The North Country has seen a lot of road construction this summer, but perhaps none as exciting, or invisible, as the broadband superhighway networking through the region.

The Wild Center will host a major on-ramp to this new ultra-fast broadband system. The Center set aside a large space in its basement to securely house an array of servers. The Wild Center hub is part of a new, high-capacity fiber-optic network that will run through the Adirondacks.

“Hosting this hub gives us our own on-ramp and lane on the information superhighway,” said Stephanie Ratcliffe, executive director of The Wild Center. “We’re going to be able to connect and work directly with schools and other institutions around the world and make it seem like we’re in the same room. The potential for collaborations with programs and in education is endless.”

The Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), a Watertown-based public benefit corporation, is building the network from Gouverneur east across the Adirondacks to Westport. The loop in the Tupper Lake area will connect major sites in the community including The Wild Center, Tupper Lake schools, the Goff-Nelson Memorial Library and the Adirondack Public Observatory. DANC is working on three projects in the North Country, involving 350 miles of construction connecting 94 “community anchor” institutions.

Paddling Makes a Sold-Out Splash

Introduced with a quiet test in 2011, paddling on the Raquette brought a whole new dimension to the visitor experience when the test turned into a full-fledged option for visitors in 2012.

Many of the people who bought the canoe trips were first time canoers. “Our goal is to offer new points of view to nature. It was great to lead flotillas of visitors who had not been in a canoe before,” said program director Jen Kretser. With the help of a greatly expanded summer intern program, Kretser was able to dedicate a squadron of young trained guides to lead the daily expeditions.
Check out The Wild Center

New Library Pass Gives Free Access to Wild Days

We’re getting calls from librarians all over upstate New York who have heard through the library network that it’s now possible to check out The Wild Center at your local library.

A new program, started this year, lets people check out a pass to visit the Center just like they could check out a book from 18 test libraries in the region.

The pass program is underwritten by donors to the Center. “We want to be open to everyone who wants to come,” said executive director Stephanie Ratcliffe, “the library pass, which a team here developed with library groups, is a way to let families from the region come to The Wild Center at no cost. There was strong interest among our staff to see this happen, and it’s turned out to be a wonderful system to reach out into communities and invite people to come and visit.” The libraries have maps and brochures to hand out to library patrons. More than 600 people came to the Center using the cards in its first months of operation.

The Wild Center plans to expand the network of libraries offering the cards before next summer.

Check out your library? Do you want to make sure your community can check out The Wild Center? Please call us to discuss ways we can let your library’s card holders book a day here.
A Center for Economic Impact

The Wild Center was founded with an idea that was distilled down to the “Three E’s” - with the E’s representing Education, Environment and Economy. The last of the “E’s” is vital to the future of the region. In 2013 the Center will issue a report produced by an outside firm detailing our impact on the region’s economy in our first half decade of operation. We look forward to sharing the report with you, and with its findings in hand, working with our members and supporters to find new ways to do even more for each of the “Three E’s” that drove our founding.
Sweet Gifts

The Wild Center launched a community sugaring operation, and you can enjoy the results. Our one-of-a-kind maple syrup is available in the Gift section of our online store at wildcenter.org/shop. Please order soon for the people on your list who will appreciate Adirondack sweetness.

The Wild Center, with area partners, is set to expand the maple program next spring.

Planet Us

Planet Adirondack is just getting into its orbit. Here leaders from area towns and villages got a chance to ask questions about how the warming planet is impacting the Adirondacks.

We will continue with our partners at NOAA to add new stories for Planet Adirondack to tell in coming years. There are now more than 300 different interactives we can present on our special sphere.
winter happenings
highlights of the winter and spring seasons

This Winter you can come to The Wild Center to get warm or to get outside. We always have snowshoes to test and try, and we will be featuring Maple in all its flavors as the spring gets underway. The best way to keep up with all the activities at the Center is to look to the right where the finger is pointing and sign up for alerts, and remember:

Special Holiday Hours from Christmas to New Years
Big Events all Presidents Week
Family Art & Nature every Sunday
Maple Sugaring (in season)
Maple Products (year round)

Try It

black&whitefriday$5

For many places the day after Thanksgiving is labeled Black Friday.

At The Wild Center this year it's a Black & White Day.

Black because there will be special events at our store, and lots of locally-made ideas for your holiday shopping. White because there will be many other ways to enjoy the day as well.

Black & White Friday at The Wild Center will include a chance to meet Night and Day, our two new skunks. There will be local craftspeople for those who want to start on their shopping, music for those recovering from their Thanksgiving feasts, fall treats like cider for those who still have room to eat and outdoor activities to get everyone into the outside. The best thing? Admission is just $5 for adults and free for children 14 and under.

