

# GEOCACHE ALASKA! Inc.

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## OCTOBER 2012 NEWSLETTER

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### MARK YOUR CALENDAR—EVENTS

[A Danish Treat](#), Thursday, October 4, 6:00 p.m., Anchorage.

[October Flash Mob / a goodbye to a fellow cacher](#), Monday, October 8, 9:30 a.m., Fairbanks.

[10-11-12, Flashmob](#), Thursday, October 11, Noon, Anchorage.

[Halloween GeoCache Survivor Style](#), Wednesday, October 17, 5:15 p.m., Anchorage.

[Intro to Geocaching EduVent](#), Wednesday, October 17, 6:30 p.m., Soldotna.

[GPS Ops & NW Trails FUNDamentals - Soldotna](#), Thursday, October 18, 6:47 p.m.

[GPS Ops & NW Trails FUNDamentals - Anchorage](#), Thursday, October 18, 6:47 p.m.

[12-12-12-12 Flash Mob](#), Wednesday, December 12, 12:12 p.m., Anchorage

[8<sup>th</sup> Annual Geofest](#), Friday, December 14, Anchorage. Hosted by GeocacheAlaska! Big finale for the year with a gift exchange, slide show, dinner and much more!



### President's Corner, by Wes Skinner/NorthWes

Nominations for the Board of Directors are open through October 15. Members nominated to serve must provide a statement of interest by October 31 which introduces themselves and describes why they'd like to serve. Elections will run from November 1 to November 15. Experience has shown board members will contribute a minimum of between ten to twenty hours a month

in service (board meetings, ongoing electronic communication, events, committee meetings, special projects etc), so be sure those who're nominated are willing and ready to provide that level of commitment. Benefits of board membership (beyond knowing you're contributing to the ongoing success of geocaching in Alaska) includes working alongside some of the most genuinely interesting and enjoyable persons you'll ever have the pleasure to work with – your fellow geocachers! If you want to help, contact Wes Skinner by email at: [president@geocachealaska.org](mailto:president@geocachealaska.org). Alternatively, you can nominate yourself or someone else in the [GeocacheAlaska! forums](#).

Are you a Sourdough member of GeocacheAlaska!? One of this year's most exciting Sourdough membership benefits is the trackable GeocacheAlaska! Sourdough Nametags! If you haven't signed up to become a Sourdough member of GeocacheAlaska! you're missing other tangible benefits including merchandise discounts too. Most importantly, you're missing out on being a part of the organization actively working to promote geocaching to Alaska's land managers, all while providing education and fellowship opportunities to geocachers. I tell other cachers everywhere I go about my Sourdough membership by posting this photo with my cache log – it's a great way to promote your organization and stir up interest amongst folks who've not encountered GeocacheAlaska!



## RECENT EVENT HAPPENINGS

### Creamers Field Event

The Creamers Field Geocache was held on September 15, 2012 and by virtue of having no fatalities, it was deemed a great success!!

All kidding aside, it was a day of great fun and geocaching. Nineteen determined geocachers including children showed up to attempt to find and log 20 different caches hidden throughout Creamers Field.

The caches ranged from the simple hides to cleverly disguised caches to an old fashioned scavenger hunt. Some of them were Candy Jars with the Ink stamp at the bottom. Another one was hidden in the water, cachers had to find a branch to "fish it" out. Another one was in an animal cracker container. Each one had a rubber ink stamp that was worth points and some had numbers in it for a locked box, with a full size bison in it as a prize.

The highlight of the course was trying to find the number combination to a padlocked cache.

Alaskagrown and family came in first with an amazing 29 points and walked away with the grand prize.

There were no losers as all participants were offered a prestigious handshake and an "Atta Boy" from firemanak, a worthy prize on its own.

The end of the game allowed everyone to share some great snacks and drinks while comparing notes. Some important bragging rights were allowed to be displayed as well.

### FUZZY BROS. AND BARNUM & BELLY CITO.

Girdwood, Sunday, September 16.

