

HARDWARE STORE HERALD

Volume 12

News from the Wrangell Mountains Center

Winter 2011/12

The Wrangell Mountains Center fosters understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of wildlands and mountain culture in Alaska through scientific and artistic inquiry in the Wrangell Mountains.



Almost Home

by Jeremy Pataky

For well over thirty years, the WMC has been headquartered in a century-old building in McCarthy, Alaska called the Old Hardware Store. Our activities have increased significantly in the last few years, as have our demands for space. A year and a half ago, we launched a capital campaign with the goal of raising \$250,000 to expand our campus by establishing Porphyry Place: The LaChapelle-Hunt Educational Homesite. The campaign will end on December 31, 2011.

The support has been amazing. We have raised \$203,000—over 80% of our goal—in a relatively short time span with a limited staff. Our list of donors is diverse, and reflects both an upwelling of local and regional support as well as support from statewide and national levels. Our fundraising success thus far represents an investment in our mission to foster understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of wildlands and mountain culture in Alaska through scientific and artistic inquiry in the Wrangell Mountains, and also testifies to the strong community of peers and friends loyal to the memory of Ed LaChapelle as well as his partner, Meg Hunt. In the remainder of the year, we hope to cross the finish line having raised the full goal, which will allow us not only to buy the property, but to prepare the new facilities for our use. As ever, we are accepting

Porphyry continues on page 9

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Jeremy Pataky

University of the Wrangells

by Shawn Olson

July 30, 2011. Shrouding mists and drizzle obscure our view of alpine meadows we travel through all day. Despite the dreary conditions, our students are in high spirits. We all are eager to behold the upper East Fork Valley, a seldom-visited tributary of the McCarthy Creek basin. Tales of crazily-twisted limestone layers, fossils, and a fairy-tale valley have enchanted us for weeks. My co-instructor, Nabil Kashyap, and I navigate with map and compass, occasionally checking our position with the GPS mainly used for scientific data collection. So far, we are dead on. We should arrive by nightfall, if all goes as planned. Of the many teachings that may be gleaned from the Wrangells, the virtues of patience and flexibility are perhaps among the most poignant. Rigid expectations don't get you far in this wild country.

Our group has been traveling together in the backcountry for almost three weeks. In just a few days we'll return to McCarthy, where the students will wrap up their final week of the seven-week Alaska Wildlands Studies program.

AWS continues on page 3



Shawn Olson

Director's Note



Nathaniel Wilder

At one time, the WMC's main raison d'être was the college program; the seeds that germinated into that program spread into neighboring beds in gardens throughout McCarthy, Alaska, and the country.

It is exciting to look forward to having enough space to allow that positive

With snow on the ground and another season under wraps, an off-hand comment that board member and hydrologist Barry Hecht made this summer at dinner, one night, comes to mind. We sat outside in front of the Hardware Store in one particular genre of sunlight unique to Alaskan summer eves. The table was decked with delicious and healthy food—organic and heavy on the home-grown side by that time of year—along with more than twenty students, instructors, and staff members. Barry simply mentioned that he remembers the days when the WMC wasn't growing much more than greens and carrots. Undoubtedly they were some good greens and carrots, but now we grow many colors of vegetables, rhubarb herbs, and flowers; we have starts inside early in the spring, and are busy harvesting, canning, and preserving food into the fall.

I'm sure Barry's pre-salad-with-lots-of-garden-fixins-even-edible-flowers/veggie-stir-fry-over-quinoa/homemade-bread-and-dessert comment was meant as a tribute and thanks to the staff, volunteers, and students who'd grown, harvested, and cooked the food we were about to eat. I think it also spoke to the confluence of forces and events that had placed us all in that spot together, with a good day's worth of learning under our belts.

Barry's comment came to mind later in September, too, as we finished off the last bucket of kim chee that Joe and Allison made with WMC veggies. There's no doubt that many people over many years have contributed to our gardens and recipes. These efforts are part of our operational foundation: what do we eat? What do our students eat? What is our model for action? Our answers to these questions becomes more and more compatible with our desire to practice and demonstrate sustainability to the greatest extent possible.

