



January 2013 NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE:

[Upcoming Events](#)

[2013 Photo Calendar](#)

[Reviewer's Corner](#)

[Community Story](#)

[Winter Trail Exclusions](#)

[Trap Safety](#)

[Join GeocacheAlaska!](#)

[Geocaching Permits](#)

[Recent Event Reports](#)

[President's Corner](#)

[State Parks Parking Permit](#)

[Seeking Newsletter Editor](#)

[Apocalyptic Solstice Gathering](#)

[TransAmerica Caching](#)

[GeocacheAlaska! Online](#)

[Newsletter Archives](#)

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

[Welcome to 2013](#), 1 January, 10:00 a.m., celebrate the New Year with cavyguy in the middle of Big Lake.

[2013 First Geocaching event of the year!](#), 1 January, 11:30 a.m., hosted by firemanak at the Fairbanks Food Factory.

Dogs and Traps, 16 January, 6:30 p.m., Loussac Library, Wilda Marston Theater (see flier on page 13 of this newsletter for details).

RECENT EVENT HAPPENINGS

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

Monday, November 26, 6:30 a.m., Anchorage. Bright and early in the still lingering darkness, cachers from around the city and as far away as Talkeetna and Palmer, started arriving for a hearty breakfast with friends, and a smiley.

Karma123, Alaskavans, coloreido (ET#2), akhillbillies, Malcore and his stash (Question; does it have its own profile) were the first to show. They offered me a smile and a "good morning", then gave me the seat at the head of the table, that they'd been saving for the host. Not far behind came AkLois&Clark, followed by ONESPIRIT555 underneath a fuzzy black hat. Then came another familiar hat, covering the glare from Capra Hircus and he took a seat.

A log sheet was passed around and tickets placed into fuzzy's fedora, for drawings later during the event.

Dmzlstone, Zakthemaster, and wolfmaster made it, they rarely miss an event (It's a guaranteed smiley in the dead of winter ya

know). Polgera wanted a spot at the table; it was nice to see her healing so well from the recent shark attack. Then from behind my back strolled in Jackcat14. From the smile on his face, I wondered if he'd just planted a new hide, but he was only hunting for some eggs. Then I noticed that DR-AK, and Snd83 had arrived. How long had they been here? The blended in perfectly with all the camo they wore.

KimKat29 sleep walked her way to the event, and drew for prizes. The FTF was a free meal, which Karma123 enjoyed.

Soon entered Twinkywalks and Lost Bug looking for a seat, to the kids table they headed, soon to be joined by me :). AkFuzzydice, who HAD just hidden a cache, took a seat here too, along with Burtonsinak who was seeking biscuits and gravy. NorthWes SIGNED in (get it...SIGNED, in), and FlihtriskAK flew in behind him. I looked over and there was Li1gray seated at the table. LadybugKids somehow found a seat at the main table, and started answering questions for many a cacher. He's always so helpful. AKGH519 (ET#1) finally made it, carrying the last of the Calendars, which didn't last long.

Drawings were made for prizes before everyone was getting ready to leave, with NorthWes taking home a Skifast coin. Twinkywalks walked away with a new bison to hide, and a couple of TB buddies went out to some attendees.

Before we all started making our way to work, more late arrivers came sauntering in. Akjoey and Glenn.fish made it to the event before they had to get to elementary school (both of them, glenn.fish is only in 3rd grade ya know). Then came Akbubbles, grabbing the last smiley of the event.

And so, still bright and early, in the lingering darkness, we all headed our separate ways having started it with friends and a smiley.

[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. Click the event name for logs and photos.

[12-12-12 12:12 Homer Cacher Meet & Greet, Homer.](#)

December 12th in Homer dawned windy and icy! That didn't stop a few intrepid Homer (and Soldotna!) cachers from braving the weather and visiting at 12:12p.m. in the Bishops Beach pavilion. The Firefly and family, Gold3421 and family, Alaskan Gold Dust, SSO JOAT, NeverSummer, and torn8owx told tales, shared experiences, and enjoyed sharing with gold3421's dad what this whole geocaching thing is all about! What a day to discover that the trusty old Coleman stove has sprung a leak....as all of us waited (mostly) patiently for the

water to boil so we could enjoy hot cocoa and hot apple cider. Alas, it was not to be so, though drink packets were taken to be enjoyed in the warm comforts of everyone's home or office. Door prizes were drawn, good-byes said, and all participants tucked hands in pockets and ears behind collars to venture back up the icy slope to the vehicles. It was great to see familiar faces and to meet a few new ones!



Sun poking through, by Neversummer

[8th Annual Geofest](#), Friday, December 14, Anchorage. Hosted by GeocacheAlaska! Click the event name for logs and photos.

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

*We gathered at the hut to celebrate some Holiday cheer, only to find the Grinch was near!
The tables were covered with games and more....
as we waited for Poodle Chic to stroll through the door.*



*When much to our surprise... all we could hear...
Was the Grinch who announced, the Holiday Bash was his this year!
While a brave little who named Cindy Lou tugged on the Grinch and said... Yey You!
It's our Holiday Bash... a party you can't crash!
But you can join us all the same, come now let us play a game!
The Grinch pondered... as his heart began to grow, I have to, I have to steal the show!
He came up with a scheme that wasn't so mean... he'll lick all their Candy Canes and turned them green!
Than all the Cachers sang songs of Holiday cheer... Merry Grinchmas to all and we'll see ya next year!*

Caching in the Banks Holiday bash was a great success! We had 24 in attendance and a couple who said this was their first ever event! We played Geo Bingo, Grinch Trivia, and sang caching holiday songs! Everyone was a winner that day with a Grinchmas goodie bag filled with Grinch trading cards, a Pathtag promo discount coupon, a micro bison and a green candy cane! There were eight winners of Poodle Chic's holiday Pathtag. Pizza and prize drawings were sponsored by

GeocacheAlaska! and, Mama Nanook. A BIG thank you to Mama Nanook for the cash donation towards the pizza!

