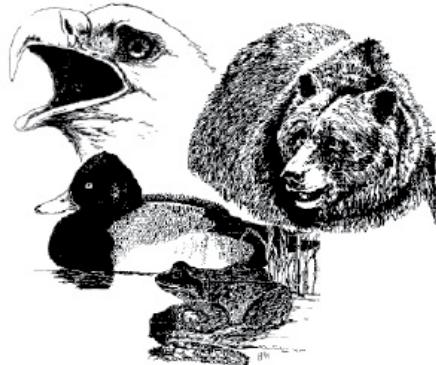




and other free nature walks,  
talks and wildlife viewing!



Prepared by  
Carrie McClelland



2013 Annual Report

# **Wild Discoveries: Wildlife Viewing Program Annual Report on nature interpretation programs and activities, 2013**

**PR-14-05**

© 2014 Yukon Department of Environment

Copies available from:

Yukon Department of Environment  
Fish and Wildlife Branch, V-5A  
Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6  
Phone (867) 667-5721, Fax (867) 393-6263  
Email: [environmentyukon@gov.yk.ca](mailto:environmentyukon@gov.yk.ca)

Also available online at [www.env.gov.yk.ca](http://www.env.gov.yk.ca)

Suggested citation:

MCCLELLAND, C. 2014. Wild Discoveries: Wildlife Viewing Program annual report on nature interpretation programs and activities, 2013. Yukon Fish and Wildlife Branch Report PR-14-05. Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada.

## Table of Contents

Summary .....	1
Introduction.....	1
Scope.....	1
Program Delivery.....	1
Events .....	2
Advertising.....	5
Partners.....	7
Discussion .....	7
Appendix A – Wild Discoveries Calendar of events .....	9
Appendix B – Google Calendar screen shot.....	10
Appendix C – Wild Discoveries poster sample .....	11
Appendix D – Newsprint ads.....	12



## Summary

*Wild Discoveries* is a collection of wildlife interpretation and nature appreciation programs that provide opportunities for Yukoners to learn more about the natural world. The 2013 series was one of our best attended over the last 10 years. We hosted 31 different programs reaching 728 people. Through these programs, we are reaching more people on a greater variety of wildlife topics. We successfully rebooted the Knee High Nature kids' series of programs, and included several new "urban" programs about wildlife that people witness in downtown Whitehorse. These interpretive programs were particularly popular as they were on weeknights, easily accessible, and very relevant to residents. The Wildlife Viewing Program looks forward to building on the successes of the 2013 season as we plan and design the upcoming interpretive season. This report includes programs that were offered from January to December 2013.

## Introduction

Wildlife Viewing Program events are delivered through interpretive walks and talks and public presentations that focus on a specific wildlife topic. Most events are organised within the annual *Wild Discoveries* summer series, and focus on a variety of issues related to wildlife, biology, management, and appreciation. The *Wild Discoveries* series is an ideal venue in which Environment Yukon biologists and other researchers can communicate their findings and knowledge of Yukon's wildlife to the public. The public is directly engaged with experts in the field who are able to answer questions and better inform Yukoners.

## Scope

This report describes the *Wild Discoveries* interpretive series offered through the Wildlife Viewing Program from January through December, 2013. It includes programs that were directly part of the *Wild Discoveries* series, as well as additional interpretive programs that were hosted in the off-season under different banners including Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month (YBAM) and Water Week.

## Program Delivery

**Wildlife Viewing Biologist:** The WV biologist assists in the planning and delivery of the interpretive programs. She supervises the WV technician and Biodiversity Programs assistant (STEP student position) who principally organise the year's events. The WV biologist also delivers some programs to the public.

**Wildlife Viewing Technician:** The WV technician begins booking speakers, planning the summer calendar, and laying out the calendar of events in April. He supervises the Biodiversity Programs assistant with finalising the summer events and organising how each event will run. The WV technician also delivers some programs to the public.

In 2013 Chris Wilkinson was hired on a casual, part-time basis to backfill for the technician who was on leave. This person focused on hosting or delivering evening programs in Whitehorse.