I can't help but think that the growing diversity of our increasingly locally-sourced diet at the WMC is a reflection of the growing diversity of our programing and service to the community. As time passes, we grow more produce, more programs, and more impact.

growth to continue. Our imminent expansion into Porphyry Place comes from the same logic that made the garden, and then the gardens, more and more integral, over the years, to both our program support and our educational endeavors. And along with gardening came composting, and with good harvests came the opportunity to preserve more food to eat each spring during planting season. This year we were able to offer You-Picks to the community on Fridays. With the new facilities at Porphyry Place, we aim to add wildcrafting and food preserving workshops to our roster, as well as more regular hands-on gardening and composting workshops.

The support during this period of fundraising has been tremendous. Having raised over 80% of our goal as of this writing, we are working to finish the capital campaign by the end of December. By springtime we will have not just the Old Hardware Store to open up, but a whole lot more. As our programing grows along with the fruits (and veggies) of our labor, I look forward to the continuing and parallel trend behind the scenes in the administrative "garden" at the WMC. We're pulling weeds, watering in the evening, and saving our seeds for spring. We have new energy in our board, some top-rate compost to mix into the soil, a growing staff, and steadfast and committed volunteers making it all happen. It will take time to fully phase in all of the new campus, but we are quite excited to sow all the seeds of your support in our various raised beds come spring.

I can almost smell the hot tomato air of the greenhouse, and I can almost hear the din of twenty-some hungry students and teachers quieting down together at a table set for dinner in the golden summer light. ∞

Wrangell Mountains Center

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One Hundred More Hardware Store Years by Jeremy Pataky & Mike Loso

2011 marked the centennial anniversary of the Hardware Store's construction, and we are pleased to report on measures taken to help it stand for another century. On September 30, 2010, the Wrangell Mountains Center (WMC) commenced predevelopment work on the Old Hardware Store (HWS) through a grant from the State Historic Preservation Office. Our goal was to develop plans for a comprehensive, ground-up rehabilitation for the building, a historic building in McCarthy which serves as WMC headquarters. This year-long project culminated successfully this fall. The team included Petra Wilm of Ten21 Architecture; Seth Anderson, a structural engineer with Arete, LLC; Grant Crosby, a Historical Architect who works for the NPS but was volunteering independently; Mike Loso, who coordinated the project on behalf of the Board of Directors; Jeremy Pataky, WMC Executive Director; and WMC seasonal staff members. The primary products of this project include as-built drawings of the HWS and rehabilitation and structural drawings with recommendations for treatment.

We enjoyed other accomplishments during the year-long project. We completed a facilities master plan that identifies the role of the HWS in the expanding WMC campus. We persuaded Jim Baker, Kennecott Mines NHL Project Superintendent, to visit the HWS with a copy of the draft plans and provide his informal comments about the best strategy for implementing the structural rehabilitation. The architectural team also designed a new utility outbuilding to sit on the footprint of the historic garage which is now gone and poorly documented; it will house power, water, and other systems for use by HWS occupants. And finally, Petra Wilm acquired plans for other buildings in our envisioned campus and assembled a complete portfolio of graphically-uniform plans for future use with funders or planners.

The pace of our anticipated progress toward rehabilitation of the HWS is contextualized by the WMC's capital campaign to purchase property directly adjacent to the Hardware Store. We made significant headway in our campaign to purchase Porphyry Place, and the final plans reflect this vision, which will entail its own gamut of maintenance and adaptation projects.

We will not immediately begin a capital campaign to execute the new HWS plans, though we look forward to getting started on this rehabilitation in the long term. In the meantime, ongoing maintenance will be guided by these plans so that minor, incremental improvements or alterations to the building are completed in a manner that will ultimately contribute to the envisioned outcome. ∞

They will leave with 18 college credits in upper-division environmental field studies, and expertise in the hard skills of backcountry living and travel.

They will also leave with something less tangible—I know this because it happened to me when I was a student myself in 2003. It is something that keeps happening to me, each time I come to the Wrangell Mountains. Though hard to define, perhaps it is the opportunity to be wholly touched, to feel a renewed capacity for wonder and beauty.

After hours of walking blindly through heavy fog, we round the bend and begin walking up what we believe to be the upper East Fork Valley. We are drenched. We haven't seen more than a hundred feet ahead of us all day. We walk up, up, up through the valley. "Look! Over there!" shouts one of the students, and we all break into wide grins. Ahead, just visible through parting fog, looms a geologic marvel. An enormous limestone fault is exposed in a small gorge, a beautiful example of the Chitistone and Nizina layers we've been studying. The layers are a mind-boggling array of folds and twists. We are completely enthralled, and this is but the first of many exposures we will behold. The students focusing on geology break out the geologic quadrangles. The artistic students start sketching. One student who studies paleontology excitedly hunts for fossils.

