WILDWALK Skybreaking

Flight of the Butterflies Opens

Summer Fests
July 6
August 15
WEB CLASSES COMING SOON

The Wild Center is ramping up its experiment with online learning. Three important phases of the initiative happen this summer. The high speed broadband hub in our basement will be operational, our high-tech studio will be completed, and our tests of different approaches and systems will be in full swing. It will mean our passion for the Adirondacks will reach even further beyond the Blue Line. We’re using smartphones, laptops, and iPads. We’re experimenting with video conferencing, Skype, and live web-streaming. We’re testing our programs on retiree communities and 2nd grade students.

Using innovative technologies, we have the capability to reach housebound children and adults, international students, a theater full of adult learners, and even schools within the Adirondacks that are not able to visit us in person. Online learning can have different meanings, but at The Wild Center it means engaging, interactive, science-based programming that inspires learners to explore the natural world more deeply. The mission is the same for all of our programs, whether they are experienced at The Wild Center or beyond its walls.

AN ECONOMIC ENGINE

WILD CENTER HAS A BIG IMPACT ON JOBS

For the Adirondacks to be healthy its economy needs to be healthy. The Wild Center seeks ways to play a powerful and thoughtful part in the region’s economic sustainability. In order not to guess at what we can do, and to drive our own actions so that they have the most positive result, the Center contracted PlaceMaking, a Plattsburgh-based consulting firm to conduct a socioeconomic study of the Center’s regional impact and reach. This study was conducted to measure the impacts of The Wild Center across New York State’s seven-county North Country region.

The big picture? Between its payroll, and new jobs generated by employee purchases, the Center supports 57 jobs in the region. The purchases made by the Center in the region add another 15 jobs. Visitors to the Center come from 4617 different zip codes as shown in the map at right. The visitors who came to the Center spent a total of $10.4 million in the region.

We will use the results of the research to sharpen the way we can do more, and will continue to measure our impact on the Adirondacks so that we can do our best to do well for the Adirondacks. You can see our report on our new website in the About Us section.

“...The Wild Center’s contribution to the Adirondack region is immense. In the heart of the Adirondacks, The Wild Center has created a popular destination that tells the story of the region’s unique natural environment. Their success has significantly enhanced the economic vitality of the entire region.”

— U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

Brand New Wild Web

After more than a year of planning we will open our new web experience in two phases. We were driven in this work by the tremendous growth of our annual web visits. More than 500,000 people from 200 different countries spent time on our site watching movies, learning about the Adirondacks and our wild story. Phase One of our site will make it easier to explore the offerings and programs of the Center. Phase Two will create a whole new set of online exhibit experiences where people who cannot make it to the Center can still learn about the wild world and share in our mission.

Live! This still from a test class from The Wild Center shows naturalist intern Katie Morgan running a class for an audience that was 500 miles away in Massachusetts. Online programs will mean we can reach people who cannot get to the Center.

A screen shot from the new site during testing. Beta will be up this July.
Skybreaking for Wild Walk

This summer we will start work on one of the most exciting new projects we have launched since we opened. Wild Walk will do something ground-breaking: it will turn The Wild Center’s present experience inside out, transforming the forest that surrounds the Center into a living breathing museum experience. The roof will be the sky, the walls will be trees, the exhibits will be alive, and the floor, sometimes solid and sometimes swinging under your feet, will rise off the ground. Wild Walk will be dedicated to helping all of us see life from brand new points of view.

Walk on the Wild Side

Wild Walk will be more than 1000 feet in total length, with approximately 850 of those feet above ground. Wild Walk will be a permanent structure that is capable of housing changeable content. The structure will include a network of bridges, raised platforms, and other exciting, sometimes fanciful elements designed to deliver a fun and adventurous learning experience. The trail will have many detours so that people can take different paths and have different experiences. The upper section of the walk will culminate in a single raised platform soaring above the ground and offering an unbroken view of the Adirondack forest stretching as far as you can see.

Mission

IGNITE AN ENDURING PASSION FOR THE ADIRONDACKS WHERE PEOPLE AND NATURE CAN THRIVE TOGETHER AND SET AN EXAMPLE FOR THE WORLD
See one of the natural world’s epic stories

Starting July 6th, you can experience Flight of the Butterflies every day in the Flammer Theater. This captivating film tracks the great monarch migration, an amazing multigenerational trip, from the northern forests to a once-secret location in Mexico where millions of monarchs congregate in an incredible display. The film traces the story of the discovery of the migration, and lets viewers fly on the great insect migration, including the incredible ‘super generation’ of monarchs that can make the entire 2000 mile trip. All summer the Center will feature monarch events, so you can see the film and then participate in a wealth of butterfly activities.

Flight of the Butterflies is locally sponsored through the generosity of ADKACTION.org.

Purple Delight

Come by this summer and find out how you can grow butterflies by adding a flower like this blooming milkweed to your gardens.
This summer you can experience The Wild Center on top of Whiteface Mountain. Two years in the making, this brand new exhibit (the highest in New York) will open June 20th.

