

## Kenai Refuge sponsors the first Game Warden Camp for Youth

by Kelly Modla



*Kids who participate in the first-ever Youth Game Warden Camp will receive a t-shirt with this cool logo.*

Have you ever wondered what a game warden does? How about boating on some of the Kenai Peninsula's largest lakes and popular rivers to check anglers or flying over portions of the vast Kenai National Wildlife Refuge and landing to check on one of the public use cabins? If you like to get out in the winter, how about taking a snow machine into the backcountry during trapping season? In the fall, a horse back patrol into the wilderness during hunting season might be more to your liking or perhaps a front country foot patrol along the Upper Kenai and Russian Rivers.

These are just a few of the many activities that game wardens do. More importantly, they help the public interpret and understand regulations. Resource stewardship, interacting with the public on a daily basis, and the variety that the outdoors offers is why folks sometimes say that we have a great job.

Maybe you know a young person who has shown an interest in wildlife law enforcement or perhaps

wildlife or fisheries management. The Kenai National Wildlife Refuge is hosting the first Youth Game Warden Camp for kids currently in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades.

This hands-on camp will foster an awareness and respect for Alaska's natural resources. Kids will discover the interesting side of a wildlife forensics crime scene while learning about antlers, skulls, duck identification, and our local fisheries. Meet our Canine Officer 'Rex', and participate in activities about boating safety, fitness, reading maps, using GPS and compass, and archery.

This camp is a chance to learn more about Alaska's natural resources and meet those responsible for protecting them. One of the goals of this camp is to give kids a meaningful experience that might spark career interests in fisheries and wildlife biology, conservation, and being a game warden. But most of all, it's about having fun.

Our junior game wardens will look for the clues in the wildlife crime scene and help solve a wildlife violation, work side by side with Canine Officer 'Rex' to look for evidence or find a missing hiker, take a duck challenge to see how well they know our local waterfowl, and determine how a moose is considered legal for harvest. Camp participants will also have fun using GPS units to locate gorp stations along trails, and learn what kind of gear is good to carry in the backcountry or on the boat.

Camp participants will be taught by Federal and State game wardens, management professionals and volunteers. Our partners for this worthwhile event include the Friends of the Kenai Refuge, Alaska Wildlife Troopers, U.S. Forest Service, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Alaska State Parks, and the local 4-H chapter.

The camp is scheduled for May 3-4. For more information, please contact Kelly Modla at the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge at 262-7021 to obtain a registration packet. Registration closes May 1.

*Kelly Modla is a law enforcement officer at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. You can find more information about the Refuge at <http://kenai.fws.gov> or <http://www.facebook.com/kenainationalwildliferefuge>.*