

# HARDWARE STORE HERALD

Volume 19

News from the Wrangell Mountains Center

Winter 2018/19

Connecting people with wildlands through art, science, and education in the Wrangell Mountains.



WMC photo

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This fall, it felt like our transition at the Wrangell Mountains Center out of the summer “programming mode” and into the fall “planning mode” was the fastest in my five years on the board of directors. Our new executive director, Stefanie Tschappat, and the board were keen to build on the momentum of our last executive director, Nate Anderson.

As we push ahead for 2019, it’s worth pausing in this season of thanks to celebrate the WMC’s collective achievements from 2018. A few examples follow. Our facilities committee planned and received a Rasmuson Tier 1 grant, which allowed us to install a brand-new solar system sufficient to power our most intensive programs. Our staff received kudos from the organizers of the international summer school in glaciology and we ran the largest of our six, successful, annual, family music camps. Eighty-one youth and preschoolers participated in our Mountain Arts & Science programs. Our summer interns and volunteers put in hundreds of hours of selfless work. We received first-time donations from 14 new members who value our commitment to connect people with wildlands and 39 dedicated members gave for their fifth year running. Our board and long-time volunteers laid the ground work for a 2019 offering of our 7-week college field studies, through partnership with Evergreen State College, of Olympia, WA. As in years past, the WMC will open its doors to life-changing learning for these college students as they immerse themselves in the amazing natural and human history of the Wrangells.

During the dark time of the year, as Alaska tilts away from the sun, we have a lot of warmth at the Wrangell Mountains Center to be thankful for. Thanks to all of you for being part of the WMC community, and for your commitments to our present and future success.

Yours in the Wrangells,

Tim Bartholomaus

President of the Board of Directors

# The WMC: A Makerspace...and Place

by Tamara Harper

**M**akerspace: a place to create, invent, tinker, explore, learn and make; a space with tools and materials to facilitate creation. A space of discovery, potential, and possibility. In a town of tiny cabins, the value of such a space for creators and makers is huge. It clicked immediately...the WMC is our community's makerspace!

I was a neophyte in Mark Vail's food preservation class where I learned to put up my grown and gathered foods. Maria's Sew-Fun workshops are always a summer highlight where we make functional art into reality such as quilts, bags, clothing, aprons, and wall hangings. I was amazed our local kids turned rounds of wood into spoons this past summer at Tony Perelli's spoonmaking class! The homemade food from the WMC kitchen is consistently delicious, locally grown, gathered, and lovingly prepared. From handmade paper to bound books. From compost to dirt. From pencils and paints to field sketches and journals. From seeds to bountiful gardens. The making happens every year in the WMC makerspaces.

WMC allows us to create the tangible and intangible. We create connections to pass on knowledge, share talents, bridge generations, foster community, and understanding. Concerts to share stories. Nature walks to teach our local environment. "Kids Making History" workshops to share McCarthy's past. Camps for writers and musicians to hone their skills. Yoga classes to twist and stretch bodies into releasing postures. Talks to connect to art, ecology, and archeology.

The WMC connects neighbors, multiple generations, locals, visitors, professionals, and novices in a singular place to gather and share knowledge and skills. At this time in our country, making these connections with one another, face to face, working and creating side by side, seems all the more important and even urgent. We are lucky to have this WMC space and place for making, in all its forms. Please join us in McCarthy and use it!

## From July to August

Excerpt by Hannah Rowland

*The temperatures over 80 made it hard to work in the sun,  
especially when the swimming hole was filled  
with people having fun.*

*The fire danger was very high,  
the people longed to see clouds in the sky.*

*Days turned to a week,  
a week turned to two.*

*Some drops of rain fell,  
But it was only a few.*

*Finally, the rain began to fall.*

*It began with a slow trickle:  
drip, drop, drip, drop.*

*Then all of a sudden:*

*Ping Ping Ping Ping, Kerplorp!*

*The rain was falling fast and strong,*

*But the ground soaked it up like a dry sponge.*

*And the heavy rain had only just begun.*

*Rain Jackets, ponchos, Frog Togs and Mud boots;*

*The rain gear outfitters were having a hoot.*

*The roads filled with puddles, and the puddles turned to  
streams.*

*Now there were only a few people eating ice cream.*



*Photo by Nina Elder*

*Students from around the world on Root Glacier*



*Photo by Mark Fabnestock*

## Report from the International Summer School in Glaciology

by Regine Hock

Nearly 30 graduate students representing 25+ universities from a dozen countries gathered in McCarthy this summer to participate in University of Alaska-Fairbanks fifth International Summer School in Glaciology. WMC provided the perfect setting to equip early stage glaciology PhD students from Nepal, India, Peru, New Zealand, and the USA with tools to address expanding challenges in quantifying and modeling glacial dynamics and the rapid changes in glaciers and ice sheets occurring in response to a warming climate. The program also fosters collaboration among students and established glaciology scientists.

