

Press  
Information



THE  
**WILD**  
CENTER

## New Director for the Wild Center

NEW YORK STATE TAPS MUSEUM FOUNDER FOR TOP POST

Tupper Lake, NY - The Wild Center/Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks announced today that vice president and managing director Elizabeth M Lowe will be leaving the Museum staff to become head of the New York State's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Region 5. The region covers the majority of the Adirondack Park. Lowe will be succeeded at the Museum by Stephanie Ratcliffe, who has been the director of the new Museum's operations and programs since 2002. The transfer will be effective June 1<sup>st</sup>. Lowe will continue to serve on the Museum's board of trustees and executive committee.

"Betsy Lowe played a profound and singular role as the founder of the Museum," said board president Donald K. Clifford, Jr. "For nearly nine years she gave the fullest measure of her tremendous energy and intelligence to take this Museum from the initial idea right through to its first year of operation. The board could not have asked for more."

Lowe conceived the idea for the Wild Center while at the DEC, and left her job with the department to manage the launch of the new Museum starting in 1999. "I love the Adirondacks," said Lowe, whose family has a more than 100-year connection to the region. "Seeing the Museum open and celebrating the nature of the Adirondacks was a dream come true, and I'm returning to the DEC knowing that the team leading the Museum forward is stronger now than ever before."

Ratcliffe, a resident of Rainbow Lake, N.Y., joined the Wild Center four years before its opening and served as director of operations and programs with Lowe. She was recruited to join the Museum team from her position at the Maryland Science Center, where she was the senior director for all exhibitions, a position she held for four years. Ratcliffe started her career in museums at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. She currently serves on the national program committee of the Association of Science and Technology Centers, the leading organization serving science

museums internationally. Ratcliffe earned a BA in art marketing/museum management and a Master's in museum education from George Washington University. Prior to joining The Wild Center team, Ratcliffe had worked for the Brooklyn Children's Museum in addition to her positions with the Maryland Science Center and the Smithsonian.

Ratcliffe played a leading role in the creation of the Museum's current exhibits and programs, including all the interior live exhibits and the multimedia presentations. She was in charge of a number of the major initiatives for future exhibits, including the Bird Skywalk and Skytowers slated for construction later this year and the *Wings over the Adirondacks* experience and the planned new Snowshoe Lodge winter habitat exhibit and classroom.

"We are very fortunate to have Stephanie Ratcliffe here and ready to grow the Wild Center," said Clifford. "She was an integral part of our launch team, and brought her 20 years of experience in museums to our organization. Her advice and counsel and strong project skills were key to our opening. Stephanie and Betsy worked closely together to make the Museum succeed, and that experience is a great asset as we go forward."

The Wild Center is a new kind of natural history museum that mixes the indoor and outdoors in unusual ways. There are waterfalls inside, and exhibit labels in the woods outside. Hiking trails outside the Wild Center are like museum exhibit halls, except they are in the forest, with labels that trained staff can change daily. Live otter and bird sounds mix with the splashing cascade of falling water from a trout-filled stream. Films from engaging field scientists doing research in the Adirondacks showcase the world that surrounds the Museum. The Wild Center is open year round. For additional information visit [www.wildcenter.org](http://www.wildcenter.org) or call (518) 359-7800.

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