We had 2 Grand prizes one complete set of Grinch trading cards and another complete set of Geocaching [trading cards](#) designed by Shane "GeoLobo" who donated them to support our event!



[Come Cache With A Cold Cajun55 Flash Mob](#), December 20. Click the event name for logs and photos.

CALENDARS

The 2013 Calendars are available through the GeocacheAlaska! [online store](#) while supplies last. The cost is \$19.95 for Sourdough Members and \$21.95 for Cheechako Members.



President's Corner

by Wes Skinner / NorthWes



Welcome to the New Year! Many were able to attend the Post-Apocalyptic Hibernial Solstice Gathering NorthWes hosted in Spenard on December 21st, so you may already know you're a 'Survivor' (see me if you didn't get a Survivor decal before you left). The rest of you just have to take my word for it – we made it into another New Year! As you hang up your new 2013 calendars, be sure to mark them up with the 2013 monthly meeting dates penciled in on our forum's [calendar page](#). We'll have announcements about permit numbers for use on caches in various Alaska State Parks as soon as they become available too.

Please consider serving as a member of one of our standing committees during this next year. Your organization needs willing hands to make light work of Advocacy, Education, and Event committee efforts. Make plans to host an event – GeocacheAlaska! is committed to helping members with social and CITO event activities. The February newsletter's report on how to request help in hosting an event will have all the details needed to make you a success!

Upcoming are several new education initiatives, including an event we're supporting where the Alaska Trappers Association will show attendees trapping safety and ethics along the trails we love to hike. Of particular interest to me is practical help on how to keep your canine caching companions safe in areas where trapping is allowed. Watch for the event listing on the [geocaching.com](#) website!



Reviewer's Corner – Geocache Exclusion Zones

by Michael Malvick / Greatland Reviewer

Lately, there has been a surge of geocaches being placed in areas where geocaches are not permitted. Geocachers can save themselves the hassle of returning to the field to retrieve or relocate a geocache that does not comply with the guidelines by adopting the principle of “**know** before you go.” Before heading into the field, one should **know** the following:

1. If you are going into Campbell Tract/Far North Bicentennial Park, do you **know** where the bear exclusion corridors are? If not, there is a handy [map](#) on the GeocacheAlaska! Land Manager [webpage](#).
2. Do you **know** which trails are designated ski- and dog mushing-only during winter months. If not, see the article following this column and add the appropriate seasonal information to your cache page.
3. Do you **know** where the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) boundaries are? If not, there is a downloadable [map](#) on the GeocacheAlaska! Land Manager webpage.
4. Do you **know** the boundaries of the State Parks and the appropriate permit numbers? If not, the permit numbers and maps may be found on the GeocacheAlaska! Land Manager webpage.

5. Do you **know** where the intermediate and final stages for local puzzle and multi-caches are? If not, it's recommended one complete those caches within a two-mile radius or pick an area that isn't very cache dense to make relocating your cache easy if a proximity problem arises.
6. Do you **know** where all the Premium Member and other Traditional caches are? Be sure to load your found and unfound caches into your GPS so you can check for proximity. Alternatively, avoid shoe horning a cache into an area that is already cache saturated and take cachers to an area with sparser cache density. Show folks someplace new!

Note that the information on the GeocacheAlaska! Land Manager webpage reflects only **known** land manager geocaching policies. If an area isn't listed on the webpage, the geocaching policy for that area is unknown.

See you on the trails or an event!

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](#).

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 Trail Exclusions

Now that the Anchorage Bowl has received enough snow that the Nordic skiing and mushing trails are being groomed for those exclusive uses, it's time to remind cachers that certain trails become off limits to foot traffic during the winter months.

Snow brings an entirely different kind of trail etiquette – one based on sharing the trails and pathways with skiers and mushers. Under Municipality of Anchorage rules our trails are managed differently in the wintertime versus the summer. In wintertime trails are classified as either multi-use, ski only, or mush only.

Each classification carries different rules of use designed to make winter trail use safe for designated users. Most ski trails in Anchorage are groomed during winter by the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage (NSAA) under agreement with the Muni. This grooming is entirely funded by fees paid by NSAA members. A family membership costs \$300 annually, and the NSAA trail grooming budget extends well into six figures. Many Anchorage trail users are unaware that NSAA trail maintenance extends to summertime trail work and new trail development. When it comes to having good trails throughout our large city parks NSAA is arguably the geocacher's best friend! Learn more about the NSAA at anchoragenordicski.com. Check out their fantastic set of trail maps for each of Anchorage's large city parks.

Geocachers must abide by land manager rules and guidelines if we want to maintain our status as an approved land use group. This means we have to 'play fair' with other park land users – especially the single largest organized group of parkland/trail users in Anchorage – NSAA!

