HARDWARE STORE HERALD

Volume 15

News from the Wrangell Mountains Center

Winter 2014/15

The Wrangell Mountains Center fosters understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of wildlands and mountain culture in Alaska through scientific and artistic inquiry in the Wrangell Mountains.



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▲ Participants from the Family Music Camp gather in front of the Old Hardware Store and artist in residence, Joe Barrington's, raven sculpture.

Letter from the Director

by Kristin Link

If irst came to the WMC in 2010. It was my second summer in McCarthy, and I was putting together an internship to complete a certificate in science illustration. Getting involved with a place that shared my interests in place-based learning and investigating the world through the lenses of science and art excited me. I spent a large part of the internship working with Alaska Wildland Studies, traveling in the backcountry, teaching, and modeling my practice of field sketching. Along the way, I eagerly soaked up as much information as possible about local glaciology and botany. I didn't realize then how lucky I was to have this experience; and like others before me, it has left me indebted to and inspired by the WMC community.

I want to thank all of you for being part of the WMC community. Whether you stayed at the Hardware Store as a researcher, participated as a student or an instructor with the Wildland Studies college semester, taken a writing workshop or music camp, attended Mountains Arts and Science for Youth or a Summer Arts and Lectures Series event, or simply stopped in to say hello, you are a part of our network. Your collective curiosity and desire to learn make the WMC a rich and vibrant place, a place where a writer, a painter, and 12 glaciologists can sit around a dinner table sharing stories, experiences and questions.

We rely on you to create the opportunities for learning that enrich our community and us. Please take some time to investigate what the WMC is doing today, support us, and join the conversation to help shape our future. Renew or start a membership with us today. We appreciate each gift, no matter its size. Thank you for being a part of our community.

First Year of Residency Program, Great Success

by Kristin Link

Hunt Residency program by hosting four artists and two writers. Residents were housed in the live-work studio space at Porphyry Place for one to two weeks, shared meals with staff and program participants at the Old Hardware Store, and completed an outreach project to share their work with the community. There was tremendous interest in the program with more than 80 applications. Choosing amongst them was a challenge, but we were delighted with the artists that visited us, and the work they produced. Below is a little about each of the residents that joined us this year:

- Joe Barrington, from Throckmorton, TX, spent two weeks building sculptures from found objects. His raven sculptures made of willow, driftwood, and metal scraps now have a home in the front yard of the Old Hardware Store and are enjoyed by many.
- Professor of communication studies at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, IL, Jonny Gray, returned to McCarthy to continue his work on communication about environmental issues. Jonny lead a workshop on creating "big head" masks through Mountain Arts for Youth and created a series of big heads for the WMC which were featured in the 4th of July parade.
- Internationally renowned fiber artist, Ann Johnston, from Lake Oswego, OR, visited for a week with her family. She guest taught at the Sew Fun workshop and gave a Summer Arts and Lectures Series talk on her life and background as a fiber artist.
- Poet, Megan Grumbing, from Portland, ME, taught a workshop "Renewable Energies" where students worked on honing poetics that hold and heighten energy. A poem from her suite: McCarthy Blues is included in this newsletter.
- Former Alaskan writer laureate, Nancy Lord, from Homer, AK gave a public reading from her work as part of the Summer Arts and Lectures Series. She also published an article in the Alaska Dispatch News: We Alaskans, about her time in McCarthy.
- Fairbanks painter, Elizabeth Eero Irving, spent two weeks with us pursuing her painting practice. In addition to painting and drawing, she taught a workshop on letterboxing and created a series of letterboxes for the area.



▲ Bryan Campbell carries a big head made by Jonny Gray to the start of the 4th of July parade.

Our Own, Together

by Megan Grumbling

It's true, blue is sometimes solitude. Blue is sometimes Alone in the Wilderness, the mountain, the sky vault from which only gravity keeps each of us alone. Blue is sometimes no one's words, sometimes no words at all. Blue is sometimes awe and solace, a color of medicine, of isolation.

But here in this mountain town, the same blue also seems to be a stone that everyone touches. Touched in both reverence and banter, in both Great Room song and kitchen lingering. And so, here, glints of the awe-and-solace, the solitude blue, are passed along by people.

So does the blue seems to move through the textures of what is shared with me. The two-crystal nature of porphyry. The meaning of *na*. An ancient source of sourdough. How to draw a vast scale by coloring the most distant mountains lighter, bluer, as we each quietly paint some mountains our own, together.

Megan Grumbling was one of our 2014 summer artists in residence.