Nabil and I simply sit and take it in. This is the best kind of learning—the kind you can feel in your bones, the kind that grips you. The Wrangells are a living, wondrous, interactive classroom where the lessons go deeper than academics. ∞



William Van Vleet

Alaskans Pick, Click, Give to the WMC!

The Wrangell Mountains Center joined the Permanent Fund Dividend Charitable Contributions Program in 2009. The Alaska Legislature passed a law making this new way to give possible for all Alaskans filing on-line for their PFD. **The WMC will receive \$2,675 through the program this year.** Thanks very much to the donors who contributed a portion of their PFD checks to the Center, and to those who make it possible for Alaskans to give back to the nonprofit sector so conveniently. *Please remember the Wrangell Mountains Center when filing time comes around again this year.* If you did not designate a portion of your dividend this year and would like to give a secure, online donation, please visit our website. ∞



WMC to Manage Kennecott Rec Hall

By Jeremy Pataky

The Recreation Hall within the Kennecott National Historic Landmark (KNHL) has been an essential community space since its construction during the mining days. This icon represents diverse communities—historic, contemporary, local, and national—and exemplifies the positive potential in local/NPS partnership. Unlike other restoration projects in KNHL, which constitute “adaptive re-use,” the Rec Hall was restored to its original use as a space dedicated to community purposes.

Friends of Kennicott (FOK), organized in 1988 by a diverse group of historians, miners, local property owners and others, was responsible for the vision, advocacy, and fundraising behind the initial preservation of the future KNHL. When FOK was formally incorporated as a nonprofit in 1990, its first mission was “to preserve, restore and render available to the public the historic mine buildings located at Kennicott.” FOK subsequently steered through many fiscal and administrative hurdles and, simultaneously, conducted emergency stabilization and pressed for public acquisition.

In 2002, following acquisition, NPS and FOK signed an agreement laying the foundation for a future management partnership in KNHL, focusing on the Rec Hall. FOK’s care for, investment in, and prioritization of the Rec Hall was framed by two principles: 1) community interests must be well represented, and 2) the Rec Hall’s historic role as a community facility must be maintained. All parties agreed that a local organization would be better positioned to take on the day-to-day responsibility for community-based use. Restoring the Rec Hall was a priority for both NPS and FOK. While NPS took over stabilization, FOK raised funds for upgrades and special equipment to support community use. From 2003-08, FOK managed the community use of the Rec Hall.

The Wrangell Mountains Center (WMC) has long been one of the primary users of the Rec Hall; we organize numerous community and educational events there each year. In 2009, we began to assist FOK with their role as manager of non-NPS use of the space. The last few years have seen district, park-wide, and regional levels of NPS administration work to synchronize their efforts with mandates that originate in Washington, D.C. This shift, along with a loss of NPS institutional memory about the KNHL, has at times jeopardized the precedent-setting public-private partnership and ongoing use of the Rec Hall by non-NPS users. The WMC and FOK have consistently advocated for continued community access

to this important park-owned structure, and the WMC maintains a willingness to continue, and expand, our management role. In adherence to that original vision, we have been working in conjunction with NPS staff to answer one question: How can we keep the building open for use by both the local and visiting publics, as well as the NPS, while maintaining compliance with federal rules and policies?

The Rec Hall fills an important historical and contemporary niche carried through Kennecott’s various lives as a company town, a ghost town, a sparsely-inhabited ruin, and now as an NPS Landmark and residential neighborhood. The building also exemplifies the clear support by all involved parties, including Congress, for a community-based partnership concept for management of KNHL, including one or more public/private partnerships. Accordingly, the NPS administrators involved worked closely with FOK, eager to partner with nonprofits willing to take on certain management responsibilities. Now, the WMC is positioned to accept that partnership role.