Familiarize yourself with these tips, guidelines and frequently asked questions about winter (and summer) trail use in the Anchorage area:

- Do not walk or run on groomed ski trails.
- Pick up after your pets on multi-use trails.
- Dog mushing trails are closed to all other users due to dog team speeds and for safety of the dog teams and the trail walkers.
- Do not take mountain bikes, dogs or horses on groomed cross country ski trails. Use only designated multi-use trails

Which trails do the NSAA groom for skiing?

Kincaid Park, Hillside Trails, parts of the Tour of Anchorage Trail, APU, Bartlett, Beach Lake and wherever the high school teams race on any given weekend in Anchorage and Eagle River.

Which trails do the Muni groom and maintain?

The Coastal Trail and Russian Jack Park.

What are the best ways to ruin cross country ski trails in the winter?

FOOTPRINTS – whether they are dog paws, horse's hooves, or people's feet. Skiing on the trails when they are wet, soft and/or rainy; when they are soft and haven't been groomed and packed; during the process of grooming. Skiers who make unnecessary and radical moves (like hockey stops).

FECAL MATTER! Even multi-use trails should never have dog and horse poop.

Don't moose leave fecal matter and footprints??

They certainly do, but they don't have human owners!

What can hikers and bikers do to help the trails in the summer?

Don't "ride the rut!" Don't even walk in the rut. The narrow rut in the middle of the trail which is created by everyone following the same bike path becomes a ditch for water and mud and eventually ruins the entire trail. Ruts are better if they are on either edge of the trail. It would be better if everyone spread out over the trail. Grassy trails are periodically mowed during the summer, but not every week like your lawn!

The Municipality owns the trails; why can't I walk my dog or go running on them in the winter as well as other times of the year?

The Municipality has designated some trails as cross country ski only trails in the winter. Basically, ski trails are to ski on in the winter, and everyone else gets to use them the rest of the year! There are many parks and woods and multi-use trails available in Anchorage other than the designated cross country ski trails. Walkers with or without dogs on ski trails put themselves in a dangerous position. Dog poop makes a mess of the trails for all users. There are now dog parks for dogs, just as there are ski trails for skiers, dog mushing trails for mushers, horse trails for horseback riders, and multi-use trails that everyone uses. Respect other trail users by respecting the trail use designations!

How can I determine which trails are ski/mushing only and which are multi-use?

There are typically signs at the trailheads with maps and local regulations. You can also check online. To get you started, here are some links:

[Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage](#) (extensive links to maps for APU, Bartlett, Kincaid, Hillside, Russian Jack, Chugiak, Mat-Su, Sheep Mountain, etc., etc.)

[Alaska Sleddog Racing Association](#) (Tozier Track)

[Alaska Dog Mushers Association](#) (Mushers Hall/Creamers Field, Fairbanks)

[Chugiak Dog Mushers](#)

[Birch Hill and other Fairbanks Locations](#)

[MatSu Nordic Ski Club](#) (MatSu Valley Trails)

[Tsalteshi Trails](#) (Skyview High School, Soldotna)

Post - Apocalyptic Hibernial Solstice Gathering

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes

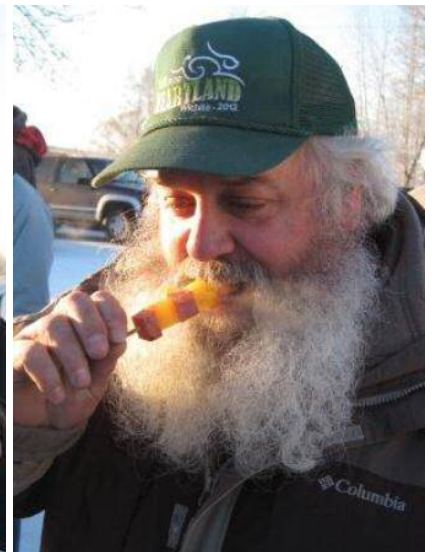


As dawn broke locally around 10:30a.m. or so, cachers who'd survived the much-ballyhooed December 21st Mayan Apocalypse began to make their way towards Lake Spenard. At the appointed moment, fuzzybelly lit the Hibachi and began cooking Sizzlin' SPAM Skewers while NorthWes cracked open bottles of bubbly cider and decanted fruity umbrella drinks for attendees. Added to the menu were delicious oatmeal cookies and miniature cupcakes. Alaskans were delighted to feast on traditional Spenard fare (where parties have been held lakeside for nearly a century) to celebrate the Winter Solstice, knowing that after the night's 18 hrs and 33 minutes of darkness the days would start to get longer again. After all, the more than 3 dozen attendees needed something to fortify themselves in breezy near-zero sunshine!

Following the foodfest, all eyes turned to the raffle. Over the course of the prior three weeks the Spenard Vortex had spewn forth various prizes, including the Special Edition Mayan Calendar Spinner Geocoin (a massive 55mm in size, with 3 rotating rings and a matching copy tag), the Limited Edition Signal SnowFlake Geocoin (featuring six Swarovski Gemstones), and the Limited Edition Winter Cache Dragon geocoin showcasing delicate translucent color designs. Topping the prize list were cans of SPAM and cans of Pineapple Chunks, intermingled with timely awards of handwarmer

packets. At the very last, as attendees had already begun to head back to work, NorthWes remembered he'd brought 'SURVIVOR' decals for all the attendees – so if you didn't get a decal, sidle up alongside NorthWes next time you see him and say "Hey – where's my Survivor decal?" He'll know what you're talking about...

