The Wild Channel Goes Live

A Magnificent Gift

Winter will be Wild

WINTER 2011
WILDCENTER.ORG

AN UPDATE FOR MEMBERS

page 3

page 10

page 4
Northern Science Partners

The Wild Center and Finland’s major science center are partnering to explore new ways to open doors to science for the places they serve. “We have so much in common with the Finns,” said Stephanie Ratcliffe. “Finland is uncannily similar to the Adirondacks, we both live in the northern temperate forest, rely on snow for winter recreation, and our science centers have similar interests in inventing ways we can be science-based and effectively convene groups around important issues.”

One year ago, a delegation from Finland’s Heureka Science Center traveled to the Adirondacks to observe The Wild Center’s sold out Youth Climate Summit, an event where high school and college students study climate change and develop sustainable practice plans for their schools. Heureka will launch their own Youth Summit next September, using The Wild Center model.

These exchanges are part of a growing relationship between The Wild Center and the Finnish science museum and are funded by a grant from the American Association of Museums. The program has sent teams across the ocean to see everything from forest practices to energy systems.

The Power to Save Money

A burst of sunlight washes over a room at The Wild Center. A new Lutron system senses the solar help and dims the energy efficient lighting in the room so there is no change in illumination, just in our energy bill. Most lights are either on, at 100 percent, or off. Our new system means we’re almost never getting billed at 100 percent, and usually at much less. Now visitors can watch how we save real money in real time on a new display that illuminates our savings. Cutting our lighting bill means we have money for more luminous ideas.
New Wild Channel Goes Live

A new window, wide with potential for the Adirondacks, opened this year. Its first filmed view offered a special look inside a famous barn in Essex, NY, and the glimpse seemed to instantly connect people in the Adirondacks to others around the world.

When the cameras rolled they captured an interview between The Wild Center’s Tracey Legat and farmer Mark Kimball. Their conversation was followed by Kristin Kimball reading from her book ‘The Dirty Life’, a memoir that follows the lively arc of her life from city girl to Adirondack farmer. A viewer from Decorah, Iowa who was tuned in to that first online broadcast said “I think this type of forum is a great way to bridge the gap of understanding between rural and city life.” The “barn-cast” included a live concurrent conversation on The Wild Center’s Facebook page where viewers posed questions to Kristin and Mark. You can see the show in reruns on our Youtube channel at YouTube.com/wildcenter and look for the film “The Dirty Life - A Barncast” by The Wild Center.

Presidents Week

We’ll start February 18 with a grand wild animal ice sculpture festival. If you are near the Center in February plan to come by and see how amazing the snow season is in the Adirondacks. Events will be indoors and out, including igloo making and winter birding. See the online calendar for a complete schedule.

& Come by for the holidays! Open Daily Dec 26-Dec 31
Winter Will be Wild

The Wild Center is the warm place to be all winter. The Center is open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays with a special slate of programs. Sundays have a family flavor with art programs that draw rave reviews from kids and parents. To see how Wild the weekends are check the calendar online, or even better, sign up to get emails that will let you stay abreast of the latest offerings. Below, snowshoes at The Wild Center ready for winter visitors.

Paddle This Way

After a quiet test in 2011 the Center will launch a full-fledged paddle experience in 2012. The canoes and docks mean visitors will get deeper into the water at The Wild Center. Here two early adopters show that there are many directions to take from the Oxbow Overlooks.
Come Together

Dining on bugs, hauling home free rain barrels, sampling smoked trout and local fromage, and dancing to Beatles and Reggae. The summer and fall Fests proved wildly popular, and will come back next year, so plan ahead for days when the Adirondacks come together at the Center.

Mission

Ignite an enduring passion for the Adirondacks where people and nature can thrive together and set an example for the world.

Rock on

The Wild Center is working with great partners at DEC, ORDA, the Nature Conservancy, WCS, and ADK building a brand new experience that will help the 100,000 people who travel to the summit of Whiteface get a much more interesting view.

