GEOCACHE ALASKA! INC.
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JUNE 2012 NEWSLETTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

MARK YOUR CALENDAR--EVENTS

WWFM IX - Anchorage AK - Town Square Flash Mob 3, WWFM IX - Big Lake, Alaska, and **WWFM IX - Homer AK - The End of the Road!,** Saturday, June 9, 9:00 a.m. Join cachers from around the world in a large coordinated Flash Mob. See Groundspeak's **Latitude 47 blog** for details.

Mendenhall Wetlands Wild Things: CITO, Juneau, Saturday, June 23. Juneau's first CITO event. Please help remove the flotsam and jetsam from the Mendenhall Wetlands.

2π Day, Thursday, June 28, Anchorage (Tentative). π Day on March 14 was a success. We'll do it again if we can find someone to coordinate it. If this event happens, it will be GeocacheAlaska!'s 100th hosted event. Contact **Polgera** if you can help!

Let's Make a Deal Sunday CITO, aka Fuzzy's CITO Event, Girdwood. Sunday, July 15. The second of three Adopt-a-Highway CITO Events.

Caching on The Kenai - 4th Annual Picnic, Sunday, July 29. SSO JOAT barbecues, sets out caches and creates puzzles, and GeocacheAlaska! provides door prizes. A Kenai Summer is no longer just about chinooks, cohos, and sockeyes.

8th Annual Geofest, Friday, December 14.

2012 Pathtags Are Here!!!

This year's editions feature a first quarter (1Q) brown bear (shiny copper finish), 2Q loon (black nickel), 3Q salmon (shiny nickel), 4Q tundra caribou (shiny gold), and the annual moose (black nickel). Sourdough members of GeocacheAlaska!, may buy the pathtags for $2 each or $17.50 for ten. A combo set of all five may be purchased for $10. Cheechako members may purchase the tags for $2.25 each, $20 for ten, and $11.25 for the combo set. The tags are currently available at GeocacheAlaska! events and will be available via online mail order after the third week of June.

Front: Moose, Loon, Brown Bear, Salmon, Caribou

Back: Brown Bear, Loon, Moose, Salmon, Caribou

EVENT REPORTS

12 years of Caching - Anchorage, May 3

What makes May 3 special? For every geocacher in the world, our addiction started on that day twelve years ago when Dave Ullmer hid the first geocache in Oregon on May 3, 2000. For more information, visit the **Historical Marker Database.** To celebrate, more than forty cachers descended upon the China Lights Buffet for great food, fellowship, entertainment. For her part, Polgera composed a 12 Years of Caching song (sung to the tune of the "Twelve Days of Christmas:"

In my first year of caching, I gave my spouse a scare, as I followed one red arrow here and there.

In my second year of caching, and my husband did not care, 2 FTF's, as I followed one red arrow here and there.

In my third year of caching, I saw something dear, 3 Moun10Bike coins...

In my fourth year of caching, I traveled far and near, found 4 special caches…

In my fifth year of caching, while looking in the mirror, 5 more gray hairs...

In my sixth year of caching, oh what did appear, 6 micros in the woods…

In my seventh year of caching, some more hides by my peer, 7 Karma challenges…

In my eighth year of caching, just what some folks fear, 8 puzzle placements…

In my ninth year of caching, I attended some at night, 9 fun events…

In my tenth year of caching I search both high and low, for 10 types of caches…

In my eleventh year of caching and this is true I fear, 11 geo-geek friends…

In my twelfth year of caching, much to my despair, 12 DNF's…

AK Hillbillies, Coloreido, and the Omonras enjoy Polgera's rendition of the "Twelve Years of Caching"

El CITO de Mayo – Girdwood, May 5

Despite a bit of challenging weather we got the job done for the first of this year's three Adopt-A-Highway program CITO (Cache In – Trash Out) Events. Several dozen cachers showed up in time to partake of Breakfast Burritos provided by Mariachi Moose (& his sidekicks LBK & scobey) in advance of the work. Li1gray's south-end crew tried to CITO an entire burned-out car, but settled for stripping it of highly valuable items which could be carried off by hand. Although we had the typical early spring chilly winds from Portage direction, rain held off until the very last, and we have once again made the 2 miles northbound out Girdwood look great! Thanks to all who came out, and to dmzlstone & crew who made the final trash haul to the Girdwood Waste Transfer Facility. Watch the event listings for details about our next Adopt A Highway CITO, the **Let's Make a Deal Sunday CITO** on July 15.

