

HARDWARE STORE HERALD

Volume 10

News from the Wrangell Mountains Center

Winter 2009/10



Based in McCarthy, Alaska, at the heart of the nation's largest National Park and just minutes from the toe of the Kennicott Glacier, the Wrangell Mountains Center offers programs that foster appreciation, understanding, and stewardship of Alaska's wildlands and communities. We meet the needs of students, scientists, artists, writers, travelers, and local citizens. Dedicated to environmental education, science, and the arts in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, we help people of all ages and abilities to explore, express, and be transformed through direct experience with this extraordinary place.

McCarthy, Alaska
WRANGELL MOUNTAINS CENTER



Environmental Education, Research, and the Arts
in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve

Welcome INCPA!

by Lilly Goodman-Allwright

The Wrangell Mountains Center is thrilled to have joined up with other environmental education centers and nonprofits as a partner in the Interpretive Naturalist Certification Program of Alaska (INCPA). The certification program trains participants from all over South-Central Alaska to become adept natural history interpreters, environmental educators, and non-formal science teachers. Over the course of one year, participants are required to complete hours of standard requirements, many of which can be fulfilled by attending WMC programs. The June educators' workshops, many events in the Summer Arts and Lectures Series, the Wrangell Mountain Walks, and special events like the Research Summit are a few (Continued on page 8)



photo by Jon Campbell

An Alaska Wildlands Studies group approaches an ice arch along the Kennicott Glacier edge. The seven-week college course includes two backcountry trips, one of one week, one of three weeks; students conduct their own research projects and study the geology, glaciology, and ecology of the Wrangells.

Pick, Click, Give to the WMC When You Apply for Your PFD

The Wrangell Mountains Center is pleased to announce that we are part of the new Permanent Fund Dividend Charitable Contributions Program for 2009. This is particularly convenient for Alaskans since we have not yet had an opportunity for on-line donation. The Alaska Legislature passed a law making this new

way to give possible for all Alaskans filing on-line for

Pick.Click.Give.

their PFD. We are excited about the opportunity that it provides all Alaskans to give to their favorite nonprofit organizations.

(Continued on page 5)



McCarthy kids Ross Bass and Owen Mozen learn about the natural history of useful plants with Vicki Penwell and Mark Vail during a Kids Day Camp. Learn more on page 9.

Director's Note

No Taste Like Home

by Jeremy Pataky

I recently enjoyed a fine dinner of salmon at Howard Mozen and Elizabeth Schafer's place in Anchorage, set up as a blind taste test between Copper River and Bristol Bay red. Howard caught both fish himself and prepared them identically. Could we tell the difference? We all agreed that one tasted better than the other... but which was which? Whichever watershed the good stuff came from, it was moister, redder, tastier, with a thicker layer of gray fat between the meat and skin. Were our palettes gravitating toward the fish harvested from the silty, opaque Copper River? Or did the ocean-caught reds taste best?

The conversation meandered. At some point, Howard retrieved a poster-sized aerial photograph encompassing just a couple square miles of the Kennicott Valley, mostly west of the Kennicott River. The picture covered much of the table. "Any guess when this was taken?" Elizabeth asked us.

There was no footbridge, no vehicle service bridge, no Kennicott River Lodge and Hostel, no John Adams' airstrip, no church, no cabins, no Glacier View Campground, no NPS "Westside" compound; water still flowed in a periglacial channel which is now a bed of dryas. The photo was not just an image of part of the valley—it was also a shot of time passing. A similar photo taken now would look very different. McCarthy's Westside area is not exactly suburbia by any stretch of the imagination, but the photograph itself made the tacit point that things are changing.

Riding my bike home that night in the rain, I thought about both the McCarthy and the Wrangell-St. Elias that I know now and the McCarthy and Park represented in that photo. I also considered the WMC I have come to know in my first year as Executive Director, and the WMC as it has evolved since its official inception in 1986 and its beginnings in the early 70s. I thought about what it means today to make the Wrangells the locus of a life, and what it meant for people like Kelly Bay, Kirk Ellis, JoeNeal Hicks, Ben Shaine, and Mark Vail, panelists on the "Changes in the Land" program this June. Several of them lamented the current impossibility of living a life as unfettered and grounded in place as theirs had been; they spoke



at length about the changes that came to the area with the establishment of the Park in 1980. They wondered, a bit warily, perhaps, about what was coming.

And like the place itself which gave rise to the Wrangell Mountains Center, our organization is changing, too, and will continue to do so. We have plenty, yet, to do, and as I see it, the need for our work and focus will increase as visitation and inhabitation of the area increases. We live in the center of the nation's largest national park, in the center of many complex and ongoing cultural and ecological processes. What will all of this mean and look like from the broadest of perspectives in the next 20 or 50 years?

For all the ambiguity, I am certain of one clear purpose—the mission of the Wrangell Mountains Center. We are increasingly effective in our dedication to environmental education, research, and the arts in the Wrangell-St. Elias region. The Hardware Store had an all-new staff this year, but managed to pull off a busy season without a hitch thanks to the unwavering hard work of our capable staff and the generous help and love of many volunteers and the community. We felt and appreciated the upwelling of support from visitors, neighbors, students, and friends.