**Biodiversity Programs Assistant:** This STEP position has brought one student into the Wildlife Viewing Program over the last several years to assist with the delivery of summer interpretive programs. The student hosts guest speakers on behalf of the WVP, assists in designing and delivering programs with the biologist and technician, and delivers some interpretive program under their supervision. The Biodiversity Programs assistant is an integral part of ensuring the *Wild Discoveries* can be delivered throughout the summer.

**Contractors:** Three contractors were hired to deliver programs on behalf of the WVP. Lee Mennell was hired to scout and lead the spring frog walk in May, Sam Skinner led the mushroom hunting walk, and the American Bald Eagle Foundation representatives were compensated for their travel to Whitehorse to deliver a presentation.

## Events

In addition to the 24 events advertised in our annual *Wild Discoveries* calendar of events, several additional events under different themes were organised. The *Otter Spotters* interpretive walk was held as part of *World Water Week* and advertised by the Water Resources Branch as part of their series of events. Three events were held as part *Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month* in April and May. These events are not directly part of *A Celebration of Swans* but provided spring learning opportunities for Yukoners. The last interpretive event of the season was organised within a week of learning that the Fortymile caribou herd were making an historic crossing of the Dempster Highway. Since the caribou had not been seen in this region in more than 60 years, we had not originally planned to run an event in the region. The interpretive walks were organised and hosted at the last minute, with advertising only in the local newspapers, Facebook, and with radio interviews with CHON, and CBC.

### Interpretive walks and talks hosted by the Wildlife Viewing Program

Count	Event	Date/Time	Location	Description	Attendance
1	Otter Spotters	Mar 17 10 am – 2 pm	Whitehorse	A snowshoe at the head of Little Atlin lake. Lead by Rene Rivard. Part of Canada Water Week.	11
2	Into the Boreal World	May 22 7 pm – 8 pm	Whitehorse	A guided interpretive walk around the trails behind the college.	6
3	Frog Walk	May 24 9 pm – 11 pm	Rat Lake/ Whitehorse	Lee Mennell leads a group down to Rat Lake to hear the frogs croaking as they mate.	10
4	Paddling the Lewes	May 25 9 am – 3 pm	M'Clintock Bay/Lewes Marsh	A guided canoe day-trip past through the M'Clintock mud flats to look for birds.	17
5	You're kidding	June 3 6 pm – 9:30 pm	Whitehorse /White Mountain	An easy walk up the interpretive trail to look for goat kids at a distance.	0
6	Orchid Acres	June 6 7 pm – 8 pm	Dawson	Cancelled due to lack of orchids. Late spring.	n/a
7	It's tea time	June 11 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Downtown Whitehorse	A short walk through the park with Bev Gray to learn about edible plants.	28
8	Ground Squirrel School	June 18 6 pm – 8 pm	Yukon Wildlife Preserve	Short visit into the Preserve with Grant Zazula and Tom Jung to learn about Arctic ground squirrels	20
9	Knee High Nature #1	June 25 10:30 am - 11:30 am	Middle McIntyre Marsh	Short interpretive programs targeting kids ages 3-10. 1 <sup>st</sup> in the series.	12
10	Real Raptors	June 28 5 pm – 6 pm June 29 10 am – 11 am	Frank Slim Building, Shipyards Park	American Bald Eagle Foundation brings up 3 live birds to tell about their lives.	90
11	Knee High Nature #2	July 2 10:30 am – 11:30 am	Middle McIntyre Marsh	Short interpretive programs targeting kids ages 3-10. 2 <sup>nd</sup> in a series.	37
12	Carcross Dune Walk	July 3 2 pm – 4 pm	Carcross	Interpretive walk with Bruce Bennett from YCDC about dune ecologist.	21
13	Mayo B, Salmon and More	July 6 1 pm – 2 pm	Mayo	Visit the special salmon stream around the Mayo B dam with a rep from Yukon Energy.	0
14	Life on the Edge	July 6 7 pm – 9 pm	5 mile Lake/Mayo	An easy interpretive walk around this trail focusing on the ecology of riparian areas.	0
15	Pika Palace	July 7 10 am – 12 pm	Signpost Hill/Keno	Guided interpretive walk with Regional bio about alpine wildlife.	5
16	Knee High Nature #3	July 9 10:30 am – 11:30 am	Middle McIntyre Marsh	Short interpretive programs targeting kids ages 3-10. 3 <sup>rd</sup> in the series.	23