The cache page read, "Come see the BIZARRE, come see the ODDITIES, come see the RIDICULOUSNESS :) Ring Master Fuzzybelly will astound and amaze you with his raucous riots and death defying stunts."

Tight rope walking, Sword swallowing, a Strong Man, Amazing Animal tricks, and the Tallest Cacher in the world. And for the most amazing feat of all, Fuzzybelly will dive from the top of the Big Top into a single cup of water."

"FORECAST: I spoke with Mother Nature and scheduled sunny weather."

Yes, it was bizarre. Yes, there were oddities. Yes, things bordered on the ridiculous. But, there was not any tight rope walking or sword swallowing that I saw. We did NOT have sunny weather unless liquid sunshine counts.

That said, the wind wasn't blowing, Fuzzy had the coffee brewing and muffins for all, we were treated to a live EarthCache show of sloughing mud/sand banks splashing into the outgoing tide, the animal trick was entertaining and

disconcertingly well-practiced by blazingpathways and tomanoble (what happens at CITO, stays at CITO). The dive into the cup of water was vintage Fuzzy and AKJoey was the perfect foil for it all as a classic clown.



**Blazingpathways Winds up the Crowd for Fuzzy's Leap**

There was less garbage than usual on this third round of 2012 Seward Highway CITO, but the drum we've reported in the past is still in its resting place, a truck front quarter panel was snagged, and several bags of poop were recovered. Li1gray scored the find of the day with a spare rim with brand new tire on it that capsheldon took home to try on his Explorer.



**The CITO Team Clowning Around**





AKJoey and Fuzzybelly Dressed for the Festivities

[NPLD & Blue Goose GeoTour Preview](#), BLM Science Center, Saturday, September 29.

One knows they are in for a fun event when one can find it by following the sounds of laughter and animated conversation up the path and into the woods.



Many thanks to akgh519 for pulling together a collection of sample caches to display on the event table and megakudos to wolfmaster1 who taught a bunch of experienced cachers how to load the day's temporary caches and the "Bear Aware" cache into the yellow Garmin eTrexes, which were once a geocacher's mainstay GPS. Once schooled, cavyguy, flihrtriskak, and others were able to manually load the day's waypoints into the units and guide neophyte geocachers toward their targets.

It was a lot of fun to check out all the Blue Goose Tour materials and the other USFWS references. Under Tessa Hovland's leadership, the tour has come together very nicely and looks like it's going to be a lot of fun for local and visiting cachers. A lot of work that went into passport and postcard development, cache creation, hide location identification, cache placement, website development, pathtag creation, and cache page publishing.

It was great to see so many cachers come and go during a sunny afternoon following the previous evening's unseasonable snow dump (six inches on upper Hillside). The Chugach Mountains were radiant in their new coating of snow and the local woods were refreshed by the rain/snow the lowlands received. I don't know how the good folks at venue host BLM and event host USFWS did it, but they couldn't have ordered up better weather for the afternoon.



### Reviewer's Corner – Needs Archived Log and Electrical Look- a-Likes

A recent trend has appeared where people are writing a "Needs Archived" log when they can't find a cache. In most cases, the more appropriate log type would be a "Did Not Find," unless there has been a string of DNFs and the cache owner has not logged onto the geocaching.com site for an extended period of time or there are guidelines violations the reviewer should know about. A "Did Not Find" log should get the attention of the cache owner. A "Needs Archived" log goes straight to the Reviewer. I have more than 500 DNFs on my player account, so there is no shame in logging a DNF.

[2012 Indian Summer](#), Storck Park, Anchorage, Sunday, September 16.

After nearly two weeks of continuous wind and rain and even a hopelessly soggy morning, the weather settled down in the afternoon for a round of food, games, and fellowship. Many thanks to NorthWes for firing up the grill and feeding the hungry CITO crew and other attendees. Thank you to those who brought the potluck goodies, especially the -AK pair that brought the chili. Thanks, also, to GeocacheAlaska! for providing all the door prizes and congratulations to the lucky winners. The GPS accuracy contest was hotly contested and the field range finding was entertaining. The youngsters had a blast on the playground equipment and even a couple of geohounds attended.

