

Around The State



June 2014

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Friday, June 6: [Dhaulaghiri's Alaskan Adventure Meet & Greet](#), 6:00 p.m., Valdez.

Saturday, June 7: [WWFM XI - Anchorage AK - Town Square Flash Mob!](#), 9:00 a.m., Anchorage, [WWFM XI - Mat-Su - FlashMob](#), 9:00 a.m., Wasilla, and [WWFM XI CAMO'D CACHERS!!!!](#), 11:00 a.m., Ketchikan.

Saturday, June 21, [G.O.C.'s Alaskan Potluck in Sitka Street Park!!!!](#), 1:00 p.m., Anchorage.

Monday, June 23, [Meet and Greet with Greatland Reviewer](#), 6:00 p.m., Ketchikan.

Friday, July 18: [Spencer Glacier Whistle Stop Camping Kick-Off](#), 2:00 p.m., Spencer Glacier.

Saturday, July 19: [Spencer Glacier Whistle Stop Camping Day Two](#), 3:00 p.m., Spencer Glacier.

Sunday July 20: [Spencer Glacier Whistle Stop CITO](#), Spencer Glacier.



Photo credit: Ladybug Kids
[Nugget Falls Earthcache](#)

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

President's Corner

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes



GeocacheAlaska! Inc. has finally received the 2014 Permit for new cache placements in Mat-Su/Copper Basin State Parks, Chugach State Park, Kenai River SMA, and Prince William Sound/Resurrection Area State Parks. All the information needed for complying with cache placements in state parks can be found by reading the permit and other related information, from the paragraph about Chugach State Parks at this [link](#) on the Land Manager tab at the our GeocacheAlaska website. You've probably already seen this notice on our Facebook page, whose membership has been growing by leaps and bounds recently. Take time to post photos about your latest finds there, so others can enjoy what's great about caching in the Great Land!

Recent wildlife encounters by outdoor recreationalists with moose and their calves in Kincaid Park, and a brown bear with cubs on JBER, have highlighted the need to know what to do when (not IF, but WHEN) you encounter Alaska's large wildlife on the geocaching trail. An excellent resource for understanding how to plan for the inevitable up-close encounter with Alaska's big game is the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. [The Essentials for Traveling in Bear Country](#) section of their website teaches how to experience encounters with Alaska's three bear species in the safest manner possible, while the [Living With Moose](#) section educates about how to act around the most common (and underestimated) large animal encountered here in Alaska (especially in urban areas). Make sure every geocache you visit is free from food and any items with scents, as these are prohibited items in caches, and attractants for wildlife.

We have a wide variety of upcoming events over the next six weeks across a broad stretch of the state. The absolutely unique series of events occurring at Spencer Glacier (accessible only by the Alaska Railroad) are balanced by flash mobs and meet'n'greet opportunities. Stay tuned for a special one-of-a-kind event to occur in mid-July, where you'll have a chance to participate in voting leading to selection of the finalists in the 2014 Geocaching International Film Festival. Our Event Committee chair, Dana Russo/[DR-AK](#)'s recent visit to Groundspeak HQ led to an invitation for GeocacheAlaska! Inc members to help with the groundwork leading up to the final voting held as part of the Groundspeak Block Party in mid-August. Keep an eye on the list of new caches (found on your profile) so you don't miss out on any of the coming events!

Top Tens: Alaskan Cacher's Caching Achievements

By Scott Aleckson / SSO JOAT

This month's Top Ten list of Alaskan Cacher's Caching Achievements goes to the highest caches in Alaska. These caches are at the highest elevations in the state (excludes PMO and disabled/archived caches).

- #1 [Big Denali](#) (Earthcache) = 20,144 ft
- #2 [Mount Yukla Ridge Cache](#) = 7,011 ft
- #3 [Hakuna Cantata](#) = 6,234 ft
- #4 [Barrel of Monkeys](#) = 5,889 ft
- #5 [Ridgeseeker's Holy Grail](#) = 5,650 ft
- #6 [Denali Summiteers Challenge Cache](#) (Mystery) = 5,623 ft
- #7 [All Trails Lead To Heaven](#) = 5,456 ft
- #8 [Gunsight](#) = 5,354 ft
- #9 [Williwa—Anchorage's Rooftop](#) = 5,217 ft
- #10 [Wrong Mtn. Summit](#) = 5,213 ft

For those who like to climb to the highest peaks, these caches are for you!