Table Continued

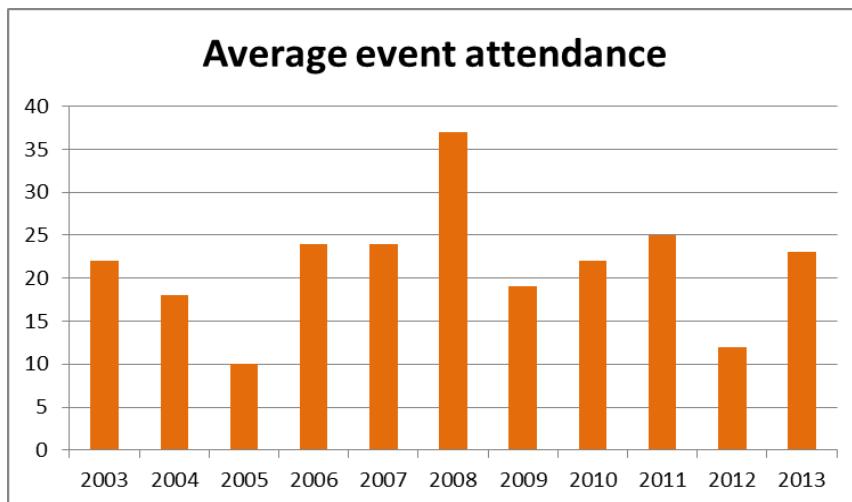
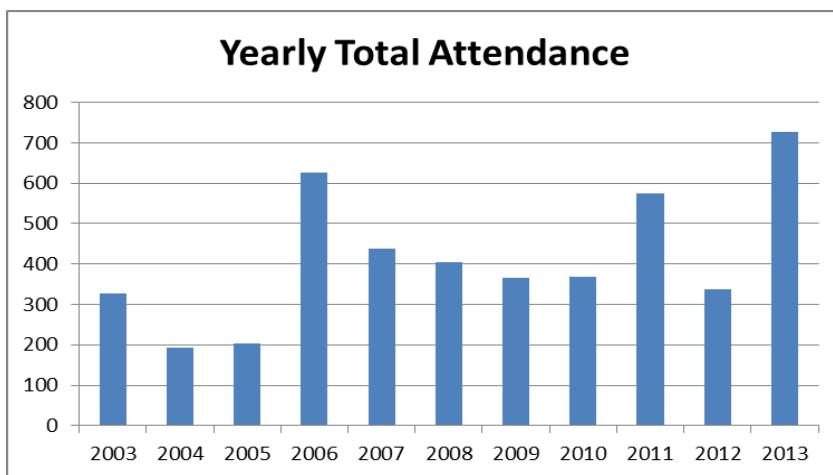
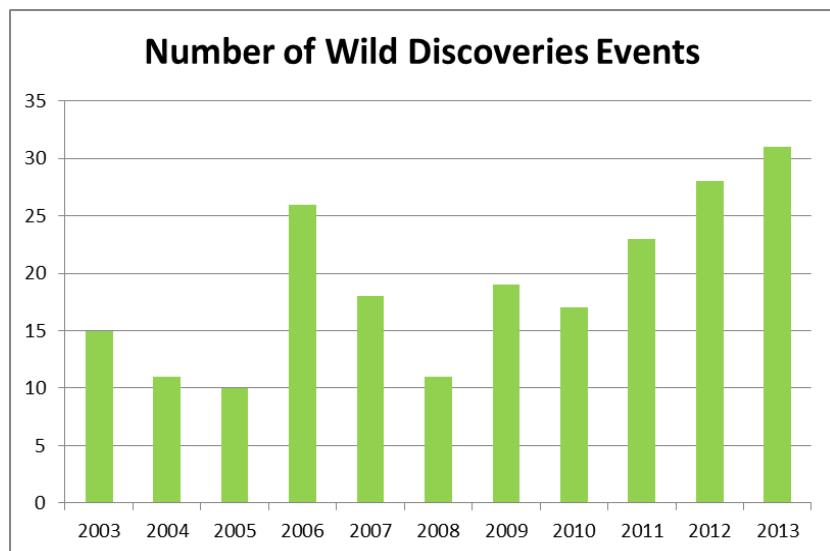
<b>17</b>	Busy Beavers	July 10 7pm – 8 pm	Whitehorse	Short, easy walk and talk about the work of the beavers along the Millennium Trail.	45
<b>18</b>	Knee High Nature #4	July 16 10:30 am – 11:30 am	Middle McIntyre Marsh	Short interpretive programs targeting kids ages 3-10. 4 <sup>th</sup> in the series.	31
<b>19</b>	Wye Lake Walk	July 17 7 pm – 9 pm	Watson Lake	Easy guided walk around the downtown lake about ecology.	1
<b>20</b>	Knee High Nature #5	July 23 10:30 am - 11:30 am	Middle McIntyre Marsh	Short interpretive programs targeting kids ages 3-10. 5 <sup>th</sup> in the series.	38
<b>21</b>	Eagles and Webcams	July 24 7pm – 8 pm	Whitehorse	Small talk from us and Yukon Electrical about the eagles we've been watching grow up.	75
<b>22</b>	One fish, Two Fish	July 27 1pm – 3 pm	Dezadeash/ Haines Junction	Talk and learning game about the fish of Dezadeash and its unique ecosystem.	9
<b>23</b>	Spruce Beetle Walk	July 28 10 am – 11:30 am	Haines Junction	Guided walk along the Spruce Beetle trail about this little insect.	3
<b>24</b>	Ahh Nuts!	July 31 7 pm – 8 pm	Whitehorse	Walk and talk with Meghan Larivee about Red Squirrels	20
<b>25</b>	Wandering for Wolves	August 7 7 pm – 9 pm	Whitehorse	Short walk to an abandoned den site to talk about wolf ecology with Peter Knamiller.	31
<b>26</b>	Going Batty	August 9 9:30 pm – 12 am	Chadburn Lake/ Whitehorse	Talk and witness bat trapping/banding.	32
<b>27</b>	Mushroom Power Up!	August 13 7pm – 9 pm	Chadburn Lake/ Whitehorse	Walk led by Sam Skinner to ID mushrooms and taste some.	55
<b>28</b>	Red Fish, Blue Fish	August 24 7 pm – 9 pm	Scout Lake/ Whitehorse	Short walk with Oliver Barker about the Kokanee Salmon and stocking program.	6
<b>29</b>	Yukon's Great Salt Lake	August 25 6 pm – 9pm	Whitehorse	A guided walk to the Takhini Salt Flats with Bruce Bennett to talk about this unique ecosystem.	28
<b>30</b>	Elk Bugling	Sept 27 6 pm – 9pm	Whitehorse	A guided walk to listen for the Takhini Elk herd and bugle for them.	32
<b>31</b>	Caribou Crossing	Oct 19 3 – 6 pm Oct 20 10 am -12 pm	Dawson City/ Dempster Highway	Drive up the Dempster together to see the Fortymile Herd of caribou.	42
<b>Attendance sum:</b>					<b>728</b>

