IT’S TIME FOR PLANET ADIRONDACK

By Stephanie Ratcliffe

A drop of water, Hurricane Irene seen from space, storms raging on the sun - every one of those things is related. We are opening Planet Adirondack because it will be eye-opening to use science and a glowing new technology to see how they are connected.

We do live in the age of information. Right now 50 percent more digital data is collected each year than the year before. Sometimes the information seems like a hurricane that does nothing but howl around us.

But there is a great opportunity in that gale for us to work with others to take the new information and turn it into something that delivers on the promise of that new knowledge by helping us see more and see it more clearly.

That’s why Planet Adirondack will be a part of The Wild Center experience. The Adirondacks are globally important. We want to understand and share a point of view that will let visitors stand outside the planet, in a specially designed theater in our building, and watch the Earth work, and make new, personal discoveries about the ways things are connected.

There are more stories about Planet Adirondack in this Otter, and on our website at wildcenter.org/planet

New Mountain Exhibit to Open

The highest elevation exhibit in New York will open late this summer. It will describe how life can exist in an incredibly tough environment - the top of an Adirondack High Peak. “Visitors to Whiteface are going to be able to see the mountain in much more detail,” said The Wild Center’s Rob Carr, part of the exhibit design team for the project. It is estimated that more than 200,000 people a year will see the new exhibits, which will be placed on Whiteface Memorial Highway rest stops, in the structures on the summit of Whiteface and in the ski lift Gondolas.

The Whiteface exhibit (label detail above) was funded by a grant from Scenic Byways, and produced in partnership with ANCA, ORDA, the DEC and with help from WCS and the Adirondack Nature Conservancy.
You are in a dark room. The Earth, bathed in its most beautiful blue marble costume of clouds and continents, spins before you, a giant globe glowing with life. The hurricane season starts and you watch as Irene gathers the force that would wash out Adirondack rivers and roads. Or night falls and you can see the density of lights glittering over human settlements from Shanghai to Boston, and the dark black shield of these mountains.

Planet Adirondack is real. Satellites and GPS devices have captured petabytes of images and information that merge to turn the Planet Adirondack sphere into a wondrous new tool for discovery.

Come this summer and prepare to see the Adirondacks up close in the pattern etched on the swimming flank of a brook trout, and also get ready to see it with amazing clarity in the Planet Adirondack experience. You will have the chance to see the Adirondacks as part of a changing and dynamic planet that is in turn part of a solar system and a universe.

The Wild Center works best when it opens all our eyes to inspiring new points of view. Planet Adirondack will afford an Adirondack view like no other.

You will find the entrance to Planet Adirondack between Otter Falls and the Alpine Summit exhibit. Planet Adirondack is in its own hall adjacent to the Pataki Hall of the Adirondacks. The experience begins June 15.

Planet Adirondack would not be possible without the inspired efforts of the scientists at NOAA and their work on behalf of Science On a Sphere®.
Join the Hive July 4

Plan on a great family day at the Center. BuzzzFest II will happen July 4, and you can be part of a thriving hive of activity all day. Be sure to taste some insect cuisine from the entertaining insectivore evangelist David George Gordon, who seems to have convinced this young diner that bugs will taste great.

Views

See the World from a New Point of View

Planet Adirondack takes huge galaxies of information and uses them to let you see the world in amazing new ways.

The image below is a still from a show about how currents of the ocean spin around the globe. There are dramatic views that let you watch the power of the tsunami that ravaged Japan or the storms that overwhelmed the Adirondacks last year. Planet Adirondack opens June 15th.
Lovely

It is always nice to discover the depth of personality in the animals that are part of our staff. This summer you can see the beauty of two new neighbors. Our new skunk, Trillium, and our turkey vulture, who has not landed a name yet, have both added their characters to this ‘wild center’. See them both, in person, this summer.