November 23
Every week Tracey Legat collects all the things that are going on in and around The Wild Center and taps them into a fast-read newsletter that she emails to Wild Center insiders. Sometimes it’s about free events, sometimes it’s about the Adirondacks, or the chance to be part of a Wild Center idea. It’s the best way to know what’s up at The Wild Center.

To get on the inside please turn on your machine and go to wildcenter.org/more, a few taps and you will be on Tracey’s list, which we keep private as if all our emails were in there, which they are.

Your Opinion Counts

More than 80 people have reviewed The Wild Center on the popular Tripadvisor site. If you want to share your opinion about The Wild Center with thousands of people around the world, please go to Tripadvisor and tell everyone what you think about the Center. Here’s a sample...that made the staff smile.

“My 13-year-old and I enjoyed the place from opening until closing. The exhibits are fantastic, but you also need to see all of the five different movies, and also the videos in the video room, do some of the programs, see the special live animal presentations in the central gathering space, eat a great lunch - the food is excellent - walk all around outside to see the turtles, fish, and birds in the bird blind.... there’s just so much. The staff are very friendly and knowledgeable. We found that if you asked a question or two, they would launch into a personal program just for you - pulling cool things out to share. This place is the best nature center/museum/exhibit ever!”
Small Visitor Gets A Big Welcome

Five-year old Maleeya Martin walked into the Big Wolf Great Hall on August 10th, 2012, and into the memories of everyone hovering by their walkie talkies. “We knew that visitor number 500,000 would come in the next few days, and then it rained, and the next few days turned into the next few hours,” said volunteer coordinator Tracy Thomas who was the first to notice that we were closing in on the milestone. So far The Wild Center has welcomed more children to its halls and trails than the total number of people living in the Adirondacks.

MORE REACH FOR TEACHING

From Stanford University’s Artificial Intelligence classes available online at Coursera to the Khan Academy teaching millions about organic chemistry, a revolution in education is taking place online.

The Wild Center is one of 12 museums participating in a major grant from the Institute of Museum & Library Services to develop its own education programs using the newest web-based systems. Kendra Ormerod, who headed up the work to make The Wild Center’s movie and related curriculum for A Matter of Degrees available to schools all over New York, is taking the lead developing The Wild Center’s online programs. The new grant opens the door for The Wild Center to work with the New York Institute of Technology to develop the new programs. Kendra traveled to New York as part of the grant to spend time at NYIT, working with online education experts, including William Crow, a senior educator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. According to Crow, teachers who participated in the MET’s online programs were more likely to bring their students there, no matter where they lived in the country, compared to teachers who participated in programs at the MET itself. Kendra is paired with a teacher in the Hudson Valley area, and will develop an online course on the science of our changing climate that will be available within the year.

“We know that we can make excellent programs for students and teachers who can come here,” said Kendra. “We also know that we can develop excellent online experiences for people who cannot easily visit us in person. We have insider access to the best of the new web teaching systems, and that means more students will get excited about science and the Adirondacks, which is what our education effort is all about.”

People

Staff and Ollie welcome visitor number half a million to The Wild Center (visible peering over the ticket counter). So far visitors have come from 40 nations and all 50 states. Out of the first 500,000, more than 150,000 were children.
Five years ago The Wild Center’s executive director Stephanie Ratcliffe jumped on a grant opportunity offered by the State Department through the American Association of Museums to sponsor an international exchange for science museums. Stephanie had a colleague, Mikko Myllykoski, who she had met at an annual gathering of science and technology center leaders. When she saw the grant she thought of Mikko, who heads up Heureka, the Finnish Science Center. Stephanie envisioned a natural connection between Finland and the Adirondacks: they each shared temperate and boreal forests, winter cultures dependent upon snow for recreation and economy, and the same energy needs during long periods of cold. The grant led to four exchanges that saw teams from each region travel across the Atlantic.

The first visit by the Finns coincided with The Wild Center’s second Adirondack Youth Climate Summit in 2010. The Finns were impressed by the 200 students from over 30 schools and colleges who gathered for two days of workshops designed to help them create climate action plans for their respective schools.

This year, Heureka recreated the spirit and purpose of the Adirondack summits at their first Finnish Summit in Helsinki, modeled on the one invented here by Adirondack students.