Learn more about our residents at wrangells.org. Apply for next year's program starting in January.

Welcome New Board Members

he WMC is pleased to welcome the following new members to its board of directors.

- Tim Bartholomaus has the good fortune of completing both his master's and doctoral degrees while studying glaciers within the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. He served as a faculty member of the WMC'c college program for six seasons. As a board member, Tim is excited to help build on the WMC's history of education, research, and community outreach.
- Jared Steyaert first came to the Wrangells in the spring 2006 to be the Hardware Store Manager for WMC. He is now part owner of Kennicott Wilderness Guides. As a new WMC board member, Jared is looking forward to supporting programming that encourages the power of selfdiscovery in the raw and beautiful environments of the Wrangell Mountains.
- Dave Wellman is retired from teaching science at Kenny Lake School. He now runs a small bed and breakfast and the Wellwood Nature Preserve in Kenny Lake and does consulting for the Willow Creek Research Project. The McCarthy-Kennicott area has been one of his favorite havens for many years.



• Owen smiles with the walrus mask he made in resident artist, Jonny Gray's Mountain Arts for Youth class.





▲ Above: Group shot of the 2014 Family Music Camp. Below: One of the final performance on the last day.

WMC Campus Brims with Music

by Lilly Goodman-Allright

n the last morning of the Family Music Camp, our entire WMC campus was bursting with music. As individual bands, whose members ranged in ages from 5 - 70 prepared for a final noon concert, tunes emerged from every available corner. Swinging melodies could be heard from the back deck of Porphyry Place to the classroom of the Hardware store.

You may have been able to treat your ears on any other given moment of the three-day camp. Passers by Porphyry Place in the early morning might have heard sweet harmonies emerging from the Morning Sing-a-Long, or foot stomping fun from the Session I Advanced Jam. Lullabies from the beginning ukulele class may have reached you just in time for an afternoon nap, while laughter from the Drama Improv Session could have woken you up. Finally, maybe you just couldn't stay away and joined hands with the other 34 members of the camp during the evening Barn Dance, or the Open Jam Session that filled the Great Hall with smiles and song until dusky streamers of last light closed out the day.

If you missed the concerts, don't worry. With grins that huge on the faces of camp participants, they'll be sure to be another chance next year. Save the date: July 16-19, 2015! ••

Birding in the Mentasta **Mountains**

by Kathryn Tolley, WMC Intern

Tlooked forward to the birding workshop upon my arrival in Alaska. Getting a sense of the local birds has always been a part of how I get to know a new place. Participating in and helping out with the birding workshop gave me a better sense of where I was and introduced me to my new feathered neighbors.

From the wrens that were longtime residents of my Midwestern yard to the Ruddy Ducks that reside in the rushes of my favorite pond in Yellowstone National Park, I have always loved birds. The prospect of spending time with birders who knew the birds of Alaska well was exciting.

We spent our first night of the workshop at Huck's Hobbit Hostel in Slana, AK, with delicious food and wonderful hospitality. Sitting on the porch of our cabin provided a lovely view and a chance to listen to all the nearby birds, providing a great way to get started.

The workshop continued to improve, with opportunities to watch and listen for waterfowl from a campsite near Twin Lakes. Waking in my tent to birdsongs and the smell of hot coffee more than made up for the cool, spring temperatures. Several hikes provided an opportunity to further explore the landscape as well as the birds.

This adventure was a chance to meet new people and to get to better know the neighborhood and its feathered neighbors. I definitely recommend this experience as a chance to learn about some of the birdy residents of Alaska, either as a new introduction or to renew an old acquaintance.



Permaculture: A Different Way of Doing by Ginny Cooke, WMC Gardens Intern T magine a world where a holistic, systems based

approach is used to tackle the major issues of Lour times. From how our food is grown, to how our buildings are constructed, to the way in which our economies function. Imagine this approach --

evaluating the various factors that affect our daily lives while keeping future generations in mind. Sounds pretty impressive, huh? This vision is exactly what Cindee Karns introduced to participants in the Introduction to Permaculture workshop, taught this past June at the WMC.

So what exactly is permaculture? Permaculture stands for "permanent culture" and "is a branch of ecological and environmental design and engineering that develops sustainable architecture and selfmaintained agricultural systems modeled from natural ecosystems" (Toby Hemenway, Gaia's Garden). Permaculture has three main tenants: care for the earth, care for the people, and return of surplus (reinvesting surpluses so that the first two main tenants may flourish).

