



October 2013

IN THIS ISSUE:

[President's Corner](#)
[Recognition](#)
[Facebook and Twitter](#)
[Cachapalooza](#)
[Equine HELP](#)
[Golden Loop](#)
[2014 Board Nominations](#)
[GeocacheAlaska! Membership](#)

[Reviewer's Corner](#)
[Fall HOBO CITO](#)
[Photo Contest](#)
[Public Lands Day](#)
[Destination Rhode Is.](#)
[2013 Geocoins](#)
[Online Archives](#)
[Permits](#)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR—EVENTS

[Celebrate 100 Years!, Homer, October 5](#)
[2013 Fall HOBO CITO - Girdwood Adopt-A-Highway \(3\), Girdwood, October 5](#)
[2013 Fall HOBO CITO - Turnagain Pass Leap Frog, Turnagain Pass, October 5](#)
[2013 Fall HOBO CITO - Russian River Campout Social, 10/5](#)
[2013 Fall HOBO CITO - Russian River Camp Breakfast, 10/6](#)
[2013 Fall HOBO CITO - Russian River Campground, 10/6](#)
[Halloween Geocache Survivor Style: Last Meal, Anchorage, October 17](#)
[GeocacheAlaska! FUNDamentals EduVent - Anchorage, 10/24](#)
[GeocacheAlaska! FUNDamentals EduVent - Fairbanks, 10/24](#)

RECENT EVENT HAPPENINGS

[FAIRBANKS CACHAPLOOSA 2013, Fairbanks, Sept. 7](#)
[Geocache Rally Event, September 21](#)
[Celebrate Caching at BLM's Campbell Tract!, September 28](#)
[Celebrate Alaskan Caching Hallmark Experiences, September 28](#)

Geofest Is Coming...

...only if someone steps up to chair the event so here is your opportunity to help coordinate a fun event but not have to do it alone!

The BP Energy Center is reserved for GeocacheAlaska!'s 9th Annual Geofest is December 13 and an event coordinator is needed. The GeocacheAlaska! Board will provide support, but members are needed to make the event happen.

If you are interested, contact Roberta Bromlow (Polgera) at polgera77@hotmail.com or any one of the board members.

Let's keep this annual event alive!



President's Corner

by Wes Skinner/NorthWes

This week brought a 'Stark' reminder (in the form of a solid dosing of 'Termination Dust') that "Winter is coming" – and our Fairbanks members have been cache hunting with measurable amounts of that white stuff on the ground already! It's a good time to review your cache pages and look at the attributes in light of the coming snow – don't mark a cache 'winter friendly' unless it's relatively convenient to find regardless of how much snow has fallen. Many cachers of all levels of experience become very frustrated when snow arrives and the cache owner hasn't given a thought to letting searchers know about how winter will affect the likelihood of the cache being found, or if the difficulty is going to go up exponentially because of snow. This is far less about challenging hides and far more about courteous behavior – after all, a cache with a difficulty rating of 2/2 which is fairly easy to find with 4 to 8 year old kids in the summertime may turn into a session of absolutely no fun in the winter, which might sour persons on caching for all time! Be fair, think about how seasonal changes will impact your hide, and talk about it on your cache listing page using attributes or useful hints.

It's a busy time for GeocacheAlaska! Inc., right now. The 2013 Orca Geocoins have arrived, and online sales are in full swing. You should've received an email with information on how to get yours already, and they should be available at events occurring in the near future. As well, we're in the nomination phase of elections for the Board of Directors right now. An article in this newsletter contains all the details about the election process and how you're involved as members. Seriously consider stepping up to become involved at a higher level, either as a volunteer committee member in areas like Events or Advocacy, or look at what it takes to be a board member. Your fellow local cachers rely on the volunteer efforts of our Board members to achieve successes in areas such as Land Manager relations to secure permits to play on public lands, or in educating the public about geocaching, or as Event hosts/planners/worker bees. There's room for volunteers of all levels of ability across a wide range of opportunities – please think about how a few extra hours of your time could make a significant positive benefit to the Alaskan geocaching experience!

Geolexicon Help

Ever run into a TLA (three letter acronym) or FLA (four letter acronym you just can't "crack?") A couple of good lexicons to help decode geolingos compiled by Texas cacher Prime Suspect may be found at <http://geolex.locusprime.net/>. Groundspeak also has a Glossary of Terms at <http://www.geocaching.com/about/glossary.aspx>.

Recognition Corner – Thank you to the Cache Creator *by the C.A.C.H.E. Committee*

Sometimes it is interesting and fun to go online to the www.cacherstats.com website to see where you compare to others in the geocaching community as far as the number of finds and hides. Everyone who has found at least 200 caches should be listed.