The programs we offer to locals and visitors, the conversations we engage in, the relationships we foster, the vegetables we grow, the love of place we feel is all born of our core purpose of inspiring and promulgating an appreciation, understanding, and sense of stewardship for our home region and community and other wildlands worldwide. This is essential work in an era fraught with the ramifications of our capacity to notice, study, impact, savor, and be affected by the places we claim as our own, the places that claim us as theirs.

The *what* of our efforts is explicit, more or less, in these pages, but the *why* behind them all is worth a reminder. The purpose and mission of the WMC governs the efforts behind all that we offer to the community. That purpose fed Mike Loso and Megan Richotte's visions of the first-ever Wrangell-St. Elias Research Summit, for example, and sustained Suzi Drinen's dedication to our Mountain Arts for Youth program, and spurred the creative sizzle and earnest engagement with place and language that permeated Nancy Cook's 12th annual Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop; it brought Vicki

(continued on next page)



photo by Jeremy Pataky

Home (continued from page 2)

Penwell on board to offer kid camps in Twin Lakes and McCarthy. Hardware Store staffers Stefanie, Anna, Kim, and Elena tended our garden and lovingly prepared literally thousands of meals. For two months, 16 undergraduates studied and traveled in the front and backcountries of the Wrangells and went home not just better educated but irrevocably changed. A pair of violet-green swallows set up a nest in one of the boxes mounted on the Hardware Store, and after weeks, we heard the hungry cries of the young as the parents came and went with food, and then we watched the fledglings leap into their first tentative swoops and dives. And then they were all gone, migrating south, hopefully to return next year.

I look forward to my own return to the Hardware Store in spring, and I'll watch and listen for the swallows. The salmon will come back next year, too, to the Copper River, to Bristol Bay, to water between and beyond.

Salmon—turns out we loved the local fish best that night at Howard and Elizabeth's. Not that both fillets weren't delectable. I think it makes sense, though, that the salmon taken close to home, in a river made of melt-water from our backyard glaciers, tasted right. I like to think there is some overlap between our own reasons for being captivated by and committed to this land and the salmon's reasons for their return to natal water. I like to believe that our fish taste best to me because my mind and senses are being shaped by the place that made those salmon. I know that I am fortunate to know others who feel that, too, and to have the chance to learn from, and with, each of them, and to see them learn from each other. We are all fortunate that enough people believe in that to collectively make it possible. Thanks to all of you. ∞



photo by Jeremy Pataky



Welcome Aboard, Danny

We're pleased to welcome Danny Rosenkrans to the WMC Board of Directors. Danny works as a land manager for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, where he has served in a variety of roles. A geologist by training, Danny is interested in dialogue and advancing the integration of nontraditional park uses with sustainable management of park lands and resources. He also hopes to advance the role of science in decision making and communication with park users. He lives in Kenny Lake, Alaska with his family.

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Inaugural Wrangell-St. Elias Research Summit A Great Success

by Michael Loso

The inaugural Wrangell-St. Elias Research Summit convened in McCarthy on July 6-7. The event was conducted primarily at the Old Hardware Store, but included events at the Kennecott Recreation Hall, as well. Highlights included:

- Keynote talks by leaders in their fields including both NPS and academic scientists.
- A community dinner at the Hardware Store, followed by a public lecture by Professor Bill Morris of Duke University, attended by over 100 folks including Summit participants, local residents, and Park visitors.
- A round-table discussion of research priorities and needs in Wrangell-St. Elias.
- A poster session at the Kennecott Recreation Hall.
- A 2nd public dinner, this time a potluck at the Rec Hall, followed by “Changes in the Land,” a moderated panel discussion featuring long-time local residents of the Park.

Attendance at the event was excellent. Thirty-one persons pre-registered for the free meeting and attended virtually all activities. This group included a good mix of NPS staff, academic scientists, other agency representatives, and nonprofit leaders (including folks from both the Wrangell Mountains Center and the Murie Science and Learning Center). In addition, 50-100 additional participants joined us for the evening activities, including probably the largest public dinner ever served at the Old Hardware Store (free homemade pizza!). For many participants, the greatest highlight was probably “Changes in the Land,” which featured conversation among five long-time Wrangells residents: Kirk Ellis (Nabesna), Kelly Bay (McCarthy), Mark Vail (Fireweed Mountain), Joe Neal Hicks (Mentasta), and Ben Shaine (Kennicott). This discussion of ecological and social changes in the landscape kept the audience rapt for nearly two hours. After a great question and answer session, the event was capped by a standing ovation for the panelists.

Outcomes of the workshop varied for individual participants. Feedback was highly positive. The primary goal of this first Summit—to introduce members of the research community to each other—seemed highly successful and there were good spirits and conversation throughout the summit. In

addition, practical accomplishments included dissemination of research permitting information, sharing of knowledge about resources available to all scientists, and the initiation of a working group dedicated to convening a subsequent meeting to develop a “white paper” outlining research goals for the Park, with a goal of informing WRST’s upcoming RSS process. Workshop participant Dan Doak, a professor at the University of Wyoming, is leading this effort.

The workshop was supported by funds from the Murie Science and Learning Center (\$3000), Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (\$2000), and in-kind support from Alaska Pacific University (\$2500 for planning and organization by the convener) and Wrangell Mountains Center (\$2500 for organizational labor by the Executive Director and other staff). This support allowed the event to be run at no cost to the participants, including three complete homemade meals and refreshments each day.