During the workshop, Cindee provided an indepth introduction to the philosophy and practical application of permaculture through a variety of lectures and hands on activities. Participants learned about the various patterns that exist in nature (and can be mimicked in design for different uses), low cost, simple techniques such as building a worm compost out of recycled materials and making dandelion tea to boot garden nutrients, and information on building (growing plants in layers, or stories, so that there is



workshop group takes a break for lunch on the way up the Skookum Volcano Trail. Right: Birding is about more than birds and participants enjoyed making observations about other plants and animals. Mark Vail pointed out this rare white version of Wooly Lousewort.

◆ Left: The birding





▲ The WMC has the best food. Left: the kitchen staff lays out breakfast for the NPS exhibit workshop. Right: Making use of Alaska's bounty, salads of WMC greens and bluebells and a bowl of harvested fiddlehead ferns.

a canopy layer, understory, ground cover, etc.), and companion planting (growing plants together to benefit each other). The gardening part of the workshop got very hands on when everyone went to one participant's house and starting digging up her yard to make room for a new garden (and to hopefully mitigate the giant puddle that was forming by her house)!

One thing that was brought to the attention of the group was that permaculture is not limited to growing food or building with natural materials. It also includes aspects such as community, economy, and everyday living—all parts of the WMC's diverse mission. In our group of eight, almost everyone served as both teacher and student through sharing personal knowledge and experience. The group contemplated what this could mean with an even larger community.

The workshop was a great start to the season with ideas and techniques that benefitted both participants and the WMC in preparation for a productive and creative summer.



Alaska Wrangell Mountains Field Semester Update

by Kristin Link

Te are excited about our new developing partnership with the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Colorado, Boulder to offer a field-based, intensive program in the Wrangells. The new program will offer a 7-week 9-credit course for college students nationwide as well as internationally.

We are working to have the program up and running in time for the 2015 summer season. Please stay tuned and check our website, www.wrangells.org, for updates.



▶ Left: Artist in residence, Ann Johnston, demos a technique for the students of Sew Fun. Right: Students at Sew Fun work busilly on independent





▲ Scenes from Mountain Science for Youth. Above: Collecting invertebrates in McCarthy Creek. Below: Sifting for artifacts

Summer 2014 Arts and Science Youth Programs

by Lara Applebaum, Youth Programs Coordinator

Tisitors and the youth of our community ages
5-15 came together again for interactive
workshops inspiring creativity, understanding,
and connections to our local culture and environment.
Over 20 youth participated in this five-week series,
including a science and an art workshop each week.
Mountain Arts for Youth workshops included both
individualized and group projects in felting, fabric
prayer flags, printmaking, mask making, and writing.

This summer also brought the addition of Mountain Science for Youth, which included the hands-on exploration of our local environment in relation to archeology, glaciology, hydrology, fisheries, aquatic invertebrate sampling, and the boreal forest.

Many thanks to Robin and Lyda from WISE, the WMC Meg Hunt Residency Program, and our local volunteers for their willingness to share their time and talents with us! Additional thanks to the Blackburn Heritage Foundation for their generosity in sponsoring this program.

Hosting Researchers

By Kristin Link

upporting researchers in the Wrangell-St. Elias and the McCarthy-Kennicott area is an important way the WMC fulfills its mission. We provide logistical support including room, board, and research space, a welcoming and intellectually curious atmosphere, and opportunities for outreach and creating connections with the public.

This summer the WMC supported several research projects. William "Billy" Armstrong, PhD candidate at University of Colorado, Boulder, returned for his third summer to collect data on the Kennicott Glacier. He and his team are building on work done by his advisor, Bob Anderson, and others dating back to 2000. Many community members have been involved in helping transport materials to and from the glacier as well as with providing advice. This year Billy gave a presentation about the hydrology of the Kennicott Glacier as part of the WMC's Summer Arts and Lectures Series.

Alaska Wildland Studies alumni, Leanne Phelps, spent the summer at the WMC pursuing her masters degree research through the University College London on "Human-bear interaction in the Kennicott Valley: Conflict, attitudes, and bear safety." Leanne conducted interviews and surveys with local residents and visitors and compiled her work in several informative films, which can be found online (linked to the WMC blog). We were happy to offer Leanne a work-trade arrangement in exchange for a portion of her room and board while conducting research.

Jack Holt and his team from the University of Texas Institute for Geophysics stayed at the WMC for a couple of days on their way into the field to collect aerial surveys and data on the ground about rock glaciers. They enjoyed overlapping with the International Summer School in Glaciology.