Special Notes from the Host: I came up with the concept for this event after reading about all the hoopla surrounding the end of the Mayan Calendar. I realized what a big deal this date had become when a well-designed geocoin was made to commemorate the day, and began to dream up ways to incorporate surviving the 'Apocalypse' with the winter solstice. The shores of Lake Spenard tied it all together for me, and the Spenard Vortex was the perfect foil for building interest in the event across the weeks leading up to the solstice. I couldn't have carried off the signature 'Fly By Night Club' tribute menu without fuzzybelly's cheerful expert field chef work, and was gratified that so many attendees not only indulged themselves in trying the Spam Skewers but admitted to liking them! The success of the event is measured in the quantity of 'attended' event logs (see them for yourself on the [Event Page](#)). My hope is that this event would help illustrate how to use your sense of humor in developing an event, and how to tap into the corps of ready and willing volunteers to help make your event a total success. GeocacheAlaska! Inc. and Groundspeak both have online resources to assist with cache page development and hosting an event. It's much easier than you might think, and it's a great way to meet fellow cachers!



Trap Safety & Sharing the Trails with Trappers

By *Scott Aleckson* / [SSO JOAT](#)

With the first winter snow comes a lesser known trail user in Alaska; the fur trapper. Trapping remains a popular method of hunting fur-bearing animals in Alaska. Trapping is currently a completely legal activity with most seasons running from the beginning of November through as late as May, though exact openings vary greatly by species and Game Management Unit. It does not matter what your personal views are about trapping and this article will not address those views one way or another. We are all out there using the same trails at the same time. As with all multi-user public land, it is important that we are aware of other user groups and learn how to mesh our use and their use without creating conflict.

The potential conflict between geocaching and trapping arises with the fact that both groups are hiding small objects off the trails on public lands. While most muggles simply walk/hike/bike/ski the trails without stepping foot into the woods, the nature of our two activities means that we are intentionally leaving the trails for at least a short distance. Geocachers are hiding our caches such that muggles don't accidentally find them. Trappers are hiding their traps so that other trail users shouldn't easily find them, but their targeted game species will. Since we are both getting off the trail with a similar intent (hiding something), there is clearly a chance that we might stumble onto someone's trap sets while we are out searching for caches.

First and foremost, realize that it is against the law to touch, alter, or remove a legally placed trap, the associated trap set, or any legal game that might be caught in a trap. It does not matter if a trapped animal is alive or dead; you may not touch it. It is important that all trail users are able to recognize a trap set and know that they must leave it alone. The Wildlife Division of the Alaska State Troopers takes game management very seriously.

Due to a history of intentional vandalism and theft, you may want to take note that many trappers have taken additional steps to protect their traps. A common practice is to hide an automatic game camera nearby with a view of the trap set. Any motion in the camera's field of view triggers it to silently capture a photo or even record video. If someone is intentionally tampering with a trap set, it may be captured in photos. Those photos can then become the key piece of an investigation by the Alaska State Troopers Wildlife division.

People who hit the trails with their dogs often have great concern about traps. Most styles of trap sets are not going to be a problem for domestic dogs as they are too small for most dogs to get into. Some traps are elevated off the ground. Some are placed in small structures or even underwater. The majority of fur-bearing game animals are considerably smaller than dogs and the traps are sized for the intended game. Of course, there are traps that can injure or kill a domestic dog, so it is wise to learn about trapping and be prepared before you go out.

Many of our park areas have leash laws. Preventing your dog from getting into a trap in the first place is by far the best option. A dog on a leash is not going to wander off and find a trap. If you are in an area that doesn't require a leash, you should carry one anyway. If you find that you are on or near a trap line, immediately put your dog on a leash until you are well clear of that area.

If prevention fails and your dog does get into a trap, you must act quickly and calmly to free the dog. One thing you can be sure of is that a dog will react unpredictably and probably in an aggressive manner. You must be prepared to deal with the dog's reaction. In some cases, you may need to muzzle the dog just to be able to control it enough to free it from the trap. This can be done with a leash, scarf, jacket sleeve, or any length of material you have. Quickly wrap it around the dog's nose two or three times and make a double knot to hold the mouth shut. Then you can focus your attention on freeing the trap. If possible, cover the dog's eyes as well. Most dogs are calmer when they can't see what's going on. It is also a good idea to attach your leash to the dog's collar prior to releasing the trap so you can keep the dog from running away when you get it loose. A wounded and frightened dog may take off once it is free and not respond to your commands. Know your dog, but realize that their pain response may be unpredictable.

A personal story here; one of my dogs is an extremely energetic 3 year old black lab. She is a true athlete that can leap over a 4-foot fence with a single bound. My yard is now ringed with a 6-1/2-foot tall fence. During her early tests to try and surmount the taller fence, she split a toenail while trying to climb over a wooden gate. The dog is normally extremely friendly and very easy to control. After that nail was split, a piece of it was sticking up and it was clearly painful with the promise of catching the broken piece on everything. So, like any good owner, I grabbed the toenail clippers to remove the bad section. Well, she normally doesn't fuss too much at nail trimming, but when I grabbed the paw with the injured nail, she immediately turned into the devil. There was no amount

of consoling that was going to allow me access to that injury. After a little wrestling match, and then a muzzle, there was plenty of blood drawn, but it was all mine. It was at that point that I truly realized what these trappers were talking about when they said releasing a dog from a trap may be the hardest thing you would ever attempt to do. While at the medicine cabinet cleaning up my own scratches, I grabbed the bottle of Valium left over from another dog's post-injury treatment and pulled the "wrap it in bacon and toss it in the air" trick. About an hour later, while she was sound asleep, I quickly snipped off the offending and broken toe nail. She woke up and glared at me; too smart for her own good. By the next morning, we were best friends again.