The GeocacheAlaska! Clean-up Crew, photo by akgh519

GW X or BUST!!! – Anchorage, Anchorage, May 14

About thirty cachers showed up to send Cavyguy off to Geowoodstock X in Sellersburg, Indiana, which will be held during Memorial Day weekend. Cavyguy deftly operated a grill from his georig's tailgate to feed the hoard.

Geocache Submission and Review Fundamentals, Tuesday, May 15

About twenty-five cachers gave up a sunny evening to watch Ladybug Kids go through the "old" and the "new" beta version of the geocache submission forms. The presentation was punctuated by lively question and answer exchanges and some joking at each others' expense. The 1Q and 2Q 2012 pathtags were unveiled at the event.

Reviewer's Corner – Log Types and Periodic Maintenance Sweeps

Here are some helpful hints on when to use some of the log types you can write for a cache.

- Did not find (DNF): Use this log *each* time you search for the cache and do not find it. Oftentimes, DNF logs are the first indicator to a Cache Owner there may be a problem with a cache. To keep the history of the cache accurate, do not change your DNF log(s) to a Found It log once you find the cache. These logs do not automatically go to the local reviewer.

- Needs Maintenance: Use this log when you find the cache and the cache needs the Cache Owner to tend to a wet log or broken/cracked container or other problem. Do not use this log if you haven't actually found the container or remains of the container. You don't know the cache needs maintenance if you haven't found it. This logs sets the "Needs Maintenance" attribute on the cache page so Cachers can filter out the cache and to serve as a flag to the Cache Owner that the cache needs attention. The attribute can be removed by an "Owner Maintenance" log written to the cache page or by editing the cache page attributes. I prefer to see the written log because tells me and the caching community the cache was tended to and that everything is all right. These logs do not automatically go to the local reviewer.

- Needs Archived: Use this log to bring problems such as a missing cache and owner, trespassing issues, etc., to the local Reviewer's attention. A "Needs Archived" log will not automatically result in the cache being archived if the Reviewer and the Cache Owner are able to work things out. This log does automatically go to the local reviewer.

Three or four times a year, I run pocket queries for all Alaskan caches and perform what Reviewers refer to as a "sweep." I sort the caches according to whether they have a "Needs Maintenance" attribute, have been temporarily disabled for a month or more, or have more than three consecutive DNF logs. I'll write a Reviewer Note to each of these caches to prompt the Cache Owner to take the appropriate action which may be as simple as clearing the "Needs Maintenance" attribute from their cache page or may require a cache maintenance or replacement visit. I will not take any further action such as archiving a cache until a second sweep indicates the Cache Owner has not been responsive (this can be as easy as a "Note" log to the cache page to let the caching community know what's up), the cache problem(s) have not been resolved, and/or the cache has clearly been abandoned. I can't emphasize enough the importance of good communication between the Reviewer, the Cache Owner, and the Caching Community via the Reviewer Notes, Notes, Owner Maintenance, Needs Maintenance, and Did Not Find logs.

My most recent sweep was completed at the end of April and required review of 95 temporarily disabled caches, 325 caches showing the "Needs Maintenance" attribute, and 156 caches with three or more consecutive DNF logs. Some caches fell into all three categories! What this means is that about one out of every eight active Alaskan caches potentially has an issue requiring Cache Owner attention. Let's all work together to improve on that ratio before the caching season gets into full swing and the tourists arrive.
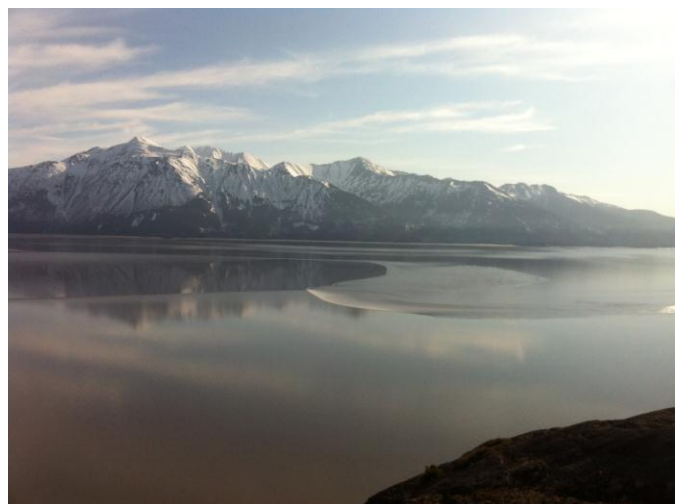
Hike Report - Ice Pan Alley
by Ladybug Kids, featuring skifast and akgh519