The WMC is happy to work with researchers coming through for a couple of days or for a couple of months. Connecting with and supporting researchers is an important part of the WMC mission.

Lovalaska Pick.Click.Give.



▲ Participants from the Summer School hiking on the Root Glacier

Glaciology Summer School

by Kristin Link

he WMC hosted the bi-annual International Summer School in Glaciology for the third time this summer. The University of Alaska Fairbanks Geophysical Institute and the International Arctic Research Center organize the summer school with funding from the National Science Foundation. For ten days students and faculty from all over the world (including the USA, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, Norway, the UK, India, Australia, and New Zealand) convened in McCarthy. The top minds in glaciology focused on sharing information, and solving common challenges of conduction research about glaciers and looking for commonalities in lines of scientific inquiry around the globe.

Lindsay Bartholomew, who taught science communication and blogged about the program, explains that students "learn by experiencing, listening, trying, and doing." She continues:

During each day, students listen to lectures from esteemed glaciology instructors from all over the world, try exercises assigned by instructors based on those lectures, and of course experience glaciers by going out on treks to see them firsthand. But the "doing" of this course is important as well. Students have been working on group projects with course instructors, to gain experience and knowledge on the processes and techniques involved in glaciology research. So every afternoon, the log cabins, picnic tables, and even the rocks by the nearby riverside, all become project places.

The fruit of these projects was presented in a "mini





▲ Above: Students present their projects at the mini conference. Below: A poster session held outside the Hardware Store. Each student brought a poster explaining research they had been working on.

conference" on the last day. Topics included the use of computer models to derive conditions at the base of a glacier, interpreting GPS data for moving ice, and how unmanned aircraft systems (drones) can be used to collect glacier imagery. It was amazing to hear and see what was accomplished in 10 days and a pleasure to host this great group of scientists.

Read more on Lindsay Bartholomew's blog, *Lindsay* in the Arctic: www.miamisci.org/lindsayinthearctic/





▲ Above: The Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop 2014.

Below: Nancy Cook and Robin Child perform at the Word Jam.

Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop: True Story

by Nancy Cook

Tith Frank Soos of Fairbanks and Tom Kizzia of Homer serving as visiting writers, the 16th Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop was a wonderful, fruitful gathering. It was a real treat to hear the personal story of "neighbor Tom's" writerly odyssey which became Pilgrim's Wilderness. And Frank lived up to his well-earned reputation as a challenging yet generous mentor of creative nonfiction.

Especially fun was the opportunity to interact so intimately with a number of summer neighbors who attended this year's workshop. Sunny Cook and Patt Garrett kept themselves busy telling engaging stories about characters they've studied through their affiliation with the McCarthy Kennicott Historical Museum while new summer resident Jon Erdman, a McCarthy Lodge employee, reflected on his experiences knowing God in the kayak wilderness of Glacier Bay. Also in attendance was the ever-delightful Robin Child, who brought her brother, Nathan, along

this time; Robin compiled a powerful memoir from her experiences teaching art in the villages of western Alaska. Newcomers to the workshop included the talented mother-daughter duo of Hannah and Diana Hindley from California, the ever-thoughtful Barbara Williams of Anchorage, and the spirited eighteengoing-on-eighty-year-old Christopher Philopena all the way from Connecticut.

A good time was had by all! And we got some good writerly work done as well. The writing workshop is a wonderful Wrangell Mountains tradition, and I feel lucky to be a part of it.

Facilties Update

by Kristin Link

n recent years, the WMC has expanded across the street to include Porphyry Place, and we are delighted to have the extra space to accommodate our programming. However the Old Hardware Store remains integral to our campus, and the subject of our thoughts as we work to be a sustainable organization for many years to come.

For the second year in a row, the WMC successfully applied to list the McCarthy General Store on the Alaska Association for Historic Preservation's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties list. This list is intended to bring public awareness and increased support for the conservation of these buildings. It also makes us eligible to apply for funding for hands-on preservation work and to leverage funding from other sources.

We also received grant funding from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to conduct an as-built survey and to work with an electrical engineer, both necessary steps in planning for physical work on the building. These projects build on stabilization work completed in 2010 through a grant from the State Historic Preservation Office. The overarching plan involves consolidating upgraded utilities in a new outbuilding, strengthening the foundation of the Old Hardware Store, and making the buildings more firesafe and efficient.

