slowly get back in the routine, integrating the lessons I'd learned on the road: self care, savoring every small moment of joy, and the delight of serendipity. In the long run, this experience had a double benefit for WISE. I'm rejuvenated, and we now have a roadmap to navigate changes in the future.

One Sabbatical, Two Points of View

Jolene's Point of View:

When Robin shared the exciting news that she had been awarded a Rasmuson Sabbatical Grant I was so happy for her. For so long she had been at the helm and often filling several positions by herself. Now, I would be entrusted to filling in as Interim Executive Director in her absence. And by absence, I mean not just physically, but completely! That meant if I had any questions or encountered a problem, *I couldn't call her*. Robin is my go-to, she knows everything about WISE and I feel like even after being with WISE since 2016, I still had so much to learn. And boy did I.

smile Sometimes the best way to learn is to just jump in and become fully immersed. Despite it being a calmer time of the year, **I was hopping!**

In the five months that I held down the fort, the learning opportunities simply abounded and I found myself being a student; eager to absorb everything I possibly could so that I could *"do WISE proud"* and not make an absolute disaster of it all for Robin to come back to! I'm laughing now at the thought, but that was a true fear of mine! I definitely had some trepidations, but I knew I had a wonderful board to call on if I should need volunteers, guidance, or a hug of encouragement.

Outwardly, the greatest highlight I was able to experience was WISE's program Changing Seasons. It was the first time that I fully participated in the lifecycle of a program- from funding and planning to implementation and reporting. It was rewarding on so many levels. I became aware of the intricacies of working with other nonprofits, volunteers, and governmental organizations;

the roles, knowledge base, and resources that each contribute to a shared cause. The *many, many* beautiful people that partner with WISE to help make programs like Changing Seasons come together for our youth absolutely makes my heart swell with happiness and gratitude. *Teamwork really does make the dream work!*

Internally, my greatest lesson was about what "A Day in the Life of Robin Mayo, WISE ED" really looks like- she's a regular Wonder Woman! In this very brief period of time, I had encountered so many moments where one simple thing (or so I mistakenly thought **shaking my head**) really encompassed having to do twenty other steps as well, that answering the phone can often lead to five things being added to your to-do list, and your to-do list is never done! *And, she does this every day.*

Now that I have absorbed all of these amazing lessons from hands-on experiences and the wonderful teachers that helped me along the way, I have a well-rounded understanding of WISE and the simply amazing partnerships we have with various organizations and volunteers.

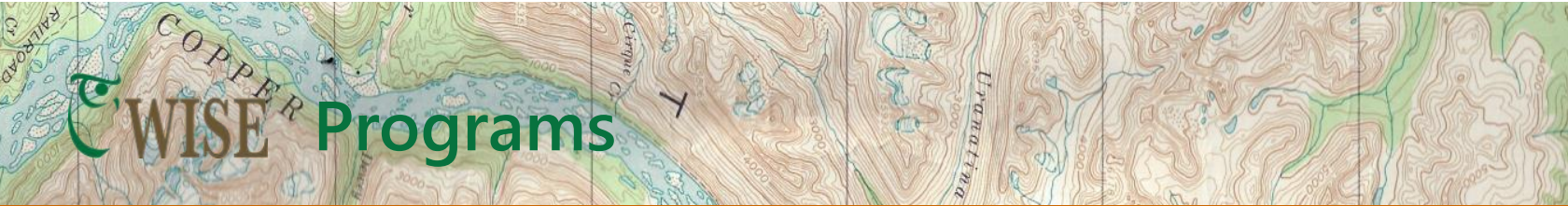


Baby Beluga at a free BLM campsite with a stunning view of Mt. Whitney, California



Jolene Nashlund has excelled at a variety of roles at WISE since 2016, including Lead Naturalist Guide, Development Director, Summer Program Specialist, and Interim Executive Director.

Proving her versatility, she went incognito as the Mad Professor for the Time Machine Skit at Changing Seasons 2022.



A family of swans enjoys protected habitat at Nic'anilen Na'

Nic'anilen Na' Management Plan

After two years of steady work, in 2023 we were delighted to complete a management plan for Nic'anilen Na', WISE's 60 acre property at Lower Tonsina. Working with facilitators from the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program, the plan captures a vision, goals, and the steps we need to take to manage the property and make it useful for our education programs.

A planning team of WISE board members, staff and the property donors first met with partners and community stakeholders to gather thoughts and ideas for the property. Through numerous conversations we were able to come to a consensus on some key ideas, then build a plan for trails, facilities, and management. An important decision was deciding not to make the property open to visits from the public, because WISE doesn't have the capacity to monitor and manage continuous use. We will focus on educational programming, and also hope to welcome scientific studies.

As we worked, we kept discovering more history in the layers of stories we heard from local residents. The beavers made things interesting by creating a whole new set of dams, throwing a monkey wrench in our trail plans. We had to determine if the old cabin on the site could be saved. Ultimately, we decided that stabilizing it was cost prohibitive so we would let it degrade naturally.

In September, we held a work party at the site, marking and clearing a new trail to the pond. We also located survey markers, and started putting up signs to inform the public and mark the boundaries. With a roadmap in place, we are excited for the next steps in this adventure.



Aluminum tree signs mark the boundary

Warm thanks to everyone who participated in this process, and especially to Zachary Babb and Lizzie Dean of Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance. Your wisdom, experience, and especially patience were legendary. The staff at Great Land Trust were also invaluable throughout.