Look for another Top Ten list next month.

Editor's Note

By Cathy Wilmeth / [The_Firefly](#)

Many thanks to NorthWes for handling the newsletter publishing duties while I was taking care of business in various other places. I hope you enjoy this fun filled edition of Around The State! Alaska has some great cachers with great caching tips and stories.

Send your submissions to editor@geocachealaska.org by June 25th, 2014. As always, everyone is also encouraged to send photos, caching tips, travel reports, newsletter suggestions, etc. This is your newsletter, let's hear what you have to share!

2015 Geocoin Design

By Scott Aleckson / SSO JOAT

GeocacheAlaska! is looking for design ideas for the 2015 geocoin. We are considering a return to the precious metal coins similar to what we did with the Alaska Mint in years past. Coins would be minted as a stamped design in bronze and silver. It has been decided by the Board of Directors that we are going to use the 2015 Anchorage Centennial celebration as the basis of our coin design. One side of the coin shall be dedicated to the Anchorage Centennial and the other side of the coin shall be dedicated to GeocacheAlaska! with the possibility that the geocaching side of the coin will become the new coin back design to replace our existing sourdough miner coin back.

We are asking our members to put pen to paper or pixels to image files and come up with your ideas for one or both sides of the 2015 geocoin design. Even if you are not an artist, but have a concept that you can describe in detail with rough sketches on paper, you may still help us come up with a great design for the 2015 geocoin. Please contact our Fundraising Committee Chairman directly with your ideas: Scott at joat@geocachealaska.org

Sandbox Snippets

By GeocacheAlaska! Board of Directors

Watch for the Sandbox Snippets to return next month!

Reviewer's Corner

By Michael Malvick / Greatland Reviewer



School No Caching Zones

Due to a recent spate of geocaches being placed on school grounds by various school groups and individuals, I'll spend some time this month discussing why I will not typically publish those caches.

The Geocaching Guidelines for [restricted areas](#) state a cache may not be published, "due to its proximity to a public structure, including and not limited to, highway bridges, major roadways, dams, government buildings, **schools**, military installations, hospitals, airports and other such locations." As a rule of thumb, if a geocacher can be seen by faculty or students from a school building or playground or parents in student drop-off/pick-up zones, it's only a matter of time before police are called to investigate. Authorities have been called even at schools where the principal had given permission for a cache hide because not all employees were aware of the cache. Valdez High School was evacuated due to a bomb scare a few years ago because a geocache was hidden near the school's propane tank.

Where I can show latitude with respect to this guideline is using local knowledge that the general public can be expected to be in an area during just about any time of the day. Examples of these kinds of areas include the Frisbee golf courses at schools in Anchorage and Seward, Nordic and running trail access at Eagle River and Service High Schools, and other similar multi-use locations. However, even in these situations, it is prudent to place the cache out of view of potentially concerned parents and school employees so newspaper stories about cachers being led away in handcuffs don't appear in the media.

Switching subjects, caches may again be published within Alaska State Parks in Southcentral Alaska. The permit number is **14-KA-973**. The permit number must appear on the cache container and the cache page. Before submitting a cache listing within one of the parks, please thoroughly read the complete list of stipulations in the permit, which may be [downloaded](#) from the GeocacheAlaska! website.

Recent Events

Start Your Day Right with Dhaulaghiri

By Michael Malvick / Ladybug Kids

The geosleddogs nosed me awake at their 0600ish feeding time and I unsuccessfully tried to ignore them for a few extra winks, but they were persistent about filling their bellies. I staggered downstairs, measured out their food, added water, and scrolled through the e-mails on my Blackberry that had trickled in during the night. Time stamped at 0144 was a note from Hans of Dhaulaghiri informing me that a weather delay in Houston caused him and wife Cindy to miss their Denver to Anchorage connection resulting in their diversion to Fairbanks so they could catch the first morning flight to Anchorage.