‘Walking into the Heureka space and seeing a sea of blue t-shirts emblazoned with our youth summit logo above Finnish words was quite a poignant moment,” said Karen Thomas, a Wild Center trustee who traveled to Finland to experience the summit. “An aspiration for The Wild Center is to impact people by connecting them to nature in the Adirondacks and in other places where the natural world could use a voice. Students in the Adirondacks created this powerful event on behalf of the Adirondacks, and it was being copied in Finland.”

The Finnish summit opened with a video of Adirondack student leaders speaking directly to their peers in Finland. “I turned around to watch the Finnish audience and I could see them connect. They were seeing their common ground in their shared hopes for the environment in the words and images of the Adirondack students.”
Linda Vaughan’s Enduring Legacy

Linda Vaughan developed a love for the Adirondacks at a young age, had a seasonal home in Long Lake and was a 10-year member of The Wild Center. In 2011, we received a significant bequest from her estate that set an extraordinary example of how estate planning can lead to a gift that is often much larger than what is possible during one’s lifetime. The new Linda Vaughan Society, named to honor Linda’s groundbreaking gift, honors everyone who supports The Wild Center by leaving a bequest in their will or gift in their estate plan. This special group of benefactors now includes 30 families who are leaving a legacy for the Adirondacks and helping to shape the future of The Wild Center. Linda Vaughan Society membership simply requires that you inform us that you are planning a gift in your estate to The Wild Center. There is no minimum gift to belong, and you may join by name or remain anonymous.

For more information, please contact Jamie Ford by phone at 518.359.7800 x 109 or by email at legacysociety@wildcenter.org.

Behind the Scenes

Join us this winter for Members’ Day every Friday. There are behind the scenes tours starting at 1:30 pm, (the tours were so popular this summer we held them three days a week to meet the demand). You can also enjoy 20 percent off everything at The Wild Supply Co. on Fridays with your membership.

On a Behind the Scenes tour you can see where our otters live when they’re not swimming, and get an upclose look at how our life support systems and animal care staff keep Stickley & Company in good spirits and good health.

The Otter is published by The Wild Center
518.359.7800, 45 Museum Drive, Tupper Lake, NY, 12986

Donald K. Clifford, Jr. Lynn S. Birdsong Stephanie Ratcliffe
Chairman President Executive Director

The Wild Center/NHMA is a not for profit 501(c) (3) organization with a Charter as an educational institution from the New York State Board of Regents
On the following pages we list the names of people who we think of as our own Power of Ten. These are people who joined The Wild Center when it was still a figment of the imagination, and have renewed their membership or annual donation for ten consecutive years.

In June 2000 the first issue of the Otter rolled off the presses and featured the “First Site Tour” for Charter members and friends on August 27. Maybe you received that Otter or were on that tour. We appreciate all of our long-time members and friends and many of you are recognized on plaques and walls at the Center. For a new kind of recognition, we looked at our member and donor families who have provided ten or more years of consecutive support to The Wild Center – and there are 459 of you. Those 10-year members and donors – our own Generation X – are each listed on the following pages.

We invite everyone to a celebration in recognition of their steady support, on November 23rd as part of our Black & White Friday. Membership does some wonderful things for The Wild Center. We believe that the members are part of our core strengths, standing with us in all our work. The support from members also makes a difference to our finances, and allows us to more confidently plan our future.

Thanks to all of our members and donors, young and old, new and long-time for helping to show our 500,000 plus visitors at the Center and millions who have explored our website, what is so great about the Adirondacks.

14 years and counting...
As we celebrate those who have provided continuous support for 10 or more years, it’s a pleasure to recognize one couple among many who saw the potential, provided the early support, and then continue to do what they can to improve The Wild Center experience. Bill & Janet Rochow gave their first gift in April of 1999, became members in 2000, and have maintained their commitment for each of the past 14 years. Bill & Janet also participate in the volunteer program by welcoming visitors to the Center and showing them how to make the most of their visit. Many thanks to the Rochow’s and to everyone who is a member or Wild Center donor.
Powers of Ten

Before The Wild Center was opened, people who believed in the dream signed on as members and donors. The names on these pages are those of whom we call our own Generation X, for the roman numeral 10. All of these people joined before we opened, and have continued their commitment every year since. The support of so many is what makes all that The Wild Center does, and will do, on behalf of the Adirondacks, possible. ThanX!