## Advertising

Wild Discoveries events are advertised in numerous ways depending on the timing and location of the event.

- 1) **Calendar of Events:** This publication is released at the beginning of June and mailed to all Yukon households, including Atlin B.C.. Households that have signed up with Canada Post to block all non-addressed mail (flyers) will not receive a *Wild Discoveries* householder. The householders are also made available at Environment Yukon offices, the main YG building, rest stops, Visitor Information Centre and museums/visitor attractions across the territory. Events that are held in April and May are included in the YBAM householder. (Appendix A)
- 2) **Online calendar:** The most up-to-date information is available on the Wildlife Viewing webpage in a Google calendar. The calendar is posted as soon as events are confirmed and updates can be made in real time (such as change of location or cancellations). The public can also sign up for the calendar so that updates will be directly imported into their own Google calendars. (Appendix B)
- 3) **Posters:** A *Wild Discoveries* poster template is used to advertise all events. Approximately 20 posters are printed and posted around Whitehorse in popular locations such as Main Street, coffee shops, Visitor Information Centres, and community notice boards. Posters are also printed and sent ahead of time to the community where an event will be held. (Appendix C)
- 4) **Paid advertisement:** A print ad is placed in the Yukon News and Whitehorse Star at the beginning of the season reminding Yukoners to check their mailboxes for the householder. These ads are supported by radio ads the week of the release. Two more newspaper ads were taken out in July and August to remind people about upcoming events. These were not supported with radio spots. (Appendix D)

**Number of Wild Discoveries events and attendance, 2001 – 2013.**



## Partners

These organisations offered time, resources, staff, or a location to host a *Wild Discoveries* event. Often we call on experts from these areas to offer variety and new programs.