Current NPS rules and policies now require that the WMC lease the building directly from the NPS in order to manage the public/community use of the Rec Hall. The lease embraces the original partnership strategy and will streamline administration of the building; it will enable more advance planning by the public and, for the first time, put equal prioritization on community and NPS use. The current lease will be applicable only to the summer season when WMC has staff available, although off-season community use remains a future goal. The NPS will retain ownership of the Rec Hall and responsibility for its structural integrity and maintenance, while the WMC will be responsible for scheduling and managing its summertime use. The signed lease agreement is expected soon and will be followed shortly by new procedures for its use. In the meantime, the 2012 calendar is open, so feel free to contact the WMC to discuss events or dates.

We are pleased with the NPS’s renewed commitment to the original partnership strategy and willingness to serve the highest number of users. The WMC looks forward to continuing to enliven the Rec Hall space with our own programs and functions, and to serving the larger private and public community. If you have any questions, please contact me at 907-244-7717 or by email. ∞



WMC, Museum, and NPS Partner for Centennial Celebration

by Eleanor Jensen



William Van Vleet

Members of the Kennecott/McCarthy community celebrated the Copper River Northwestern Railway's centennial in early July through numerous weekend activities. The

events were co-sponsored by the McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum, the National Park Service, and the Wrangell Mountains Center. Beautiful summer weather helped contribute to many festive and historically significant experiences.

Discovery of the Bonanza Mine Outcrop in 1900 started a hard-fought process to make copper ore deposits available to the market. Eventually, a railroad from Kennecott to Cordova was completed in March 1911. The railroad and mine ran until 1938 and processed nearly \$200 million worth of copper ore. Railroad spikes still found along the McCarthy Road are reminders of a pivotal chapter in the area's geological and cultural past.

This summer's events included: a performance by the Ahtna Heritage Dancers; the spectacle of twenty vintage and antique cars from Fairbanks and Wasilla; a pancake breakfast at the WMC, which was a fundraiser for the museum; a slide show presentation by Jim Edwards about his life in the valley; presentations by Ranger Dan Lefler and Park Historian Geoff Bleakley on railroad construction and its regional significance; a reenactment of driving in a copper spike near the Kennecott Mill Building; a reception at the Kennicott Glacier Lodge; and a period-dress block party in McCarthy. ∞



Nathaniel Wilder

Heartfelt thanks to our staff who made the Wrangell Mountains Center warm, welcoming, educational, and inspiring this summer. You're amazing! *Pictured left to right: Adam Wells, Jobanna Jackson, Eleanor Jensen, Allison Sayer, Joe Donohue, Robin Child (volunteer-and-then-some extraordinaire), Jeremy Pataky, Greg Handley.* Thanks, too, to our numerous other volunteers (listed on pages 11-12) who were absolutely invaluable.

Changes on our Board of Directors

Since 1999, **Lila Vogt** has served generously on our Board of Directors as Treasurer. She has now stepped down from the board, and will be sorely missed. Deep thanks for your many years of selfless service and dedication, Lila.

We have two new board members: welcome!



Jessica Speed

Joey Williams has been visiting the Wrangell Mountains for the last 13 years. Her first experience with the Wrangell Mountains Center was as a student in the Wildlands Studies program. She immediately fell in love with McCarthy because of the people, its wild beauty, and the strong sense of community. This experience in the Wrangells made her decide to make her home in Alaska. She moved to Sitka after graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2000. Two years later, she took a teaching position with the Anchorage School District, where she teaches 3/4 grade in an Open Optional program. Recently, she and her husband purchased property in Kennicott and are beginning to build a cabin there. Joey joined the board last March. She believes the Wrangell Mountains Center is an integral part of what makes the Wrangells special and looks forward to becoming more involved with the WMC.



April Bederman

Sally Gibert moved to Alaska in 1974 after graduating from the University of California at Santa Cruz. From 1975-79 she worked for the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission in Anchorage on various analyses of "(d)(2)" legislation leading up to passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). During this time period, she was captivated by McCarthy and the Old Hardware Store. She took summers off to manage work on the building and to keep the crew fueled on pancakes. In 1979 she got the building listed on the National Register of Historic Places and received a small grant to help cover supplies. Shortly after Wrangell-St. Elias National Park was established, she was able to live in McCarthy year round for a few years and get a practical taste of rural Alaska. She also witnessed the sometimes difficult adjustments that both park staff and local residents endured in those early days of the park's establishment. This combination of professional background and real-life experience landed her the ANILCA Coordinator position in the Governor's Office in 1984, where she eventually served eight governors over 27 years. Sally retired in August 2011. She is returning to the WMC board and looks forward to spending more time on her personal interests in McCarthy and Kennecott as living communities and in local park management issues. ∞

Natural History Field Sketching

By Eleanor Jensen

Artist and instructor Kristin Link's journal pages undoubtedly emit a sense of place. She uses observational drawing and descriptive language to explain and understand her location within a surrounding environment. Kristin taught and shared this perspective with participants in the WMC's Natural History Field Sketching & Journaling Workshop, July 15-17.