Follow-up activities still underway include creation of content for a web page (to be hosted by WMC at <http://www.wrangells.org>), acquisition of web design software, and training of the WMC Executive Director to format, upload, and manage that content. Content will be developed jointly by convener Michael Loso, WMC Executive Director Jeremy Pataky, and Alaska Pacific University undergraduate Vanessa Willcox-Healey, who attended the Summit and will be providing content as part of her Senior Project at APU. One component of that will be a substantial bibliography of research conducted at the park, including scanning (by commercial contract) of unpublished research housed at the Wrangell Mountains Center, and, of course, published peer-reviewed literature.

Informal discussions suggest that a two-year interval is appropriate prior to the next Research Summit, and so our goal will be to repeat this successful event in 2011. Stay tuned for the 2nd Research Summit, which we hope will attract even larger numbers of scientists and researchers while featuring a full menu of presentations and activities. ∞



Photo by Barry Hecht; upper photos by Jeremy Pataky

Pick, Click, Give *(continued from page 1)*

This program provides a safe, secure and easy way to make a donation. 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 support the Wrangell Mountains Center, we appreciate your gifts and hope you will use this option to make an additional donation. For those of you who reside outside of the state or who are otherwise ineligible for the PFD, please know that our good friends at the Postal Service will still take good care in their delivery of your valuable contributions.

We look forward to your support of our ongoing dedication to environmental education, research, and the arts in Wrangell-St. Elias. Our members and donors help us sustain a multitude of ongoing and new programming each year that fosters understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve and the surrounding region. We're proud of our work, and proud of the broad base of supporters who choose to join us in our heartfelt pursuit of our mission.

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 3** and **Wrangell Mountains Center**. 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. You can find more information about the program, including frequently asked questions at PickClickGive.org. Or call us at (907) 244-7717. ∞

There's a new way to reach out and help Alaskans. Apply for your PFD online and you can share part of your dividend with some of your favorite Alaska nonprofits. It's a chance for all of us to come together and give a little extra. Just Pick, Click, Give.

Give Cash. Make Change. For Alaska.

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*Wanna save paper
by receiving your Herald electronically?
Let us know at jeremy@wrangells.org*



Volunteer John Rice de-roots another raised bed in the WMC organic garden during the 2009 Memorial Day Volunteer Work Party weekend.

Educators' Rock Concert in McCarthy by Lilly Goodman-Allwright

The theater set was the provocative landscape of the Stairway Icefall and Mount Blackburn glimmering on a clear sunny day; the orchestra was meltwater draining from the Kennicott Glacier, tumbling rocks and gravel into silty waters; and the performers were the seven participants in the Changing Landscapes workshop for educators and guides offered by the Wrangell Mountains Center this June.

The performance was the final assignment for the two-day course accredited by Prince William Sound Community College that introduced content and tools for teaching the exciting and dynamic processes governing our landscape. As a course wrap-up, participants presented the "life story" of their rocks. A humorous dramatic poem explained how one pet rock had transformed over time from being part of a molten mass to rolling around in McCarthy Creek with other metamorphic stones. A rhythmic dance and song illustrated how moving tectonic plates, volcanism, and glaciers had been part of a different rock's history. The audience of fellow participants cheered and roared with laughter as they witnessed a thoroughly creative review of the course content. Good seats are available for next summer's educator workshop! Check back on our website for details. ∞





We celebrate the life of Sarah Langner Thorn and mourn her passing.



Teamwork

The Wrangell Mountains Center exists and runs for the benefit of the local and broader communities, and it thrives because of the talents and generosity of many fine people.

We had an amazing core staff at the Hardware Store this year. Kudos and thanks to Stefanie Sever, Anna Nowosad, Kim Mapp, and Elena Bantle. You are wonderful!

Thanks, too, to the students from the college program who stayed on board as short-term interns at the HWS - heartfelt thanks to Kelsey Bearden, Jon Campbell, Bess Crandall, Sarah Hieber, and to Gahl Shottan who joined us as a hard-working volunteer, too!



photos by Jon Campbell, Barry Hecht, Jeremy Pataky, Rachel Samuelson, Nathaniel Wilder, et al

INCPA (Continued from page 1)

examples of the many opportunities INCPA participants can take to complete their rigorous training. INCPA candidates are also required to complete several hours of volunteer instruction and shadowing, as well as complete a stewardship project—all of which may also be completed at the Center.

The Wrangell Mountains Center is excited to welcome INCPA candidates to our Old Hardware Store headquarters in McCarthy and is looking forward to supporting the diverse group of educators, naturalists, and guides. Becoming a participant in the certification program is easy and worthwhile; interested candidates can learn more at the INCPA website <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/science-center/incpa.html> ∞



One of Buzz Schwall's marionettes; Great kids having a great day at the Center; Meghan Holtan performing in McCarthy during the 4th of July. Photo credits: Suzi Drinen x2; Rachel Samuelson

Mountain Arts for Youth 2009 Summer Program by Suzanne Drinen

Mountain Arts for Youth kicked off the hot summer in style on June 13 with Buzz Schwall of Anchorage, who brought multiple years of designing and building in the theater world to life with handcrafted marionettes. The Hardware Store's Great Room had nine different insects hanging from its beams, including spiders, caterpillars, beetles, and stoneflies. After an animated puppet show in which Buzz introduced his multi-legged critters, a lesson on healthy stream ecosystems led children and adults alike to make and paint their own stoneflies while expanding their appreciation and awareness of the natural world.