Because I fly way too much, I figured they would arrive in Anchorage around 0715 without consulting the flight schedules. Dhaulaghiri's original plan was to catch the hotel shuttle to the Puffin Inn the evening before and to walk to the event. Instead, they were going to land first thing in the morning, collect their luggage, and need a ride to the [Start Your Day Right with Dhaulaghiri Event](#) (GC5568R) and luggage storage until the Enterprise rental counter opened at 0900. I looked at the clock, looked at the GeocacheAlaska! store that still needed consolidating and my bare feet, did a quick mental calculation, and determined I could make the airport just in time. I obtained Dhaulaghiri's phone number through mutual acquaintances in Houston, punched him a text, and e-mail, and left a voice message that I was on my way and launched into overdrive to get out the door. I felt for the dogs, because they sensed my energy level and got excited, thinking we were all going on an adventure.

Valerie and Donny Bell (VB-AK) won the 2014 GeocacheAlaska! photo calendar.



Unfortunately, today was not their day and despite my tossing them ample treats as I left, they expressed their feelings with howls of disappointment as I rolled down the driveway.

NorthWes has predicted I could ski out my driveway this morning, but other than some slush on the georig's windshield, it was plain old rain torrentially pouring at my abode. I drove down the Hillside shaking my head in disbelief that this was May 31, out of town guests were arriving, and Alaska was serving up some unusually miserable weather. I pulled up to baggage claim at 0722, risked a run-in with security by jogging into the terminal, and spotted Hans and Cindy hauling their dry bag backpacks away from the carousel. Quick introductions were made and I explained my plan to load their gear into my rig, run to the event, and later sort out their rental car since Enterprise wasn't yet open. It's amazing how geocaching can bring people together because we'd only just met a couple of weeks earlier via an e-mail exchange after Kirbydax and Rich and Lola had suggested Dhaulaghiri contact me prior to their Alaskan adventure trip. Within a minute of meeting, they stacked their gear in my georig and hopped in for transport to the event. That almost felt like picking up hitchhikers along the Richardson Highway 25 years ago.

Against the odds, Dhaulaghiri and I arrived early at Gwennie's, checked in with the hostess, and were guided upstairs. We didn't even have our orders in before "R" of RCWard, Karma!, Tundra Tim, Klondike Kate and others filed in. One thing about geocachers...they are almost never late for an event if there is food involved! Soon li1gray, capsheldon, DR-AK, AKLois, cavyguy, TeamDJM (from Alberta!), and dwdrake filled in the center section of the floor. Somehow, our waitress kept pace and everyone was soon devouring a delicious breakfast.

Having ordered first, I finished eating *almost* first and organized the door prize raffle. While I was assembling the prizes from the store, Dhaulaghiri added



Dwdrake and AKLois are happy and fed!

Recent Events



Hans of Dhaulaghiri and cavyguy meet and greet!

five personal pathtags, Capsheldon added a micro geocoin and TeamDJM tossed a super cool looking Alberta Badlands geocoin onto the pile. Many thanks for your generous contributions!

Just after the prizes were awarded, akgh519 and ftl-ak arrived to say "hello" to folks before moving on to work the rest of the day. The rest of us eventually headed down the stairs and dispersed around the parking lot to snap photos of each others' vehicle TB stickers. Unlike at Geowoodstock, no one called the police about that nefarious activity in the parking lot. But, then, we were in the heart of Spenard, home of the Spenard divorce and other harder core happenings.

Thanks everyone for coming out and making an otherwise cold, rainy morning extremely bright and fun!



Karma!, Klondike Kate, and Tundra Tim swap latest goadventure stories.

Swedish Geocachers in Town



More than twenty cachers filled one of the banquet rooms at La Cabaña to welcome Swedish cachers Bo& Elisabeth and Göran_Maria. Photo by Op Beardo (formerly known as Osceola Prepper).