[Geocaching HTML & BBC Fundamentals](#), Tuesday, September 18.

SSO JOAT did his typical bang-up job of distilling what appears to be a complex task into its basic elements. Technology at the BP Energy center was put to good use with Scott presenting from Soldotna and firemanak attending remotely from Fairbanks. Presenters and attendees had to roll with a wireless outage and WebEx host transfer as LBK bolted for the airport. Kudos to NorthWes for moderating and then taking over host duties. The course content may be downloaded from the GeocacheAlaska! website [here](#).

Another recent trend has been the reappearance of caches that look like electrical devices. The types of caches should be placed on public utilities only with the express permission of the owner of the power pole, transformer, sign pole, or electrical disconnect. Chugach Electric took a very dim view of an electrical look alike on some of their equipment several years ago and took the matter directly to Groundspeak. Another issue with electrical look-a-likes is they encourage people to open things they shouldn't open and put their fingers where they shouldn't at the risk of electric shock or worse or interrupting someone's cable or internet service. The cache hider may be an experienced electrician, but the average cacher is not. If you feel you must hide a cache like this, please place it away from anything with live power.

Finally, I'll be performing a "sweep" of all caches that have three or more consecutive DNFs or have been temporarily disabled for more than a month or so October. This is a great time to spruce up your caches before the snow makes maintenance difficult. Please consider adding the "Available in Winter" or "Not Available in Winter" attribute to your cache page(s). Failure to respond to a Reviewer Note may result in the cache being archived during the next sweep.

See you on the trails or at an event!

### Retrieve your Sourdough Nametags!

by Scott Aleckson, SSO JOAT

The new [GeocacheAlaska!](#) Sourdough Nametag trackables have been distributed to all Sourdough Members. These Travel Bugs are registered to the [GeocacheAlaska!](#) account on [geocaching.com](#) but are yours to travel with, log through caches that you visit, and share for Discovery by other geocachers. Note that you must maintain physical possession of these tags and they are not intended to be left in caches or given to anyone else. Wear them at any Events that you attend to show off your membership in your GeocacheAlaska! organization. Take a look at the current members' [Nametags](#) activities!



When we issue and activate a new Sourdough Nametag, it is "virtually" dropped into the first Event cache that GeocacheAlaska! held; the [Meet, Greet, and Eat](#) event from March 2009 in Anchorage. This event is long since archived, so it is just being used as a virtual landmark for launching all new Sourdough Nametags. This gives every trackable Sourdough Nametag the same starting point for calculating miles traveled during your geocaching adventures. Each Sourdough member needs to "virtually" Retrieve their issued Nametag from this Event cache. Go to the [geocaching.com Trackables](#) page and enter the Tracking Code from your nametag into the first field and click the "Track" button. When your Trackable's page comes up, click the "Found it?"

Log it!" link in the top right menu. Enter a log for "Retrieve from GeocacheAlaska! Meet, Greet, and Eat", preferably for the date when you received the tag (make sure this date is after the date we placed it in the event and prior to the date you start logging the tag through other geocaches). This will move the Nametag to your Trackables inventory on your own [geocaching.com](#) profile.

As of this writing, about half of the tags that we have issued and distributed to Sourdough Members are still sitting in the Event cache waiting for their assigned Sourdough Members to Retrieve them and start their adventures. So please make sure that you have Retrieved your Sourdough Nametag. If you have any questions about the Sourdough Nametags and how to use them, please contact the GeocacheAlaska! Webmaster, [SSO JOAT](mailto:SSOJOAT) by direct email at [joat@geocachealaska.org](mailto:joat@geocachealaska.org).

If you would like to get your own Sourdough Nametag, join GeocacheAlaska! as a paid Sourdough Member for just \$20 annual member dues. Visit our [Join page](#) for instructions on how to join via PayPal or you can print and mail an application.