Find Alaskan cachers by pressing the LOCATION INDEX link on the home page. Then select ALASKA. If your name is missing from the Alaska list, then it could be that you haven't registered your home coordinates in Alaska or you haven't found any of the eight Alaskan caches the site reviews to find your caching statistics.

If you want your stats included on the cacherstats website and you have at least 200 finds, then you'll need to claim a find on at least one of these caches:

1. GCXW2A Chunk's Treasures
2. GC127XV Anchorage – Big Wild Life
3. GCMHVN Grandma's Toy Box
4. GC1D6Q9 Don't Drain the Water Yet
5. GC1QWC8 Take the Hill
6. GCJRJE The Good Stuff Cache
7. GCT74G Welcome to Fairbanks!!!
8. GCV67N Revilla Up Hilla

While the site focuses more on the find count and that is how cachers are ranked, if you press the link in the CACHER STATS LINK column, you will see the updated find and hide count.

We'd like to recognize and focus on those cachers who have given to the game by creating hides. You may be amazed how many of you there are. As of mid-September, 376 Alaskan geocachers are recognized on the site. As a point of reference, only sixteen Alaskan cachers were listed on the site in 2005.

- 288 cachers have gifted our game with 5513 Alaskan hides.
- 78 cachers have created 20 or more
- 29 of those have given us more than 50. WOW!

A special thanks to each cache owner, because you've given us an opportunity to solve a puzzle, take a challenge, walk a multi, learn about the geology, and find a regular that has great creativity, great placement, great scenery, a great cache page, or a place new to see. You've given a path to community and reasons to celebrate with events of every flavor ... for holidays from hotdogs to Halloween, picnics to 31 days, from meet and greets to educational events, birthdays, CITO, camping, and World Wide Flash Mobs (WWFMs).

Editor's note:

http://www.zinnware.com/HighAdv/Geocaching/most_caches_found.php?OrderBy=hides&Ordering=DESC also provides a list of caches by number of hides, but it is not organized by state as is cacherstats.



Reviewer's Corner – Cache Maintenance & Cache Changes *by Michael Malvick/Greatland Reviewer*

The appearance of termination dust on the mountains around the state is a great reminder that now is a great time to spiff up your caches and make sure they are ready for the long winter caching season. I'll be following up on the sweep I conducted in August by archiving caches for which I wrote a Reviewer Note requesting action. "Action" can be as simple as a "Note" written to the cache page by the Cache Owner letting the caching community know the cache isn't abandoned, but that extenuating circumstances are causing a maintenance delay.

Recently, I've been queried about how far should a cache be moved before the original cache is archived and a new cache created. A cacher may move a cache up to 528' on their own using the "Update Coordinates" log type. Beyond that distance, the Reviewer has to change the coordinates. However, if the basic aspect of the hunt, hide style, access, and/or overall caching experience changes with relocating a cache, it may be best to create a new cache listing.

I've also been asked about changing the cache type of an established cache (e.g. changing a night cache listed as a multi-cache to a puzzle cache). The general consensus among Reviewers is that cache types should not be changed unless there is a very good reason to. Changing the cache type long after publishing results in every previous finder's statistics changing. Most cachers won't care, but some cachers, especially if they used the cache to complete a Challenge Cache, won't be happy about the change. This is also true about changing difficulty and terrain ratings after the fact, especially if the difficulty and terrain ratings are at the high end.

2013 GeocacheAlaska! Geocoins Now Available!

The 2013 GeocacheAlaska! Orca Geocoin is now available online and at select events around the state. The coins come in shiny gold and shiny nickel finish and cost \$9 for Sourdough members of GeocacheAlaska! and \$10 for all other cachers. Supplies are limited, so [click here](#) to order yours now!



Fall Hobo CITO Camp & Clean coming October 5-6!

By Scott Aleckson, SSO JOAT

We are going to run another HOB0 CITO weekend to end the summer caching season. If you missed out on our last HOB0 CITO series from Homer to Girdwood, go have a look at the listings and logs for the seven Events that were held the weekend of May 17-19 starting with [GC4AR47](#). Each cache listing has shortcut links to all events in the series, so you can follow the HOB0s from Homer all the way up the road. It was a great deal of fun and we did some major cleaning along the way. Go check out the photo galleries!

A shorter version of the series was planned in the [GeocacheAlaska! Forums](#) on the Events and CITO board. The events have now been published starting with [GC4NFGX](#) (and are listed on the front page of this newsletter) at our normal Adopt-A-Highway location in Girdwood. That event will start on Saturday morning at 9:45am for the safety briefing and then divide up to do the last cleaning for the year of our 2 miles of highway.