A week later, Bruce James, of Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment (WISE), came out from Copper Center to join resident and visiting youth in the study of the ecology of the boreal forest that so many of us call home. The session began with a brainstorm of what we collectively knew about the forest and was followed by a scavenger hunt to identify certain objects that, with a quiet mouth and a keen eye, one might find. Equipped with rubber animal scat, mammal skulls, animal prints, and bird feathers, it was a great success.

Meghan Holtan of Anchortown Circus joined us on the weekend of July 4th to awe and inspire her audience with an impressive performance of stilt walking, diablo, spinning plates, and unicycling. She brought her talents to the Rec Hall in Kenecott where youth of all ages got to try their hand in the arts of circus performing. She started us gently, teaching us to juggle featherweight cloths, and eventually took us outside on wooden stilts and balance boards.

Block Printing with Kris Gregory garnered a huge crowd for this third annual event. Twenty six attendees relief carved on foam, rubber, and wood, printing our designs on rice paper. A copy of each print was collected and made into a book to add to the block printing archives at the WMC. Thanks to Mark Vail, the ink rolling went off without a hitch as Nancy Cook and Mark made handprints of the youngest in the group into a prayer flag to auction off at the Tall Tales Contest.

The waning summer finished with a visit from Haley Runa, an Anchorage artist. She brought up her knitting talent and sat around the fire in the Great Room with an intimate group of students. As we drank tea and ate baked goods, we learned different stitches and patterns.

As the Mountain Arts for Youth Program Director, I would like to thank all of the artists who participated. Without your generosity and talents, none of this would be possible. A special thanks to O'Hara Fleming, who continues to generously support Mountain Arts for Youth. ∞

WMC Wishlist

If you would like to give new or used items that will directly enhance our effectiveness at the Hardware Store, we could really use the following items...

Pick Axe	Firewood
Chainsaw	55 gallon drum
Hatchet	Bicycles
Satellite phone(s)	Laptop Computer
Digital Projector	enclosed cargo trailer

Lessons Earned

by Jonny Gray

Lesson 234: Traversing a Lateral Moraine

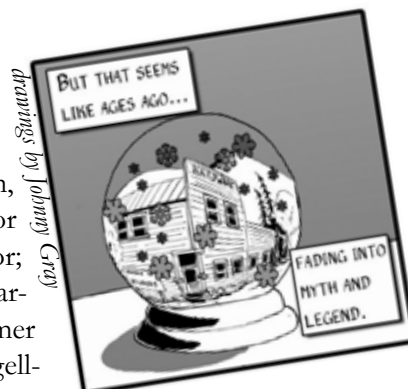
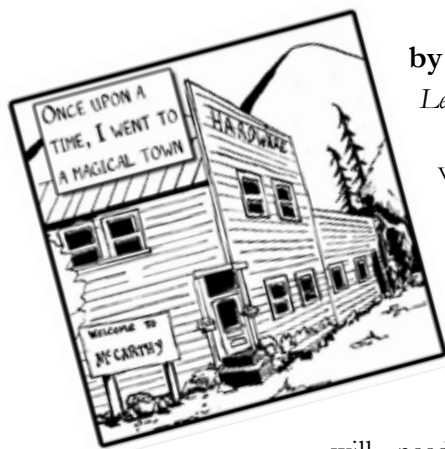
Beware. It is steep and loose and you can hurt yourself. That said, know that you will do better if you stay in motion. Those pebbles and boulders will shift, and you can ride them down the incline to your doom. You have to be comfortable with uncertain footing. You can go too fast, but you can also go too slow. Control the slide. Pick your path carefully and confidently as you move obliquely down to the even more slippery terrain of the glacier.

Lesson 238: Walking on a glacier.

You may have walked on ice before, but this is different. The ice is old and hard as marble. Unless there are lots of pebbles in it, you will need crampons. Crampons will give you stable footing, but they will also require a different orientation to something you've been doing since before you were two. Walk too casually, and they will catch on your cuffs – at best, ruining a pair of pants, more likely throwing you to the hard, marble surface of ancient ice. These are the sacrifices we make for firm footing.

Two lessons learned courtesy of the Wrangell Mountains Center. Two lessons rooted in the deep philosophy of place-based pedagogy. These are lessons about traversing particular terrains, landscapes not unique but very central to McCarthy and the Kennicott Valley. Negotiating these landscapes teaches me something not just about Alaska or glaciers; there are broader applications here, deeper wisdoms learned with the body. ∞

Jonny Gray flew out to the Fosse with a few fellow writers to explore the west side of the Kennicott Glacier before the workshop began. Johnny is a professor at Southern Illinois University Carbondale and a two-time alum of the Writing Workshop.



of McCarthy; Suzi Drinen, WMC Mountain Arts for Youth program director; Bruce James of WISE, Barbara Cellarius, Ben Cramer and Josh Quinton of Wrangell-St. Elias and Jessica Denny and Jim Sharpe of MSTC.