### Calendar Contest Voting Coming Soon!

by Tom Noble, aka Tomanoble

The Calendar Photo Contest is coming soon to an e-mailbox near you! Be on the lookout for YOUR chance to help choose which photos appear in the 2013 GeocacheAlaska Calendar. When you receive your link to the SurveyMonkey ballot for the Contest you will be able to vote for your choice of the best photograph in each of nine different categories. The photograph which receives the most votes will grace the cover of the Calendar.

Please be sure to be on the lookout for the Calendar Photo Contest Survey and help choose the winning photographs.



## USFWS Blue Goose Tour Flies into Anchorage

Since you must fly or boat to get to nearly all of Alaska's Refuges, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service are bringing the refuges to you! The Blue Goose GeoTour (BGGT) is a series of 16 geocaches that have been hidden at 16 of the 223 Anchorage Parks. Each geocache features one of Alaska's amazing National Wildlife Refuges.



USFWS's Tessa Hovland developed the concept, obtained underwriting from the [Anchorage Park Foundation](#) and reached out to GeocacheAlaska! for assistance. Local cachers NorthWes, Coloreido, and akgh519 painted the containers and Tomanoble, FlightriskAK, and Ladybug Kids helped identify suitable parks for the caches and hid many of the containers.

Each cache contains a special First to Find (FTF) prize with up to 10 additional prizes. Caches also contain a trivia question that is answered by following a virtual clue printed on passport cards in the cache. The first 50 people to visit all 16 caches and submit their completed trivia [postcard](#) will receive a custom Alaska National Wildlife Refuges path tag. All submissions will be eligible for other fabulous prizes, but the more you caches you log, the better your chances are of winning!

To track your progress, 1) Link to the GPS coordinates on Geocaching.com by searching the Hidden by Username: "[Blue Goose](#)" or the Cache Name: "BGGT"; 2) With your GPS or smartphone find up to 16 refuge geocaches; 3) Within each cache is a passport card with a trivia question. Take a passport card and follow its virtual path to answer the question; 4) To track which caches you've visited and trivia questions you've answered, download a [passport](#) and [postcard](#) ; 5) Submit your trivia answers via postcard to: Blue Goose GeoTour, Alaska NWRs MS 235, 1011 E Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503 or via email to [wild4ak@gmail.com](mailto:wild4ak@gmail.com). The deadline for submitting entries is **November 14, 2012**.

You can also "stamp" your Anchorage Park Foundation Park Passport using the [Anchorage Parks app](#) . Good luck and happy geocaching!



## 2013 Board of Directors Nominations

Elections for the 2013 Board of Directors will soon be here. All board of director seats will be up for election and nominations can be made from September 15th through October 15th. You can e-mail your nominations to the GeocacheAlaska! [Vice President](#), or state your interest to a present Board member or in the [GeocacheAlaska! forums](#). Voting will take place November 1-15th via secret ballot on SurveyMonkey. The link to the survey will be sent to all Sourdough members by e-mail.

Duties of the Board of Directors and Standing Committees are given below:

The **President** shall:

- Preside over all Association meetings and Board of Director meetings.
- Cast the deciding vote in the event of a tie during voting at Business Meetings.



- Sign contracts and agreements on behalf of GeAK!
- Appoint members as necessary to perform the tasks agreed upon by the Board.

The **Vice-President** shall:

- Perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President.
- Make arrangements for scheduling meeting dates and locations.
- Supervise the Nominating Committee.
- Tabulate ballots for all GeAK! elections.