After a couple hours of highway cleanup, the Hobo group is going to head down to Turnagain Pass where we are going to do a “leap frog” cleaning of several trailheads and pullouts from the top of the Pass down to Tern Lake. These will be tackled by breaking up into two or more teams with each team being assigned a series of locations along the route. After the final gathering at Tern Lake, we’ll haul the trash to the Cooper Landing transfer site and proceed on to the Russian River Campground to setup camp for the night.


We’ll have a campfire social event on Saturday evening near our cluster of campsites (exact location in the campground is still to be determined). Feel free to bring something to roast over the fire. We’ll have all the fixin’s for S’mores to share. Make sure you bring a waterproof tent and a warm sleeping bag! It is on the verge of winter after all. We could see anything from sun to rain to snow on these late season outings.


Sunday morning we’ll be having a breakfast social. The game here is to have a little camp cook competition. Bring your favorite breakfast stuff with enough to share (think small portions) and we’ll just see who is the king of the campfire grill. After getting our fill, we’ll tackle the Russian River campground to do some cleaning. We’ve been asked about cleaning out fire rings, so bring along a shovel (square point works best) and some leather work gloves. Our Hobo team made short work of the Hidden Lake fire rings back in the spring, so I know we can get them knocked out at the Russian River to lend a helping hand to our partners in the National Forest Service.

Take a look at the event listings and put in your Will Attend logs as soon as possible so we can make plans for the number of folks to expect on the camping portion of the trip. And if you can’t make every CITO site or participate in the campout, we’d still love to have you at any of the separate events that you can make it to!

Twitter and Facebook Group are now online!

By Scott Aleckson, SSO JOAT

 In an ever expanding effort to provide club and caching info to our members, GeocacheAlaska! has added a new Group to Facebook as well as setup a Twitter feed. If you’re on Facebook, visit our group and click the Join button. The group is set to “closed”, meaning that the general public can see the group and the list of members, but cannot see anything posted on the group page. Only members will be able to see the contents of the group. We have left the joining process wide open, so once you request to join the group, any existing group member can add you to the group. Based on your privacy and feed settings in Facebook, you may have anything that is posted on the group appear on your own homepage feed. It is just another convenient method for our members to share caching information and for the Board to keep you up to date on club activities. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/geocachealaska/> to join our new group.

 Now, for all you “twits” out there, or is it tweeters? Or twitterers? However you want to call it, we have set up a new Twitter account, which you can find [@GeocacheAlaska](#) or by searching for GeocacheAlaska! with the search function at the top of your Twitter homepage. Put us on your Follow list and you’ll receive periodic updates from us. In an effort to put these two new features to the test, we will be maintaining frequent Twitter and Facebook updates throughout the coming Hobo CITO weekend camping events. If you can’t make it to those events, make sure you are following us on Twitter and have joined as a member of our FB Group so you can virtually follow along with this event series.

2014 GeocacheAlaska! Calendar Photo Contest!

By Scott Aleckson, SSO JOAT

It is time to submit your photos to the annual calendar photo contest! The deadline for photo submissions **has been extended to Sunday, October 27**. All photo submissions will be posted on our website in the last week of October and then an online survey will be distributed by email for voting on your favorites. The winners will be placed in our 2014 Calendar, which should be available for purchase in December.

A rule adjustment for this year has increased the number of photos you may submit up to 4 per category. The categories remain the same as last year. We need to have high resolution images for the calendar, so please send the highest quality image files that you have available. As a general rule, the photo should have been taken with a digital camera that has at least 3.2 megapixels of resolution and the image should be no smaller than 1000 pixels on its longest dimension and 700 pixels on its shortest dimension. Photos that do not meet resolution requirements may be rejected from the calendar contest, though they will still be used in the GeoFest slide show and in the online gallery of our website.

All calendar contest photos **MUST** have been taken in Alaska! They **MUST** be associated with a specific geocache, though any cache type is allowed and the cache has to have been published, but it does not need to be currently active. It is up to the submitter to pick the category that the photo is being entered into and we request that you come up with a title or caption for your photo, but keep it light and pithy.

When you submit your photos, please include a message in the body of your email that includes the following information:

Photographer's real name

Photographer's geo-nickname (Geocaching.com username)

Contest category

The GC# of the geocache associated with, or nearest to the photo location

The names and/or geo-nicknames of any recognizable people in the photo

The categories for the photo contest are:

Adventure (Extreme)

Children

Containers

Flora

People

Places

Whimsy (Fun)

Wildlife

Winter



Send your photos by email with only ONE photo per message. Begin the subject line of your messages with **[PHOTO CONTEST]** followed by the contest category to help us sort out the messages as they come in. If there is any of the above information missing from your email, you will receive one request to submit the required information. Failure to provide all the requested information will result in your entry being rejected from the contest, though all photos received will still be put in the GeoFest slide show.