If skifast starts hiking from McHugh at about 1600 and gets hung up with some tough cache searches and DNFs while LBK gets hung up at work and doesn't start hiking from Rainbow until 1730, at what point along the Turnagain Arm Trail and what time will the two of them meet up with akgh519 who hiked up from Sunshine? Assume three minutes for each phone a friend placed by skifast.

Well, at least on this sunny day, the three cachers converged at Ice Pan Alley at about 1845. I followed the faint trail from nearby **Sunshine Bison** to ground zero, crossing a snow filled gully that featured small bear tracks. As I climbed up through the hemlocks I spied akgh519 moving quickly toward ground zero. I'm not sure what came over me, but I'm blaming the cold medicines I'm taking, for making me growl like a bear in greeting. Akgh519 reached real quickly for some hardware I didn't see him packing and I prepared to lay flat, but he instead greeting me with an outreached hand. Skifast emerged from the bushes a few minutes later and we set about locating the cache, signing the log, and enjoying the view on a beautiful evening. There is an interesting lean-to structure up here, but not nearly as intricate as the one on the next knob to the west.

This is a great location to watch the bore tide flow up Turnagain Arm. Use the "Sunrise" tide table in your Garmin GPS or check out the **Turnagain Arm Tidal Bore Earthcache** for more information.

Turnagain Arm Tidal Bore Photo by akgh519.

Caching in the Philippines
by John Scoblic/**Scobey**

While in the Philippines two years ago, I found the cache, "The big flood," **GC10H8D**, by Scoobidoo (no kidding). When I read the cache page on my GPS, the hint struck me: "it's located beside a roof approx. 100 meter behind the church." I thought,"how in the world am I going to reach the roof?" When I got to the cache, this is what I saw:

Burial House, Bacolor, Bulican

The cache is located in Bacolor, Bulican and this structure, a burial house, was in the path of a river of ash (deposited by the Penatubo Volcano in 1991). The whole area is covered in a deep layer of ash that buried houses, farm animals and people as they slept.

The Approach to San Guillermo

From a sign in front of the Church: "The San Guillermo Parish Church was named after the town's Patron Saint. The Church was originally constructed by the Augustinian Friars in 1576 – also the town's founding – with Fr. Diego De Ochoa, OSA, as the town's first parish priest having been installed as such two years after. In 1880, the Church was destroyed by an earthquake only to be rebuilt by Fr. Eugenio Alvarez in 1886. On September 3, 1995, lahar flow from the slopes of Mt. Pinatubo which erupted into world notice on June 15, 1991, buried the Church at half its 12m height prompting of its more than 50,000 town residents to evacuate to safer grounds in resettlement areas."

San Guillermo Façade. The entrance was originally a second floor window.

This was a great side adventure while on our way to the Bataan Memorial on Mt. Samat. My son, daughter-in-law and her mother commented that they never would have visited this church if it hadn't been for me wanting to find this cache.

The Interior of San Guillermo

Calendar Contest
by Tom Noble, aka Tomanoble

The 2013 GeocacheAlaska! Calendar photo contest is officially open.

This year's categories are:
People, Places/Locations, Containers, Flora, Wildlife/Fauna, Adventure/Extreme, Whimsy/Fun, Caching Children, and **Winter.**

You may enter up to three photographs in each category. To be eligible for inclusion in the Calendar Contest the photographs must be taken in Alaska. Thirteen photos will be displayed full-size on the calendar with at least one picture chosen from each category. The photo garnering the most overall votes will be placed on the cover. Entries will be accepted through September 30, 2012, and online voting will take place in October 15-31, 2012.