The **Treasurer** shall:

- Be responsible for all income and expenses.
- Keep accurate financial records.
- Make timely deposits of all monies received.
- Bill all those who owe money to GeAK!
- Pay duly authorized expenses.
- Make available financial records to GeAK! for inspection and audit.
- Recommend a budget to the Board.
- Recommend appropriate changes in the dues structure.
- Make an annual report to the members at the first/last Business Meeting each year.
- Maintain a ledger describing GeAK! property.
- Send out membership renewal notices in a timely manner.
- File required annual paperwork to maintain nonprofit status

The **Secretary** shall:

- Record minutes of all Business Meetings, General Membership Meetings, and Executive Committee Meetings.
- Maintain a file of legal documents and licenses of GeAK!, past minutes, newsletter archives and other official documents.
- Record and receive all copies of contracts and agreements consummated by GeAK!
- Provide written notice of the date, time and location of meetings to the membership at least two weeks prior to the meetings, including, as needed, notice of proposed bylaw changes and elections to fill vacancies on the Board.
- Maintain a list of members, officers, Members-at-Large, and committee members.
- Conduct and respond to correspondence as required.
- Provide for the publication of the monthly newsletter of GeAK!
- Act as registered agent for GeAK!

The **Webmaster** shall:

- Manage content on the GeAK! Website.
- Manage the GeAK! forums.
- Maintain domain status and GeAK! forums.

**Members at Large (4)** shall:

- Facilitate event planning.
- Facilitate regional chapter formation.
- Assist other members of the Executive Board where needed.

Board Members also serve as members of the standing committees defined in the [GeocacheAlaska! By-Laws](#).

The **Advocacy Committee Chairman** shall:

- Represent geocaching interests in public forums and to recreation land managers.
- Actively promote the "Cache In Trash Out" (CITO) program to help in the maintenance of parks and trail systems.
- Respond to geocache placement issues raised by land managers, the public, or other geocachers.

The **Education and Outreach Committee Chairman** shall:

- Educate geocachers on low impact geocaching and promote stewardship of our natural resources.
- Educate other outdoor enthusiasts on geocaching.
- Increase awareness of geocaching issues in the area through interaction with other outdoor activity groups, schools, geocaching clubs, and the public.



## Hosting Geocaching Events

By Scott Aleckson, SSO JOAT

As the organizer of the annual [Kenai River Picnic Event](#), I've often been asked how I am able to set up such an event and make it look so easy. It should come as no surprise that it is all in the planning. With the hope that others will jump on the Event cache bandwagon, let me share some tips about how to create and run your own Events.

**Start with a theme.** There should be a central theme to any Event. It can be based on a particular holiday, season, or date. It can be linked to a particular location. Or it could be tied into a specific activity. Maybe it is a combination of the above. For instance, the Kenai River Picnic is themed to the location (Kenai River), the season (mid-Summer), and two activities (picnic & day caching game). In short, why are we getting together? What are we going to do?

Now, plan the formal activities that will be part of your event. Use the KIS principle (Keep It Simple). In general, you should have a gathering period that consists of informal social time for at least a half-hour at the beginning of the event to allow time for people to arrive. During this time, they should have an event logbook to sign in and self-adhesive nametags to write their name on and wear during the event. Do not start any formal activity too soon or you'll have the "fashionably late" arriving in the midst of it. Folks need a chance to say "hello" and catch up with old friends before you get into the nuts & bolts of your event. If there is any final setup that needs to be done (e.g. laying out a food table), it can be completed during this time. On the event day, don't be afraid to ask for the assistance of people as they arrive to help with completing such setup tasks. Also consider asking for volunteer help to arrive a little early to help with those setup chores.

**Food planning.** Most events should have a food component and it can be placed near the beginning or the end of your event. It could be as simple as having everyone bring a dessert or as formal as a catered meal. If people need to bring food, be as specific as possible about the types of food needed and request that attendees declare what they will bring in their "Will Attend" log to help prevent duplication with other attendees. Make a detailed menu and be sure you have enough of everything in advance. If food is pre-purchased or catered, will there be a cost sharing charge for attendees? This must be determined in advance and clearly posted on the Event cache listing. If people need to bring money, make sure you activate the "Fee Required" attribute on the cache listing. You could also consider obtaining sponsors for your event to help pay for the meal, but remember that you cannot promise or place any commercial advertising on the event cache listing in exchange. GeocacheAlaska! Inc. can help with certain events, but this requires an application to the Board of Directors for pre-approval at a Board Meeting prior to the event. Plan well ahead.