David & Arlene Adams · Kenneth & Barbara Adams · Virginia & Michael Adler · Kozhaya S. Akiki · Jeanine & Fram Akiki · Samuel & Kathryn Alessi · Paul & Nicole Alioto · J. Ripley & Shirley Allen · Laurie R. Amell · George & Lynn Andrews · Anonymous (7) · Clifford & Joyce Apgar · Lionel & Esther Arlan · Duffield Ashmead & Eric Ort · Tom Aydelotte · Carter & Suzanne Bales · Shelley & Sal Balestrieri · Peter & Marie Balet · Catherine G. Ballard · Joan E. Barker · James & Carolyn Barnshaw · John B. Barr · John P. Bartoszek · Katharine W. Batson · John T. Beaty, Jr. & Anne Mehringer · David & Joyce Beaumont · B. George & Theresa M. Beausoleil · Helen K. Beck · Joseph & Patricia Beneshan · Dawn L. Bennett · Patrick W. Bentley · Rick & Suzanne Benton · Robert & Marigold Bischoff · Michelle L. Blair · M. Parker & Judy Blatchford · Charlotte & Joseph Blitt · Larry & Nancy Boeye · Perry & Aurelia Bolton · Robert & Patti Bonesteel · Dick Bower · Ronald & Kathleen Bowler · Ed & Margaret Bragg · John P. Brand · Mordecai & Sheila Braunstein · Brian Brennan & Mary Ann Luciano · Beverly P. Brownell · J. Michael & Patricia A. Bruhn · Charles R. & Nancy Shores Buck · Neal S. Burdick · Susan E. Butler · Dean & Janice Butts · Jonathan E. Byrd · Susan L. Byrd · Jim & Charlotte Carr

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Richard & Judy Dougherty · Nancy A. Douglas · George & Ann Earle · Bill & Audrey Eberhardt · William & Sally Ebersbach · Richard F. Eisenberg · Kathy Eldridge · Frances Beinecke Elston & Paul Elston · Peter & Anne Englott · Jim
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Belong
Anne Ryan · Richard Jack Ryan · Jack & Mary Ellen Ryder · Lois A. Sadowski · Lucille B. Sadowski · Richard & Beth Saunders · Art & Harriet Savage · Nina Schoch · Jim & Anne Schoff · Alan Schwartz · Mimi Seagars · George & Margaret Seeley · Nathaniel & Emily Selleck · Jeffrey B. Sellon & Marilyn Burns · John & Martha Sempowski · Daniel & Betsy Senkowski · Carolyn M. Serota & Richard Feldman · Carl & Isabel Shedd · James R. Sheffield · Dr. & Mrs. Russell N. Shefrin · Alan & Molly Sheren · Steven R. Shraeder · Barbara Silber · Lenton & Barbara Simms · Melvin & Linda Simon · Nancy K. Simpkins · Fred & Grace Sisto · Donna L. Sloan · Theodore S. Smith · William G. Sommerfield · Ronald & Hilda Sorensen · Dan & Sadie Spada · Esther W. Spaulding · James & Laurie Speer · Peter & Barbara Sperry · Charles & Lori Spitzner · Steve & Happy Spongberg · Gloria St. Onge & Harold Blake · Helen E. Stacy · Martha E. Stauffer · Roger & Kathy Steinbrueck · William H. Stevenson, Jr. · Bradford E. Parker & Eileen Stott-Parker · William & Barbara Stowe · Sandra & Arnie Strader · A. Richard Strauss · Barbara R. Strowger · Richard & Patricia Strowger · Patrick & Linda Marie Studley · Joseph J. Sullivan, Jr. · Barbara A. Sutton · Charles & Sally Svenson · Thompson & Susan Swayne · Eleanor V. Sweeney · Amy & Robert Sweet · Thomas & Wendy Sweet · John & Louise Tanner · Michael Tardif & Harvey Cohen · Harvey & MaryAnn Tebo · Ann M. TenEyck · Carl Terry & Lisa Bradley · David Thomas & Alexandria Kibiuk · Karen & David Thomas · David H. & Elizabeth Thomas-Train · Dr. Phyllis B. Thompson · Elizabeth W. Thorndike · Colleen Thornton · David & Lori Tilgnr · Everett & Karen Titus · Shawn G. Tooley · Peggy Z. Troutman · Wayne & Betty Tucker · Nancy & David Turner · Dean & Philinda Tuthill · Robert & Sarah Underhill · John & Peg Underwood · Austin & Janet Vanderbilt · Glen A. Vandewinckel · Lyle VanVranken · Pauline H. Villeneuve · Robert & Susan Virostek · Bonnie J. Wagner-Westbrook & John D. Westbrook · Peter & Francine Walker · Keith & Donna Waltz · Michelle E. Watkins · Brian P. Watson · Peter & Nancy Watts · Dr. Daniel G. Way & Dr. Harriet Busch Way · Mark & Susan Webster · Alice W. Weeks

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Thank you one and all.
Winter Events 6
Online Learning Set to Start 8
A new web for the north 2

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