Organisation	Contribution
<b>American Bald Eagle Foundation</b>	Brought birds up from Haines for Real Raptors. (Wildlife Viewing compensates their travel expenses)
<b>Animal Health Unit</b>	Lead the squirrel walk. (YG employees)
<b>Bev Gray/Aroma Borealis</b>	Lead the tea time walk. (Volunteer).
<b>Fish and Wildlife Branch Biodiversity Programs</b>	Hosted Bat Research revealed night. (YG employees)
<b>Conservation Data Centre</b>	Lead the Carcross Dunes, and Salt Lake walk. (YG employee.)
<b>Conservation Education Youth Programs</b>	Loaned canoes for YG staff for Paddling the Lewes trip.
<b>Lee Mennell</b>	Lead the Frog Walk (contractor)
<b>Fish and Wildlife Branch Regional programs (Mayo, Dawson)</b>	Lead 5 Mile lake and Keno hill walk and Caribou Crossing event. YG employees.
<b>Rene Rivard</b>	Lead Otter Spotters walk (volunteer)
<b>Fish and Wildlife Branch Species Programs (Wolf, Fish, Elk)</b>	Lead the wolf, fish, and elk walks (YG employees)
<b>Yukon Electrical</b>	Hosted the Eagles and Webcams talk. (Partnership program – no charge)
<b>Yukon Energy</b>	Hosted the Mayo B/Salmon walk. (Volunteer).
<b>Yukon Wildlife Preserve</b>	Provided location of Ground Squirrel talk (Free of charge)

## Discussion

In 2013 we had one of the highest total attendance of *Wild Discoveries* programs, but we also hosted a greater number of programs than in years past. Through these programs we are reaching more people on a greater variety of wildlife topics. A more thorough and comprehensive advertising campaign likely complemented the suite of programs, making more people aware of the opportunities to participate in Wildlife Viewing Program activities.

In the coming interpretive seasons we should look closely at which programs were well attended and transfer those qualities to other programs. For example, we should consider the date, time, and location of the program, in addition to the topic, as significant factors in influencing someone's decision to attend. Perhaps if a poorly attended program were held at a different time of the week, it might be more popular. Based on this year's successes, there seems to be a demand for shorter programs located directly in Whitehorse, on topics that are directly relevant to the people who live there.

Attendance at interpretive programs offered in the communities continues to be low and often attended by tourists or visiting Yukoners. We should continue to offer program “packages” that offer several programs in the weekend for people who might consider travelling to that community to participate. In the coming seasons the Wildlife Viewing Program will continue to build relationships with local residents to assist with promotion of community programs, but also to provide guidance on appropriate dates and topics of local interest.

The Wildlife Viewing Program will continue to evaluate individual interpretive programs to determine if and how they should be run in the coming years. We currently base this assessment both on the popularity of the program and on the importance of the program’s message, in balance with appropriate use of our time and resources.

## Appendix A – Wild Discoveries Calendar of events

### Wildlife Viewing Special Events



#### It's Tea Time!

**Tuesday June 11, 6:30 PM (1 hr)**

**Aroma Borealis 504 B Main St**

Join Bev Gray for a cup of tea and a nature walk highlighting plants used for tea and medicinal purposes in Teegatha Oh Zheh Park, downtown Whitehorse.

#### Ground Squirrel School

**Tuesday June 18, 6:00 PM (2 hrs)**

**Yukon Wildlife Preserve**

Join Environment Yukon biologists and Yukon Palaeontologist Grant Zazula for a fascinating look at these subterranean dwellers. We'll observe the squirrels through scopes and learn about recent Yukon research on the species. Co-hosted with Yukon Wildlife Preserve.

#### Knee High Nature #1

**Tuesday June 25, 10:30 AM (1 hr)**

**Middle McIntyre Creek, Whitehorse**

Bring your youngster out for a different nature-based activity each week. Activities and games are designed for kids. Head up College Drive and follow the signs.