**Ice Breaker.** Plan to have some kind of ice breaker activity near the start of your event. This can be placed right after the social time or after the food if the meal is occurring at the beginning of your event. The ice breaker should be a short duration, group participation, fun activity that will force people to get up and mingle. A classic ice breaker is the Geo-Bingo game. You can download a customized set of [Alaskan Geo-Bingo](#) cards from our website. Other varieties are available out there on the Internet. In an outdoor setting with a number of kids available, a quick and fun activity is to run a mini-CITO competition. All you need is candy and a bunch of those plastic grocery store shopping bags. Call all the kids together and get some adult volunteers to chaperone. Announce a team competition and have the kids break up into several small groups. Give each kid a shopping bag and give the whole group about 15-20 minutes to collect up as much trash as they can. If you do this right after the meal, you can utilize the remaining adults to help tidy up the food/dining area. When the kids come back, you can announce the winners (which are everyone, of course) and hand out the candy in exchange for the trash bags.

Any number of fast and easy party games can be used as your ice breaker. Be creative. Search through [geocaching.com](#) for events from other parts of the country or from around the world ([Google translation](#) as needed). See what they are doing elsewhere and use those ideas as the basis for your own events.

**The Main Event.** If the food or dining was your main event, then you don't need to worry about this part. Otherwise, this is where you can make your event really shine. Setting up a daycaching course is a very common type of geocaching event. Using a number of non-published geocaches that are placed in the area specifically for the event opens up a whole field of competitive and fun game play for the attendees. Daycaches are not published on [geocaching.com](#), so they don't have to follow proximity guidelines. This allows for a higher density of caches within a confined event area. Just remember that all daycaches must be picked up at the conclusion of the event (solicit volunteers before folks leave at the end of the event). Place your daycaches and get averaged and accurate coordinates just like you would do with any other cache. Make a list of these caches with coordinates and descriptions as needed to handout to cachers. With a little creativity, you can place all sorts of FTF prizes in the caches, have multi-caches, puzzles, or even virtual caches as part of your daycache playing field.

For those who have attended my Kenai River Picnic, you know that I've developed my own twists to the daycaches. By placing points cards in the caches along with some unique "playing cards" (you'll have to come see it in order to see it), there is a board game style competition that is actually part of the daycache circuit. With everyone starting at the same point and working against each other and the clock, it makes for a wild frenzy of activity. A little over an hour on the playing field goes by fast as lightning and the competition can be fierce. Everyone comes back smiling and then we get to total up the points, play the cards, and find out who is the winner.

Some events will place day caches well away from the event site, making it necessary for cachers to drive to the various sites around a larger area. This breaks up your cachers and forces smaller groups of people. In my opinion, this promotes less interaction between cachers and doesn't serve the social needs of an event quite as well. My preference is to use a smaller playing field that is entirely within walking distance of the main event site. You can have larger groups of cachers as they don't have vehicle logistics to deal with. Groups are going to run into each other in the field, causing more social interaction. And you can keep the event time much shorter, which tends to keep everyone busy and enjoying themselves. We've all been to a lengthy gathering and know what happens when one or more of your group (especially the kids) get bored or tired and no longer want to play. There is less chance of burnout with an event that is less than 2 hours as compared to an event of 8 hours or more. There is notable difference of 2-3 minutes between finds compared to 15-30 broken up by driving time. So be reasonable with your playing field and the amount of time to dedicate to any given activity.

**Prizes.** You have to have prizes. Even the simplest of events, such as a Flash Mob, should have a door prize or two. Door prizes are a great way to make sure people will stick it out for the whole event, as you typically draw for these prizes at the very end of the event. So try to get several items and make sure there is some "good stuff" in the mix. Unactivated geocoins also make great prizes and can be picked up fairly inexpensive at various online retailers. Of course, don't forget to look at our own GeocacheAlaska! branded merchandise and also put in a formal request to the GeocacheAlaska! Board of Directors to donate to your prize cache. If you have competitive activities, make sure you have some prizes to go to the winners immediately at the end of those activities.

Make much ado about awarding prizes to winners as well as for the door prize drawings. This should be the grand finale of your event with one last punch of energy and excitement. You don't want your event to fizzle out; you want it to end with a bang!

During your event, make sure you take lots of pictures and encourage others to do the same. Post these pictures to the event cache listing with your Attended log entry. And yes, the Event Host gets to log Attended on their event. It is not like finding your own geocache. You were there and participated just like everyone else. Log it.

One more point about events with day caches; please tell your attendees up front that each geocacher gets to log just one Attended log to your event. Do not allow the entering multiple Attended logs to create additional "find stats" for each day cache. This practice has occurred in some parts of the world and it is generally frowned upon. Let's not let this take hold in Alaska!

While it might all sound like a lot of work, the key is to break your event down into a few primary parts and plan each of these separately. Don't overdo it on any given component (KIS) and allow plenty of time for each section of your event. You don't want to be rushed to get through things, but you don't want to have excessive lulls in the activity. It's a bit of a balancing act. When you see that the current activity is winding down and people are breaking into "chat circles", it is time to start the next activity on your event list. Keep things flowing.

As the host, you must be flexible throughout the event. You can spend countless hours planning out and preparing for every conceivable detail of your event. When the day comes, nothing is going to go exactly as you wanted it. As long as you've planned well and have everything you need, just let the event happen. If you must completely skip over a particular activity on the fly, just drop it and move on. Sometimes a particular activity will take longer than you planned or people will spend more time doing it because they are having fun. Don't interrupt that. If it's working, let it play out. Stay flexible and adjust your event schedule on the fly. And don't try to do everything yourself; delegate! Be the director of the social symphony, but allow the music to flow from the players.

Now get to planning and we'll all be eagerly awaiting YOUR next Event Cache!

## **A Lazy Loop**

by Ray Menzie/akgh519

Coloreido and I were looking for some numbers to add to our annual total and for someplace we would need to get done sooner than later because of the 'white' stuff that we knew we would soon be seeing. After a bit of pondering and consultation with Ladybug Kids, we decided to make a Lazy Loop!



Our loop began at the Lazy Mountain trailhead, which is at the south end of Huntley Road. From Palmer, go east on the Old Glenn Highway, 2-1/2 miles from Palmer take a left on Clark-Wolverine Road, proceed ½ mile to a T intersection, take a right on Huntley Road, follow it to the end, take a right to the Lazy Mountain Recreation Area and trailhead.

The Mat-Su Borough describes the Lazy Mountain Trail as a steep hiking trail traversing the west slope of Lazy Mountain, climbing 3000 feet in less than 2-1/2 miles. The first half of the trail travels through wooded areas of cottonwood, spruce, birch, aspen and tall grasses. At about the 1500 foot elevation the trail crosses into alpine tundra and offers good view of the Knik and Matanuska River, and the Cook Inlet. The trail is challenging and tends to be muddy and slippery after a rain or frost. The round trip hike takes about 4 hours to complete by the average hiker. I would add 1-1/2 hours to this to sign logs etc. None of the hides are all that difficult. If you do the up and back you will encounter 11 caches, the first being GC26G37 [Half Way Lazy???](#) and the final will be at the peak i.e. GC2HCBF [On top of Lazy: Remembrance](#).

Coloreido and I took this hike one step further and instead of returning the same way we came, we made the loop down the next ridge over to the Southeast finishing up at the Matanuska Peak trailhead. Doing this as we did increases the cache total from 11 to 18. You can also add 3 more by grabbing those along the Morgan Horse trail which crosses the Matanuska Peak trail very near the trailhead.

The Matanuska Peak Trailhead is found at the south end of Smith Road. From Palmer- go east on the Old Glenn Highway, 3 1/2 miles from Palmer take a left on Smith Road, proceed 1-1/2 miles straight east to the end of the Smith Road and the trailhead parking lot.

We took two georigs and left one at each trailhead. If you only want to take one georig you can take the Morgan Horse trail from very near the Matanuska Trailhead back to the Lazy Mountain Trailhead. This will add approximately 1 mile to your hike.

We left the Lazy Trailhead and made our way up through the trees grabbing caches along the way. Ammo cans and micros both. As I stated earlier, none of the hides are too difficult although one of them eluded us. As we neared the end of the trees we came upon GC2PW9A A Lazy Dinner, Not!!!. Just beyond this cache is a picnic table which is a great place to take a break and begin to take in the views of the surrounding area. We took notice of Matanuska Peak and reminisced of our recent summiting of it with Ladybug Kids.



**Matanuska Peak from very near the picnic table just above GC2PW9A A Lazy Dinner, Not!!!**



After a snack and a libation we continued on up the ridge grabbing several more caches along the way. As we neared the summit the North wind began in earnest and we added more layers donned our hats and wind shells. It was one of those days when you were glad you didn't worry about the extra weight and were glad you brought it along!

We saw 'old glory' waving in the wind and knew we were approaching the summit and GC2HCBF [On top of Lazy: Remembrance](#). Upon reaching the cache, 'Old Glory' and the summit we began doing all of our chores. We signed the log, took pictures of our Geocache Alaska Nametags with the cache and a few other things and took photos of the surrounding area. We didn't stay too long because the wind had a bite of winter in it and I for one was getting cold.



Coloreido taking care of the 'book work' (l) and Our GeocacheAlaska! Name tags and a Coloreido signature item the cache and 'Old Glory' (r)



Coloreido defends the high ground (l) and Coloreido at the cache with Matanuska Peak in the background (r)



From the summit we began our descent down toward the Matanuska Peak Trailhead which shielded us from the cold wind. It was the longest dry spell for caches of our day. But we did manage to find a bit of fun along the way and if you wanted to place a cache, this would be a great place for one!

The first cache we came to on our descent was GC2GXZE On top of Old Smoky: My 50<sup>th</sup> hide. We found the cache easily and saw that this and all of the rest of the caches on the way down are rarely visited. We continued down into the trees finding caches along the way.

We found GC2GY0G 4000 FT Cache along the Matanuska trail and then backtracked a bit and then down another trail to GC2GV4X Up on the hillside. There was some construction going on in the area but being the weekend it was quiet today!

We then decided to do something I like to do...we went bushwacking up to the next cache. I thought we could save some distance and some vertical. The cache we bushwacked to was GC2GY0J Next to the Wart Tree which ended up being right next to the Matanuska trail!!! We signed the log and took a few pictures using an item we found in the cache for a prop...

From there we proceed down the Matanuska trail to GCWXZY Cars. After signing the log there we continued on until we reached the Morgan Horse trail where we turned left and proceeded to find GC2GY0P Beware of the Thorns which we both decided to be a well named cache!

We next found GC201F7 Morgan Horse Trailhead 2 and then reversed our course back up the Morgan Horse Trail across the Matanuska Peak Trail up to GC2GY0N The Trunk. If you only brought one georig and left it at the Lazy Mountain Trailhead, you would continue on the horse trail to it.

Coloreido and I had left my georig at the Matanuska Peak Trailhead so we reversed again back to the Matanuska Peak Trail and continued down it passing by GC2GY02 Beginning of the End to the trailhead. We had found it on our previous trip to Matanuska Peak. Our total distance on the loop with our sidetracks was 6.90 miles and we encountered 4130 feet of vertical. I don't recall how long our day was but it did take the majority of the day.

I hope you too will make a Lazy Loop someday soon and enjoy the caching, the views and a bit of silliness as Coloreido and I did along the way!!!

*Do you have a favorite hike or milestone story? Please submit it along with photos to [Ladybug Kids](#).*



You never know what kind of silliness will come to mind when out caching with '519'! Coloreido calls it 'Caching with Class'



# GEOCACHE ALASKA! INC.

Exploring the Last Frontier • [www.geocachealaska.org](http://www.geocachealaska.org)



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## 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.

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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.

## 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](#).

## 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](mailto:ladybugs@geocachealaska.org), attention "Around the State."*