FNBP Hilltop Trailhead CITO Event



A dozen geocachers turned out on a warm sunny afternoon on May 25, and cleaned up the Hilltop area of Far North Bicentennial Park. The most interesting items recovered included an old tire and an unused can of bear spray which Li1gray was quick to "recycle." Photo by LBK.

Recent Events

Meet & Greet chiefsfan19 & merrittsbadges



At least thirty cachers turned out to welcome merrittsbadges and chiefsfan19 to Anchorage on May 19. Despite the chilly breeze, folks stuck around and chatted outside for close to two hours. Photo by Karma!

Lunch Potluck Event at Knik Glacier



About twenty cachers rode ATVs to the snout of Knik Glacier on a gorgeous late-April day. Photo by burtonsinak.

Meet & Greet from SD, Fairbanks.

Splash and Cache, Chena River.

Caching Travelogues

Split the Booty (GC13MK4)

By Cameron Gilchrist / AlaskaCariboozer and Marlys Gilchrist / SnowySwan

Sunday, May 25, 2014: Split the Booty could have been renamed "Share the Booty;" our Memorial Day weekend was shared with the FalconEyedFinders. Andrea invited us to spend their last weekend in Alaska with them at her father's cabin on Big Lake, before they depart, via Washington, for Misawa AFB in Japan. Marlys and Andrea have been friends since junior high, and the 7 kids between our two families have become like family during their year-long stay in Alaska, while Paul (F16 pilot) was stationed at a non-family base in Korea.



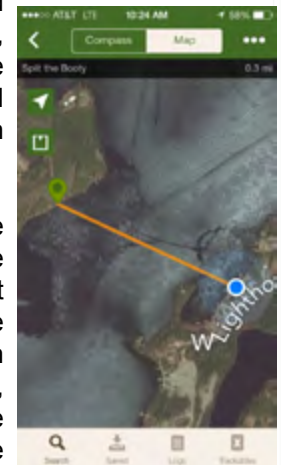
5SnowyBous.JPG



Andrea-FalconEyedFindersandMr.&Mrs.Beaver.JPG

Games of freeze tag, modified geocaching, and kayaking the lake cove were the highlights for the kids. When they tired out, they would climb into the camper or the cabin and relax with a movie, then re-start playing all over. Our middle boy (Drew, age 6/Cheese&Sprinkles) was a quick learn on the kayak. All he wanted to do was paddle around the cove. Time with close friends was our "sharing the booty."

Split the Booty was an ongoing discussion. The cache was located .35 miles west from the cabin. However, we had to cross the bottleneck of Big Lake to get there. Boat and Sea-Doo traffic was heavy at times going from one hourglass end to the other. Furthermore, the southern winds were strong enough to catch the canoe like a kite, making a quick crossing out of the question. Friday came and went. Saturday came and the smoky wind from the Kenai fire was strong enough to aloft real kites off the dock. Wakes from the passing boats gave the lake an ocean-like feel, not appropriate for a crossing with a 3, 6, 8, 9, and 11 year old.



From here to there.jpg

Caching Travelogues



GZ across the water.jpg



The Crew.JPG



Cool.JPG



Ferns.JPG



The Crossing.JPG

We decided Sunday morning would have to be our best shot. The breezes tend to be less in the morning and the speed boat craziness hadn't quite started. Around 9:30am, and with PFD's on everyone, my family loaded up the canoe. Andrea, Noah, and Jacob of FalconEYedFinders set off in the kayaks. The crossing was uneventful. We had 4 vessels and one large inner tube to make ourselves as visible as possible to the speeding cross traffic. It didn't take more than 10 minutes to cross and find a rooty shoreline to dock to.



AskCaitlyn&TheBROWLD.JPG

Our estimates of GZ weren't far off, as we were only 200 feet north. We hiked through the foliage and woods and quickly made the find. The ammocan was clean and dry with a few worthy items of swag to trade. We left our 3 pathtags for the next cachers, took some pictures and



Friends looking for booty.jpg

headed back to the boats. Conditions hadn't changed much and the crossing back to the dock was easy and quick.