The same grant funded two day camps based in McCarthy. Eleven children attended the first camp and seven the second. Both camps included experiential learning opportunities that allowed children to explore the landscape. The swallows using the nesting boxes at the Hardware Store provided a captivating opportunity for children to get a close up view of bird behavior. It was so

captivating, in fact, that children gathered to watch the birds for several days after the program. Suzi Drinen was key to the success of both camps as was the entire staff of the Hardware Store. Mark Vail, WMC Advisory Board Member, shared his insights into the plant world with us and I only hope the kids learned as much as I did. Meghan Seifert and Vanessa Wilcox-Healy of Wrangell-St. Elias helped out, as did Jared Stayaert.

In addition to these programs, we offered a half day Family Camp pilot program, which was not a part of the grant funded programs. Three families paid \$75 to participate. We had a great time (*continued on page 13 Day Camp*)

Youth Day Camp Programs at WMC

by Vicki Penwell

This summer the Wrangell Mountains Center received a grant from Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve through the Parks As Classrooms program to fund a series of kids' day camps and family camp programs. These programs included the day camp program previously offered by the NPS in Nabesna at the Twin Lakes Camping Area. Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium (MSTC), Cheesh'na Village and Mentasta Lake Village have been long time partners and supporters of the camps and continued their support this past summer. The Nabesna day camps are full day events that feature experiential learning opportunities in a place where many of the village elders spent time as children. Elders and community members share traditional knowledge with participants, making the camp a place based cultural and natural history learning experience.

WMC offered two Nabesna Day Camps. Approximately 18 children and numerous parents and volunteers attended the first camp. We incorporated an Ahtna language lesson taught by Jessica Denny and the Elders, Lena Charley, Jerry Charley and Steven John. The second camp was attended by 22 children and once again, numerous parents and volunteers. I was fortunate to have the assistance of volunteers Cindy Quinton of Slana and Christine Johnson



Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop Contemplates “Nature as Guide”

by Nancy Cook

The 12th Annual Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop was honored to host Indiana essayist and conservationist Scott Russell Sanders, along with his gracious wife Ruth and sixteen new and returning writers. From day one, the call was out to produce writing with real intention, and till the final hour, that’s what our writers did. With writers from throughout Alaska, as well as Washington, Indiana, Kansas, Illinois, and North Carolina, it was a real treat to see, read and hear this creative community in action.

Craft talks and writing exercises at the Old Hardware Store were complimented by excursions to the toe of the glacier and a guest lecture from Ben Shaine on the geology of the valley and the Deborah number. About half of the group, including Sanders, joined Jeremy Pataky and intern Kim Mapp on a Root Glacier hike before heading to the Kennecott Recreation Hall for a public reading. Other highlights included the Community Word Jam held in the Center’s Great Room, a popular event for the community and a chance for visitors and locals to interact.

Huge thanks to the WMC staff and interns for all the delicious food; to Lila Vogt for volunteering as registrar; to our devoted returning writers (Patt, Maria, Sherry, Jonny and now Marie) who carry the traditions of this week forward; and to Sunny Cook who hosted our south side dinner and took a year off writing to serve as fulltime Grandma.

An excerpt from *A Conservation Manifesto* (University of Indiana Press 2009) follows, which speaks poignantly to the mission we embrace within our Wrangell Mountains Center community. Sanders’ reading of these words inspired the audience in Kennicott. May they inspire each of us, too, to work diligently and persistently to acknowledge, preserve, and creatively celebrate the common wealth we share. ∞

The Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop is made possible by a grant from the Alaska State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, and by Prince William Sound Community College and the National Park Service. Thank you!

From *A Conservationist Manifesto*

by Scott Russell Sanders

We need an alternative story, one that appeals to our generosity and compassion rather than our selfishness. We need a story that measures wealth not by the amount of property or money in private hands but by the condition of the commons. We need a story that links the health of individuals to the health of communities, a story that reminds us we belong not merely to a city but to a watershed, a bioregion, and ultimately to the earth. Rather than

defining us as consumers, this new story would define us as conservers; rather than exhorting us to chase after fashions, it would invite us to find joy in everyday gifts—in the voice of a child or a bird, in music and books, in gardening and strolling, in sharing food and talk. To live by such a story, we need not be sages or saints; we need simply be awake to the real sources of the good life.

I’m guessing that everyone reading these lines has entertained such a vision. You’ve dreamed of living in a household and a neighborhood suffused with love and respect. You’ve dreamed of living in a community that is just, beautiful, harmonious, and durable, a community that values all its citizens, makes room for other species, draws energy from wind and sun, meets many of its needs from local sources, nourishes learning and the arts, and protects these blessings for future generations. You’ve dreamed of belonging to a nation of such communities, and to a world of such nations.