If you have vacation photos or additional photos that you wish to submit for the GeoFest slide show, send them to the same email but start the subject line with **[SLIDE SHOW]**. No categories are needed, but we would still like to know who took the picture, where (GC#), and who is pictured in the image.

The email address to use for all photo submissions is photocontest@geocachealaska.org

If you have questions about the contest, you may send them to this address or go to the forums and post your questions in the [2014 Calendar Photo Contest](#) thread.

Thank you and we look forward to seeing your best geocaching photos soon!

Call for GeocacheAlaska! 2014 Board Member Nominations

The GeocacheAlaska! 2014 Nominating Committee will be working during the next several weeks to compile a ballot for election of the 2014 Board of Directors. The Nominating Committee is [Michael Malvick](#)/Ladybug Kids (chair), [Victoria Noble](#)/Blazingpathways, [Tony Roof](#)/firemanak, and [Cameron Gilchrist](#)/AlaskaCariboozer.

The nominating process and schedule is:

September 15-October 15: Accept nominations and explain Director accountabilities to nominees. Nominees prepare a Statement of Purpose detailing why they are running for a position and describing relevant experience. Candidates may nominate themselves or be nominated by another cacher by posting in the [Nominations for 2014 Board of Directors](#) thread of the GeocacheAlaska! forums or e-mailing a member of the Nominating Committee.

October 16-October 22: Proposed ballot submitted to GeocacheAlaska! Board of Directors.

October 24: Candidates participate in GeocacheAlaska! Open Mic Night, [GeocacheAlaska! FUNdamentals EduVent - Anchorage](#) and [GeocacheAlaska! FUNdamentals EduVent - Fairbanks](#)

November 1-November 15: Online elections held via SurveyMonkey.com.

GeocacheAlaska! Inc. is a cacher/member-driven organization. The GeocacheAlaska! Board of Directors sets the agenda for the organization so it aligns with the mission defined in the [By-laws](#). Members of the Board use their time on the Board to improve the Alaskan caching experience for all cachers.

The GeocacheAlaska! Board of Directors is looking for geocachers who enjoy all things geocaching and are ready to give back to the game from which they have obtained so much enjoyment. Do you or someone you know have the qualities it takes to be a successful Board member?

Attributes of successful Board members include:

1. *Enthusiastic.* Is the cacher gung-ho about geocaching and most everything geocaching?
2. *Team-oriented.* Does the cacher have an established track record of working effectively as a member of a team?
3. *Helpful.* Will this cacher bring a "how can I help" attitude?
4. *Communicative.* Can the cacher effectively communicate verbally and in writing?
5. *Self-starting.* Can this cacher recognize the need for something to be done and jump right in to get it done?
6. *Inquisitive.* Will the cacher ask clarifying questions if they don't understand something? Is the cacher eager to learn?
7. *Assertive.* Will the cacher provide feedback on most topics and push back or speak up if they don't agree with part of a discussion or a decision?
8. *Reliable.* Can the cacher be counted on to attend Board of Directors meetings and to routinely (at least every two or three days) check forum threads and e-mail and provide feedback or vote as needed? Can the cacher be counted on to complete tasks they volunteer to do or are assigned by the President?
9. *Business-minded.* Will the cacher bring business-savvy to the Board and be able to make decisions based on what is best for the organization rather than what may be easiest or most popular?
10. *Computer savvy.* Does the cacher know enough about computers and/or smart phones to use the on-line resources required of Board members (forums, website, e-mail, vendor sites, etc.)?

Members of the Board of Directors have the following duties specified in the GeocacheAlaska! [By-laws](#):

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.

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.

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

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!

Webmaster shall:

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

Members at Large shall:

- Facilitate event planning.
- Facilitate regional geocacher involvement.
- Assist other members of the Executive Board where needed.
- Serve on standing committees (currently Advocacy, Education and Outreach, Events, and Fundraising)

Board members shall be Sourdough members of GeocacheAlaska! and have an account with geocaching.com.

The minimum time commitment for a Board Member is attendance in person or via conference line at one Board of Directors Meeting a month, usually, but not always, on the third Thursday. Most meetings are usually one-hour long and held prior to the monthly GeocacheAlaska! Eduvent. The January and Summer meetings sometimes run longer. On-line time commitments vary by member, but range from one to two hours per week on average for review of emails and Board discussions/votes in the forum.

The Board of Directors recently amended Article VI of the By-laws to establish two-year staggered terms of office:

A Board Member's term in office shall be two calendar years and serve until duly replaced. Board Members may be re-elected every two years. The President, Secretary and Webmaster shall be elected to terms beginning in even-numbered years. The Vice President and Treasurer shall be elected to terms beginning in odd-numbered years. Two Members at Large shall be elected to terms beginning in even-numbered years and two shall be elected to terms beginning in odd-numbered years.