The inclusive experience includes exhibits at the Whiteface Ski Center, the Town of Wilmington and the 4,867 foot summit itself. To see the main exhibit you drive up the Veterans’ Memorial Highway, stopping along the way when you see the sign clusters in the periodic pull-offs. At the top you can walk the alpine nature trail from the Castle to the peak, or travel through the mountain tunnel and ride the elevator to the Round House and Weather Station on the summit. Along the way you will see exhibits that showcase the summit from new points of view. You can explore stories, interactive exhibits, videos, 3-D models and panoramas that interpret the natural history of Whiteface and the surrounding Adirondacks.

There will be more about this on our new website. Tickets to the summit drive are available at the Tollhouse at the Veterans’ Memorial Highway operated by the Olympic Regional Development Authority.

**Try It**

The Whiteface Exhibit includes a chance to see a year in the life of the summit filmed in Hi Def stop action. You can spin through a whole year, or freeze a great moment of winter alpenglow. Look for the Spin Browser in the Summit Round House on top of the mountain to watch the year fly by.

**WHITEFACE: The Exhibit**

The new Whiteface Summit Exhibit is part of a partnership between the Adirondack North Country Association, the Olympic Regional Development Authority and New York State DEC, with scientific help from organizations including, the Atmospheric Science Research Center, Wildlife Conservation Society, the Adirondack Nature Conservancy and the Summit Stewards program.

“We care about the whole Adirondacks,” said Rob Carr, who oversaw many of the exhibit experiences on the mountain. “Whiteface is the busiest mountain in the region, and being able to turn it into a place where people will learn more about what makes the Adirondacks so special is a great opportunity.”

The Whiteface Exhibit takes advantage of existing structures on the mountain, with experiences housed inside the tower, tunnel and on the Memorial Highway rest areas.

**The Wild Center’s Rob Carr at the summit this winter to film our live broadcast from the peak.**
Grow Monarchs

You Can Help Boost These Flying Marvels in Your Garden

Monarch butterflies depend on milkweed plants. They lay their eggs on them because they are the only food the monarch caterpillars eat. Monarch numbers are declining, partly due to the loss of open spaces where milkweeds grow. You can help give monarchs a boost by creating a milkweed garden. What’s the best way to encourage monarchs to turn your backyard into a nursery? Offer them food, drink, a place to stay and a milkweed patch to leave their eggs. Here is how to set up your own monarch stopover.

Plant native flowering plants. Many butterflies and native flowering plants have co-evolved over time and depend on each other for reproduction and survival.

Include host plants. Butterflies lay their eggs on specific plants called hosts. Monarchs only lay their eggs on milkweed so it is critical to include native milkweed plants in your butterfly garden. Monarchs will lay their eggs on the leaves and the young caterpillars feed on the plant. The milkweed contains toxins called cardiac glycosides that the caterpillars must ingest, which causes the monarch butterflies and caterpillars to be poisonous to most predators. Milkweed flowers make a colorful splash in gardens, meadows, and other habitats. There are over 100 different milkweed species and monarchs use about 30 species so visit www.plantmilkweed.org to learn what species to plant in your region.

Provide blooming flowers all summer long. Monarchs need nectar from flowers all the time so choose plants that bloom in early, mid, and late summer.

Provide a place to rest. Flat stones offer butterflies a place to bask in the sun and rest. Avoid insecticides because they kill insects. Include water. Butterflies can often be found puddling — drinking water and extracting minerals from damp areas of the ground. Place coarse sand in a shallow pan and add it to your habitat — keep it moist by adding water frequently.

For more information on creating a monarch waystation visit: www.monarchwatch.org

FLAVORFEST

Great Food in Every Direction

FlavorFest returns this August 15 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. Gates open at 10:00.

BuzzzzFest

BuzzzzFest, our big midsummer celebration, will take place Saturday, July 6th. BuzzzzFest will be a day of fun with something to entertain, delight and perhaps gross out people of all ages. BuzzzzFest this year honors the creatures that make the world go round, with a special tip of the antennae to butterflies and the amazing Monarch clan. We will also dip a wing for dragonflies, honey bees and all the buzzing, chirping and crawling things in between.

Special thanks to NCPR, our media sponsor for both these events.
I was thrilled to join The Wild Center staff as the new Herpetologist. I feel very lucky to get to work in such a beautiful place every day (inside the Center and out), and I cannot wait to share my passion and knowledge with others. One of the most gratifying parts of the job is inspiring people to care about the amazing and beautiful world around them.