Photographs may be submitted by emailing a high resolution copy to **PhotoContest@GeocacheAlaska.org.** Please use the tag **[PHOTO CONTEST]** as the Subject Line of your message.

In the body of the message, please the photograph's category, the names and/or geonickname of any people appearing in the photo, and the photographer's name and geonickname. Also the GC number and the cache name must be provided or you may link directly to the cache page using the url format http://coord.info/GCXXXXX. Finally, please include a title or caption for the image if you have one.

All photos submitted to the Calendar Photo Contest will be posted on the GeocacheAlaska! website and will appear in the GeoFest Slide Show in December. Some photos may be selected and published in the GeocacheAlaska! Newsletter.

By submitting your photo to this contest you grant GeocacheAlaska! Inc. the right to use and reprint the image on the Calendar, the Newsletter and the GeocacheAlaska! website. Photo credit will be given to the photographer. There is no compensation awarded to the contest winners. Winners get the honor of having their picture grace a monthly page or the cover of the calendar and the knowledge and happiness in knowing that their photograph was chosen to receive this honor.

View from Beluga Point Overlook - Seward Highway Cache Tour (GC27NKE), by Reid Katagihara (coloReido)

AKGH519 chews like a moose, by Scott Sagraves (fuzzybelly)

How to Paint Plastics

By SSO JOAT

You've seen them in the woods. Intricate camouflage patterns on those fancy geocache containers. Maybe you've tried your hand at painting some Tupperware, but had less than desirable results. There is some art to getting a good camo pattern, but the science behind making the paint stick is the key. Without the proper groundwork, any artistic effects will be short lived in the wilderness. Here is your step by step guide to getting great camo paint finishes on most plastic containers, though it works just as well on ammo cans.

You'll need some supplies, which are all available from your local hardware store. These include a can of regular paint thinner, medium to fine grit sandpaper, painter's masking tape, and spray paints that work on plastic, such as Krylon *Fusion*. Krylon also makes a series of Ultra-Flat Camouflage colors that use the *Fusion* formulation and work great on plastics. I also recommend some nitrile or rubber gloves to keep the paint thinner and paints off your hands and a dust mask to keep the paint out of your lungs.

Plastic painting is most successful on sturdy plastic containers that have little flex to them. The softer and more flexible the plastic, the more likely that the paint (which is not very flexible) is going to crack and eventually chip off. The clear plastics used in Plano boxes and the round, screw-top Ziploc storage containers accept paint very well. Soft, opaque plastics like those used in Rubbermaid tubs do not tend to hold a painted finish for very long. And it is always best to start with a brand new container that has never been used for storing food. Food odors can linger at low levels and will still attract squirrels and other critters with sharp teeth and good noses. Even if the container is new, scrub it with soap and warm water. Note that this article shows the painting of a small JIF peanut butter container as an example. After washing, the interior was also scrubbed with Acetone. Even so, it would be placed with due caution to avoid animals.

Here are some containers that have been prepared for painting (with an un-sanded box in the back right for comparison). All exterior surfaces are "scuffed" with sandpaper in a crosshatch or circular pattern. Sand the surface of the plastic until evenly clouded with scratches. Use masking tape to cover areas that you don't want painted, such as the threads and sealing surfaces. Once everything has been sanded and masked off, wipe down all the surfaces that you are going to paint with some regular paint thinner on a rag. This will remove any sanding grit, dirt, and oils from your fingers that will cause the paint not to stick. Set the containers on a backdrop surface, such as a piece of cardboard where you are going to paint.

With clear plastics, I like to start with a light color and often use Krylon *Fusion* in Flat White as the first coat. The white base color will be visible inside the container, giving the interior a bright, clean appearance when opened by geocachers in the field. During this initial painting, use several very light coats allowing several minutes between them for drying.

There is no need to get a consistent or thorough coating of paint when you're doing camo. In fact, flaws in the evenness of the paint actually contribute to the camo effect. After getting most of the plastic surface covered with some paint, allow the paint to dry for about 15-20 minutes if using Krylon. If you use Rust-Oleum paints, allow at least 30 minutes drying time before applying the top coats.

