

Celebrate Kenai National Wildlife Refuge's 75th birthday!

by Candace Ward



Come celebrate the 75th Birthday of Kenai National Wildlife Refuge on December 16!

Celebrate Kenai National Wildlife Refuge's 75th Birthday on Friday, December 16, from 5 – 7 PM, at the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center on Ski Hill Road, one mile from Soldotna. This is a free event for the public and features fun, family activities, light refreshments and, of course, birthday cake.

Family activities include a wildlife art scavenger hunt, making moose antler headbands, and dressing up as animals at the 75th photo booth for a “take home” photo memento. Each family participating in these activities receives a free commemorative bull moose poster and other treats.

Come see the new permanent exhibit of Kenai Refuge artwork created and donated by Tom Collopy and Mary Frische of Wild North Photography based in Homer, Alaska. Over the last 4 years, Mary and

Tom have traveled the Refuge in all seasons capturing amazing photos of scenic vistas, wildlife, and visitors having fun. Tom and Mary will give a short presentation, beginning at 6 PM, sharing their explorations in the wilds of Kenai Refuge and other Alaskan National Wildlife Refuges over the last decade.

The Refuge will also recognize the winners of the “75 Things to Do on the 75th Birthday” contest. Winners will share their memorable Refuge experiences over this last year and give us all inspiration for future adventures.

Has your family enjoyed the “75 Things” activity? Don't forget to come in to the Refuge Visitor Center between now and December 10th to get your commemorative participation gift (25 things or more required). When you turn in your checklist, you will be

entered into the grand prize contest. Awards include a public-use cabin stay, a gift bag of Refuge gear from the Alaska Geographic store, and a miniature statue replica of “Majesty of the Kenai,” the bronze statue you see in this article’s photo and which welcomes visitors at the Visitor Center’s entrance plaza.

We are fortunate to have generous non-profit partners who have helped fund this event and make it possible for us to have refreshments and give out prizes. These partners include the National Wildlife Refuge Association, Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges, National Wildlife Refuge Retiree Association, and Alaska Geographic.

For those who appreciate and love the land

and wild community that is Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, please join us for a wonderful evening celebrating our Refuge as a very special place for the last 75 years.

Candace Ward is a park ranger in the Visitor Services Program at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. She has worked at the Refuge for 32 years and experienced the 50th, 60th and 70th celebrations. The 75th will be the best one yet! For more information, please contact the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center at 907-260-2820, Tuesday through Saturday from 10 AM – 5 PM or check out the Refuge website at <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/kenai/>.