For the length of the program, eight instructors from the UAF glaciology group, and three from other US institutions, offered plenty of opportunity for interaction between instructors and students, formally and informally. Students took part in glaciology lectures, exercises and computer projects, and presented their own research pinned to the outdoor walls of the Wrangell Mountain Center or to laundry lines. Excursions to nearby glaciers provided hands-on memorable experiences especially for the almost 10 students who (though studying glaciers) in fact had never been on a glacier. A number of evening activities rounded off the program, including a public lecture that attracted more than 50 locals and tourists. Participants left not only with a stronger background in glaciology, but also with a network of professional contacts from around the world.

## DRILL, NOT A DRILL

by Abigail Chabitnoy

*The berries were not ripe  
we plucked and crushed on  
our tongues.*

*We bent low to thumb each  
foreign body that opened  
held our breath to record  
erratics glissading  
from the mountains we left  
standing*

*the sigh of icemelts.  
It was love we pressed  
our fingers through  
the honeyed fungus  
love we let the shallow  
rooted spruce stand  
where no one had need  
love we sang to chase  
the bears from the  
brush*

*we projected  
on the iceberg  
when the dark was  
sufficient  
love we refrained  
from throwing stones  
at the muddied lake.*

*Sea weeding  
through green  
it was love  
we did not pluck  
the unsightly growth  
from the  
supple  
earth.*

### 2018 Artists in Residence

*Marianne Monson - writer  
Ann Mansolino - visual artist  
Hadley Austin - trapeze artist  
Yoni Goldstien - cinematographer  
Abigail Chabitnoy - poet*

# Sustainable Systems

by Arlene Davis Rosenkrans

There is growing interest worldwide about “Sustainable Systems.” Since presenting at the Wrangell Mountain Center’s Porphyry Place on Sustainable Agriculture in August 2018, I’ve reflected on how I do and do not personally contribute to sustainability.

I spoke about the supposition that the systems in place right now are NOT very sustainable and a bit out of our control. I shared how others with fewer resources address this in their lives. In winter 2016-17, I returned to East Africa (Morogoro, Tanzania) to volunteer five months with Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania (SAT), a growing non-profit.

SAT promotes organic agriculture; they have organized over 2,000 small farmers into work/learning groups. Farmer trainings demonstrate how to use animal waste, compost, mulch, and natural pest and disease controls on their crops. Benefits are improved soil, farmer health, and crop productivity. The groups also benefit from integrated small savings and lending associations, tree nurseries, value-added product training and promotion of farmer-driven research at the nearby university. The impact on these small farmers, many of them women, is profound.

How can we Alaskans become more “sustainable”? One of my three precepts of life is to eat something local every meal. Organic gardening and supporting WMC garden training can nurture this. We can also take care of our “stuff” and think about where our waste goes. I struggle with how we travel, how much we travel, and what we do when we travel.

Education is key to moving towards more sustainable systems in our everyday lives. I taught several dozen Peace Corps Volunteers in Micronesia and realized that Americans are growing up with a disconnect to basic life skills such as gardening and cooking. I applaud WMC’s efforts to integrate these basic trainings into their courses and everyday living at the Hardware Store.

*Carson installing Hardware Store solar panels*



*Photo by Nate Anderson*

## Renewable Energy

by Jared Steyaert

Earlier this year, the WMC, with the generous help of the Rasmuson Foundation, installed six 300-watt solar panels and associated equipment. Along with new gel batteries, our power system is a more hearty, low-maintenance system, than we have ever had in the past.

The new panels were installed on a 15-foot pole with a mount that makes it easy to get the best angle for the sun. I will also rest easier this winter, knowing that the panels are adjusted vertically so the snow won’t stick to them!

While the WMC strives to maintain the character and heritage of the Old Hardware Store, we are excited about the opportunity for reliable and robust power. Next season, while hosting a wide variety of visiting scientists and artists and running programs that help people connect with the wild, we will proudly be showcasing the virtues of a renewable energy system.