After this primer base is completed and dry to the touch, you can apply the base color coat. The color you choose for the base coat will set the "tone" of your camo pattern for the rest of the project. There are multiple methods to selecting the color layout and each one will have a slightly different effect on the final design. You can start with light colors and apply darker colors over the top using reverse stencils that let the light colors show through. A reverse stencil is simply pieces of natural materials such as leaves, grass, and twigs or cardstock cutouts of natural materials or objects that are laid over the container while the darker color is sprayed on. When the materials are removed, they leave a "shadow" on the container in the lighter base color.

A standard stencil is a large piece of cardstock that has the stencil design cutout in the middle. These are easily made by drawing the outline of the cutout or even printing a picture of something like a leaf or clump of grass. Then lay the cardstock on a plastic cutting board and cut out the shape with an X-Acto hobby knife. You can also make stencils with words by downloading a stencil font into your word processor and printing out the design on cardstock. Cutting out such designs takes lots of patience.

With a standard stencil, you would make the container a contrasting color and then spray the color of the object (e.g. green for a leaf) through the stencil and onto the container. A key point to remember with camo stenciling is that we are not trying to get a perfect, hard edge transfer of the stencil onto the container. You do not tape down the stencil, but hold it over the container while you give a very light "shot" of paint at the opening. I recommend holding the paint can at least 16-20 inches away from the container with the stencil just barely in contact with the container. Momentarily push the spray button on the can about 2-4 times to give little bursts of paint into the stencil cutout. Immediately remove the stencil cardstock. You can use the same stencil and work

your way over the surface. For example, a single leaf stencil can be repeatedly moved over the surface of your cache as you give multiple spots a quick burst of paint. In a matter of seconds, you can have a cache that is covered in leaves. Rotate the stencil randomly left and right as you move to new spots. Changing the size and shape of your stencils as you go will give an even more random pattern.

For these examples, I've kept the process very simple by starting with a light base color. The Plano box is going into a pile of cement blocks, so I've started that one with a grayish base color. Then I've gone green and tan on the other two for comparison of the different effects. The key is matching the colors of your hide location. I have gone so far as to take a photo of the hiding spot and set the photo next to my painting area as a reference while I lay down the camo colors.

Once the base colors are dry to the touch, you should remove the masking tape and install the lids. The cache will be hidden with the lid installed, so apply your camo pattern while the cache is closed and assembled as it will be in the wilderness. These ultra flat camo paints will dry to the touch in a matter of minutes, so you can spray the top of the container and flip it over and do the bottom after a very short pause.

The first step to camo is to break up the base color with some random splotches of other colors. Holding the paint can about 18 inches away, give short bursts of paint while moving the can slowly. This gives you varying sizes and densities of paint hitting the surface.

Remember to shake your paint cans for a couple minutes before you start and give them a few shakes periodically as you work. When you are finished with a color, invert the can and give it a couple seconds of spray to clear the paint out of the nozzle. I don't let that paint go to waste and point the can at the cache from about 2 feet away. The dotted effect of spraying paint from far away greatly enhances the camo pattern.

In these examples, I started with dark brown, switched to OD green, and then a few light hits with black to just splatter some black dots here and there. After these steps, if your overall coloring is too light, just shoot it with a few more bursts of darker browns and blacks. If the color seems too dark, grab the lighter loam, sand, or khaki and add some random bursts to lighten it up. This is where the artist comes into play. Be creative and don't worry about perfection. There is no such thing as "perfection" when it comes to camouflage. The more random and irregular the color and pattern, the better the camo effect is probably going to work. Play with distance and burst lengths as you go.

Now that you have a blotchy camo pattern as a base, you are ready to put some stencil detail on there if you desire to do so. For these two containers, I just grabbed a clump of grass stencil and hit them with a contrasting light color; tan for the green cache and green for the tan cache. When set on the ground in the forest, these caches will disappear into many environments. You could make and use stencils for nearly any natural flora that you'd find in the area of your cache hide. Think about grasses, leaves, ivy-like creeping plants, alders, mushrooms, bugs, etc. Use your imagination and get creative. The nice thing about working in camo, if you mess something up, just hit the goof with a splotch of the base color to erase it.