As we work on these bigger plans, we have also made improvements to our operating facilities. Our neighbor and supporter, Patt Garrett, helped us out in a huge way this summer by generously donating a new stove/oven to the WMC kitchen. The new range has been key to our summer programming and helps our staff prepare nourishing food for students and guests. Thank you Patt!

WMC honors the legacy of Ruth A.M. Schmidt (1916-2014)

by Sally Gibert

arch 29, 2014 marked the passing of Dr. Ruth A. M. Schmidt, age 98. She was a well-known Anchorage geologist and educator, and a quiet supporter of the Wrangell Mountains Center.

I first met Ruth in 1974 as a young college intern volunteering at the Alaska Center for the Environment. She was nearly 60, in the prime of her long professional career. We inexplicably developed a close, cross-generational friendship that endured for 40 years.

As a member of the statewide Prospector's Club, Ruth loved visiting McCarthy and Kennicott. The spectacular geologic processes at work in the Wrangells drew her back many times from the late 1950s to the late 1970s.

On her last trip to McCarthy, about 1979, she witnessed my early efforts to save the decrepit Hardware Store with initial plans to open a youth hostel. She was most supportive and pleased to see a young woman tackle such a project.

Ruth was particularly passionate about science education. When she later learned about the creation of the Wrangell Mountains Center and the college field program, she was most delighted to contribute. Her generous annual donations, which continued for the rest of her life, helped support the WMC's growth and increasing stability.



◆ Ruth Schmidt mentoring a student in 1968

▼ Scenes from the 2014 McCarthy Half Marathon and 5K Runs sponsored for the second year by the WMC. Clockwise from left to right: Runners Ginny Cooke and Erin Campbell are all smiles after signing up for the 5K. Long time race organizer, Dan Meyers, gathers participants at the start. Runners are cheered on by volunteers from the McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum.







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Kennicott River (\$250-499): Bob & Suzanne Anderson, Tim Bartholomaus & Sophie Gilbert, Joe & Sue Ellen Bemben, Mike & Karen Loso, Carol McIntyre & Ray Hander, Susan Pizitz, Ivan Samuals, Rob Wesson & Gayle Gordon, Barbara Williams

Fireweed Mountain (\$500-999): Grant Crosby & Petra Wilm, Patt Garrett, Merck Foundation, Jason Reitmeyer, Maria Shell & Walt Tague

Donohoe Peak (\$1000+): Blackburn Heritage Foundation, Sally Gibert & Dick Mylius, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve

Wrangell Mountain (\$2500+): Alaska State Council on the Arts, Barry & Ellen Hecht, James & Ann Johnston, National Trust for Historic Preservation

Mount Blackburn (\$10,000+): John & Tana Bosshard, Cara Haskey, Ruth Schmidt.

Scholarship Fund: John & Tana Bosshard, Ann & James Johnston.

Tall Tales \$500 cash prize: McCarthy Lodge

Half Marathon & 5K: New North Consulting, Skinny Raven Sports, Wild Alpine

Supporting Organizations:

Alaska State Council on the Arts National Endowment for the Arts Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve National Trust for Historic Preservation







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Please hand-deliver this form to the Old Hardware Store in McCarthy or mail along with a check or money order to: Wrangell Mountains Center, PO Box 142972, Anchorage AK 99514-2972		
Please update my contact in	nformation (see above)	

Special Thanks to our In-Kind Donors and Volunteers

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As well as to the 2014 staff:

Bryan Campbell, Facilities Manager; Ginny Cooke, Garden Intern; Tamara Harper, Administrative Assistant & Rec Hall Coordinator; Rachel Franklin, Kitchen Manager, Kristin Link, Executive Director; Claire Mann, Intern; Jenny Rosenbaum, Bookkeeper; Kathryn Tolley, Intern.

Ways to support the WMC:

- Renew your membership.
- Stay in touch--Keep your contact information up to date.
- Spread the word about our programs to prospective participants.
- Donate to invest in exceptional program development.
- Donate airline miles for WMC volunteers to make on-campus visits to spread the word about the new college program.
- Volunteer at our annual work-party on Memorial Day weekend and special events.







Watch our website for details on our 2015 season which will include:

- Meg Hunt Residency Application Opens (January)
- Spring Break Up Party and Fundraiser (April 24)
- Memorial Day Work Party (May 24)
- Mountain Arts and Science for Youth
- Summer Arts and Lectures Series
- Our workshop line-up including the Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop, the Family Music Camp, Sew Fun, and much more
- Updates on the Alaska Wrangell Mountains Field Semester





▲ Sunset in the Kennicott Valley. Photo by Leanne Phelps