The exhibits will showcase how life survives in one of the harshest climates on Earth. Here team members gather outside the summit’s tunnel entrance.
One thing about being a museum in the woods is you can tap ideas like this. This winter we’re doing something sweet at The Wild Center. We’ll take a deep dive into maple where you can energize your days with a taste of the wild that’s still made from the water that flows up a tree. When the sap runs, drop by and taste the freshest, best maple you’ve ever had. This winter we’ll show how the sweetest stuff in the Adirondacks is not just for pancakes anymore.

The sweet idea debuted at FlavorFest 2011, where this young visitor drank it all in.

Within minutes of the Earthquake that rattled the Adirondacks this fall, The Wild Center’s Facebook crowd was posting updates about the tremor. The number of reports (86) and their breadth (Old Forge, Lake George, Gouverneur ...) turned the posts into a news event. The Plattsburgh Press Republican cited the real time reports from Wild Center friends on tremors to inform their readers where things were shaking and where they weren’t.

If you use Facebook please drop in and like us. It’s a fun crowd and a source of lots of interesting daily news from the North Country.
Two Fans Tell Their Own Wild Stories

We’re a center for different things to different people. We invited two young bloggers to tell us about their experience at The Wild Center, and the two, Jenna and Lauren, sent us this view of our 31 acres.

by Jenna

When we went to The Wild Center, I felt happy, it felt like I was in my own backyard. I saw birds, otters, and other animals that are in the wild. I heard all kinds of birds. The trails were my favorite part of our visit because I like walking in the woods.

The Wild Center is a wonderful place that you should visit, and if you like hiking, take the trails! The playground is wonderful, too. My family spent about half an hour there. It was a great trip for us! I suggest you take a trip there, too.

by Lauren

A lot of people talk about the otters and think they are the best part of The Wild Center. They are not my only favorite part, but I did enjoy them. I liked The Pines because it is a natural playground. I liked the tree roots to play on, and the different things to climb on made of wood. I saw a hummingbird moth for the first time in the butterfly garden at The Wild Center. I really liked all of the water areas, and I liked looking through the binoculars at the Oxbow Overlook.

I enjoyed all of The Wild Center, and I think it’s a good place to go if you’re looking for somewhere to visit that’s close to nature.

It’s a special museum, and I highly recommend it!

If you are interested in helping support more nature play in your community please contact us. We would be glad to point you in the right directions.

Get more Wild Things Today

10,000 Wild Center friends are onto something already. Get what they are getting by going to wildcenter.org and clicking on the email sign up option. We’ll send you events info and news that you don’t get anywhere else.
Imagine you can choose between a classroom and spending the day at The Wild Center. Sally Gross is the person at the Center who helps teachers get their kids onto the bus and into the woods. When summer is over and school’s back in session, The Wild Center shifts gears. The Center is open on Fridays and weekends for the public, but it’s open the other days for school groups.

Things get especially crowded in the spring. “It’s something really interesting about The Wild Center, we just change who we are,” said Sally. “It’s great because there are days when the whole staff become teacher assistants. We get this jolt of energy from the kids who are just running from place to place eating up the experience. There can be hundreds of kids and the whole place is geared to giving them a learning experience.”

Sally helps teachers sort through the course offerings and programs designed by the education team.

You can see the menu in the education section of our website by exploring the pages under the Education tab.

Diana’s Good Fortune

Diana Fortune got a speeding admonishment on the way to her first meeting to talk about how The Wild Center might go from dream to reality. Over the next decade her enthusiasm never waned as she helped raise the funds that built and launched the Center.

This month Diana moved from The Wild Center to be the director of the North Country Community College Foundation. The mark of her commitment to The Wild Center is in part the fact of the Center itself, but as importantly it’s reflected in the people she leaves in her place who continue to build on The Wild Center’s ability to break new ground on behalf of its science-based mission.
If you subscribe to *Adirondack Life* or the *Adirondack Explorer* you have probably seen the new ‘My Center for ...’ pages about The Wild Center where individual friends of the Adirondacks say what the Center means to them.

“When you are inside the Center every day you can easily see that one day it’s a school for a pack of 5th graders, the next moment a site for a family reunion, then a place for a thoughtful gathering on the regional economy, and then you turn around and there are people who want to see *The Pines* because they have plans to build new nature-based play areas for kids. We see all those shifts,” said Stephanie Ratcliffe. “It was interesting to us that so many people saw it the same way, as a center for a whole variety of actions.”

