

Upcoming fall free events at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center

by Candace Ward



Enjoy the wilderness adventure film Arctic Son: Fulfilling the Dream on Saturday, November 7 with filmmakers Tom Irons & Jeannie Aspen from Homer. (Photo courtesy of Tom Irons & Jeannie Aspen)

October marks the 6 month anniversary of the new Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center. To celebrate, we are hosting a series of three special free events over the next three Saturday afternoons.

On Halloween, October 31 from noon to 4 PM join us for “Spooky Seasons.” Visitors of all ages will enjoy learning about “not so scary creatures”—owls, bats, spiders and much more! Our Visitor Center Multi-Purpose Room will be set up with a variety of learning stations, activities and crafts that help us learn about the true role in nature of these sometimes maligned creatures. The event is set up as a drop-in and people

can spend as much or little time as they would like. This event gives us a different type Halloween “treat” based on a natural rather than sugar “high.”

On Saturday, November 7 at 1 PM, Jean Aspen and Tom Irons, film makers from Homer, will present a free special showing of their film, *Arctic Son: Fulfilling the Dream*. Jeannie and Tom share their story of moving to Alaska’s remote Brooks Range in the spring of 1992 with their 6-year-old son, Luke, and friend Laurie Schacht. Living alone for more than a year, they had the energy and insight to keep journals and to film building a cabin and recording their day to day

lifestyle in this remote wilderness. For over 20 years, they still continue to spend each summer at this very special wilderness cabin site.

After the film, they will answer questions about their wilderness life experiences. Jeannie will be available to sign her books—*Arctic Daughter: A Wilderness Journey* which recounts her youth in the wilds of the Brooks Range as well as *Arctic Son: Fulfilling the Dream*, the book the film we are showing is based on. Their books and DVD's will be available for purchase and signing. There will be special discounts on purchases of books and DVD's with proceeds supporting the Refuge's nature education programs.

On Saturday, November 14 at 1 PM, Ranger Leah Eskelin leads her ever popular Fall Photo Safari. Participants roam the outdoors with digital cameras provided by the Refuge and capture nature images that inspire them. All ages are welcome and it is always fun to see the variety and creativity of everyone's "shots."

So please join us for fall fun at the new Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center!

Candace Ward is a park ranger who has worked in the Refuge's Visitor Services Program for over 30 years. She is excited to share nature programs at the new Kenai NWR Visitor Center. For more information contact the Visitor Center, Tuesdays–Saturdays, 10 AM–5 PM, at 260-2820.



Kids come join us on Saturdays for "Spooky Seasons" on October 31 and a "Fall Digital Camera Safari" on November 14. (Photo by Refuge staff)