Releasing Common Trap Types

There are 3 general types of traps to be aware of: Snares, leg-hold, and body hold traps. Snares consist of a loop of wire that is designed to catch a small animal around the neck. These usually have a small metal slider that allows the loop to close, but prevents it from opening. The harder you pull, the tighter it gets. If your dog gets caught in a snare, you will need to physically restrain the dog from pulling against the snare's anchor as that will simply tighten the wire even more. Locate this sliding link, rotate it so the hole is lined up with the wire, and slide it back up the wire to open the loop. You must allow some slack in the wire between the loop and the anchor; this can be very difficult to do with a struggling dog working against you.



This photo shows the loop end and slider on a typical snare trap. The little piece of angled steel that forms the slider must be rotated so that the short side with the hole in it is perpendicular to the piece of cable, which will allow the wire to feed back into the loop to enlarge it. The wire used in snares is generally too strong to be cut with standard electrical wire cutters. So don't bother with trying to cut the wire unless you are carrying cable cutters specifically designed for this task. You need to find that sliding mechanism and release it.

There are several types of leg-hold traps and these are the most common type of trap in use. They have two spring-loaded jaws with a trigger plate in between them. The trap is designed to close on the foot and hold the animal. They are not designed to kill the animal, but they can cause significant injury to the dog's foot depending on the size of the trap. Again, it is important to quickly control the dog and prevent him from struggling against the trap. You can quickly release a leg-hold trap by stepping on the spring or springs located on each side to release the jaws. Some traps have only one large flat spring, while others have two. Some have coil springs in the base, but they will still have a flat plate on each side to compress those springs. If there are two springs, you must compress both of them at the same time to release the jaws.

Note that there is no way to pry the jaws of a trap open. You must compress the spring or springs that are pushing the jaws closed. The following images show the three common configurations of leg hold traps. In all three cases, the levers on either side of the jaws must be compressed toward the ground to open and release the trap jaws. With this style of trap, as soon as you press down the springs, the jaws will relax and the dog is probably going to pull its foot out of the trap on its own. So be sure to have your leash attached to the dog prior to releasing the springs. As soon as the foot is out of the trap, you should wrap it in a clean bandage (make sure you always have a roll of gauze and a roll of "Vet Wrap" or "Coban" tape in your first aid kit), and then put a protective outer wrap of tape. In severe cases, the dog may not be able to walk on that foot, especially if there is a fractured bone. You may need to

carry your dog out. This is a good time to think about what you can do for your dog in the way of first aid and transportation in the back country. There are many ways your best friend could be injured and rely on you to rescue them.

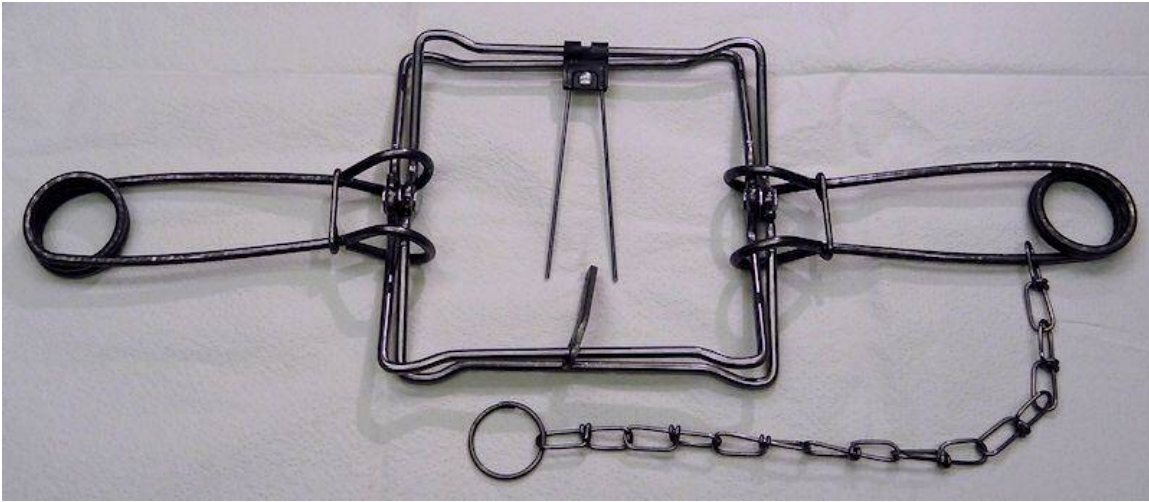


The previous 3 images are the common types of leg-hold traps including the single and double long spring type and the more compact and powerful coil spring type at the lower left. Note that the jaw structure of these traps can also vary. Most are the smooth edged steel pictured here, but some have rubber padded jaws to minimize pelt damage.