The work of creating wise and loving communities begins with cherishing our common wealth. I speak of it as “common” because it’s ordinary and because it’s shared. By “wealth” I don’t mean money, but the actual sources of well-being. I mean the soils, waters, and atmosphere; the oceans and prairies and forests; the human gene pool and the plenitude of species. I mean language in all its forms, including mathematics and music; every kind of knowledge, from folklore to physics; and all manner of artifacts, from satellites to shoes. I mean practical arts such as cooking, building, herding, and farming; the art of medicine; the traditions of civil liberty and democratic government. I mean wildlife refuges, national parks, and wilderness areas, as well as schools, museums, libraries, and other public spaces. ∞ *Scott Russell Sanders is the author of more than 20 books, including A Private History of Awe, a coming-of-age memoir, love story, and spiritual testament, and his latest collection, A Conservationist Manifesto. His writing has won the AWP Creative Nonfiction Award, the John Burroughs Essay Award, and the Lannan Literary Award. Learn more at www.scottrussellsanders.com*



above: Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop students and staff gather outside of the Hardware Store; photo courtesy of Doris Thurston. top right: Scott Russell Sanders describes writing and craft. bottom right: Several writers explore the Root Glacier. Photos by Jeremy Pataky





Todd Bogan

From Campus to Camping

Ben Shaine

Projects on the agenda of WMC's Wildlands Studies Program this summer included the effects of climate change on mountain sheep (this was the second year of the program's participation in an international research project), the sometimes-odd responses of glaciers to warming since the Little Ice Age, solutions to the dilemma of keeping bears from backpackers' food, the puzzle of why some alpine craneflies are wingless, and the strange behavior of moss balls on the Root Glacier. Sixteen college students built strong minds and bodies while experiencing the benefits of a warm, collaborative learning community in conditions sometimes less than warm. It was, as usual, a life-changing event.

Sixteen college students coming from many national and international campuses joined faculty with expertise in natural history sciences, management issues and the humanities for the seven week program. Through Wildlands Studies, which offers many programs internationally, they earned twelve units of transferrable credit from California State University – Monterey Bay. In addition to living and working in the community at the Old Hardware Store during their time in McCarthy, a three-week backcountry traverse between the Kennicott and Kuskulana Valleys capped their experience, with stellar leaders, including returning faculty Dave Mitchell and Leif Mjos, supporting travel through rugged country. Preparing for that trip, they camped on ice, learning with glaciologist Tim Bartholomaeus. At National Creek Pass above Kennecott, Wrangell Mountains Center advisor and Duke University professor Bill Morris showed them moss campion flowers, some a hundred years and more old, that he and his colleague Dan Doak are monitoring as part of a study of the response of that species to global warming. Bill and ecologist Megan Gahl introduced students to plant species identification and adaptations

to severe alpine conditions. Program alum Sophie Gilbert, now at UA-Fairbanks, led them through the discipline of natural history field journal entries and offered instruction in sketching and watercolors.



Jon Campbell

High points also included visiting WMC advisor Mark Vail's homestead and the chance to care for, and eat from, the Wrangell Mountains Center garden in McCarthy that benefits from Mark's help.

During an intense final week of oral presentations and report writing, students put together their project results. Among other outcomes, the Wrangell Mountains Center is becoming a world center for knowledge and research on the specialized topic of moss balls on glaciers! – and much more.

College students have been living and studying at the Old Hardware Store since the 1972 field program from environmental studies at UC-Santa Cruz. That's longer than the building served as a real hardware store in the mining days. 2009 was the twenty-seventh year of student groups through the Wildlands Studies, the program that was the seed that eventually grew into the Wrangell Mountains Center. Sally Gibert, Marci Thurston and Ben Shaine initially created WMC as an organization for the purpose of owning the Old Hardware Store primarily for use by the Wildlands Studies Program. Through creative efforts and hard work by many people, WMC has grown now to encompass much more. But the flagship program from which it grew still thrives. ∞



Jon Campbell



Barry Hecht



Jon Campbell

Far left: Wildlands Studies faculty and staff in an alpine classroom. Left: The AWS students prepare to split into two independent groups and begin their three-week long backcountry traverse. Above: AWS students (l to r) Lindsey Pepper, Desire Dela Vega, Bess Crandall, and Devon Picklum jumping for Wrangells joy.

Raising Funds & Friends

by Jeremy Pataky

With an increase in fundraising efforts this year, we managed to navigate the treacherous waters of increasing costs in a down economy. Many of our regular donors were unable to contribute as much as usual this year due to the market, and one entire revenue-generating program – our Alaska Pacific University Natural History of Alaska course – was cancelled last minute without recompense. Fortunately, WMC managed to keep the doors open with propane in the tanks, vegetables in the soil, and people of all ages in our programs, thanks to the generous gifts of both money and time from our many members, donors, participants, and volunteers. Thank you all so much.

A precedent for success was set last winter with a membership drive challenge from Megan and Rich Richotte. Megan's been an active WMC board member and NPS liaison for some time, and she stepped forward to address a pressing need that we faced – with our coffers low, our pickup on the skids, and spring-time coming on fast with all the cargo-hauling, pre-season prep work looming – the Richotte's challenged us to raise \$2500 in new or renewed memberships in one month. They promised us their well-maintained Ford Ranger pickup as a match if we could pull it off, and we did it – with the help of a concerted and supporting base of new and renewing members, we raised enough cash to cover our expenses and earned a much-needed vehicle which proved to be a dependable workhorse this year. Thea Bemben even hosted a WMC benefit dinner party in Pittsburgh to aid the cause. So consider this a huge round of applause for the Richotte's and all those who helped in that membership drive! Megan and Rich have moved out to Lake Clark, and she'll be scaling back her board duties, particularly those involving the Park. We'll be sad to see her go, but eager to welcome Danny Rosenkrans in her place. Good luck, Megan.