The 2014 election will be conducted to create the stagger by electing a full Board. The President, Secretary and Webmaster and two Members at Large will be elected for two-year terms and are up for election again for the term beginning in 2016. The Vice President, Treasurer, and two Members at Large will be elected for one-year terms and are up for election again for the term beginning in 2015.

Geocaching in Fairbanks - Cachapalooza 2013

by Mike McGhie/AKTrekster w/ photos by Hal Meyer/liquidearth



FAIRBANKS CACHAPLOOSA 2013 event was presented by N'oreasters, Steve and Robin Brook, on September 7, 2013 at Pioneer Park in Fairbanks, Alaska and in the eyes of this cacher was a screaming success. The event really began on June 1 when N'oreasters came up with this great idea to strategically place ten caches with a hint located on each cache. These hints were to make up the final coordinates to the grand prize. In addition to finding these caches, plus the all-important hints, a points system was put together where the attending cachers could accumulate these points for a better chance of winning. The one who generated the most points, WINS! Very creative idea!

There were also different games to play where you could accumulate points such as a scavenger hunt, where specific questions about the surroundings within Pioneer Park were to be found and answered. Also different pictures were taken throughout the Pioneer Park that you had to find. This was interesting because you had to find what was only a portion of the actual instance. For instance, the "R" in Park at the front of Pioneer Park, or a bucket of popcorn which was part of a vendors advertising sign. And then there was the fortune cookie. The fortune cookie contained different amounts of points you could earn, or lose, or be taken away. Wild idea! As a personal experience, myself and cacher *Skadi*, had 5 smileys taken from us. Weren't expecting that... Oh, forgot to mention, when you won points you were given a smiley sticker. Deemed appropriate because we all are out for the smileys right.



To say the least, N'oreaster's fun and games made for an awesome event.

The attendance was fantastic. There were cachers from Fairbanks to Vermont and all the way from Arkansas to partake in the festivities. There were new cachers and those that have been doing this for years. Some very interesting handles like, "Now What" and "Gray Bat". Loved it!

To make the event lively FiremanAK, MamaNanook, and myself, AKTrekster, seemed to be the brunt of some good jokes. FiremanAK was sunbathing on a sheet of ice and AKTrekster seemed to be totally lost



looking for a cache. MamaNanook has earned herself somewhat of a trademark, as well as created a future caching abbreviation. If you're a need to know person, and you need to know what PMNSWPJWC means then you're welcome to comment and I will share.



At the end there was snacking on some delicious cakes and pies and drinks and everyone shared caching experiences and their favorite hides they had placed. Paul "Gray Bat" shared some real innovative ones that you would see on YouTube. The transistor was the best I think.



And to finish off the end of a Fairbanks Cachaploosa 2013 event was the honoring of the winners. There were 3 prizes given out to individuals or teams that had accumulated the most points. This was what everyone had been waiting for since June 1st when this all started. The winners would win one of the awesome cakes prepared by Patty, a guest of N'oreasters from the great state of Vermont. They were called "Cracker Jack Cache Cakes" and made of Dutch Chocolate, Swiss Chocolate and Red Velvet! "Cracker Jack" meaning there is always a prize in the middle. The cakes contained the mighty mega bison cache containers that were 3.5" in height and 2" in diameter, and they contained little prizes themselves. Great Idea and the cakes were delicious. Thank you Patty for your great cooking skills.



I understand there was also a special event going on that we didn't know. Congratulations *Skadi*, your attending was your 700th find. Way to go!

Oh, I imagine you are wondering who won the big three prizes.

So without further ado...

- First prize went to (drum roll) theweirdozone and alaskakat with a total of 38 points, Congrats, you deserved it!
- Second prize went to the always willing to get up in the middle of the night and do some caching, MamaNanook. She took the second prize with 37 points.
- And third prize went to firemanAK, musicchr49 and rmachida, and valerieseaker with a total of 35 points. Great Job.

You are all champions!

I had a wonderful time and I think everyone did. Next year I know that N'oreasters will pull off another great one as well. And I will be looking forward to it

AKTrekster

Don't forget... "Keep the DNF's to your back and Go for the Cache!"



Thanks Liquidearth for supplying me the images and some of the info for this article. You have good intel. You Rock!



By Wes Skinner/NorthWes

The scenic 730 acre BLM Campbell Tract in Anchorage Alaska is just a small part of more than 600 million acres of public lands found in America. On Saturday September 28th it was the focal point for over three hours of intensive public contact by members of GeocacheAlaska! at the [Celebrate Caching at BLM's Campbell Tract!](#) event. As part of the 20th annual National Public Lands Day celebration (designed to introduce Americans to their Public Lands, and get them outdoors), GeocacheAlaska! partnered with the Bureau of Land Management's Campbell Science Center to teach interested visitors about geocaching.