See the plan at www.wise-edu.org/nicanilen-na.html

Goals

Learn and Discover: Create outdoor learning and exploration opportunities through guided and instructional programs.

Protect and Enhance: Protect, and where appropriate restore and enhance, the property's natural and cultural resources.

Steward Together: Manage the property through partnerships and relationships with organizations which share our vision of the property.

Nic'anilen Na' means "where the stream flows out into the current" in Ahtna. It is pronounced "NEEK on a lynn NAH"



Have sharp tools, will travel! This awesome crew cleared a new trail to the pond at Nic'anilen Na' in September.



WISE Summer Staff

This summer we were joined by two talented young people who were the driving force behind every program.

Amanda Jackson has wanted to focus on Environmental Education for several years, and took the plunge this year. As well as tackling every aspect of youth programs, she was a guide for the Copper Country Discovery Tour, delighting guests with her stories of moving from Texas to the Copper River Basin. Amanda has taken a permanent job with our partner Copper River Watershed Project, so we look forward to working with her in the future.



Amanda Jackson and Naomi Fassin (better known as "Tex" and "Nae-nae") take a well deserved rest on an old tram support on the way to Bonanza Mine.

International student Naomi Fassin has roots in Japan and France, and is studying environmental conservation in San Diego. She quickly adapted to life in rural Alaska and became indispensable with her organization skills. It was a joy to watch her learn and grow into a confident outdoorswoman complete with backpack and bear spray. Here is her reflection on her WISE summer:

"When I first started the internship, I wasn't totally confident about being in the wild, and going on youth programs and hikes. But throughout time, thanks to the help from Robin, Amanda and Bryan and Amanda from BLM, I was able to truly have fun on programs and learning together with the students on macroinvertebrates or card games. After all, I had a lot of fun spending the summer in Alaska, and all the memories, like circling the fire to make s'mores, the rewarding view at the top of the mountain after almost dying on the trail, and the relaxing kayak fishing at sunset, will be remembered as something irreplaceable as I move forward into the future."



Naomi enjoys a brief visit with a dragonfly at Aquatic Ecology Camp

Catching up with a VISTA Volunteer

A decade ago, WISE hosted a three year project with Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) to raise our capacity to serve the youth of the Copper River Basin. Three amazing individuals took a leap of faith and came to live here for a year. Their work included websites, donor databases, and communication plans that we still rely on every day.

During my sabbatical journey last winter I stopped in to visit Jamie Dawson. She had just accepted a new job and moved to a new town in northeastern Oregon, so it was an exciting time to catch up. Jamie has kept in touch with WISE since her departure, she has been a monthly donor for years, and served on the development committee.

Jamie has been working at Oregon nonprofits since leaving WISE, and recently accepted the position of Conservation Director for Greater Hells Canyon Council, which advocates for wilderness and good stewardship in the region. Working on advocacy and controversial issues takes a special attitude which Jamie has in abundance. She cheerfully noted that her predecessor had once been hung in effigy, taking that as a sign that there was important work to be done.

Although they had only been in Joseph for a few weeks, Jamie and Tyler were already quickly becoming part of the community, including volunteering at the local ski area. Jamie and I took the dogs on a cross-country loop, enjoying memories of similar outings during her year in Alaska.

The other VISTAs were Matt Morse, who now works in environmental conservation for the State of Alaska, and Lyda Rossi who is tackling medical school.



Jamie and Robin take a ski at the volunteer-run winter recreation area at Joseph, Oregon.

Education Partners

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



Willow Mountain is a perfect place to practice map reading

"In learning you will teach, and in teaching you will learn."

Phil Collins

Government and Tribal Partners

Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission
 Ahtna, Inc.
 Alaska Department of Fish and Game
 Alaska Department of Natural Resources
 Copper River Native Association
 Native Village of Chitina
 Native Village of Gakona
 Gulkana Village Council
 Mentasta Traditional Council
 Native Village of Kluti-Kaah
 Native Village of Tazlina
 NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance
 US Bureau of Land Management
 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

Nonprofit Partners

Alaska WildBird Rehabilitation
 Copper River Watershed Project
 Copper Country Alliance
 Copper Valley Community Library
 The Foraker Group
 Greater Copper Valley Chamber of Commerce
 Kenny Lake Community League
 Kenny Lake Public Library
 Prince William Sound Science Center
 Project Healing Waters Alaska
 Valdez Consortium Library
 Wrangell Mountains Center
 Willow Creek Water Consortium
 Wellwood Conservancy

Partner Focus: Ahtna Inc.

We are honored to live and work on the past, present, and future homeland of the Ahtna people. We honor the wisdom of the elders and the resiliency of the youth. The talented staff at Ahtna, Inc. have been mainstays at WISE programs for years, sharing their culture and mentoring youth to be stewards of the land.



Thank You!

2023 Funders



Alaska Conservation Foundation



Wrangell Mountains Wilderness Lodge
Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation
State of Alaska CAP
Amazon Smile
Copper Valley IGA
Copper River Subway Inc.
Copper Valley Telecom
Alaska Community Foundation
Copper River Native Association
Fred Meyer Community Rewards
NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program
For more details on WISE revenues and expenses, please request our 2023 Annual Report, or see it at www.wise-edu.org

Thank You to our Generous Donors!

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