#### Bat Research Revealed

**One evening, week of June 24, late night, Squanga Lake Campground**

Environment Yukon biologists are monitoring bat populations in the territory. Come chat with the researchers about their work, as they work! Call Wildlife Viewing or check our website for final details.

#### Real Raptors

**Friday June 28, 5:00 PM (1 hr)**

**Saturday June 29, 10:00 AM (1 hr)**

**Fireplace Room at Shipyards Park, Whitehorse**

**Saturday June 29, 3:30 PM (1 hr)**

**St. Christopher's Anglican Church, Haines Junction**

Meet live birds of prey from the American Bald Eagle Foundation in Haines, AK. Learn more about these raptors and the foundation.

#### Birds & Dragonflies

**Saturday June 29, 1:00 PM (2 hrs)**

**Meet at Fish Ladder, Nisutlin Drive**

Meet the birds and dragonflies of Hidden Lakes with entomologist Syd Cannings. A Yukon Bird Club event.

#### Birds of Dawson

**Sunday June 30, 5:30 PM (2.5 hrs)**

**Meet at Dawson's Visitor Information Centre**

Come on a birding walk in this historic town with Sebastian Jones. A Yukon Bird Club event.

#### Knee High Nature #2

**Tuesday July 2, 10:30 AM (1 hr)**

**Middle McIntyre Creek, Whitehorse**

Bring your youngster out for a different nature-based activity each week. Activities and games are designed for kids. Head up College Drive and follow the signs.

#### Wildlife Viewing Event

**Knee High Nature. These are Wildlife Viewing activities just for kids!**

**Wildlife Viewing Program: (867) 667-8291, Toll free: 1-800-661-0408, ext. 8291, email: [wildlife.viewing@gov.yk.ca](mailto:wildlife.viewing@gov.yk.ca)**

#### Red Fish, Blue Fish

**Friday August 23, 7:00 PM (2 hrs)**

**Meet at Takhini arena parking lot**

Environment Yukon fisheries biologist Oliver Barker will be leading an evening walk to check out Kokanee Salmon in their spawning colours. We will carpool to either Chadden or Scout Lake, depending on the fish.

#### Swan Lake Fall Migrants

**Sunday August 25, all day**

**Whitehorse meeting place TBA**

A day-long field expedition to Swan Lake in search of fall bird migrants with Boris Dobrovolsky. A Yukon Bird Club event. Register by email: [ybcfieldtrips@gmail.com](mailto:ybcfieldtrips@gmail.com)

#### Yukon's Great Salt Lake

**Wednesday August 28, 6:00 PM (3 hrs)**

**Meet at the Beringia Centre parking lot**

This is the place to see rare plants and unique mineralization. Join plant enthusiast and Environment Yukon biologist Bruce Bennett for a walk around this little-known gem of the Takhini Valley. Bring your boots. Carpooling is encouraged.

#### Fall Bird Migration in Whitehorse

**Sunday September 8, 9:30 AM (3 hrs)**

**Meet at S.S. Klondike**

Discover fall migration at Schwatka Lake and Hidden Lakes with Ione Christensen. A Yukon Bird Club event.

#### Birding at the Sewage Ponds!

**Sunday September 15, 9:30 AM (3 hrs)**

**Meet at S.S. Klondike**

The Whitehorse sewage lagoon is a birding hotspot! Join Devon Yacura for all the action. A Yukon Bird Club event.

#### Birds of Lake Laberge

**Sunday September 22, 9:30 AM (5 hrs)**

**Meet at Porter Creek Super A Foods**

Birding on the edge of Lake Laberge with Ione Christensen. Dress warmly, wear boots, and bring a lunch. A Yukon Bird Club event.

#### Elk Bugling

**Friday September 27, 6:00 PM (3 hrs)**

**Meet at North Klondike Rest stop**

Join us to view Elk in rut and hear them bugling. Dress for the weather and wear appropriate footwear. Carpooling is encouraged.