The field-based course employed exercises that studied the Wrangell's particular landscape. Science and art combined in our sketchbooks as we worked to document the natural world. The workshop—in harmony with the WMC's efforts—was about the practice of observing and articulating ideas about what we see. Watch for registratoin details our wesbite sometime after the New Year for the 2012 course. ∞



WMC & Partners Bring Programming to Copper Center

by Lilly Goodman-Allwright

What do Copper Valley Electric, Copper Valley Telecom, Wells Fargo Bank, the National Park Service, Wrangell Institute for Science and the Environment, Copper River Watershed Project, Copper Valley Development Association and Ahtna Heritage Foundation all have in common? If you were in Copper Center last June, you might know the answer. Besides being local to the Copper Valley (sorry no prize for that guess), the eight local organizations all partnered with the Wrangell Mountains Center's efforts to organize an exciting cultural event in Copper Center—a performance by Yupik storyteller Jack Dalton. A professional storyteller, actor, writer, and teacher, Dalton has been honored by the World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education as a Distinguished Dignitary and is considered by many, indigenous and non-native alike, to be "The Storyteller". An enthusiastic multi-generational Copper Basin audience learned why during an inspiring performance of Dalton's now-famous creation tale. The storyteller also roused a packed McCarthy crowd in the Old Hardware store during a public storytelling event, initiated by the Storytelling workshop for Educators.

Besides being thrilled to bring rich cultural programming to the Copper Basin, WMC was delighted with the opportunity to team up with so many local organizations. We look forward to more opportunities to join together with regional partners to serve our community. Thank you Copper Basin! ∞

Adding to Teacher Toolboxes

By Lilly Goodman-Allwright

Why is that group of people crawling blindfolded along the spongy, mossy forest floor? Don't they know that they might bump into a pile of coyote scat, touch a slimy morel, or fall on a squirrel midden? You may have pondered these questions this summer if you had happened to run into the eight intrepid participants of the Natural History Workshop for Educators. However, they would have quickly explained that such close encounters with nature were exactly the goal. This "blind walk" (an idea originally presented by Joseph Cornell) was the culminating activity of this 2 ½-day course that introduced educators to exciting and innovative techniques designed to engage youth in the natural world.

Having brimmed their cups with new natural history information, the visiting educators were ready for the next one in a line-up of two back-to-back one-credit workshops. Yupik storyteller Jack Dalton, in *Telling Alaska's Stories*, exercised his skills to inspire creative juices in the twelve enthusiastic participants. Whether taking the perspective of an ancient talking building, a singing rock, or a frustrated mosquito, workshop participants found themselves weaving their own spicy flavors into captivating lessons on natural and human history.

Do you wish you had been there, too? Let us know, and we'll do it again! In the meantime, think about the Changing Landscapes Workshop in May 2012—where you can add to your place-based tool-kit and learn how to teach about Alaska's geology and geomorphology. Targeted at educators, the workshop is open to all interested participants. More into the human-side of things? The History of Kennecott and McCarthy is also tentatively scheduled for the same time period. Stay tuned for details! ∞



Weekly Nature Walks

The WMC began offering weekly nature walks on Friday afternoons this summer. Intern Johanna Jackson, who came to work for the WMC after two years with the Park Service in Kennecott, was in charge of the program. Her regular nature walks focused most heavily on plant life visible along the Clear Creek trail. The walks began at the Hardware Store and usually went up Clear Creek toward the glacier toe. Johanna's weekly walks were supplemented by specialist walks led by guest instructors as part of the "Wrangell Mountain Walks" program.



