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THE WILD CENTER FOUND TO BE MAJOR CATALYST AND ECONOMIC ENGINE FOR THE NORTH COUNTRY

Tupper Lake, NY – During the Adirondack Research Consortium’s annual conference on Thursday, May 16th, Tim Holmes, Membership and Appeals Officer for The Wild Center will reveal findings from a recently commissioned socio-economic study of the Center’s regional impact and reach. The Wild Center is a major catalyst and economic engine for the North Country. In a typical year, visitors to The Wild Center and Center operations generate more than $14 million in total regional revenue and 277 jobs.

Even before officially opening in 2006, The Wild Center was a driving economic force in the region. Sourcing building materials within a 500 mile radius of Tupper Lake and lumbering, milling and air-drying all of the exterior siding within 25 miles contributed not only to the first Silver LEED certification of a museum in New York State, but it also began the substantial economic impact that the Center would have on the region.

The Wild Center sourced nearly half its good and services from North Country vendors in 2011. The total economic impact of those purchases was $1.2 million, adding the equivalent of 15 new jobs to the region. The Wild Center is one of the largest local employers in the area with close to 80% of The Wild Center’s 38 employees living in Tupper Lake and surrounding towns. Their salaries had a $2.4 million impact in the North Country, meaning that money stayed local and was spent on groceries, clothing, mortgages, taxes and fuel among other things, resulting in 19 additional regional jobs. The study used data from 2011 and 2012 to compile the report.

More than 60,000 people visit The Wild Center each year with 85% coming from outside the North Country region. Those visitors add $10.5 million to the North Country’s economy, spending that generates 243 jobs. Visitors to The Wild Center reported that the Museum was the main reason for their visit to Tupper Lake that day. On average, visitors stay two days in the local area, and four days in the region, spending close to $900 during their travels.

“The Wild Center kindled a long awaited awakening for this region and has directly enhanced our bottom line,” said Terry and Robyn Doolen, owners of Shaheen’s Motel in Tupper Lake. “We also are appreciative of the environmental learning tools the Center provides to us personally and to the community at large – people want to feel part of the process and love to be included in the goals of improving our environment.”

“The Wild Center is an Adirondack showcase that educates and inspires and creates jobs and generates revenue,” said State Senator Betty Little. “It’s a model of how we can promote the natural wonder of the environment that surrounds us and gain an economic benefit important to the sustainability of our Adirondack communities.”
While more difficult to measure, there are qualitative impacts that The Wild Center has on the region. As a regional leader in science and technology applications, the Center partnered with NOAA to bring the first Science on a Sphere to New York State. Science education is at the core of what the Center does, educating children and adults about natural sciences, green building practices and renewable energy through traditional educational practices, as well as distance learning.

“We have a strong partnership with The Wild Center based upon our common interest in education,” commented Seth McGowan, Tupper Lake School Superintendent. “We refer to the Center as our science wing because that is where our students experience firsthand what they are learning about in the classroom.”

“We felt strongly that after seven years of operation, we needed to measure and quantify our impact with some formal data. It is humbling to see the broad impact that The Wild Center has on our community and region,” said Stephanie Ratcliffe, Executive Director of The Wild Center. “We come to work every day because this is what we love to do. The fact that the construction and now operation of The Wild Center creates not only a substantial economic benefit, but is also a significant member of the North Country community simply validates the work we do. We continually develop new ideas, like Wild Walk that will ensure we positively impact our community, both in the services we provide and economically. Innovative ideas will grow The Wild Center and our region.”

“The Wild Center has been an amazing success story,” said Garry Douglas, President of the North Country Chamber. “In economic terms, it has quickly become a major anchor in the heart of the Adirondacks. More than that, however, it has possessed an entrepreneurial spirit from the very beginning. From the revitalization of Tupper Lake to helping to foster a sustainable economy in the Adirondacks, The Wild Center has become a key player and partner.”

To download a summary of the report, go to the About Us page at wildcenter.org.

For additional information about The Wild Center's hours, calendar of events, membership, special events, and featured programs, please visit [http://www.wildcenter.org](http://www.wildcenter.org).