

Earth Day video narrative transcript

Hello! I'm Ben Bobowski, Superintendent of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve in Alaska, of the United States of America. Today I invite you to "Stop!" and look around, to all the world has to offer.

With so much going on today, and so much we've been through over the last year, it can be difficult to see beyond what is immediately in front of us. But for today, Earth Day, we at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve invite you to take the time to fill your senses with all the magnificence the world has to offer.

First, I want to acknowledge the traditional stewards of the lands that we now call Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve.

I offer my respects to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of many peoples – traditional stewards to the north, the Upper Tanana; to the south, the Eyak and the Tlingit; and our closest neighbors to our headquarters, the Ahtna - Today, we all meet virtually on their traditional homeland.

A better understanding and respect for these cultures develops an enriched appreciation of their long and enduring cultural heritage, and it gives us a long view into time and of those who have come before us.

We're grateful of the earth's natural wonders, small and large, as well as the bounty it provides for us, today.

We are committed to protecting the earth, for tomorrow - so future generations will benefit, just the same.

We appreciate the earth's quieter spaces, that provide opportunities for recreation, as well as the opportunity to re-create ourselves anew.

Thanks to those who had the foresight to set aside areas for protection, such as the vast inhabited wilderness of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, for this and future generations.

And thanks to each of you who contribute to the protection of these special places for the future.

We miss our visitors from afar, seeing our colleagues from Canada, Costa Rica, Chile and from other protected areas around the world. A special 'shout out' to our colleagues in the parks of Poland! For years you have developed meaningful relationships with parks the United States. I fondly remember the most recent visit of Tatra staff to Wrangell-St. Elias, just a few years ago. We look forward to gathering together again soon!

The exchanges of people from afar enriches life's experiences, our perspectives, our knowledge and abilities to protect the earth; but also serves as a humble reminder that in fact the world is much smaller than we often think; that we have much more in common, than we often believe; and that we are all in this, together.

When I look at these large landscapes of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, or better yet pictures of earth from space, I'm reminded that we don't see lines that separate us. Indeed, for all of us, we share much more in common, than divides us.

We know this last year has been challenging for all of us. If anything, history has taught us that in the darkness you can find light and that light can carry you forward to a new day!

Celebrate Earth Day with us, not just today, but every day!

And take good care.