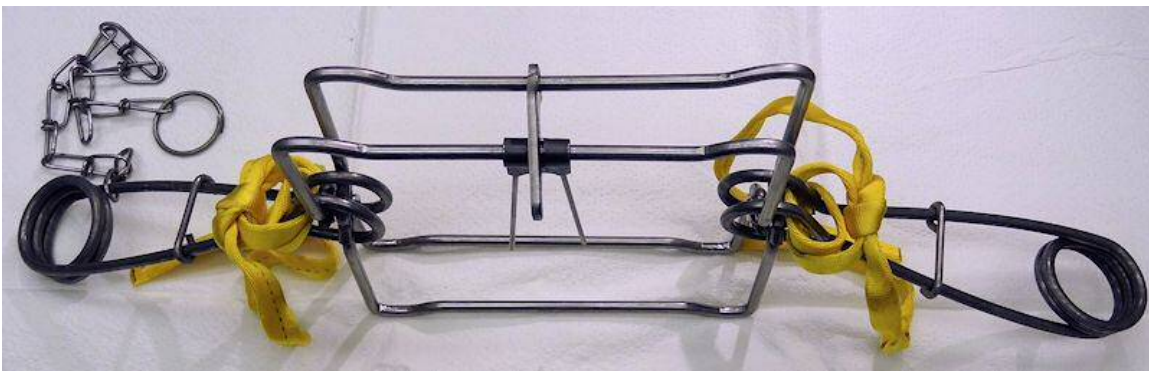
The final type of trap is the body hold trap which is the most dangerous type of them all. These are also known as “kill traps” or Conibear traps. These often large traps are designed to allow the game animal’s head to pass through the opening and then the square body of the trap snaps shut with great force against the neck or chest. They typically cause death instantly by breaking the neck or within a minute or so by asphyxiation. A dog caught in one of these traps has a very poor chance of survival and you must react very quickly if there is any chance of saving the dog. These traps are sometimes used to target fox, coyote, or wolves, so they are sized just right to accidentally catch a domestic dog.

Again, there is no way that the jaws of these traps can be pulled or forced open in any way. The only way to release the jaws is to compress the springs on either side. Some smaller traps will only have one spring on one side, but the larger ones that are a real danger to dogs typically have two springs. You must compress both springs, but have to do so one at a time. The springs on these traps are very strong and it is unlikely that you can compress them with your hands except on the very small traps. You will need to use a leash or length of rope to compress the springs.

The springs generally have a small hook attached to one of the bars. This hook is used to hold the spring in the compressed position while you go release the other spring. In order to gain the mechanical advantage to compress the springs, use your leash or a rope to loop two passes through the eyes of the spring. Then step on one end of the rope or place your toe in the loop of the leash and pull on the other end to force the ends of the spring together. Hold tension with one hand and reach down with the other to flip the hook over the spring to hold it closed. Remove the leash and repeat the process on the other side’s spring. The following series of photos will walk you through this process.



The image above is a Conibear trap that is lying in the tripped position with the springs held closed with the safety catches. Note the coil arm spring on either side, the right one having an anchor chain attached. Smaller traps may have only one spring on just one side. The square frame in the center is hinged on each side in between the looped ends of the springs. The two wires on the top are the trip mechanism that causes the trap to close when pushed by the game animal. The single piece extending up from the bottom is also part of the trigger.



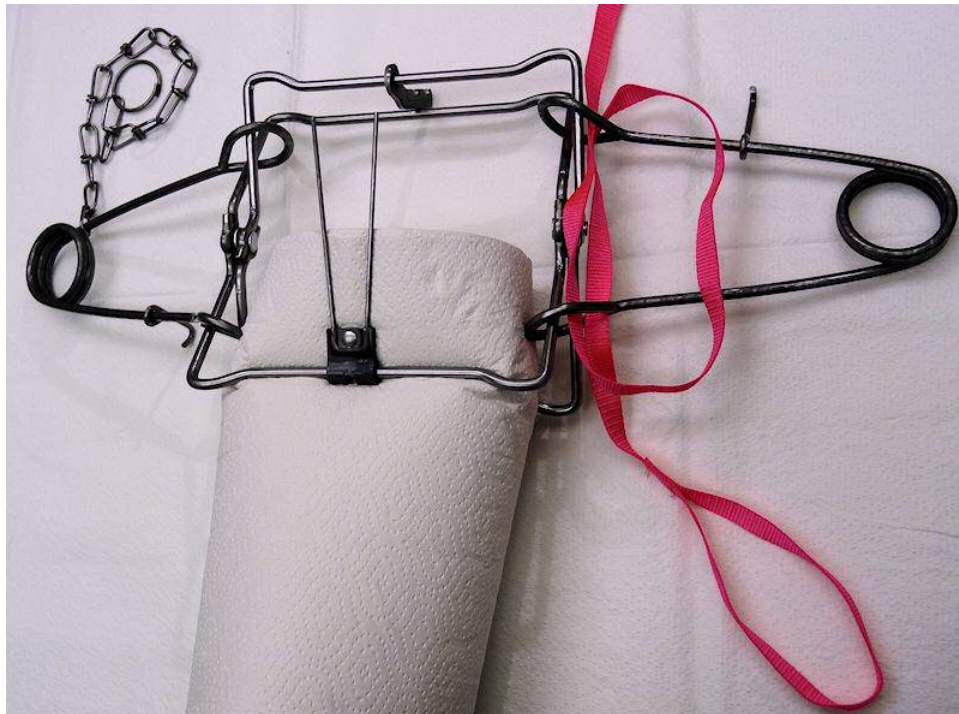
This is the trap in the set position as viewed from above. Note that the yellow webbing straps are tied in place to make the trap safe for the purposes of the demonstration and would not be on a real trap set. Also, when the trap is in the set position, the safety catches on each side would be disengaged. Any pressure against the two trigger wires in the middle will trip the jaws to swing shut with great force. This trap is generally set in a vertical position so that the game animal would walk through the center opening. The rest of the trap set would be made to channel the intended game animal into walking through the trap.