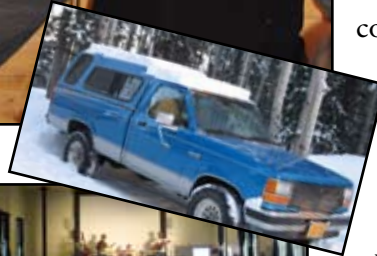
We segued into spring with a WMC party in Anchorage, hosted by board member Maria Shell and her husband Walt Tague in their home. With beer donated by

the Moose's Tooth, music compliments of Sticky Wicket, an amazing spread of food catered by Everyday Gourmet's Kirsten Richardson, a WMC slide show and silent auction, we packed the house, had a great night, and raised some funds. One week later, Anna, Stefanie and I were in sunny McCarthy, hauling thousands of pounds of summer supplies across the foot-bridge, settling into the Hardware Store, and patiently waiting for the water line to thaw.

As ripples from the woeful economy impacted the usual funding base of the WMC even as our overhead costs rose, we kept up the campaign to foster both long-term support with donors and funders and near-term support through events. Our two summer fundraisers were a hit this year. The 2nd Annual John Denver Tribute Concert, featuring a potluck and a silent auction, and the Tall Tales Storytelling Contest, which included both live and silent auction components and a \$500 cash prize donated by McCarthy Lodge, were memorable and successful. Terry Blosser and Dave Hollis made a great team as co-directors of the John Denver Tribute, which KCHU broadcast live on the air from the Kenne-cott Rec Hall. Tony Oney, Denver's friend and pilot, came out with his family and with the producer of Denver's Alaska film, which included 70s footage from the Wrangells.

The lodge was packed for this year's Tall Tales Contest, which featured a host of great storytellers and a diverse silent auction. Emily Bass won the cash prize with her autobiographical tale about the adoption of her son, Ross. Thanks to all the contestants, and to the donors who contributed a fine array of goods and services to the auction. And huge thanks to Nancy Cook for emceeding the event with pizzazz and skill – couldn't have done it without you.

Stay tuned for details about a mid-winter WMC event in Anchorage, and plan for the usual good times and good programs in the Wrangells this coming summer. Please take the time to renew or begin your membership, and remember to Pick, Click, Give to us if you'll be applying for your PFD this year. Alaska has more nonprofits per capita than any other state – thanks for helping keep us in the pack. ∞ *Top down: Sticky Wicket performs at the WMC house party in April (photo: Lila Vogt). Monte Montepare well on the way to his second place in the Tall Tales contest and Emily Bass, Grand Prize wintter (photos: Jon*



With a Place in Community, and a Community in Place

The Wrangell Mountains Center is very lucky to benefit from the deep wells of generosity within our many volunteers and members. One dynamic WMC volunteer is Mark Vail, who helped in innumerable ways this year both behind the scenes and (often literally) on-stage. He nursed the starts for our organic garden, helped out with staff training and program delivery, oversaw the planting of our gardens, flower and herb beds, spent two days teaching our college students at his homestead, and more. He was one featured panelist at the Changes in the Land discussion (see Mike Loso's research summit article) and he joined Jeremy Keller in discussing locavorism and foodsheds after we screened the film *Eating Alaska*. He shared his time, knowl-

edge, and homegrown vegetables often and freely.

Two WMC events which featured Mark Vail book-ended our summer season, appropriately enough—he led an early-morning birding walk during Memorial Day weekend (preceded with his own rhubarb coffee cake), and then, after the busy summer months and hundreds of different people at the Hardware Store, we gathered in the Great Room for a talk by Mark.

During this talk, Mark explored the idea and practices of place-based living and education, articulating a philosophy and its implications for his own life choices as well as much of the work we do at the Center for our community. Below are four questions Mark encouraged the audience to consider, as well as answers or further questions they prompt for him. He begins by diving into some of the origins and meanings of the word “place”:

Four Questions by Mark Vail

Place—from Middle English: open space; from Latin: *planta*, the sole of the foot. a. way of admission. b. physical environment. Thus we find that where we plant the soles of our feet is our place in the world.

What do I know about the place where I live?

Do I know the 50 most common plants?

Do I know the seasonal whereabouts and behaviors of the creatures in my environs... including humans?

Do I have an idea of the seasonal climactic scale? HI/LO temps? Wet/Dry seasons?

Where do things come from, and where do things go?

Food, energy (fuel), garbage—where are the impacts? Do they register in my thinking? I use a small exercise called “think back”, in which you take any given object and try to think it back to its origin taking account of the means that it took to get it to its present location.

How do I connect to the Earth?

Does the food I eat come from local sources? Do I collect or contribute to their production? Is my being here outsourced to some unknown entity? Am I a casual observer, fed by a long distance gravy train? How light is my impact on the land? Will I leave the land untrammelled?

What is my purpose as a human being?

To learn to know myself. To care for the land that feeds me. To help others where I can; to share. To learn to live lightly on the land so that those who follow may enjoy the same diversity of benefits that I have.