**Stayed tuned for updates about some of our 2019 programs!**

**Evergreen College Field Studies ~ June 22 - August 9**

**Family Music Camp ~ July 24 - July 28**

**Riversong ~ July 30 - August 5**



*Mike Loso teaching glaciology 101*

## Mountain Arts & Science for Youth Programs

Photo and Story by Lara Applebaum

This summer, both visiting and local youth participated in our five-week series of interactive workshops fostering creativity, understanding, and connections to our local culture and environment. Our series began by relating local life—past and present—through the annual Kids Making History workshop.

Other workshop topics included predators and prey, birding, magnetism, painting with alcohol ink, stained glass mosaics, printmaking, and paper beading.

We hosted middle and high school-aged students from the greater Copper Valley for the third annual overnight Geology Camp. We also expanded our glacier exploration with a campout by the Root Glacier with elementary-aged youth!

In addition to hosting science and art workshops twice a week for school-aged kids, the Mountain Arts and Science for Preschoolers program met weekly and included yoga, painting, and an insect hunt.

Many thanks to our partner organizations and donors, including the Wrangell Institute for Science and the Environment, the National Park Service, the McCarthy-Kennecott Museum, and the Blackburn Heritage Foundation for their continued generosity. Additional gratitude to the visiting and local artists and educators for their willingness to share their time and talents with us! We look forward to another summer of fun and exploration!



## Director's Reflections

by Stef Tschappat

As an educator, I have always prioritized hands-on learning, engaged in the natural environment and allowing for self expression. As my own children grow up, I have toted them around our home, in the heart of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, to explore the many wonders of such a diverse environment. Watching salmon spawn, rivers change, glaciers melt, flowers bud, berries ripen, and gardens blossom, have been the markers of time for our lives here.

Now serving as Executive Director for the WMC, I listen to the stories of lives changed by experiences in the Wrangell Mountains through one of our programs. As a small, off-the-grid non-profit, we are a community dedicated to educating all people about the joys of a natural life through sustainable practices. With a small dedicated staff, countless devoted volunteers, and a supportive community, we are touching lives and changing futures.

The WMC is devoted to sharing information about research, education, culture, and community. I am delighted to help the WMC move forward with current and future programs that are cultivated by this mountain utopia – where glaciers meet land and a vast wilderness that is guaranteed to take your breath away.



*photo by Peggy Moroch*

# Spaghetti Magic

by Sophie Littée

Sometimes we get sweet notes from WMC guests or participants. This one came to me about a week after the half marathon/ 5-mile races and prompted the thoughts that follow.

Hello there. I hope this isn't a strange request. My husband and I were present for this year's race. He ran and won 1st in the 5-mile race. Afterwards our whole family attended the spaghetti dinner. Which was amazing! I was wondering if it's possible to get the recipe for the veggie sauce served that night? I have a love for great food with a story. We had an amazing weekend and fond memories were made. Plus, I literally have been craving it since we left McCarthy. We move around a lot and I would love to add this to the small selection of recipes we have collected from the places we have been. I appreciate your time. Sincerely, Ash Smack

The simmering pots of spaghetti sauce on the Old Hardware Store stove represented a culmination of the summer for us here at the end of the road in McCarthy. The sauce embodied the hands of people near and far, the labor, the love, some spontaneity, the weather and all the elements. Early this spring, garden beds were weeded, turned and composted one at a time. Onions, beet, chard and kale seeds were planted. Herbs were planted. Seeds and seedlings went into the ground.

Tending the garden was the morning ritual, and as summer continued, the garden was in full swing. Just about everything we grew ended up in those spaghetti sauce pots for the final big event of the summer – the half marathon and 5-mile races! Local game meat, from both ends of our watershed, added to the spaghetti pot was a wonderful treat to share with our running and Hardware Store community!

The pots simmered away as the racers made their way across the finish line. Appetites were growing. Salads of all our beautiful greens were prepared with rhubarb vinaigrette, fresh bread was baked, and a chocolate rhubarb cake rounded out the meal. Our community gathered. We celebrated. We feasted!

**Bon Appétit!**

*Abundant Harvest from WMC Garden*



## Spaghetti Magic Sauce

Caramelize onions in equal mix of butter and olive oil. Add garlic, carrots, celery and spices of fresh oregano, sweet marjoram, basil, thyme, salt and pepper and bay leaves. Cook on low.

Puree stewed tomatoes and add to the pot with a dash of balsamic vinegar. Simmer on low for a couple of hours.

Oven roast red and orange peppers, zucchini, and broccoli in olive oil until tender and slightly blackened. Add to the pot with fresh kale, collards, cabbage leaves.