A low-key event kicked off the afternoon's volunteer effort, rewarding geocacher attendees with some social time and a smiley before we turned our attention to the real work of the day. An easy trail-friendly course of 3 ammo can caches were set up within several hundred feet of the amphitheater and fire pit, where we'd established our 'home base.' Each interested visitor was given an introduction to the geocaching game, with comments highlighting the game's outdoor emphasis and 'treasure hunting' interest for children, families, hikers and dog walkers. Participants were given a quick course in how to use one of our pre-programmed Garmin 76 GPS units (received as donations this year from LGL Alaska Research Associates Inc.), and were then sent on their way to make their finds. A total of twenty-seven parties checked out GPS units, with each group averaging about five persons in size. Most visitors indicated an interest in going further with geocaching, and walked away with our informational flyer.

During the first hour of our activity, the Burtons enthusiastically set up one group after another with an introductory explanation on caching and how to use our Garmin 76 GPS units. As the afternoon wore on, Ladybug Kids, Tomanoble and Blazing Pathways kept up public outreach, with stellar contributions from akgh519 (who knew he could catch kids flying through the air? Yet another legendary feat!), and AwesomeWaffles (who flew up all the way from Oahu Hawaii JUST TO HELP US!). The RCWard caching couple and NorthWes rounded out the afternoon's public relations efforts, keeping up with waves of late arrivers and cheerfully helping them figure out how to use the GPS units (no - that's NOT a touch screen...), and were instrumental in closing up our station and packing down the shelter loaned to us by the BLM. Many other members stopped by to visit or lend a hand during the beautiful fall afternoon.

This is exactly the kind of activity GeocacheAlaska! Inc. was created for – public outreach, education and training, while fostering excellent working relationships with public land managers. Approximately 135 persons visited our activity, and more than three dozen hours of volunteer time were invested by our members to make this activity a success.

Equine HELP by Frank Moore/akerdoc

Long sections of the Hiking Eklutna Lake Power Trail (HELP) are reported to be under water, but that didn't stop [akerdoc](#), [aksvetty](#), and [AKGrani](#) from saddling their tools of the trade (TOTT) and heading out on a beautiful autumn day. Puddles are no problem when you are several feet above them!



AKGrani and aksvetty cross the first of many large puddles, akerdoc takes a breather from riding his mountain bike, and one of the faithful steeds enjoys an al fresco snack near [HELP 28](#).



Sourdough Members akgh519, frozenbuns and onespirit555 having fun at the [Midwest Geobash 2013](#) in Wauseon, Ohio! You never know who you will find at a Mega!!!

Geocaching Destinations – Block Island, Rhode Island *by coloReido/Reid Katagihara*

Many of us enjoy geocaching because it brings us to scenic locations that we otherwise might not have visited. Personally, I am very thankful for the caches placed throughout Chugach State Park as an additional incentive to explore Alaska’s wilderness. Not only is SSO JOAT’s picnic event one of the best events in Alaska, it also brings many geocachers, including out-of-state visitors, to the Kenai Peninsula.

Likewise, geocaching can be another, or for some of us *the* encouragement to explore a new area outside of Alaska. Having never been to Rhode Island, I selected the Ocean State as my vacation destination last fall. Sometimes referred to as the vacation spot for the rich and famous, Rhode Island certainly has its share of mansions and yachts. However, vacationing and geocaching is possible for the economically-minded traveler.

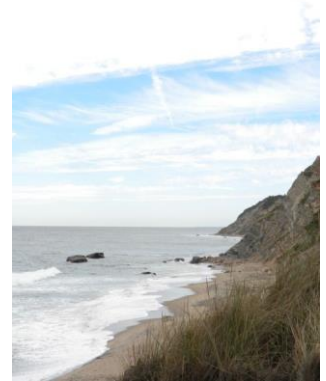
One thing to keep in mind about the New England states is there are plenty of toll roads. In Rhode Island, the only toll road (\$4 each way) is the bridge between Jamestown Island and Newport. Unless you’re short on time, you can take the longer detour and pick up more caches as your drive around Narragansett Bay.

Block Island currently has about 50 geocaches. Located approximately 15 miles offshore to the south, the fare is under \$25 roundtrip for the ferry which takes about one hour each way. The local residents have said that the island is packed during the vacation season between July 4th and Labor Day. Many have told tales of thick, bumper-to-bumper traffic and difficulty in getting one of the extremely limited parking spots. One has to schedule months in advance and pay nearly \$50 each way to bring vehicles to the island. Renting a vehicle on the island will cost about \$100 per day! While renting a moped is slightly more economical, I would recommend renting a bike on the island. Approximately seven miles long and three miles wide at its furthest points, Block Island is very easy to bike on the paved and dirt roads to reach the caches placed here.