In the rest of these photos, I have placed a roll of paper towels into the trap in the location that the dog's head would be if they triggered the trap. We will walk through the process of compressing the side springs using a small dog leash. Pretty much any leash, cord, or rope can be used to do this. It should be at least 3 feet long and a standard 6-foot leash is perfect for this operation.

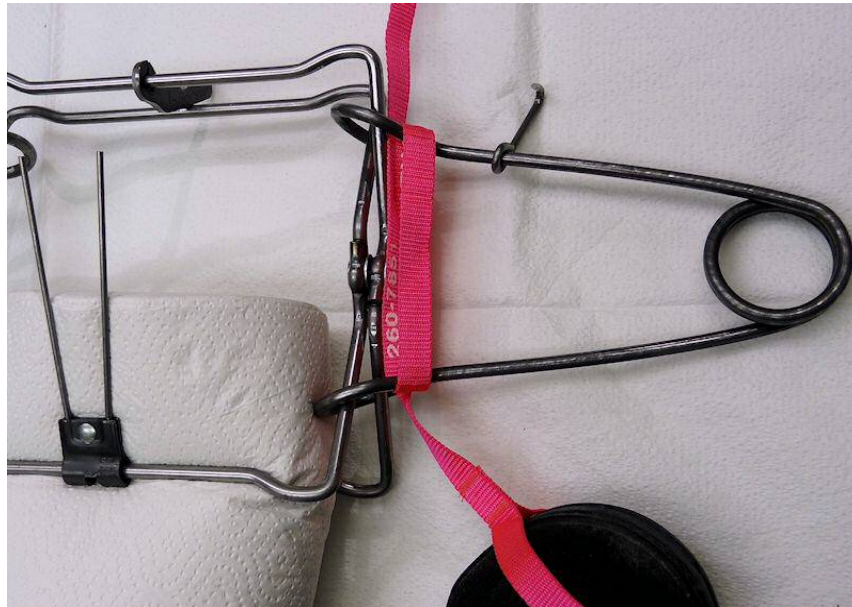
The trap shuts in a horizontal position and will typically capture the animal by the head with one side of the jaws on the neck and the other side may be on or in front of the snout. In the next photo, the roll of towels (bottom center) has entered the trap, triggering the mechanism and the jaws have shut with considerable force, flattening the full roll of towels. Note that the loops on the springs have slid apart, widening the gap between the sides of the springs. As those loops slide apart, they are forcing the square frames to hinge shut and making it impossible to spread the trap jaws apart.



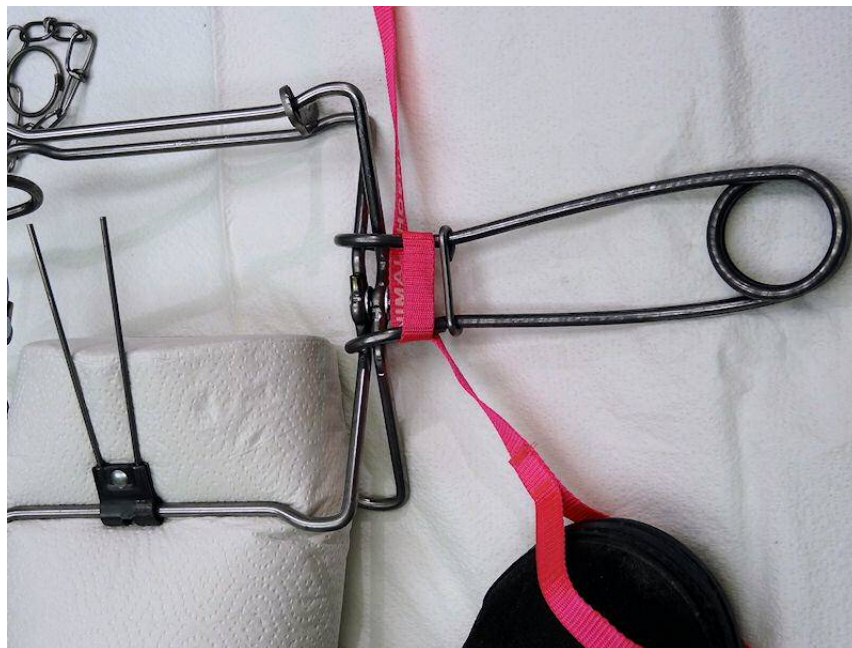
To release the square frame, you must recompress the springs on both sides of the trap by forcing the spring arms back together and securing them with the little safety catch. Trappers often use a special tool for this job, called a trap setter, but that's not something that you will be carrying around with you. A quick 2:1 mechanical advantage can be generated with a dog leash or a piece of rope. To start, run the end of the line or leash through both eye loops on one of the springs, bring the end around and run it through a second time as shown in the next photo. If you have problems getting access to the loops, spin the whole spring arm to the left or right until you can get the end of your leash or rope through the loops.



Next, step on one end of the line or place your toe through the loop of the leash. Pull hard on the opposite end of the leash and the ends of the spring will be drawn together.