Jeremy Pataky

(*Day Camp continued from page 9*) learning to read old fashioned compasses and practiced new skills with a fun game at the ball field. Even our five year old participant was able to find compass headings. After a time out at the swimming hole, we made maps with custom compass roses and headed over to McCarthy Creek for hot dogs and s'mores where we made a campfire culinary discovery: cinnamon grahams make amazing s'mores! Based on the enthusiastic response, we are working on a program to expand the Family Camp and offer a multiple day event in 2010.

Jeremy and I are also working on future funding for day camps. We hope to find a sustainable source to fund these programs, which are important for the youth of the Copper Basin and for visitors to the Park. Today's children will be tomorrow's caretakers of these special places. Without programs like the WMC Day Camps, children will lack under-

standing of and connection to the cultural and natural resource heritage that is theirs. I know that I watched children fall in love with the natural world around them this past summer.

Please let us know if you would like to get involved with the WMC Day Camp Programs. Donations, ideas, assistance running program or fund raising would be greatly appreciated. Camp dates will be posted later this winter on wrangells.org ∞



Jeremy Pataky

A Million Thanks!

GRANTING ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska State Council on the Arts
and the National Endowment for the Arts
Murie Science and Learning Center
National Park Service
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

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and stewardship of the lands and communities of
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve **TODAY***

Name _____ **Email** _____ **Phone** _____
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Membership Support Level

___ \$15 Student/Basic ___ \$25 Standard ___ \$150 McCarthy Creek
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please hand-deliver this form to the Old Hardware Store in McCarthy or
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Wrangell Mountains Center
2104 Lincoln Avenue, Anchorage AK 99517

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By including the Wrangell Mountains Center in your **Planned Giving**, you will help to ensure that our programs and services will continue to serve the communities and ecosystems in and around Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve today and in the long term. Please contact us or your own financial advisor to learn more about the many options that may meet your needs, such as **bequests**, gifts of **stock**, a gift of **retirement assets**, or a gift of **real estate**.

Rebecca Bard, Rich and Megan Richotte, Rick & Bonnie Kenyon, Rick Jurick, Riki Ott, the Rowlands, Sarah Hieber, Saint Elias Alpine Guides, Sally Gibert & Dick Mylius, Saunders McNeill, Scott Russell Sanders, Shane & Anna Hostetler, Sherry Eckrich, Spirit Mountain Artworks, Stellar Designs, Stefanie Sever, Stephens & Tamara Harper, Susan Pizitz, Suzi Drinen, Teeka Balas, Terry Blosser, Thea Agnew Bembem, Tina Wang, Todd Soeberl, Tony Oney & family, Vanessa Wilcox-Healy, Vicki Penwell, Vicki Snitzler, Wayne & Gaia Marrs, WISE, Wrangell Mountain Air, Wrangell-St. Elias News.

AND FINALLY

Core Staff: Stefanie Sever, Facilities & Garden Manager; Interns Anna Nowosad, Elena Bantle, Kim Mapp; Jeremy Pataky, ED.
Program Staff: Barry Hecht, Ben Shaine, Bruce James, Buzz

Schwall, Dave Mitchell, Haley Runa, Lilly Goodman-Allwright, Kris Gregory, Leif Mjos, Mark Vail, Megan Gahl, Meghan Holtan, Mike Loso, Nancy Cook, Scott Russell Sanders, Sophie Gilbert, Suzi Drinen, Tim Bartholomaus, Vicki Penwell. *Guest Speakers and Artists for the Summer Arts & Lectures Series:* Mike Murphy, Alex Rose, Ben Shaine, Bill Morris, Deta Gasser, Ellen Frankenstein, JoeNeal Hicks, Kelly Bay, Kirk Ellis, Mark Vail, Irina Rivkin, Jamie Esler, Riki Ott, Terry Blosser and Dave Hollis and all the John Denver Tribute Concert performers

*a very large thanks to our volunteer
Board of Directors
and Advisory Board members*



Monitor our website or contact us for details on our 2010 lineup of programs...

- **Sweet Sunny South WMC benefit concert** (January 27, 2010 in Anchorage, details tba)
- **INCPA Education Techniques Workshop** (February 4 & 11, 2010)
- **Natural History Workshop for Educators** (June 4-5, 2010)
- **Summer Arts & Lectures Series** (throughout summer)
- **Alaska Wildlands Studies college program**, 28th year (June-August)
- **University of Alaska Fairbanks Int'l Glaciology Course** (tentatively, June)
- **Multi-day Family Camp and Kids Day Camps** in McCarthy (tba)
- **13th annual Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop & Community Word Jam** (August)
- **Culture Camps** in the Nabesna district (tba)
- **Naturalist Walks** (throughout summer)
- **3rd Annual John Denver Tribute Concert** (Kenecott Rec Hall, June 18, 2010)
- **Tall Tales Storytelling Contest** (McCarthy Lodge, August 28, 2010)
- **Alaska Pacific University Natural History of Alaska course** (Sept)
- **Mountain Arts for Youth** (throughout summer)
- *More Exciting New Programs yet to be announced....*



Wrangell Mountains Center is a private nonprofit organization dedicated to environmental education, research, and the arts in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. WMC is supported by members, as well as donors, our programs, the National Park Service, and by grants from the Alaska State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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