Since no camping is allowed on Block Island, overnight visitors pay a premium to stay at one of the hotels. By traveling after the tourist season, it is possible to avoid the crowds and receive a better deal for overnight stays. Not only are the temperatures more bearable (especially for Alaskans), but lodging prices are often slashed in half after Labor Day! You save even further by staying overnight Monday through Thursday where prices are further discounted. A couple of college student geocachers received a significant discount after calling the owner of a top rated bed and breakfast, while I received a more meager cut by paying in cash.

While I stayed on Block Island for one night, my time was spent riding the bike as fast as I could and running on trails trying to grab as many of the island's caches that I could. I would make the recommendation to stay for 2-3 nights to have a more relaxing visit, and taking the time to visit the South East Lighthouse (GC6761) and walk the beach along the Mohegan Bluff (GC1MFHC).



While in Rhode Island, other notable caches and sites include:

- Touring the mansions in Newport (near GC11DVT)
- Goddard Park is a nice park that is home to a couple dozen caches. Here, BBWolf+3Pigs has set the bar on creative park and grab caches. Although I have enjoyed all of his caches in this series, GC1PEAH was my favorite.
- Little Rhody DeLorme Challenge (GCZK7D) - It took me a week of careful planning, but if you plan your trip just right, this cache is the only DeLorme Challenge that you can complete in one day.

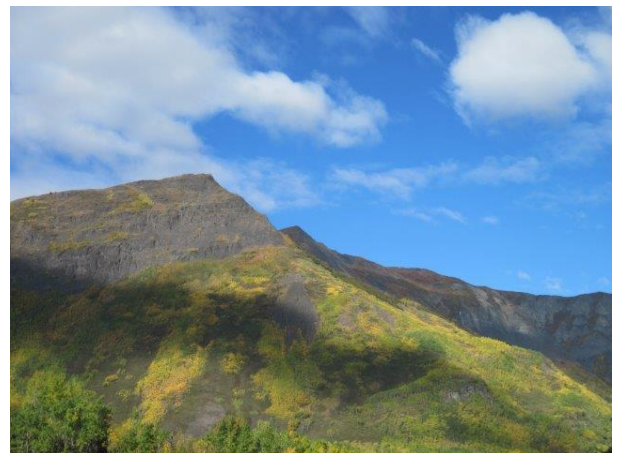
A Golden Loop – Autumn in Alaska *by Michael Malvick/Ladybug Kids*

The second week of September came up on the calendar and I got to thinking that it was a great time to hunt down Autumn colors around Southcentral and Interior Alaska. A quick check of the weather forecast indicated I had two days of blue skies and warm weather before a front blew in, so I loaded up the georig with camping gear, food for three days, and geopointer Victor to drive the 600-mile Glenn Highway, Richardson Highway, Denali Highway, Parks Highway loop. I'm glad I did because I enjoyed two sunny, t-shirt and shorts days, brilliant night stars, incredible views of the Talkeetna, Chugach, Wrangell, and Alaska Range peaks and eye-popping Autumn colors just ahead of several days of rain and snow.

For a variety of reasons (in part, because the decision to leave early was spur of the moment after checking the weather), I didn't get away until 1100. I drove straight to [Ida Lake & the Bench of Envious Comfort and Joy](#), a cache that already has fourteen favorites despite having only nineteen finds and it's definitely worth the short detour off the highway for a visit.



Next, I completed the "Alaska Cachers" series power trail along the Glenn Highway beginning with [tex_ak](#) and working my way east. I really enjoyed caching along the old stretches of highway that were so narrow, there were no places to pull over and inspect the interesting sedimentary rocks along the way (there are EarthCaches just begging to be developed out here). The colors were just beginning to peak at this elevation, so I knew the foliage would be even more brilliant going over Eureka Summit and other high points on the route.



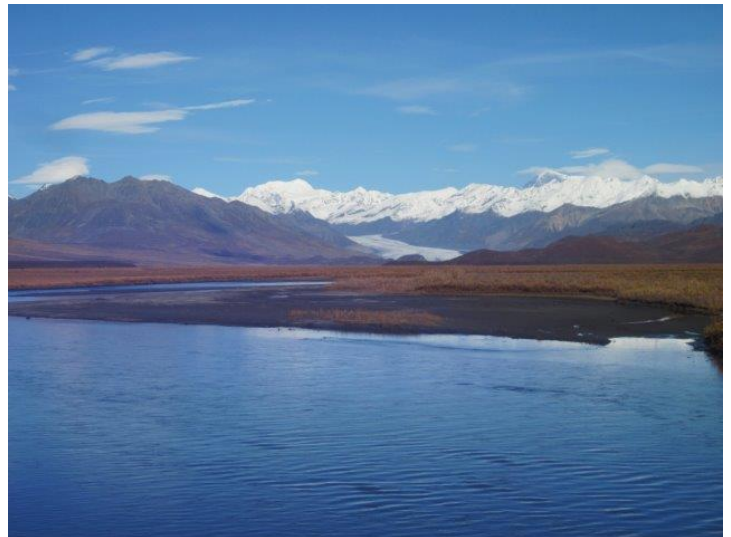
Once I completed the Alaska Cachers series, I entered "next closest" to begin working on some of the Roadhouse caches on the way to Glennallen, only to discover the full PQ didn't load into my Oregon and I didn't have any more caches to the east loaded. What to do...go home or head on? I decided to push on to Glennallen and talk a tourist out of their laptop for a few minutes at the Caribou Inn. Then, I saw a "free wi-fi" sign at the Nelchina