#### All events

**are free and**

**open to**

**the public.**



**Yukon**  
Environment

[www.env.gov.yk.ca/events](http://www.env.gov.yk.ca/events)

for up-to-date information

Find  
"Yukon Wildlife Viewing"  
on

facebook

## Appendix B – Google Calendar screen shot

The screenshot shows a Google Calendar interface with the following details:

- Header:** Today, Print, Week, Month, Agenda.
- Right Sidebar:** LIST, Yukon Mammals, Yukon Fish, Invasive Species.
- Events:**
  - Tuesday, July 16, 2013: 7:00pm Busy Beavers
  - Wednesday, July 17, 2013: 10:30am Knee High Nature #4
  - Saturday, July 20, 2013: 7:00pm Wye Lake Walk
  - Monday, July 22, 2013: 10:00am Parks Day with Shailyn Drukis
  - Tuesday, July 23, 2013: 2:00pm Parks Day with Shailyn Drukis
  - Tuesday, July 23, 2013: Parks Day - hike, workshop, potluck BBQ & music!
  - Wednesday, July 24, 2013: Teslin Lake Bird Observatory - opens
  - Wednesday, July 24, 2013: 10:30am Knee High Nature #5
  - Saturday, July 27, 2013: 7:00pm Eagles and Webcams
  - Sunday, July 28, 2013: 10:00am Northern Survival
  - Wednesday, July 31, 2013: 1:00pm One Fish, Two Fish!
  - Sunday, July 28, 2013: 10:00am Spruce Beetle Walk
  - Wednesday, July 31, 2013: 2:00pm Canyon City Nature Walk with Bruce Bennett
  - Thursday, August 1, 2013: 7:00pm Ahhhh Nuts!
  - Wednesday, August 7, 2013: 10:00am For those history buffs
  - Wednesday, August 7, 2013: Culture and Archaeology with Greg Hare
  - Friday, August 9, 2013: 7:00pm Wandering for Wolves
  - Friday, August 9, 2013: Lichen and Fungi Weekend (Aug 9-11)
  - Friday, August 9, 2013: 9:30pm Going Batty
- Bottom:** Events shown in time zone: Pacific Time - Whitehorse, Google Calendar button.



## Appendix C – Wild Discoveries poster sample

The poster features a yellow background with a blue header bar. In the top left, the text "WILD DISCOVERIES" is written in a stylized font, with "2013" below it. To the right of the text are several white footprints of different sizes. Below this, the text "You're Kidding!" is written in large red letters. A photograph of a white mountain goat with dark horns is centered in the lower half of the poster. The text below the photo provides details about the event.

Did you know that a baby goat is called a kid? Join us at the viewing platform on White Mountain to view the goats and their newborn kids from a safe distance.

**When:** Monday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 6:00pm to 9:30pm

**Where:** Meet at Robert Service Way Rest-stop (on the Alaska Highway)

**Details:**

- The drive to White Mountain from the meeting place is approximately 1 hour •
- Car pooling is encouraged • Wildlife Viewing will have viewing scopes and binoculars to share onsite but please feel free to bring your own!
- Free •

For more information, call (867) 667-8291,  
toll free 1-800-661-0408, ext. 8291. Check for updates and new events at  
[www.wildlifewatching.gov.yk.ca](http://www.wildlifewatching.gov.yk.ca)

Yukon Environment

## Appendix D – Newsprint ads and Facebook promotion ad

**Bats, bison, bugs, birds...**

 It's time to get outside and learn about Yukon's wildlife. We are offering free wildlife viewing events this spring and summer. For details call 667-8291.

Join us for exciting Wild Discoveries.

For more information, visit: [www.env.gov.yk.ca/events](http://www.env.gov.yk.ca/events)



**Free wildlife viewing and outdoor events!**

 Nature lovers, young and old, are invited to dozens of walks, talks, and wildlife viewing activities this summer in Yukon.

For a full listing of events, visit: [www.env.gov.yk.ca](http://www.env.gov.yk.ca)



**Right Column Preview**

---

**Discover Yukon Wildlife**

 View the calendar of wildlife viewing events happening this summer. Free and kid-friendly!

**Free wildlife viewing and outdoor events!**

 Nature lovers, young and old, are invited to dozens of walks, talks, and wildlife viewing activities this summer in Yukon.

For a full listing of events, visit: [www.env.gov.yk.ca](http://www.env.gov.yk.ca)