Saute Shaggy Mane mushrooms in butter and add to the pot. Thin the sauce with water.

Add spices as needed: fresh oregano, basil, sweet marjoram, and a couple of squirts of Siracha, salt and pepper.

The key to a good sauce is slow cooking and fresh ingredients. Roasted vegetables lock in the flavors so each unique flavor explodes as you take a bite.

## Carnivore Version

Sauté ground moose and goat in garlic and onion. Add veggie sauce over the top and simmer on low heat for a few hours.

Grated Parmesan cheese for topping.

# Meg Hunt Residency Program

Photo and Story by Ann Mansolino

I visited Wrangell-St. Elias National Park once before, while traveling in Alaska seven years ago, and immediately knew there was something about the place, the landscape, that I was drawn to and wanted to return to someday. I am honored to have had the opportunity to do so this summer as an artist in residence at the Wrangell Mountains Center.

I work in photography, bookbinding, and writing. My creative work is increasingly focused on the ways in which landscape and the natural environment can help us understand ourselves—as metaphors for our emotions and psychology, as well as expressions of our more literal relationship to nature and the larger world we inhabit.

During the residency, I found myself drawn to the Root Glacier, artistically and experientially, and visited it as many times as I was able to. The residency provided an opportunity to go out to the glacier, then stay in and write (while it rained), and then go out, and come back in again. From the external to the internal and back again—it's what I need to be able to respond meaningfully to the place. I think that's one of the really important and unique aspects of the WMC: that it connects people to wilderness through both art and science. The art and science connection

played a larger role in my own work there than it has in the past, and is something I will continue to do when creating place-based work in the future.

That's the part of the process I'm involved in at the moment: creating finished image and text works in the form of handmade books that explore glaciers as metaphors, as ways of understanding internal personal change. The glaciers look solid, unmoving. We watch them and see no change. And yet it's always moving, flowing...as I am, as you are, as we all are. For the insights into both self and land, and for the images and words and other works of art that will come of this experience, I am tremendously grateful.



*photo by Dave Hollis*

## McCarthy Half Marathon/5-mile

by Hannah Rowland

After about a month of rain in August the sun came out to warm us up for the half marathon/5-mile race. The turnout for this year was a total of 56 participants and a dozen local volunteers to help with setup, timing, and water stations. Of these 56 racers, we had a great showing of runners from the local community. It was exciting to see many of them pass by as they ran in a pack.

For the 1/2 marathon one of our local runners, Matthew Shidner, was the first to finish for men with a time of 1:30:06. Krista Schnell was close behind him for the first women's finish with a time of 1:41:03. For the 5 mile race, Sean Smack finished first for the men with a time of 0:34:52, and Veronica Satinska for the women with a time of 0:38:34

Most of the course was not affected by the flooding, but a 1/4 of a mile was taken off the end of the course. Unfortunately, the runners still had to get their feet wet.

# McCarthy Creek Flooding

by Sally Gibert, WMC board member

In August/early September, McCarthy Creek went on the rampage – again. Flooding is not unusual. Since my first visit in 1976, McCarthy Creek has dramatically flooded at least once a decade.

The flood waters always bring a glut of sediment eroding from upstream bluffs and banks. As the water slows, it drops this sediment in a predictable deposition process called accretion. When flood waters recede, the creek begins an equally predictable pattern of downcutting to recreate a more stable channel – until the next flood rearranges the creek bed once again.

Was this year's flood unique? In part, yes. The bed of McCarthy Creek has been slowly rising due to accretion for decades, at least. But the recent flood raised the creek bed in the vicinity of McCarthy about four feet, which is indeed unusual for one event. The extra sediment forced overflow to adjacent low-lying areas like our lower yard below the Old Hardware Store, and the low area below Porphyry Place containing the WMC employee housing wall tents. Since the flood, the creek has carried downstream some of the new gravel and cobbles.

What's next? It's hard to know. Relocating the wall tents to higher ground is a reasonable first step. There are also long-term concerns about Clear Creek as a community water source, and for local access.

The Wrangell Mountains exemplify dynamic landscape changes that make “geologic time” visible on an annual and sometimes even daily basis, like a time lapse movie. Witness the rapid and dramatic changes underway at the toe of Kennicott Glacier! While we need to be mindful of ways to respond to these changes, we can also celebrate the wonders of this exciting and dynamic landscape. The WMC is prepared to do both.

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*Photo by Nina Elder*

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