Mission

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

World of Opportunity

The poster for the Finnish Youth Summit looks a lot like ours. That’s because they’re twins separated only by an ocean. Based on The Wild Center model, the Finnish Summit is scheduled to convene in September of 2012.
**FLAVORFEST**

*Great Food in Every Direction*

FlavorFest returns this August 16 with a chance to sample the best flavors of the Adirondacks. Maple, trout, artisanal farm products, grills, music, children's activities and a passport you can use to sample it all. Special local food Farmers’ Market too.

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**NEW CANOE**

This summer you can add a paddle trip on the Raquette to your Wild Center plans. The canoes are available at the Oxbow Overlook docks. The new tours are all part of an expanding effort to help people see more of the Adirondacks.

Canoe tours will leave the docks daily with a naturalist guide who will point out some of the cooler features of the Oxbow. Paddles, canoes and life vests are all provided. If you and your family want to take the trip, we’re recommending you reserve online in advance, or be sure to reserve a boat when you arrive at the Center. Online reservations are available up to the day before your visit, or until they are sold out.
This Fourth of July there will be a wild hive of activity at the Center. Circle the Fourth now and bring your family, friends, an appetite, and enjoy a wonderful Adirondack community Fourth.

Bug chef David George Gordon will be back, for his sold out cooking demonstrations of one of the world’s most popular cuisines. His insect tastings might get you thinking that a plucked chicken looks less edible than a grilled scorpion. We’ll have a special live show in the Flammer Theater that will create its own buzz, live music, plenty of honey barbecue and a special zoomobile of new wild creatures.

Learn more at wildcenter.org/buzzz

The new canoe tours are another way we are working to help people see and explore more. The new program will expand our campus onto the rare Oxbow, an ice age artifact, and create a new and changing experience for visitors to explore. Please note that a Member discount applies for canoe use.

Details at wildcenter.org/paddle
Josh runs the Wild Supply Co., and works to tie the store to the mission of the Center as closely as he can. That means he hunts for local ideas, tracks down regional authors, and looks for items with a deep Adirondack economic footprint. “Buying local for me goes beyond the actual product, we work with local screen printers to develop images and styles from the ground up. We try to help local food purveyors introduce their products to a big new audience. Buying local includes all of the Adirondacks. From screen printers in Bolton Landing to jewelry makers in Parishville or printmakers from Upper Saranac Lake. I go to ANCA’s Buyers Days in Saratoga and it puts me face to face with many local artisans so I can see everything that comes from the talent in the North Country.

“Buying local keeps dollars in our community. Part of our mission is about people and nature thriving together, and dollars that stay here longer have a real impact on all our neighbors.

“The best part of buying local is getting to know the various artists and crafters. I get to hear about what motivates and inspires them.

“I love being able to tell a human story about the items that fill our store, I think that we are introducing visitors to a whole community of skilled Adirondackers.”

Volunteer to be Wild

Jim Cronn came to us with serious silviculture skills from a career teaching forestry. As we plan our future Wild Walk experience (more about this in Otters yet to be published) we wanted to look at the trees on our campus to help the forest become as diverse and fauna-friendly as possible. Jim surveyed the entire collection of trees and plants in the proposed Wild Walk area, and made recommendations that we will follow to improve our site so that more native birds and animals will find a home here.

We have a full time professional volunteer program that has contributed hugely to the success of the Center. If you have a skill you want to put to use please get in touch with Tracy Thomas at tthomas@wildcenter.org.
“Where people and nature thrive together” is a line from The Wild Center’s mission. There’s a lot in that idea, and the Adirondacks can be a place where more thriving can happen. Which brings us to an old and sweet connection between trees and people.

This spring The Wild Center launched a community maple syrup project. The Center provided the buckets, the training, the taps and the sugar house. The community supplied the spirit. The trees, even in the warmest March on record, delivered the sap.

“There was so much that happened that was unexpected,” said Dave St. Onge, who spearheaded the project. “I can’t stop at the gas station without having someone ask me how the syrup is going. It’s been incredible to see grandparents who had not tapped in 30 years tell their grandchildren old stories that were close to vanishing. Sugaring can be expensive, so when we got the equipment here it unlocked a lot of interest from people who could come and learn and then do their own tapping. Wes Jennings, who has been a backyard tapper for years was a huge part of the success, bringing all kinds of people into the project by literally knocking on doors of neighbors who had stands of maples, and bringing them into the bucket brigade.”