The idea came from a Fifth Anniversary Survey where more than 1000 members and supporters answered detailed questions about what they felt The Wild Center was and could become.

What do you want a Center for? Is there something that is important to you? Let us know in person or any way from Facebook to a letter with a stamp.

*The ‘My Center for...’ ads at right feature Curt Stager of Paul Smith’s College, Jim Schoff of Upper Saranac Lake, and Kristin Kimball from the Essex Farm.*
A Magical Gift

The Wild Center just received what one person here called ‘a magical gift’. It felt that way. The bequest, made by the late Linda K. Vaughan of Long Lake and Wellesley, MA, touched people in amazing ways. The gift of $2.4 million is the largest single private gift The Wild Center has received to date. An equal amount was also given to the Adirondack Museum. In a single profoundly moving gesture Dr. Vaughan reminded us how much people invest in our collective work to tell the stories of the natural and human history that have formed this remarkable corner of the world.

Dr. Vaughan’s love of the Adirondacks and its wilderness developed at a young age when she was a canoeing guide at Silver Lake Camp girl’s camp in the late 1950s. She returned every year and was a quiet and consistent supporter of the Adirondack Museum and The Wild Center.

“This is a transformative gift,” said Stephanie Ratcliffe at a ceremony in Long Lake. “Everyone who is part of The Wild Center was deeply moved by Dr. Vaughan’s commitment to our future.”

Dr. Vaughan was Professor Emerita of the Department of Physical Education and Athletics at Wellesley College, and was Chair/Athletic Director of the Department from 1973 to 1990. She continued teaching until her retirement in 2000. Dr. Vaughan passed away in 2009.

A WILD FORCE

A few days ago a man emailed The Wild Center from Italy as he planned his visit. He found us through our global web outreach. In Helsinki, Finland there were long discussions taking place about the Adirondacks and its place in the world. Those face-to-face talks happened through a series of Wild Center initiatives. In Iowa a family tuned in to meet a farmer in her barn in Essex that was part of a test to see whether The Wild Center can bring live views of our world to people all around the world.

There are two forces at work at The Wild Center. One draws people to our campus so they can see a new view of wild. The other broadcasts outward from our Center, reaching people who want to understand the Adirondacks and what makes our place so valuable. Both these forces matter to the future of this region. I urge you to join the work here and feel for yourself the power of both these energies that matter so much to the Adirondacks.

Lynn Birdsong
President

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Changing People’s Lives

Every time someone like you joins The Wild Center you add to our shared ability to change the world around us. I urge you to read this excerpted speech from 17-year old Meadow Hackett of Saranac Lake, whose life you changed.

"My experiences with The Wild Center’s Summit have been some of the most rewarding and memorable experiences of my high school career.

“The Summit opened doors for me beyond my most hopeful imagination. You can only imagine my surprise when in the weeks following this year’s Summit I received a call and heard Jen Krester’s voice on the line asking me if I would like to travel to Helsinki as part of a museum exchange between The Wild Center and Heureka Science Center based in Vantaa, Finland. I think I may have smiled for five days straight following that phone call.

“My involvement with The Wild Center has changed the direction of my life. For years, I desired to become an author but as I envisioned my future, I really couldn’t see myself cooped up in front of a computer writing day in and day out. Tomorrow, I leave for college, and though many have encouraged me to pursue environmental studies, I will be attending the Villanova School of Business but not with hopes of becoming the next great investor or broker on Wall Street. Instead, I will be attending school with my sights set on the world of museums.

“In closing, I would like to say that I will be ever grateful to the Museum and all I can hope for is a prosperous future for the area and The Wild Center. I am so sad to be leaving the Adirondacks but I really couldn’t have dreamt of a better childhood. I am so blessed to be among you all today. While in Finland, the adult members of The Wild Center team met with the U.S. Ambassador Bruce Oreck, he told them that it was their duty to “touch, move and inspire the youth” and The Wild Center has done just that for me."

Meadow Hackett first met The Wild Center as a seventh grader from Saranac Lake. She went on to help lead last year’s sold-out Youth Summit.

Now a first year student at Villanova, and, inspired by The Wild Center’s impact on her life, she is planning a future leading the future of museums.