This year's guest instructors included Mark Vail (birding); Jessica Speed ("Birding by Ear" evening skills workshop and subsequent morning birding walk); Bill Morris ("Bees and Bluebells"/plant pollination); and Barry Hecht (moraines and glaciology), all of which were well attended. These weekly nature walks cost \$5 or were free to members, and they attracted tourists and locals alike. We hope to continue this program next year. ∞



Maria Shell

Wrangellia: The Art of Breakup

By Jeremy Pataky

Last winter's WMC fundraiser was an ambitious art-based collaboration with the now-defunct Trailer Arts Center's MTS Gallery in Anchorage. The Anchorage Community Land Trust controlled the space which hosted the MTS Gallery for nearly six years before the building was slated for demolition. The gallery was known throughout the arts community for its diverse array of quality exhibits and performances. "Wrangellia: The Art of Breakup" served as both the opening reception for the space's final art exhibit and as a fundraiser for the WMC. It featured Anchorage-based and statewide artists who contributed their work in celebration of the gallery and in support of the WMC.

The evening event was multi-faceted. It included a Wrangells-focused photography exhibit by Sarah Davies, a community art wall, and a silent and live auction. The live auction involved the work of Alvin Amason, Margaret Hugi-Lewis, Erin Pollock & Stephanie Kese, Linda Enfante Lyons, Craig Updegrove, Ted Kincaid, and Angela Ramirez. Their art pieces were painted or installed on the gallery walls, cut from the building after the auction, and sent home with the winners with a "Certificate of Authenticity" marked on the back to prove its worth as an actual piece of the MTS Gallery and Alaskan art history.



Jeremy Pataky

WMC Board President, Howard Mozen, spoke to the mixed crowd of Anchorage-area artists, art fans, and WMC supporters. Live music, a no-host bar, and TapRoot catering helped fuel a vibrant and memorable event. The generosity and talent of the involved artists and patrons, Bruce Farnsworth and Sarah Davies, and the many volunteers who made it an enjoyable evening, a successful fundraiser, and an excellent opportunity for expanding WMC awareness. Stay tuned for details on our spring event in Anchorage. ∞

Research in the Wrangells

The WMC supported a variety of research in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park again this summer. WMC staff member Greg Handley spent a week at a remote field site assisting researchers from UAA's Environment and Natural Resources Institute for the project "Melting Ice, Habitat Change, and Nutrient Flux: Hydrological, Biogeochemical and Biological Linkages between the Copper River Watershed and the Coastal Gulf of Alaska." We lent modest logistical support to UAF's Tim Bartholomaeus' ongoing glaciological work in Icy Bay, Barry Hecht's geological research, and Leif Anderson's work on glacial melt; Anderson is a grad student at University of Colorado at Boulder.

We also hosted Margot Higgins, who writes: "Thank you WMC for supporting the first season of my field research in the summer of 2011, which included over 65 interviews in the community. By (re)tracing the stories that people have told about the local ecology and human history in WRST, my dissertation examines the complex relationship between park residents and the federal government, the flora and fauna, and the area's mining and post-mining history. I am particularly interested in the ways that a diversity of people have articulated the ecological and sociological features of WRST, through archival research that involves oral histories, documents related to the mining era, inventories that were used for the establishment of the Park, and management documents. My research also identifies and analyzes the management dilemmas in WRST by taking a critical look at the present revisions process surrounding the Kennicott Operations Plan, WRST management history, and negotiations for the establishment of the Park. By examining the trajectory of people's experience in WRST before and after the arrival of the NPS, I look at how participating in NPS processes has shaped the experience of Natives and non-Natives, and how the community's involvement, knowledge, and experience has shaped NPS projects in the region." Big thanks are due to Margot for her generous volunteerism during her tenure in the valley.

We look forward to improving our capacity for research assistance and support through our expansion, and to providing many outreach opportunities for scientists and researchers in the Wrangell-St. Elias region. ∞



Andrew Mackie

Above: Old timer Jim Edwards tell stories of his life in the Kennicott Valley during a Root Glacier day hike. Margot lived at Beaver Creek in one of Jim's cabins during her first summer of research in McCarthy.

Creative Writing Program Expands

By Jeremy Pataky

The WMC's annual Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop, founded 14 years ago by Program Director Nancy Cook, has provided wonderful opportunities for local, Alaskan, and national writers to study their craft and draft new original work in the gorgeous mountain setting of McCarthy-Kennecott. Featuring a variety of nationally-recognized visiting writers, the workshop has run at capacity nearly every year since 1996.

