

Kailey James Studies Ecology, Cares for Bears in Alaska

by Barbara Prokop, MD, Clayton, Missouri

Chapter MD in Clayton, Missouri, is blessed with many young members who bring variety and excitement to our programs. One of those members is Kailey James, a fourth generation P.E.O., and recent Iowa State University graduate. Her studies in animal ecology provided Kailey with some exciting experiences to share.

Kailey gained national recognition for her research in hydroponics while working in a lab where water is circulated to the plants from fish tanks. She presented her findings to The World Aquaculture Societies' U.S. Conference in 2014



Kailey holds a startled salmon as it excretes roe

and again in 2015. Both years, while at the conference, she won the Yellowbook Award. This award is given to undergraduates who have displayed a passion for aquaculture and are propelling this field towards the future.

Members of Chapter MD are looking forward to hearing more about this research. The Chapter is even more intrigued by Kailey's summer with the bears in Sitka, Alaska.

Kailey traveled to Sitka in May 2015 to complete an internship with Fortress of the Bear, a non-profit bear rescue facility—the largest of its kind in the United States. Mother bears sometimes die from an accident, such as being hit by a car or being illegally shot by a hunter. Additionally, when a bear becomes too aggressive and presents a danger to an area, they are euthanized. When these unfortunate events happen, the orphaned cubs are transferred to the facility, where they are raised and eventually



Kailey prepares a snack for one of "her" bears



Bear cubs relaxing in the sun



A bear cub enjoys playing in the water

relocated—usually to a zoo. There are several adult bears that have not been placed and remain at The Fortress, but the main focus is caring for the orphaned cubs.

The Fortress of the Bear is offered as a side trip for most tour ships and summer is a busy season.

Kailey's duties ranged from mucking out bear quarters to leading tour groups through the facility, while educating them on the needs and habits of the bears. Each bear has a name and a personality, and their playfulness delighted the visitors—and Kailey, too! The facility is not like a



Kailey prepares a picnic for the bears

typical zoo. The area is large and has the look and feel of the bears' natural habitat. The cubs play in the water, bounce balls, play with toys and interact with the staff and visitors.

In addition to this remarkable summer job where Kailey fell in love

with the bears, she also fell in love with Alaska. She embraced the culture of the area and loved learning of the flora and fauna.

Kailey graduated in December 2015. She looks forward to a bright future in either aquaculture or zookeeping.

She is passionate about the care and protection of animals and explains that zoos are a perfect venue for teaching this to the general public. Should zoo keeping be her choice, she will surely love being an advocate for the bears. 🌻

Kailey James, MD, Clayton, Missouri Initiated: July 9, 2012

By Becky Frazier, Editor, The P.E.O. Record

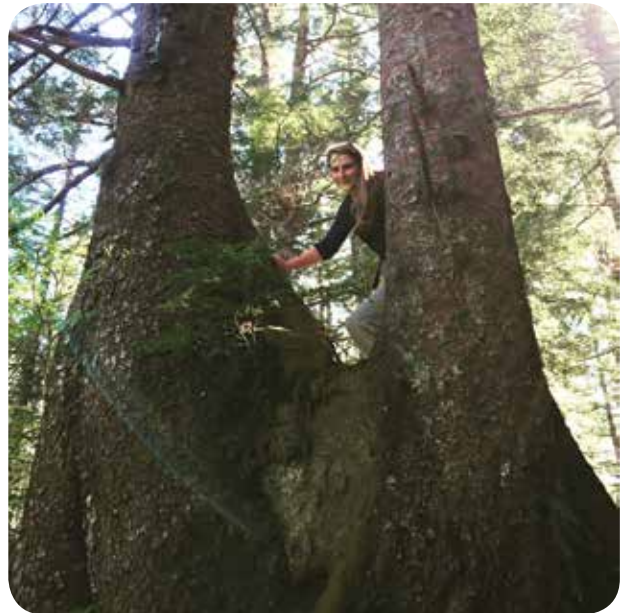
Kailey James was born in Dallas, Texas, and grew up in a suburb of Saint Louis, Missouri. She says she was interested in animals and nature from the get-go, spending most of her free time as a girl exploring the outdoors with her dogs. It was a natural choice then for Kailey to attend Iowa State University (ISU) in Ames, Iowa, to study animal ecology with a pre-veterinary focus. The animal ecology program centers on the study of wildlife and includes classes on wildlife diseases and genetics.

In 2013 Kailey went to work for the Boone Area Humane Society, a small animal shelter near ISU. There she got to do a variety of things—caring for animals, animal control and processing applications. As Kailey neared her ISU graduation date, she had to step away from her work at the humane society as she started to get more heavily involved in her research of aquaponics, which is the combination of growing fish and plants together. She was the head of the aquaponics lab where she designed experiments and oversaw research.

Kailey graduated from ISU in December 2015 and is now a full-time employee of the Animal Rescue League of Iowa in Des Moines. She started as an animal care technician but quickly

transitioned to become an animal health technician. In this position, she administers vaccinations, assists with surgery preparation and does health screenings. Kailey's dream job is to work in a zoo with large mammals—especially to get to work with bears again. She is passionate about communicating the message of wildlife conservation—and how important animals are to the ecosystem—to the public.

A fourth generation P.E.O., Kailey has known about P.E.O. all her life but as is often the case, it wasn't until she became a member that she truly understood what the Sisterhood is all about. She admits, "I was hesitant at first. P.E.O. had always been around; I just knew that my mom would have ladies over to our house. Once I got involved and everything was explained, I got it. I was surprised how welcome I was. The sisters made me feel like family instantly. Becoming a P.E.O. has been a really awesome, amazing experience



Kailey exploring a forest in Alaska

for me." Kailey follows in the steps of her great-grandmother Addie Lindvall (chapter eternal), her grandmother Barbara Prokop and her mother Pat Williams into P.E.O. Kailey, her grandmother, her mother and her two sisters, Allison James and Kathryn Williams, are all members of Chapter MD, Clayton, Missouri.

In her free time Kailey loves to hike, fish and read. She goes backpacking every year with her dad; they've hiked at Grand Teton, Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks.