

GEOCACHE ALASKA! INC.

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December 2012 NEWSLETTER

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Renew Your Sourdough Membership!!!

Renewed or new GeocacheAlaska! Sourdough Memberships that are paid after October 1, 2012, are good through December 31, 2013. You may renew online or download a membership form to mail in by clicking [here](#). Sourdoughs receive a trackable Sourdough nametag, choose the Board of Directors, and receive discounts on bling and events.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR—EVENTS

[Back to Business Breakfast...A Dutch Treat Event](#)

Monday, November 26, 6:30 a.m., Anchorage. Breakfast event to help transition from a long weekend to a long workweek.

[12-12-12-12 Flash Mob](#), Wednesday, December 12, 12:12 p.m., Anchorage, [12-12-12 Fairbanks Flash Mob](#), 6:30 p.m., [12/12/12 - Cordova Style](#), 6:00 p.m. Get together to celebrate the last time the dates will align like this in our lifetimes. Do cachers really need a reason to get together???

[8th Annual Geofest](#), Friday, December 14, Anchorage. Hosted by GeocacheAlaska!

What could be better? Food, a dessert contest, and a gift exchange. But wait, there is more!

NEW Bling—This will be the first opportunity to see and purchase the new 2012 Geocoins and Trek Tags.

Mark your calendar! On Friday, December 14th, the GeocacheAlaska! 8th Annual GeoFest ([GC3XVVK](#)) is being held at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage. The fare will be pizza and salad again, with the dessert being the fruits of everyone's labor for the dessert contest. The cost is \$5 for Sourdough members of GeocacheAlaska!, \$5 for one (1) guest of a Sourdough member, \$5 for children under 12, and \$10 for Cheechako and non-members of GeocacheAlaska!

This year you can pay with credit card, PayPal, check, or cash. Or beat the rush and pre-pay for your meal online.

The event starts at 5:30 p.m. The dessert contest entries need to be at the center by 6:15 with judging starting promptly at 6:20.

Remember when Signal the Frog attended our Fur Ronyd Parade? Well, rumor has it that Blue_Goose may attend this year's GeoFest. There is confirmation that there will be representatives from USFWS at the event, so take this opportunity to say thank you for the Blue Goose GeoTour sponsorship.

The fun never stops!! On Saturday, December 15th, there is another GeoFest. This event will be held in Fairbanks. Cache'n in the Banks Holiday Bash ([GC3Z37J](#)) is being hosted by poodle chic and sponsored in coordination with GeocacheAlaska! Hearty souls from Anchorage could drive there on Saturday after attending GeoFest on Friday night.

Come enjoy pizza, people and prizes. See you there.

[Cache'n in the Banks Holiday Bash](#), Saturday, December 15, Fairbanks, hosted by poodle chic & GeocacheAlaska!

The Holidays are here so bring on the cheer!

I challenge one, I challenge all,

Stroll up the highway.... Just follow the shrill of the Grinch's call.

Cachin' the Bank's Holiday Bash... surely is not ONE to miss!

The event will be filled with thrills, and cries of the Grinch's, hiss...

Just a stroll down Airport Way... It's a great day, to come out and play.

From 1 to 4 who could ask for more, December 15th is the day!

So block in your calendars and grab the GPS, for a glimpse of the Grinch sporting his hairy mess.

There'll be Pizza, games and prizes for all, even for those with hearts so very small!

Don't let it be said the Holidays are dead...

Get those Grinchy thoughts out of your head!

Join us Dec 15th at Airport road Pizza Hut 1-4pm, For the Fairbanks Holiday Geo Bash!



2013 Board of Directors Elected by Lisa Echard, Vice President

As Chairman of the Elections Committee I extend my congratulations to the newly-elected 2013 GeocacheAlaska! Inc. Board of Directors:

President – Wes Skinner (NorthWes) - Anchorage
Vice President – Mike Malvick (Ladybug Kids) - Anchorage
Secretary – vacant (Elections Committee is working to fill this position)
Treasurer – Roberta Bromlow (polgera) - Anchorage
Webmaster – Scott Aleckson (SSO JOAT) - Soldotna
Member at Large – Randy Cler (cavyguy) - Wasilla
Member at Large – Lisa Echard (FlightRiskAk) - Anchorage
Member at Large – Tony Roof (firemanak) - Fairbanks
Member at Large – Scott Sgraves (fuzzybelly) - Anchorage

These results were announced at the Nov 15, 2012 Board of Directors meeting and GSAK FUNDamentals Event. We had 69 of 129 Sourdough members casting votes using SurveyMonkey – a 54% participation rate. Membership on the Board by catchers residing outside of Anchorage continues to grow, as Tony Roof from Fairbanks joins the ranks for 2013. Thirty-three percent of the new board lives outside of the Municipality of Anchorage, a sign that GeocacheAlaska's goal of reaching catchers across the state is achieving increased success. Incoming president Wes Skinner's goals for 2013 include searching for board candidates and committee participation from our membership living in Cordova and the Southeast Panhandle.

Our first board meeting on Thursday January 17, 2013, will include procedures training for the entire new board, as well as action on business for the new year. Please congratulate your incoming board on their successful election to office, and let them know what you'd like to see from GeocacheAlaska! Inc. during the coming year.

RECENT EVENT HAPPENINGS

[PRE-Pocket Queries & Basic GSAK FUNDamentals](#),
November 10. By firemanak.

The Fairbanks group got together for **GPS Operations & NW Trails FUNDamentals** in October to learn more about these two subjects. When the evening was over, we all were like, what just happen and what did that all mean...LOL. Being one of the first EduVent that our group had done, we weren't prepared for it.

So when the announcement came for GSAK and Pocket Queries, I figured that we should be prepared, so we can learn more from the upcoming class by "Blazingpathways". So my wife, (AKdragonflyD) and I (Firemanak), opened our house to fellow catchers to sit and go through some basic Videos done by "CachefreakTim". His video takes you through downloading GSAK, to sitting it up, and to using the basics.

GSAK didn't seem that scary after all, so we were all excited for the following class. So Foxtrot 7, Mama Nanook,

Poodlechic, Firemanak, Iron-hide2 got together at Gulliver's books, and listened and learned about how powerful this program was, how you can sort it by anything, you can run different databases at one time.

I find myself now able to filter, sort, and use macros in GSAK. The big bad Scary Swiss Army knife of Geocaching or so I thought, is helpful and a pleasure to use.

Thank you to Blazingpathways for a great class, and thank you GSAK for a great program.

[Called to duty, boots on the ground](#), Sunday, November 11, Anchorage. The Tribe of Kalimepo threw a catcher send off for fyshstyx, whose next adventure is Army basic training.

A large crowd of catchers attended and enjoyed hot cider, hot cocoa, and spice cake by meljo. Catchers serving in the five branches of the armed services (army, navy, air force, marines, and coast guard) were recognized and several geocoins and other prizes were awarded to lucky participants.



[Pocket Queries & Basic GSAK FUNDamentals – Anchorage, Fairbanks, Soldotna](#), November 15.

Geocaching Swiss Army Knife (GSAK) is like a sweet onion...lots of layers to peel away and always something more underneath. Victoria Noble, aka blazingpathways, led a fireside chat tutorial of some of the basics of the application, with other catchers chiming in with helpful tips of their own.

Multiple locations online with catchers from Cordova, Fairbanks, and Soldotna joined the host crowd in Anchorage. Catchers in those locations also won a big share of the door prizes with two going to Fairbanks and one each to Soldotna and Cordova. Catchers at the Anchorage location enjoyed several loaves of homebaked bread provided by fuzzybelly.

Calendar Contest Winners

by Tom Noble, aka Tomanoble

The photos have been taken, chosen, and submitted. The voting has been held. Now it is time to announce the WINNERS!!!

And the winners are... GeocacheAlaska! Members, friends and families who get to enjoy the calendar. Thank you to everyone who posed for photos, provided comic relief for photos and on geocaching trips, took the photos, submitted their photos, and took the time to help select the best of our 9 categories by voting for their favorites.

Just in case you are curious, the following photographs are the winners by Category.

- Overall: "Eagle River Nature Center's Trailmaster", by NorthWes
- Adventure: "Mount Highland, Arctic Valley", by coloReido
- Caching Children: "O'Malley by the Green", by Alaskavans
- Containers: "10 years after it was placed, Mammoth Tusk remains dry and affixed to its tree", by MTboy
- Flora: "Chocolate Lilies on Bird Ridge", by Ladybug Kids
- People: "coloReido, mtndcal, li1gray, cavyguy, and Fuzzybelly at POW/MIA", by coloreido
- Places/Locations: "Reflections on Upper Trail Lake", by coloreido
- Whimsy/Fun: "Miss Lane, a little help here . . .", by Baradora
- Wildlife/Fauna: "Eagle", by Team Sussifar.dk
- Winter: "Post Snowpocalyptic Skiing", by barnacle9

Calendars will be available through the GeocacheAlaska! Store and at Geofest 2012 while supplies last. Cost will be \$19.95 for Sourdough Members and \$21.95 for Cheechako Members. It is also available at <http://www.zazzle.com/geocachealaska2013>. Price varies with quantity and shipping option chosen.



GeocacheAlaska! 2013 Pathtag Design Winners

Congratulations to GeocacheAlaska! 2013 Pathtag Design Winners WeBBleR (whale tail and breaching humpback), qaplake (orcas and Pacific white-sided dolphins), and Old Man 124 (narwhal). Many very nice designs were submitted in the Pathtags.com [forums](#), including one by Alaskan poodle chic.



The GeocacheAlaska! bling committee will be working with the winning artists to finalize the details and get the pathtags into production so all will be available for purchase by the end of March, 2013.



Reviewer's Corner – Seasonally Disabling Caches, by Greatland Reviewer

Each year, I go through a double cycle of dealing with some caches that appear to be fine, but were temporarily disabled because of the season and then forgotten about. Typically, the cache owner disables their caches in the winter and doesn't reenable them in the Spring without a reminder, or, the cache owner disables their island caches due to thin Autumn ice, forgets to enable them when the ice thickens, redisesables during break-up, and then forgets to reenable them once boat access is again possible.

Instead of disabling caches based on the season, please leave your caches enabled all year and add warnings and appropriate attributes to the cache page indicating seasonable availability. Then, it is up to the cache seekers to decide if they wish to pursue the cache.

See you on the trails or an event!

President's Corner, by Wes Skinner/NorthWes



GeocacheAlaska! Inc. exists to promote caching in Alaska, to educate and provide social opportunities for geocachers, to represent geocaching interests to land managers, and to promote stewardship of lands we play on through CITO activities. The past year has seen our organization active at all levels in carrying out these mandates.

Efforts to renew permits for geocaching in Chugach State Park and Mat-Su State Parks top the Board's action list. The Board has been working to secure a permit for Kenai State Parks as well. The permits are a single piece of paper, but there's usually extra information that's requested by land managers such as cache lists by park unit. If you're interested in working with our Advocacy Committee to finalize these permit requests please contact Committee Chairman Randy Cler/cavyguy. Every little bit of help this committee can receive is appreciated, and helps keep large swathes of land available for geocaching.

GeocacheAlaska! Inc. sponsored nineteen events ranging from fun get-togethers to serious educational efforts which logged more than 700 attendees over the last 11 months. In addition three CITO events hosted this year drew more than 100 participants as part of our ongoing sponsorship of a two-mile stretch of the Seward Highway near Girdwood. Through the course of the year other events sponsored by member cachers were provided support in the form of prizes and direct expenses. Contact Events Committee Chair Roberta Bromlow/Polgera well in advance of your event if you're interested in sponsoring your own event or CITO activity. Ladybug Kids carried off a CITO event designed to help re-open trails in the Rabbit Creek watershed after this fall's series of hurricane-force windstorms, and prior CITO work has cleaned up other city parklands following breakup. Target an area you care about and contact us about how to bring the collective efforts of GeocacheAlaska! to bear on that area's CITO needs.

Membership initiatives this year included conceptualization and completion of a trackable nametag issued to each Sourdough member (but owned by GeocacheAlaska! Inc.) Blazingpathways and SSO JOAT made this idea a reality, and our members have been checking in all across the globe with their Sourdough trackable nametags (some of which will be seen in the GeoFest Slideshow, I'm sure). The nametags were a smash hit at Groundspeak's August Geocaching Block Party (held in and around Seattle's Fremont neighborhood, also known as the Center of the Universe), where their presence seemed to magnify the perceived number of Alaskans in attendance. Thanks to this and other efforts to increase membership we now have 129 Sourdough Members – a 50% increase from last year. GeocacheAlaska! Inc. has a total of 231 members in all categories. Our best path for growth lies with our current members – who should encourage fellow cachers to sign up as Sourdoughs. Numbers matter here like nowhere else in geocaching, because when we speak to land managers about just how many persons are collectively

represented by GeocacheAlaska! Inc., we're recognized as one of Alaska's larger organized outdoor user groups.

One of the most encouraging and exciting activities to occur this year has been the Blue Goose GeoTour (BGGT) initiative with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wildlife Refuge System. Public Information Officer (and fellow geocacher) Tessa Hovland contacted GeocacheAlaska! Inc. to partner with us in bringing an educational 16-cache series from concept to placement. The Blue Goose Geotour (named after the Refuge 'icon') introduces cachers to each of Alaska's sixteen unique wildlife refuges with placements in Anchorage City Parks. Each cache contained 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 have visited all 16 caches and submit completed trivia questions from each cache by the November 14th deadline will receive a custom Alaska National Wildlife Refuges path tag. All submissions are eligible for other fabulous prizes, but the more BGGT caches logged, the better the chances are of winning. These caches will continue to inform finders about Alaska's federal wildlife refuges, fourteen of which cannot be reached by road. The BGGT initiative opens the door to future collaborative efforts with the USFWS, and may lead to select earthcaches being placed at Visitor Centers and approved access points to refuges by USFWS staff.

GeocacheAlaska! Inc. has maintained its financial viability this year, due both to increased membership and to the excellent work accomplished by our Bling Committee. The 2012 series of pathtags sold out quickly, at a price that was very affordable yet provided a good return to the organization. The 2012 geocoin project is closing on completion and is timed to be available for sale at Geofest (be sure to get yours quickly, as there are only 200 geocoins available). Work is well underway to produce the 2013 path tag series, celebrating Alaska's cetaceans. If you're interested in developing Alaska-themed trackables, contact Bling Committee Chair Mike Malvick/Ladybug Kids to learn how you can help.

As we close out 2012 I urge you to participate with one of GeocacheAlaska's working committees, to encourage fellow cachers to join as Sourdoughs, and to let your Board of Directors know what you want to see from GeocacheAlaska! The future of geocaching in Alaska is in your hands.

Alaska State Parks Parking Permit

Day use fees for improved Alaska State Parks trailheads are \$5. If you are a frequent user of State Parks trailheads or consistently find yourself challenged find enough change in your georig's console or under the seat, you may purchase an Annual Pass for \$40. A second vehicle Annual Pass may be purchased for an additional \$20 and there are parking and boat launch combination packages available. You may purchase your pass(es) online [here](#).

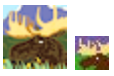
New GeocacheAlaska! Geobling Coming Soon!

Slated for arrival just in time for the Anchorage and Fairbanks Geofests, the 2012

GeocacheAlaska! geocoin will soon be available for purchase. Initial sales will be at the Geofests and then sales will move online for all other interested cachers. The coin will cost \$10 for Sourdough Members of GeocacheAlaska! and \$12 for all other cachers.

The front of the 2012 geocoin was designed by Mickey and Goofy, who also designed the 2012 GeocacheAlaska! moose, loon, and salmon pathtags, with input by NorthWes, SSO JOAT, and Ladybug Kids. It features a bull moose enjoying the last succulent forage of autumn just before the foothills turn colors and the peaks sport termination dust.

The design for the back side of the coin is based upon the design used for the Alaskan geocoins produced in 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, and 2010. It features a Sourdough cacher using a modern GPS to locate his traditional food cache in the shadow of Denali.


The geocoins will be trackable on  geocaching.com and will have a custom icon.

Only 200 of these coins will be produced, so don't delay your purchase!

Also coming soon are custom Alaska Trek Tags by GxProxy. GeocacheAlaska! Sourdough member Ray Menzie/akgh519 coordinated the project on behalf of GeocacheAlaska! The tags will cost \$6.00 for Sourdough members of GeocacheAlaska! and \$7 for all others.



Now, when you send a travel bug into the wild, you can proudly display its Alaskan origins.

The Trek Tags are trackable on geocaching.com and are linked to the GeocacheAlaska! Travelers custom icon. 

Community Story for This Newsletter

Ladybug Kids began a story in the GeocacheAlaska! forums with the intent of other cachers building the story one line at a time. Just add one line to whatever has gone before, and keep the continuity of storyline and relevance. Once the story reaches a natural conclusion, it will be published in this newsletter. If the story takes on a life of its own, it's possible it could become a serial in the newsletter, with installments published monthly. Click [this link](#) to find the thread in the Lounge section of the forums.

Seeking Newsletter Editor

By Michael Malvick/Ladybug Kids

As Secretary of GeocacheAlaska! during 2012, I inherited publishing the newsletter as one of my tasks to perform for GeocacheAlaska! In 2013, I'll be changing roles to the Vice President slot and will have many other duties to perform. As such, I need to turn over the reins of publishing this newsletter to another cacher who has an interest in melding the articles cachers submit into a publication. The newsletter editor doesn't need to (and really shouldn't) write much of the content. Past issues of the newsletter have had more than a half dozen contributors, each, so the majority of the writing takes care of itself. Parties interested in contributing some time to GeocacheAlaska! and keeping this publication alive should contact me at ladybugs@geocachealaska.org.



Winter Caching

by Reid Katagihara/Coloreido

Winter is in full effect in Alaska. This does not mean that it is time to put the GPS away until May comes around again.

While geocaching in the winter presents with its own set of challenges, it can sometimes be easier to find containers just by following the footprints! If scientists reside on Antarctica for months at a time and dog sledgers spend days on the trail to Nome for the Iditarod, surely geocachers can handle a few hours outside to find those hidden bison, magnetic key boxes, and nanos, right?

World explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes is credited with saying, "There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing."

The key to *appropriate* clothing is to keep dry and wear layers. This layering principle applies to your feet (socks, boots), legs (pants), body (shirts, jacket), and head (scarves, neck gaiters, hats, hoods). Remove or add layers as necessary. If you're hiking/snowshoeing/skiing and become warm, remove layers to keep from sweating and adding moisture to your clothing. Add more layers before you become chilled. If your clothing becomes wet from sweat, snow, or falling through ice, replace the wet clothes with a dry replacement.

There are three main layers that winter geocachers should utilize:

-Your base layer should be a wicking layer. Materials such as polyester and Polartec are designed to remove sweat and moisture away from your skin. The adage "cotton kills" has truth. Cotton absorbs moisture and loses its ability to retain warmth as it becomes wet.

-The second layer is the insulating layer. This layer helps keep you warm by trapping warm air next to your body. Often composed of polyester, polypropylene, or wool, this layer is designed to have wicking properties and provide insulation, even when wet. Fleeces are an excellent example of an insulating layer. Again, avoid sweatshirts and flannels made of cotton.

-The outer or shell layer is intended to trap warm air and keep you dry. 'Soft shells' are a windproof, water resistant layer that is 'breathable'. A breathable layer allows sweat vapors to escape while keeping out rain, sleet, or snow. After long periods of wet conditions, however, water may start to seep through into your insulating layer. 'Hard shells' provide the waterproof layer designed to withstand the long periods of precipitation. These layers are often made of nylon or Goretex.

If you're not sure about the clothing that you have, check with other active geocachers or outdoor enthusiasts. Employees at outdoor sporting goods stores are often knowledgeable and also willing to answer your questions.

Remember that these are minimum requirements and should suffice for most caches within the immediate Anchorage area. Additional equipment and supplies are often required for travel into the backcountry.

Cold Weather Injuries

by Reid Katagihara/Coloreido

When your body is exposed to the cold, blood flow is reduced to your extremities (feet, legs, hands, and arms) and increased to your core to ensure survival of vital organs (heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, etc). Your body will think that you have an increase in blood volume, and thus you will eliminate water through urine. The combination of these two effects make you more prone to cold weather injuries and dehydration.

The cold weather brings two major dangers: hypothermia and frostbite. **Hypothermia** is when the body core temperature falls below 95°F (normal body temperature is 98.6°F). Depending on weather conditions, hypothermia can be a risk even when outside temperatures are 50° or higher! Mild hypothermia presents with shivering, decrease in judgment, and loss of coordinated movement. Shivering is the body's method to generate more heat through rapid movement of your muscles. As hypothermia becomes more severe, individuals lose the ability to shiver and may lose consciousness, resulting in a rapid and deadly decline in body temperature. First aid for hypothermia is get to a warm and dry shelter, and replace damp clothing with dry clothing. Apply as many layers as are available, provide gentle external heat via fire, warm food and liquids, etc., and seek medical attention.

Frostbite is frozen body tissue and can occur when ambient temperatures fall below 32°F. Since these parts are smaller and prone to reduced blood flow in cold temperatures, extremities (fingers, toes, and ears) are more susceptible to frostbite. As these body parts freeze, a painful, tingling sensation will progress to a cold, numb feeling. Do not attempt to thaw out frostbitten areas if there is a remote chance that it will become frozen again. A second refreeze will cause further damage. Additionally, thawing tissues are extremely painful. If your feet or toes are affected, it is far better to walk to safety with a frozen foot than become crippled by a painful limb.

The best way to fight hypothermia and frostbite is to prevent it. That does not mean to stay indoors until the snow melts! Wearing the proper clothing will help ensure that you do not become susceptible to cold weather injury. Additionally, it is very important to drink fluids to avoid dehydration. With the proper preparations, geocaching in the winter can be a safe and fun activity!



The Stone Men Geobash, Geowoodstock VIII or Bust!

By David Stone/aka dmzstone

Sometime in the summer of 2009 I was told about this Mega Event called Geowoodstock and it was going to be held in Carnation, Washington just outside of Seattle. What, a Mega Event that close to Alaska! My first thought was that I have to go! Then the next thing was, how am I going to convince my wife (Green M&M) that this was a good idea for the boys and I to do. So after completing some extra chores, we were given the green light to go.

After a couple of months, I started planning the trip. I searched for affordable flights, hotels, car rental and of course some cool caches to find. After coming up with about a dozen different travel plans, I finally decided on the one I liked the best. So here is how the trip went. We flew to Seattle on the morning of June 28, 2010. I did not want to go too far on the highway the same day as flying. I have done that before and almost ran off of the road because I started to fall asleep at the wheel. So we opted to just find some caches in the Seattle area as well as some of the tourist sites.

One of the first caches that we did was a visit to Groundspeak Headquarters (GCK25B), otherwise known as the "Lily Pad." If you plan to visit this cache, reservations are required (which we had). After discovering several trackables and visiting with some of the Lackey's, we were off to find more caches trying to not get lost in Seattle.

The next morning, June 29, 2010, we headed south on I-5 picking up caches along the way. Once we made it to Portland Oregon, we detoured to the southeast to visit the Original Stash Tribute Plaque (GCGV0P). We picked up a few other caches in this area as well. One of the best was Holy Macro (GC278ME). This one took us and another group about 30 minutes to find the one film canister that had the log in it. There were probably 1,000 or more film canisters inside of a huge red bison. Torturous, but fun.

We then continued back to I-5 South until we reached Grants Pass, Oregon. On June 30, 2010, we diverted to a place called Out 'n' About Treehouse Treasort. Here we rode the zip lines for a couple of hours as well as the largest tree swing you will ever ride. This place was a blast and well worth the diversion. Looking at their web site they have added more zip lines, www.treehouseziplines.com. If I ever go back to that area, I will definitely return.

After riding the zip lines, we returned to I-5 South and continued to Reading, California. In Reading we went to the GPS Adventures Maze Exhibit (GC24YGB). Of course by the time we arrived at the exhibit, we had about 45 minutes to go through it before they closed. After we finished in Reading, we returned to I-5 North and went back to Grants Pass for the night.



wolfmaster1 & zakthemaster @ Groundspeak HQ



wolfmaster1 & zakthemaster @ The Original Stash Tribute Plaque



zakthemaster & wolfmaster1 on the Space Needle



On July 1, 2010, we continued north back to Seattle on I-5 picking up more caches along the way. One of those being Cache Across America – Oregon (GCX2F1). The next morning on July 2, 2010, we headed east on I-90 to attend the Going APE! event (GC27PZ7). We met up with Cavyguy at this event and made the hike with him. While waiting in line to check in, it was announced that an event coin would be on sale (cash only) at the start of the hike to the last remaining APE Cache (GC1169) in the United States. At that point I realized that I did not have enough cash in my pocket to buy the number of coins that I wanted to buy. Another cacher next to me that we had just met a few minutes before offered to loan me the \$20 that I needed since there was not an ATM nearby. Lesson#1 of the day learned, never go to an event like this without the proper amount of cash in your pocket.



wolfmaster1 & zakthemaster at the GPS Adventures Maze Exhibit

On the hike up to the APE Cache, we came across a group of people searching for a cache that was not loaded in my GPS (GC2ATM6, The Iron Horse Express). It had published that morning. Lesson #2 of the day, re-run your pocket query the morning of your planned outing. You never know when a new cache will publish overnight. So we signed the log too and pressed on to the APE Cache. A few minutes later we were at the legendary Ape Cache. After signing the log and looking through the swag, we moved on to some of the other caches along the trail. One of them being Iron Horse (GC79, currently the second oldest cache in Washington). That evening, we attended the registration/meet & greet event (GC261XB) that is held the day prior to attending Geowoodstock.

July 3, 2010, we met Cavyguy early in the morning for an early run to a unique cache hidden by Moun10Bike (GCJ346, got coin?). We parked one of the cars at the parking area for GW VIII and carpoled to where we had to park for the got coin cache. We knew that we had the correct coordinates because zakthemaster had solved the puzzle and received confirmation from the CO that he was right. After about a two mile hike in the rain we were at ground zero. Wolfmaster1 scored the find. On the hike out, another group of people were headed into find the same cache.

We then returned to attend GeowoodstockVIII. I stopped at all of the vendors to see what they had to offer. I must have purchased something from almost every one of them (coins and more coins). We attended one of the eduvents on GSAK, but it was difficult to hear the presenter due to the music from the main event and size of the crowd. There were a lot of different activities to do. We watched the finals of the geocoin poker tournament. When the event was over we found a few of the local caches along with Cavyguy.

That evening we went to the Midnight Geocoin Madness II Event (GC1Y7F7). And of course I bought more geocoins. The next day, July 4, 2010 we attended the Lost & Found Celebration (GC24GYW) that was held on the streets outside of Groundspeak HQ, in the Fremont area of Seattle. I think this event was what led to the annual Block Party Events that are now held there. After partaking in the activities of this event, we had to go to the airport to fly home.



wolfmaster1 & zakthemaster @ GW VIII



zakthemaster & wolfmaster1 Lost & Found

By the time this trip was over, I was already thinking about attending Geowoodstock IX (GC2AZ7G) and how I was going to convince my wife to let us go again. So stay tuned for “The Stone men geobash II, Geowoodstock IX or bust!.”

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

Caching on the ODT- October 2012: Bicycle, Buses, Bridges & a Dam Gone

By Seth Steben/Barnacle9

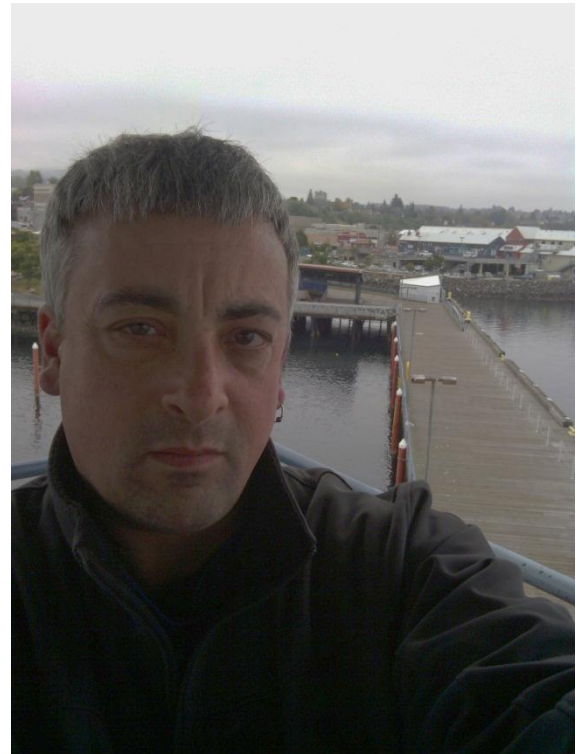
[Olympic Discovery Trail](#) in Washington State. Largely consisting of converted railroad beds, the ODT should eventually cross the Olympic Peninsula from Port Townsend to the Pacific Coast. For now, much of the route is on roadways, but right-of-way is being acquired to expand the dedicated path sections, which are generally paved or smooth packed surfaces, catering to pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians, and skaters. By definition this right of way is public land, therefore it is a perfect route along which to place geocaches. I have previously cached the Larry Scott Memorial section of trail for close to 6 miles into Port Townsend, and about a six-mile section from Sequim to the Jamestown-Sklallam lands at the head of Sequim Bay. This trip, however, began with the goal of taking a special fishy TB to a special fishy cache, and morphed into a bus/bicycle trip to the Elwha River, finishing up with about a 7 mile section of the ODT into downtown Port Angeles. The following link highlights the section of trail covered.

ODT 9 - Port Angeles to the Elwha River: http://www.olympicdiscoverytrail.com/trail_maps/pt_angeles_w.html

My journey began in historic [Port Townsend](#), where my bicycle and I caught the [Jefferson Transit Sequim Route #8](#) to Sequim, connecting easily with the [Clallam Transit Route 30 commuter](#) to downtown Port Angeles. A day pass on Clallam Transit runs \$3.00, and Jefferson transit runs \$2.50 (\$1.50 day pass plus \$1.00 out-of-county boarding fee). In the near future I plan to ride and cache the trail from Sequim to Port Angeles, but that is another story or two. At any rate, I found myself on the Port Angeles waterfront, and took the opportunity to grab several caches in the area, mostly on the ODT. The following is a list of the caches I grabbed there:

- ♣ **Stairs for Stares** [GCF6F4](#): This is a great virtual cache which requires some answers to a couple of questions, and I took the photo a right to prove my visit.
- ♣ **Francis Street Park II** [GC1G9PA](#)
- ♣ **Anchor Chain** [GC3VDNV](#)
- ♣ **A Piling Cache** [GC3VDNM](#)
- ♣ **Friendship Bridge** [GCPXC4](#)
- ♣ **A Whale of a good time** [GC3V8YB](#)


Then I took a little break on the waterfront.



Now that I was warmed up, it was time to head for my primary destination, the [Elwha River](#), and the largest dam removal project in history! To get there, I jumped on [Clallam Transit Route 10](#) heading towards Joyce, but climbed off at [Lairds Corner](#), where I grabbed a few nearby caches [Juan De Fuca View](#), [GC126TV](#) and [Those Old Nursery Rhymes](#), [GC2M6Q9](#), before riding down to my TB's destination, [Dam's Gone Overlook](#), [GC39P1Z](#).

I should mention this special TB which I went to all this effort to get here – it showed up in Cordova from Washington with a goal to visit Alaska and hopefully the Copper River. That accomplished, the owner wished it to visit some fishy places back in the Northwest.

I grabbed it and carried it around to a number of Valdez and Cordova caches and kept it onboard the fishing tender boat I run, making a number of trips on the Copper River Flats. Finally, I headed South, and made this trip on October 11th, 2012. Following is a picture

of the  **Copper River Salmon** [TB2JZEM](#) near the destination cache. Note the acquired Geocache Alaska! Salmon pathtag.



After waiting out (and then playing tour guide to) hordes of muggles, I finally put cache and TB in place, and headed for the ODT a couple of miles away. At this point, if I had crossed the Elwha on Highway 112, I could have accessed the [ODT Adventure Route](#), but that, too will be another trip and another story.

Instead, I rode to the [bridge on Elwha River Road](#), a newer structure with a dedicated bike/pedestrian path suspended below the roadway – this marks the Western end of this section of the ODT, and appropriately there is a geocache nearby: **East Meets West**, [GC1YXT2](#). The picture at right was taken on the bridge, within a few hundred feet of the cache.

Now it was time to start heading back to Port Angeles along the ODT, which is mostly dedicated trail with some easy road sections on quiet side streets. Climbing up out of the Elwha Valley, I came to my next cache, and the only spoiler pic of the story.

Black Caps along the ODT Trail, [GC3VDX7](#)



This section of trail offers peaceful views of the Elwha Valley, and the climb is very gentle. I saw nobody for a mile and a half or more. Nearing the top of the easy climb, I suddenly found myself in the middle of serious road and trail construction, so I skipped a couple of caches and

moved along to the **ODT - Dry Creek Bridge**, [GC1WB83](#), where a steep climb brought me down along the mostly Dry Creek. For the next bit, the trail follows alongside of the Port Angeles airport, then pokes through residential areas in a sort of greenbelt. I was beginning to face a time crunch, so I just grabbed some of the caches along the way:

▲ **Rockin' Robin** [GC3R2M2](#)

▲ **ODT - Milwaukee Street** [GC1WB8B](#)

▲ **The Fly In Dine and Dash** [GC3R2KF](#)

Then on quiet city streets to a nice park with a view:

▲ **Crown Jewel** [GC27R2D](#)

Finally, the route drops down to the Port Angeles Waterfront, where I found

▲ **Ahoy!** [GC3MKKY](#)

Then bicycling along the harbor I spotted the Lou Lou Belle, which spends its summers hauling tourists out of Valdez to glaciers, etc., on Prince William Sound.



Arriving back at the waterfront bus station, I was just in time to make my connection back to Port Townsend, after finding a personal record of 17 geocaches in a day.

Additional References

Olympic Discovery Trail Home: <http://www.olympicdiscoverytrail.com/index.html>

Jefferson Transit home: <http://jeffersontransit.com/>

Clallam Transit home: <http://www.clallamtransit.com/>

Port Townsend: <http://www.ptguide.com/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Port_Townsend,_Washington

Elwha Dam: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elwha_Dam

Geocaching in and around Great Smoky Mountains National Park

by NorthWes

Thanks to a continuing education opportunity my wife found in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, we found ourselves on the northern side of America's most-visited National Park during the third week of October 2012. This coincides with the fall color season in Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) – one of the peak visitor weeks of the year. Our usual tactic for visiting National Parks combines visiting popular park sites with offroad back-country day hikes in and around the area. Of course, we turn first to local geocaches to be our guide to opportunities to see the best and often least-traveled areas. This tactic proved successful once again at GSMNP – actually enhanced by its popularity and the unique geography of the Smoky Mountains.

The enduring popularity of this National Park (which sees more than a million visitors annually) meant it was well-targeted early on by geocachers when virtual cache placements were possible. We found a half-dozen virtuals scattered about the areas we were interested in visiting within the park, and many more lie along the park's extensive trail system (including the Appalachian Trail). One has logged nearly 1,200 finds and 167 'likes,' despite the very stiff elevation gain cachers face in making their way to the 3rd highest point east of the Mississippi River. Our visit to the



Cades Cove area proved why these virtuals have survived across a decade or more. As in Alaska's National Parks, both the scenery and the wildlife viewing opportunities were over the top. In less than two hours' time in one area alone we saw five black bears – GSMNP's signature park animal. These bears outweigh Alaska's black bears, often by several hundred pounds, and you can encounter them anywhere within this park. Deer, elk, and wild turkeys are seen right from the roadways too.

Right outside GSMNP borders (often literally just across the road from the boundary) local cachers have seeded the scenic two-lane highways with an unusually high number of ammocans. The ancient Smoky Mountains have themselves become geocaches in the form of earthcaches, which highlight everything from watersheds and mountain building activity to ancient fossilized sand ripples and trilobites (yes – embedded in sandstone at the very top of Clinch Gap!). Visiting cachers find themselves within a two-hour drive of Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia, so it's easy to rack up caches in five new states if you've never visited the southeast before. This area's history is well-displayed, extending from pre-European contact Native peoples through the colonizing period of the early 1800s onwards to modern times. Well-preserved homesteads illustrate how the settlers made a living, and you can purchase the output from several operating historic gristmills within the park (one of which is a virtual cache.)

Just like we see here in Alaska, the key to beating the crowds and finding parking places at scenic areas and trailheads lies in getting up and getting outside early. We were on the road no later than 7:30 am, and had no problems accessing areas we wanted to see. By noon, many of these areas were car-choked and impossible to access without long waits during this high-volume season. As usual, a hike of two or three hundred yards took us from crowds to near isolation, cutting the number of humans around us by more than 90% in every case. Great Smoky Mountains National Park is well worth visiting with plenty to offer geocachers, and can be accessed easily regardless of the expected daily visitor count.

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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](#).

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