Lodge. I pulled into the lot and the proprietor came zipping up on an ATV. I said I needed a huge favor and would be willing to pay for it. "What's that?" "I need about five minutes of time to download a file to my GPS." "Sure, I was just going to have a beer, would you like one?" "No thanks...still have to get to Tangle Lakes tonight." She set me up with her brand new Dell Windows 8 laptop and I had the file on the GPS in minutes. After twenty more minutes of small talk reminiscing about the old Glenn Hwy (where the power trail is) and other things to fill time for a lonely person who had just helped me out, I headed out with trip salvaged and a business card with a promise of a discount for lodging if I returned this winter for Nordic skiing. She was just thrilled to have a fellow "local" to talk to after dealing with tourists all summer.



So, on down the road I went, skipping the caches on the way to Glennallen to make up time, grabbed two unfound caches in town, refueled and snagged all the caches around the Gakona Junction area ([Bridges of Gakona County 2, Mile 1](#), and [Saliors Pit](#)) and another one or two going up the Richardson Highway. By that time, it was past sunset and I was still an hour from my original goal of Tangle Lakes. As luck had it, the next cache ([Paxson Lake](#)) was at the entrance to the BLM Paxson Lake Campground. The campground was nearly empty, so I picked a site by the lake, inhaled dinner, fed Victor, set the alarm for 0600 to make up for lost time the next morning, and zonked before 2200. I woke up on my own to brilliant stars at 0545 to a frozen dog bowl and light frost. After eating some breakfast, I wandered around the boardwalks, dropped an ammo can ([Paxson Lake Walk-In](#)), and then hit the road, hoping to catch dawn lighting up the Alaska Range with alpenglow. Clouds on the horizon preempted that hope, but I knew I was in for a great Denali Highway

crossing. Once on the Denali Highway, I started out with [Lake View Cache](#) and headed west. It was cold and windy the first twenty or so miles, but then I drove out of the wind, the sun burned off the clouds, and I had to break out my sunglasses. I jogged and ran to many of the caches that were 400 to 1200 meters off the road (including [Route 8-Denali Hwy](#), aptly named [Big View](#), and [Seven Heaven](#)) yet still covered only forty miles of the Denali Highway by noon, averaging only three caches an hour. I decided to keep focusing on caches on the eastern end of the highway since the western end is more accessible from Anchorage. But then, the cache placements changed. Once the highway left the alpine terrain, most of the placements were adjacent to the road. My pace picked up while finding [The Denali Series: Pingo Point](#) EarthCache, [Clearwater Creek](#), [The Denali Series: Spectacular Scene](#), [Alaska Animal Cache](#), where I ran into [Gomez2335](#) while he was shepherded 42 tourists along the Denali highway (small world!), and [Glorious View Cache](#), among many others. I eventually popped onto the Parks highway



at 1815, only fifteen minutes later than I had hoped to after spending ten hours traversing some of the most scenic 134 miles anywhere. I did leave four or five caches unfound about 25 miles from the western end of the highway that would have required an additional total 9-10 km of ATV trail running which provide plenty of reasons to go back with a mountain bike and gear to camp at the nearby Brushkana Campground.

Once back on pavement, I replaced one of my missing caches, and grabbed four or five more caches going down the Parks Highway after getting slowed down by road construction. I hit the [The Alaska Range](#) EarthCache just in time to just catch a backlit Denali and then shut down the GPS before pointing for Anchorage. Rain began to fall just five miles from home, where I pulled up at 2345, content with 75 cache finds (40 on day one, 35 on day two) one cache replacement, one new cache placement, a couple hundred photographs, and lots of memories that will long be treasured.





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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 2013 permit number for the Chugach State Park is **13-KA-1289** and it must be on the cache container and the cache page. The 2013 permit number for the Mat-Su State Parks is **S12-061** and it must be on the cache container. 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" would like to hear from you. Submit articles or suggestions to newsletter@geocachealaska.org
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