Building on that success, the WMC expanded its literary arts offerings this year to include two summer writing workshops for the first time: one in creative nonfiction and another in poetry. The established Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop, July 24-30, featured essayist and environmental philosopher, Kathleen Dean Moore, working with quilt artist and board member Maria Shell and Nancy Cook, to present the theme "Wild Comfort". The all-new Wrangell Mountains Poetry Workshop, August 11-18, featured visiting faculty member, Elizabeth Bradfield, with Jeremy Pataky, Program Director and WMC Executive Director, presenting the theme "Splendor and Slag: Towards an Honest Conversation with Place". Bradfield is the author of *Interpretive Work* and *Approaching Ice*, and is the founding editor of Broadsided Press.

The poetry workshop included writing circles and craft talks; group and individual workshops; public readings; a tour of the historic Kennecott Mill Building and a Root Glacier hike; writing exercises at the McCarthy-Kennecott Historical Museum; an open-to-the-public literary open mic event; and a closing gala and reading.

Another exciting component was a collaborative public art project that dovetailed with the writing and discussions surrounding the workshop's theme. This public art piece commemorates McCarthy and Kennecott before and during the writing workshop, and serves as a gift to the community to enjoy and stimulate thought in the following years. Three panels representing three different ways of viewing the towns were created and permanently installed—thanks to the generosity of store owner Neil Darish—in an outdoor exhibit on the McCarthy Center's storefront. The text on each panel came from three different sources: writing produced during the Wrangell Mountains Poetry Workshop; stories, poems, and songs from community members participating in a public word jam held at the WMC; and official National Park Service documents, tourism literature, and Wikipedia. Word choice and orientation on the panels was created by entering text into a "word-cloud" generating computer program. The fifty most common words were randomly arranged; words that occurred more often appeared larger. The WMC invites the community and visitors to enjoy the associations and the chance to consider what this place inspires. Only two words are repeated on all three panels, and we leave it to you to discover them. ∞



Nathaniel Wilder



Jeremy Pataky



Jeremy Pataky



Maria Shell



Nathaniel Wilder

The Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop is pleased to present a cross-genre workshop with novelist **Justin Torres** entitled: "Walking the Great Divide" from **August 12-18, 2012**. Torres was in residence at the WMC in 2011 for one month as a United States Artists/Rasmuson Foundation Alaska Artist in Residence. In his critically acclaimed debut novel, *We the Animals*, Torres borrows from his personal experience to create fiction that often reads like prose poetry. In this week-long workshop, poets, fiction, and nonfiction writers will walk the often overemphasized divide that exists between literary genres. When asked why he chose to fictionalize his story instead of writing a memoir, Torres explains how "the poetic language, rhythm, and imagery" of fiction allowed him access to emotional truths that would not have been as profound otherwise. Praised for breathing new life into a tired form, Torres' prose is often described as lyrical, and together we will learn how his process with fiction emulates the poet's craft: with careful attention to the repetition and the placement of each word. For writers of fiction, memoir, poetry or all of the above, this weeklong, intimate workshop promises to revivify the writer's craft. Stay tuned for more workshop and registration details on our website in the new year, as well as details on the second Wrangell Mountains Poetry Workshop.

Mountain Arts for Youth Summer Program

by Lara Applebaum

The Mountain Arts for Youth Program kicked off in early June with Monte Montepare's Theatre in the Woods workshop. Participants were engaged in a variety of improvisational skits that explored our relationship with the natural world. Later that month, Mark Vail discussed the history of felting and shared his felting techniques. Each participant was able to make a felt ball to take home.

In July, Maria Shell led local and visiting youth on a time capsule adventure. The group met at the McCarthy-Kennecott museum and took walking tour to explore what life was like for children of McCarthy's past. The group then contributed their own time capsule mementos for the future children of McCarthy to discover.

Valdez artist Heidi Franke shared her enthusiasm for the subtleties of nature during a sunny July afternoon of field sketching and watercolor painting. Kris Gregory concluded our summer season with her fifth annual block printing workshop; a popular event for children of all ages.

A huge thanks to all of the artists who generously shared their time and talents with our community and visitors to our valley! We look forward to another summer of fun and creativity! ∞



Nathaniel Wilder

A Stitch in Time

by Maria Shell

As part of the Centennial Celebration commemorating the completion of the CRNW Railway, the WMC partnered with McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum to create a kids' time capsule.

