

# National Get Outdoors Day

## Mural Making and More with Environmental Artist Wyland

By Sara Boario, Chugach National Forest, Amanda Smith, Alaska Geographic and Kelly Meeker, Anchorage Park Foundation



Left: Anne Zimmerman, Director, Wildlife Fish and Rare Plants, Washington Office; Wyland, Artist; Gloria Manning, Associate Deputy Chief; Sammy Salmon with unidentified child, Randy Ruaro, Governor’s Office; Beth Pendleton, Regional Forester, and Dan Sullivan, Mayor of Anchorage. Right: Two young artists join artist Wyland in creating a mural at National Get Outdoors Day

On June 12, marine life artist Wyland led Anchorage youth in an artistic exploration of the connection between the health and sustainability of our water resources, public lands, and communities. The event was open to the public, and celebrated National Get Outdoors Day with on-site mural making, painting, music and other activities. More than 200 youth and family members took part, joined by Regional Forester Beth Pendleton, Associate Deputy Chief Gloria Manning, Anchorage Mayor Dan Sullivan and other local and state officials.

To help kick-off the event, “advance artistic teams” of Anchorage youth were prepared for the celebration by staff from the Anchorage School District, Alaska Geographic, Anchorage Park Foundation, and Chugach National Forest. School art classes contemplated mural design, landscape themes, and prepared sketches. Students then transformed their

- Event Partners**
- ✦ U.S. Forest Service
  - ✦ NOAA
  - ✦ Alaska State Parks
  - ✦ Alaska Geographic
  - ✦ Anchorage Park Foundation
  - ✦ Anchorage Community Land Trust
  - ✦ Credit Union 1
  - ✦ Alaska Teen Media Institute

concepts into murals live at the event. Completed murals are currently being displayed throughout the community, including at the Alaska Railroad and the Credit Union 1 branch in Mountain View.



Finished mural

Wyland is well known to Alaskans for his “Whaling Wall” on J.C. Penney’s downtown Anchorage store. He returned as part of the nationwide FOCUS (Forests, Oceans, Climate, and Us) campaign in partnership with the Forest Service and NOAA.

FOCUS uses art and science to teach young people about our forests and ocean—and how these two irreplaceable resources hold the key to the future of our water supplies, climate, and global health. Some murals from the Alaska event may possibly be exchanged with other Wyland FOCUS projects in Puerto Rico and Maryland.

In Anchorage, the opportunities for learning and building connections between children and nature start in our city and state parks and flow to the Chugach National Forest, now a Children’s Forest. The event helped kick-off a packed summer season of activities for youth and their families across all public lands.