Now, here is the final and yet an extremely important point about getting that paint to stay stuck to your plastic container: Let it cure! These paints need to cure for about 5-7 DAYS to obtain full strength of the bond with the plastic material. If you take the cache right out and hide it, you will get scratches and the paint will chip off. Once that starts, it will spread each time a cacher handles the container. So, put the cache in a ventilated and warm area and don't touch it. It should be greater than 50°F and never let the finish freeze before it is fully cured. Be patient as the paint gradually becomes one with the plastic. After a week, it will actually be very difficult to chip the paint as it will have turned into a rock hard and very durable coating for your one-of-a-kind geocache.

Now, I better get out there and find someplace neat to hide these containers! See you on the trail.

Trail Watch-Keep Our Parks Safe and Clean!

Besides mosquitoes, other unpleasant things that spring up in our parks with warmer weather are illegal camps. These camps lack adequate sanitation facilities which can lead to exposure to hepatitis and other communicable diseases through human waste a cacher or a cacher's dog may contact. Also, many of the camp residents have substance addiction issues and can be prone to violence. A local cacher was chased away from ground zero by a machete wielding camp resident a couple of years ago.

Since geocachers visit areas of parks that are generally out of sight of most casual park users, we can serve as eyes for the greater community and report illegal camps. One may anonymously report an illegal camp via the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) Trail Watch website by providing coordinates and a description of what was observed. MOA personnel will respond with law enforcement personnel and the proper personal protective equipment to remove the camps. Reports may be filed at
http://www.muni.org/Departments/parks/trail/Pages/SubmitTrailReports.aspx

STATE PARKS PERMITS

Remember, if you want to hide a cache in a State Park, you may need a permit number for your cache page and the geocache. The 2012 permit number for the Chugach State Park is **12-044** and it must be on the cache container and the cache page. The 2012 permit number for the Mat-Su State Parks is **S12-010** and it must be on the cache container and the cache page. Downloadable copies of the permits can be obtained from the GeocacheAlaska! **Land Manager webpage** or the GeocacheAlaska! **Land Use Forums**.

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

Follow GeocacheAlaska! Inc. on **Facebook**! Stay in touch and share your activities with fellow members of the geocaching community by visiting our **page** and clicking 'Like'. Stay tuned for more Facebook fun as our webmaster develops a new Facebook Group page where GeocacheAlaska! members can plan caching adventures, post photos, and pass messages within the membership ranks. This Facebook Group is designed to be yet another member benefit for Sourdoughs and Cheechakos alike.

GEOCACHEALASKA! MEMBERSHIP

There are two membership levels at GeocacheAlaska! Inc.

Sourdough Membership (formerly known as Premium Membership) affords you discounts in the GeocacheAlaska! online and traveling stores and events that have an entrance fee (Geofest, etc.), voting rights in Board of Directors elections and a warm fuzzy feeling for helping underwrite the organization's operating expenses that include web hosting, printing, banners, post office box fees, event prizes and lots of other things that are required to make things happen. Because GeocacheAlaska! is an incorporated 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization, your membership dues are tax deductible.

If you cannot join as a Sourdough at this time, you may support GeocacheAlaska! by joining as a Cheechako (formerly known as Associate) Member. This will allow you to receive the monthly newsletter and e-mail announcements. More members at any level gives GeocacheAlaska!'s more clout and credibility during land manager conversations, so sign up today!

There are four ways you can join GeocacheAlaska! at the Sourdough level for $20/year.

1. Navigate to the GeocacheAlaska! **webpage** and click on the "Subscribe" button to set up an automatic subscription which will renew annually. Please enter your caching name in the provided box.
2. Navigate to the GeocacheAlaska! **webpage** and click on "Add to Cart" to purchase an annual membership that will run through December 31, 2012.
3. Navigate to the GeocacheAlaska! **webpage** to download a membership form you can print and mail with your payment.
4. Attend one of the upcoming GeocacheAlaska! events and speak to any Board Member.

ONLINE ARCHIVES

Previous editions of "Around the State" are now on our website. If you have missed previous newsletters, check out the series (including previous Trail Reports) **here**.

The editors of 'Around the State' welcome your articles and photos. We'd love to publish your favorite trails in your own back yard! Send your articles, photographs and ideas to ladybugs@geocachealaska.org, attention "Around the State."

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