When the loops are just about touching each other, hold tension on the lead and reach down with one hand and flip the safety catch over the spring bar to secure the spring in the closed position. Release tension on the leash until the catch takes over holding the springs. Remove your lead or line from the spring loops and repeat the process on the opposite side of the trap. If you have a long enough rope or two leashes, you might be able to go straight to the other spring without trying to extract your first leash from the spring loops.



Even the heavy duty leashes will fit through the spring loops on the medium and large sized traps. In the next image, the opposite side has already been released (note the safety catch in place). The remaining spring has been rotated downward to reveal better access to the spring loops. The leash is fed through the loops, circles back and then through the loops again. It is quite possible that once you compress the 2nd spring, you will be able to open the trap jaws with one hand and slide it off the dog without trying to secure the safety catch. Once the trap is clear of the dog, release the tension on the lead in a controlled fashion and allow the trap to shut into its tripped position (which is the safest position).



At this point, if the dog is still alive you will need to perform immediate 1st Aid and get to a Vet as soon as possible for full evaluation and treatment of injuries. This trap can cause significant head, neck, and chest injuries to include broken bones. Developing internal injuries are likely, so even if the dog seems OK right now, you should expect serious problems and head out of the field right away.

Due to the complexity of these procedures, it is highly recommended that dog owners who spend time in the field with their dogs during the winter obtain some hands-on instruction and practice with releasing these traps. The local trappers associations routinely hold public clinics that allow you to see and often times practice these procedures with personal instruction. Look for one of these clinics in your area and consider attending. There are also several online video resources that will allow you to see the procedure being performed, which may help you better understand how to do it. One such resource is posted on the state's trapping regulation website at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=trapping.sharing> where you can view a 25-minute video presentation that was put together by the Alaska Trappers Association in Fairbanks.

Also, plan to attend our next EduVent on Thursday, February 21st at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage, which will be on Outdoor Safety. This event will include a demonstration of releasing these traps in addition to a number of other outdoor safety topics. Hope to see you there! *-SSO JOAT*

Another TransAmerica Geocache, by ONESPIRIT555

COLORADO HOODOO HIDEOUT, GC1ME6T

I was caching down Terry Ranch Road on 25, south of 80, when I came across these hoodos and said to myself, "Self, this should be an earth cache." I promptly grabbed my cell and checked nearby caches and voila! There it was!



DOG SAFETY WORKSHOP



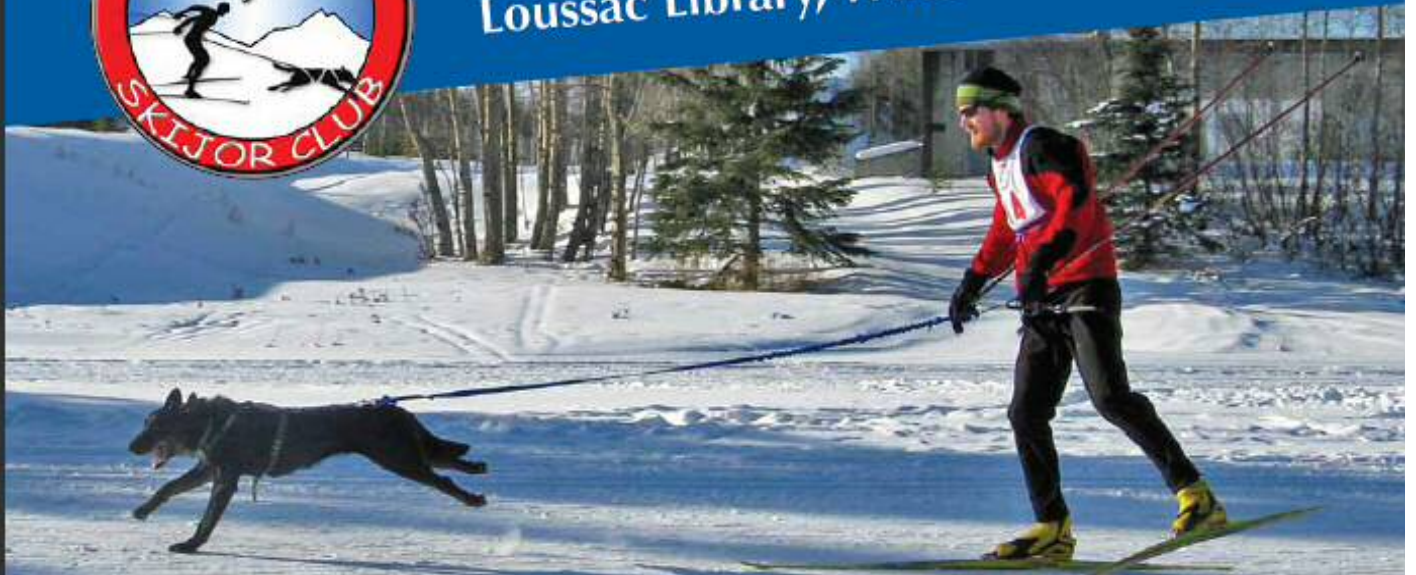
Learn how to keep your dog safe around traps.

A video & discussion on traps & snares, tips on how to free a dog caught in a trap or snare, followed by question & answer. Presentation by the Alaska Trapper's Association.

Co-Sponsored by:



Wednesday, January 16, 6:30 pm
Loussac Library, Wilda Marston Theatre



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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! more clout and credibility during land manager conversations, so sign up today!

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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.

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, attention "Around the State."