



## Alaska Wildland Adventures

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Alaska Wildland Adventures Receives “Green List” Award**

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Designation Recognizes Company as World’s Top Ecotourism Tour Operator

ANCHORAGE – One Alaska company recently received major plaudits for pioneering a backcountry experience free of the noise, pollution and expense of diesel generators.

Alaska Wildland Adventures’ (AWA) custom-designed hydropower system at the company’s Kenai Backcountry Lodge was among the factors that won it a nod from Condé Nast Magazine as the world’s leading Ecotourism Tour Operator in the magazine’s annual “Green List” awards.

The winners were featured in the September issue of the popular consumer travel magazine. “Green List” awards were presented to companies in three categories: best destination, best lodges and resorts and best tour operators. AWA won the most votes from a panel of judges comprised of academia, government agencies and “green” tour operators in the 11<sup>th</sup> annual competition.

“To be recognized among the many thousands of ecotourism businesses across the globe is a huge honor,” said AWA President Kirk Hoessle. “Our company has always been focused on offering the best possible experience in Alaska, and it is gratifying to know we’re also offering one of the best experiences in the world.”

Most Alaska lodges that are “off the grid” must power kitchens, lighting and guest conveniences by diesel generators, which are loud, polluting and expensive. AWA completed its switch to hydropower in 2000 in order to preserve the serenity of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, where its Kenai Backcountry Lodge is located. Guests were thrilled with the switch, Hoessle said.

“The lodge is remote – you have to raft in just to get there – and generators were just not consistent with the experience our guests are after,” Hoessle said.

AWA was founded in 1977 with one guiding principal: care and concern for the environment. Today, embracing that same principal, it operates three lodges and a variety of tours in Alaska, primarily on the Kenai Peninsula and in Denali National Park & Preserve. Tours focus on rafting, hiking, fishing and wildlife viewing with a “leave no trace” ethic imparted throughout the company’s programs. AWA hosts around 1,000 visitors each summer.

Hoessle said his staff, upon invitation, began preparing the Condé Nast award application in December 2004. The exhaustive process detailed the company’s commitment not just to the environment but also to charity and Alaskan-owned enterprises. The company commits 10 percent of pre-tax earnings to local and statewide charitable causes, including the Alaska Center for the Environment, Alaska Conservation Foundation, The Nature Conservancy of Alaska, the Northern Alaska Environmental Center and the Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association.

“I think the application came in at nearly 20 pages,” Hoessle said. “You never really think about all the little things you do until you put them together in one place. I am really proud of what we’ve been able to accomplish.”

The company also has developed a “Greenworks Manual” free for any business to use that teaches companies how to be environmentally friendly. Many of AWA’s suppliers and subcontractors are now using the Greenworks Manual, and Hoessle said he is happy to be able to help businesses be more environmentally active.

Hoessle has a long history of dedication to the environment and environmentally sustainable tourism and is an active member of the Alaska Travel Industry Association and Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association. Hoessle came to Alaska in 1976 to work as a crew leader and later Camp Director for the Bureau of Land Management’s Youth Conservation Corps program. He holds a degree in environmental education and outdoor recreation from George Williams College of Aurora University.

Since its inception, Alaska Wildland Adventures has been committed to providing guests with a profound travel experience emphasizing Alaska’s natural and cultural history while operating in a fashion that protects and preserves Alaska’s natural environment. Founded as Alaska Campout Adventures, the company originally offered only one type of trip – tent camping – through the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, the Chugach National Forest and Denali National Park. Its sole mission was to share Alaska’s wilderness with a few people who seek a high quality, “true Alaska” vacation experience without compromising or overemphasizing comfort. Today, AWA proudly continues the tradition as Alaska’s leader in lodge-based ecotourism adventure travel.

More information on the company’s philosophy and practices can be found at [www.alaskawildland.com/about-us/our-values-and-beliefs](http://www.alaskawildland.com/about-us/our-values-and-beliefs).

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