The experiment in tapping this connection to nature was so successful the program is scheduled to repeat next year.

“It was amazing to watch kids who live in the Adirondacks taste sap and make this connection to the forest that was personal, and, sorry for the pun, but incredibly sweet to see.”
Stephanie Ratcliffe, The Wild Center.
What’s new for members

You are the lifeblood of this growing and innovative Center, and we want to help you enjoy all that this place offers. This year we have new member events, new twists on regular events, and a new person working with membership.

Tim Holmes came on board in October as the Membership and Appeals Officer. He is taking over for Susan Arnold, while she shifts her focus to stewardship of members and donors. You can meet Tim on a Behind-the-Scenes tour – expanded this year to include a closer look at our renewable energy system. Tours are offered three days a week this season, at 3:00 on Tuesdays, Thursday Member Days, and Saturdays. The tours are free to members.

Other Ways to Support What’s New

We count on your generosity to bring this Center to life. People volunteer their time and talent, and offer other support to ensure that the exhibits and programs can continue to be enjoyed by many. The Annual Fund provides sixty percent of our operating budget – gifts to the Annual Fund truly are the lifeblood of the Center.

We have another new team member to help you be part of this great endeavor. Robin Ellis recently became our new Major Gifts Officer. He is meeting with Wild Center friends to discuss gift planning and other ways people can help ensure that The Wild Center will always be here to illuminate the future of the Adirondacks. Robin can be reached at rellis@wildcenter.org.

A Family’s Affair

Chris and Heather Tuttle, and their children, Brooke, Joey, Garrett and Mitchell, are Charter members and regular attendees.

“Our children think of The Wild Center as their Museum and their animals, says Chris, “and this sense of ownership makes me happy and proud to be able to bring them here and experience all these things together.”

Belong

Birds of a feather: Tuttle family exhibits the typical plumage of a family art day genus.
Mark your Calendar
New & Renewed Events for 2012

Member Only Events

June 10 – Birding at Spring Pond Bog
June 16 – Shingle Shanty eXpedition
June 29 – Planet Adirondack Member Reception
July 19 – Breakfast with Wild Friends
July 25 – Osgood Pond Canoe with Adirondack Museum BYOB(oat)
Aug. 4 – Breakfast with Wild Friends
Aug. 8 – Bog River Canoe with Adirondack Museum BYOB(oat)
Sept. 1 – Massawepie Mire Canoe with Adirondack Museum BYOB(yep!)
Sept. 22 - Cedarlands Fall Paddle & Hike with Broadwing Adventures

Other Special Events

June 27, July 7 & 18 - Morning Birding & Canoeing on the Raquette
Sundays in June and July - Tweets & Treats at The Wild Center (8 to 10 am)
June 23, July 21, & Aug. 18 - Whiteface Mountain Birding eXpedition
June 30 - Bloomingdale Bog Birding eXpedition
July 4 - Buzzzzfest, Join the Hive!
July 26 - Lake Placid Sinfonietta with optional buffet
July 27 - REEL Paddling Film Fest with Northern Forest Canoe Trail & Raquette River Outfitters
Aug. 6 - Frank Sinatra Cabaret with Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts
Aug. 16 - FlavorFest, Great Tastes Everywhere
Sept 30 - Fall Foliage Photography Workshop with Carl Heilman

This is just a sample. Some events fill up fast – please register early (see RSVP? box story).

For all the events this summer & fall bookmark wildcenter.org/events or go online and sign up for our email alerts.

RSVP?

Reservations are required for most events. See the events list at wildcenter.org/events and click the event to open its registration page, or click the calendar link on that page, find the date of the event, and click the event name to register.

You can create your own user account at my.wildcenter.org to streamline the process.

For more information, contact Sally Gross at 518-359-7800 x116 or sgross@wildcenter.org.
July 4 and August 16 Fests

PLANET ADIRONDACK 2 & 3

MAJOR NEW EXPERIENCE TO OPEN