Fifteen children—both locals and visitors—joined Maria Shell, Ann Dure, and Mark Vail for an afternoon of learning what it was like to be a kid in the Wrangells a hundred years ago. The event started at the museum. From there we took a journey through time. Mark Vail shared with the children stories about kids who grew up in downtown McCarthy, and Maria Shell gave a tour of her family's cabin which was originally built by a McCarthy gold miner for his family back in the 1920s.

After the history lesson, the children gathered at the WMC to record some history of their own. Each participant wrote their personal story of what it's like for them to be in McCarthy in 2011. These stories included drawings and photographs of each of them. All the documents, along with the June McCarthy Area Council meeting minutes and the July-August edition of the Wrangell-St. Elias News were packaged up in an old bear canister and stored under the museum to be opened up in 20 years.

The participants enjoyed the time capsule program so much that we plan to continue to partner on this project. Each year we will have a guest historian who spent time in the Wrangells when they were young. Next year's guest will be Zach Barrett. He plans to show the kids all the fun things he did when he spent his summers in McCarthy as a child. The participating youth will share their own stories and their stories, drawings, and photographs will be collected and stored at the museum so that future generations might have a glimpse at what it was like to be a kid in McCarthy at the beginning of the 21st century. ∞

Porphyry *continued from page 1*

checks by mail, and we have also established a secure, online FirstGiving website specifically for Porphyry Place fundraising. We hope to raise \$30,000 through this site with your help—and no donation is too small to be helpful. Check it out at <http://www.firstgiving.com/wrangellmountainscenter/porphyry-place>.

The establishment of Porphyry Place will mark a new chapter in WMC history. It will take time and care to properly adapt the site to its new life as part of an educational institute. We anticipate very limited programming, there, during 2012, with a phased-in renovation and increase in activity occurring over the following two years. The addition of Porphyry Place to the WMC will benefit the region and the landscapes and communities of Alaska and beyond by helping to meet the growing need for community and educational programming. But first we must reach our full goal of \$250,000.

If you have not yet contributed to this campaign, act now by making a donation in any amount. And if you have already donated, thank you! We are grateful for the widespread support which is transmuting from dream to reality the vision of expanding our programming while honoring Ed and Meg's dedication to education, scientific research, sustainability, and the arts. Every gift brings us closer to our goal, and we hope you will accept this invitation to first join us in meeting the final 20% of our campaign goal and then, again, in celebrating that momentous occasion. ∞

A Million Thanks to our Supporters!

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If you would like to give new or used items that will directly enhance our effectiveness, we could really use the following items...

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Digital projector | Mt. bike tires and tubes |
| Satellite phone | Canning jars |
| Backpacking tents | Crampons and ice axes |
| Bicycles | Nice pots and pans |
| Bicycle trailers | Art supplies |
| Bicycle repair stand | MegaMid/BetaMid tent |

To contribute any of the above items directly, or to make a donation toward the purchase of one of the above, contact jeremy@wrangells.org



Wrangell Mountains Center
 PO Box 142972
 Anchorage AK 99514-2972
www.wrangells.org



Prefer to save paper by receiving
 an electronic Herald instead?
 Let us know at info@wrangells.org

**Watch our website for details on
 our 2012 program lineup, which will include:**

- Gardening Workshop (May, dates TBA)
- Changing Landscapes Natural History Workshop with Lilly Goodman-Allwright (June 2-4)
- UAF Geophysical Institute's International Summer School in Glaciology (June 10-20)
- Alaska Wildlands Studies field course (June 22-August 10)
- Kids Making History program (July 3)
- Plein Art Painting with Linda Enfante Lyons (dates TBA)
- Wrangell Mountains Writing Workshop with Justin Torres & Nancy Cook (August 12-18)
- Natural History Field Sketching and Journaling with Kristin Link (dates TBA)
- Science Learning Camp for Youth (dates TBA)
- Wrangell Mountain Songwriters Workshop with Michelle McAfee & Robin Child (end of June, dates TBA)
- Nature Photography with Michael Quinton (dates TBA)
- Creative Cloth Workshop with Maria Shell (dates TBA)
- Canning and Preserving with Mark Vail (dates TBA)
- Tall Tales Storytelling Contest & Silent Auction (Aug 25)
- Mountain Arts for Youth Series
- Summer Arts and Lectures Series
- Wrangell Mountain Nature Walks Series
- and much more



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