



Alaska Wildland Adventures

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Kirk Hoessle President, Alaska Wildland Adventures

Kirk Hoessle (pronounced “hessel”) is the President of Alaska Wildland Adventures, Inc. He led the company’s first trip for five years before growing into a management position. He has been the principal shareholder and leader of Alaska Wildland Adventures since 1987.

Kirk was a long-time member of the Board of Directors for the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA), Alaska's 1,000 member travel trade association. From 2012 through 2016, he was one of 32 travel industry leaders appointed to the US Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, advising the US government on issues and policy related to travel and tourism. In October 2015, Kirk was awarded the 2015 Stan Stephens Stewardship Award by ATIA. This award commemorates the passion and dedication that Stan Stephens lived by in his commitment to safeguard Prince William Sound after the Exxon Valdez oil spill, and it honors Kirk’s work in protecting wild Alaska and sharing its beauty in a responsible and sustainable way. In 2019, Kirk was awarded Visit Anchorage’s Seymour Award for Sustainable Action.

Born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri, Kirk came to Alaska for a summer job as a crew leader with the Bureau of Land Management’s Youth Conservation Corps program in 1976. He has traveled and guided adventure travel trips throughout Alaska. His fondest travel memories involve backpacking and rafting in Alaska’s Brooks Range prior to the establishment of the National Parks now encompassing much of the area.

Kirk holds a degree in Environmental Education and Outdoor Recreation from George Williams College of Aurora University of Aurora, Illinois. Before embarking upon a career in Alaska adventure travel, his focus was environmental education. In his seven years in this field, he served as an instructor, outdoor school director, curriculum writer and program designer. And then, the spell of the Alaska wilderness got the best of him.

Kirk is deeply connected to his company and balances work with family time, boating, natural history interpretation, cross country and telemark skiing, wilderness exploration, competitive volleyball and world travel.

Personal Awards:

Visit Anchorage's Seymour Award for Sustainable Action, 2019
Stan Stephens Stewardship Award, Alaska Travel Industry Association, 2015
Special Achievement Award, Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council, 2003
Denali Award, Alaska Travel Industry Association, 2000
Ginny Hill Wood Award, Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association, 2001
Distinguished Service Award, Alaska Recreation and Park Association, 1996

Company Awards:

2024 Winner of the Where to Stay: Nature Lovers' Lodging category from Sunset Magazine's Travel Awards; awarded to Kenai Fjords Glacier Lodge
2024 Best Tour Operator; awarded to Alaska Wildland Adventures by Newsweek Readers' Choice Awards
2023 Best Workplaces Alaska Winner; awarded to Alaska Wildland Adventures by the Alaska Journal of Commerce
2020 Stewardship and Sustainability Award from the Alaska Sealife Center's 2020 Alaska Ocean Leadership Awards; awarded to Alaska Wildland Adventures and Kenai Fjords Glacier Lodge
2010 Responsible Tourism Showcase Honoree, Educational Travel Conference
2007 Top Small Workplaces award, Winning Workplaces and the Wall Street Journal
2007 Outstanding Business in Tourism Award, Kenai Peninsula Borough
2005 International Green List Award Top Tour Operator, Condé Nast Traveler
2001 Arctic Award for Linking Tourism and Conservation, World Wildlife Fund
2000 Business Most Committed to Success of Tourism on the Kenai Peninsula Award, Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council
1998 and 1995 Peninsula Pride Award, Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council
1997 Outstanding Long Term Program Award, Alaska Land Managers Forum

Speaker and Panelist:

Statewide, national and international tourism; ecotourism; environmental education; and natural history interpretation conferences and symposia.

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