Born and raised in rural, central New York, my love for amphibians and reptiles began in high school, while volunteering as a zookeeper’s assistant at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo in Syracuse. My degree work at SUNY ESF was focused on herpetological conservation, including the Kihansi Spray Toads, formerly extinct in the wild but recently reintroduced into its native habitat in Tanzania. With over 7000 species of amphibians and 9000 species of reptiles, we’ve only scratched the surface about their benefits to ecology and human health. Amphibians are often very sensitive to environmental changes, offering a visible warning to humans that significant changes are taking place, while some toxins and venoms produced by reptiles and amphibians are useful in human medicine. Despite being ecologically important players in the food web and in our native wildlife, one of the most obvious things about these species is just how little we really know about them. Amphibians and reptiles are two of the most endangered taxa in the world, and for a variety of reasons including disease and habitat loss, their numbers are swiftly declining.

My love affair with raptors started through an internship at a raptor center years ago. My fate was sealed when I held my first Eastern Screech Owl. Through the years I’ve spent time with many species, putting back together their broken bodies or working with them daily to educate the public. But time and time again I return to these flying predators. Who could resist that fierce determination, strength and beauty?

Working with my falconry sponsor, Mark Manske, I captured a juvenile male red-tailed hawk in November. Cedar (as I like to call him) and I have been working together and learning from one another daily. So far we have not caught any wild prey since he seems to be more interested in the free rat morsels in my training pouch than the squirrels loudly protesting his presence nearby. There have been a few bumps in the road as we learn to trust one another but so far it has been a truly amazing experience. As the appropriate hunting seasons come to an end we will focus on more training and less hunting. Cedar and I are bound by NYS hunting laws just like everyone else.

Most falconry birds are released back to the wild in the spring and Cedar took his leave then. I will be looking for a new flying partner later this year. We want to take the Center’s current education programs one step further. We hope to take visitors outside to the habitats that these birds need to survive and encourage conservation on a landscape level. A lofty goal - but I think my next Cedar will be up to the challenge. And while this is a new venture for me and the Center and we can’t completely predict how it will all go, we hope you will join us at some point and see this majestic bird soar with the clouds.

The word “herpetology” is from Greek: herpeton, “creeping animal” and -logia, “knowledge".
Wings over the Adirondacks

Know of any 21-45 year olds passionate about the Adirondacks and interested in its future? If so, encourage them to join Wings or treat them to a Wings membership! Wings is a special membership group of The Wild Center focused on engaging the next generation of Adirondack stewards. Wings has members far and wide, and fulfills its mission through educational outreach, philanthropic events, special receptions, outdoor activities and e-newsletters. Participation in Wings builds the next generation of Adirondack stewards, ensuring the continued vitality and impact of The Wild Center’s environmental and educational work. More information – and the Wings schedule – can be found at www.wildcenter.org/wings or by contacting Jamie Ford, Major Gifts Officer and Wings liaison, at jford@wildcenter.org. Encourage your friends and family to take flight with Wings today!

WILD CENTER 2.0

Wild Center 2.0 is about to be released, and you can be a part of it.

In July, The Wild Center will announce a $20 Million Campaign that will make 2.0 possible. Funds raised from our friends will solidify our future by raising critical Annual Fund support, strengthening our board designated endowment fund, and helping us build Wild Walk, a new, iconic experience.

Please mark your calendars for the evening of July 8th when we will officially launch the Campaign. We want our closest friends to be here to help us kick off our next big thing.

Wild Center 2.0 Celebration begins at 5:00 July 8th. Members are invited to attend. RSVP@wildcenter.org

HELP WANTED

Cool Center with 31-acre park seeks volunteers who want to create new landscapes where creatures can nestle. Includes Wild Walk, water features, butterfly gardens, blueberry patches.

Call Tracy Thomas 518.359.7800 x 114 for details

Improving the benefits of belonging

New this year are fewer membership levels and more admission benefits to better reflect how members have told us they like to visit. The free adult admissions included with memberships are more flexible, such as at the Extended Family level where a member can bring in any three adults of their choosing. All related children in your extended family also are admitted free, through age 18. An additional benefit is the availability of $5 Friend admissions every time you visit, at the Family level and above - all with the goal of making it easier for members to share The Wild Center experience with friends and family.

Learn more about the benefits of belonging to the Center at the Belong section of our new website. (Coming this July)

Upcoming Special Events

June 28 - Member Reception & Flight of the Butterflies Movie Preview
July 6 - Buzzzzfest, starts 10:00 a.m.
July 8 - Wild Center 2.0 - Reception for The Campaign for The Wild Center
July 18 - Breakfast with Wild Friends
July 18 – Osgood Pond Paddle for Members
July 19 - Monarch Migration Program
July 25 - Lake Placid Sinfonietta
August 3 - Breakfast with Wild Friends
August 5 - Beatles Cabaret
August 15 - FlavorFest, starts 10:00 a.m.
August 23 & 24 - Monarch Watch programs by founder Dr. Chip Taylor

A true family tree
The Meldrum family, Wild Center members, gather at The Pines.
July 6 and August 15 Fests

MONARCH SUMMER 6 & 7 & 10

THE HIGHEST EXHIBIT IN NY 8 & 9