Overall, this is a fun cache to find in the summer. It was a great end to our week-end as we had to head back to Anchorage. The FalconEYedFinders will drive south to Washington and then fly on to Japan. We will miss them tremendously; however we look forward to more time shared together in the future, and hopefully, we have introduced and instilled a love of caching that will continue on their world-wide travels!



Cache log.JPG



Departing the GZ.JPG

Caching Travelogues

After Montana Came Minnesota (and Wisconsin)

By Cathy Wilmeth / *The_Firefly*

After our whirlwind trip to Montana, we just kept going upon landing in Minnesota! Of course, the first week we were there left me no chance to grab any geocaches. I made quite certain, however, that I would be able to attend [10th Annual Earth Day -- A Social Event \[CITO\]](#) that was one mile from my parents' home! My family has a tradition of doing trash pickups, so my mom and one of my sisters (local) and my brother (visiting from England) joined me and my two girls for the event. It was great fun to meet other cachers, including host [King Boreas](#), and to hear some of the stories about their trips to Alaska! Even more fun to be able to say "yes!" when asked if I know various Alaska cachers – such as NorthWes and lilgray. After a short time spent meeting and greeting, everyone grabbed bags and headed off in various directions. There had recently been a city organized



Little Bits of Trash



Zoo time!



The_Firefly & Little 'Flies

clean up of the park, so it was pretty clean for the most part. Still, in about an hour of cleaning, we found lots of small bits of trash.

After doing a great CITO, the kiddos were ready for the zoo, so we dropped off our trash bags and went to find some animals. We toured the zoo for a while, and then had a picnic lunch, after which



Marjorie McNeely Conservatory

my siblings headed back, while my mom, the kiddos, and I toured the conservatory and strolled outside to 'find' the [Marjorie McNeely Conservatory Virtual cache](#). In the many times I have been to this area, I have never been down this path! Indeed, I've hardly been on this side of the park

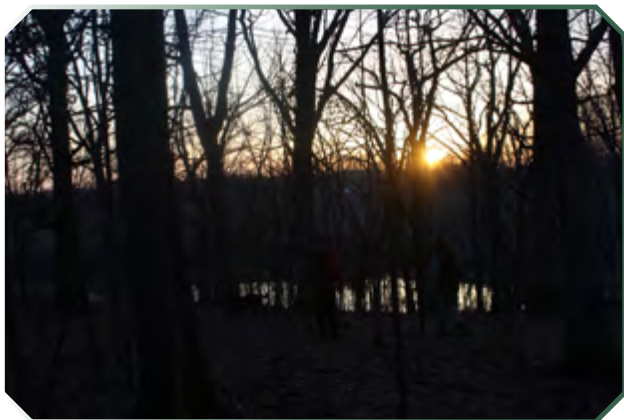
at all. What fun to read more about the conservatory and be able to log a smiley as well before heading back to let the girls have their afternoon snoozes.

After a few hours without caching, I headed out with Mr. The_Firefly for an evening of caching and dinner with [TeamDennis](#). Aaron of TeamDennis and I go way back, as his mom married my uncle back when we were kids and all living in Wisconsin. He has become a caching monster, with close to 8,000 finds in the last few years. It was great to spend a couple hours in a park near his home, finding caches he'd hidden, such as [Inga is BACK!](#), [Weathered](#), and [What's Your Sign?](#) as well as a few others hidden by various local caches. One of my favorites of the evening was [Throw Caution to the Wind!](#) I may have to try this technique on one of my own hides...We picked Aaron's caching brain, did lots of hiking, laughing, and learning. His goal is that folks get out and have fun finding caches, so his are generally not difficult, and he's always willing to go along with you! Inga (the TeamDennis pooch) is happy to come along, too. In fact, she's done these trails and checked these caches often enough that if you wait and watch, she'll lead you right to the low ones.



Lots of caches here!

Caching Travelogues



Look closely and you will see Inga & Aaron (TeamDennis) and my husband Kevin. A gorgeous sunset as we headed back to the trailhead.

After the hiking and caching, Aaron and Becca (the female human of TeamDennis) treated us to a wonderful homemade dinner and some catching up time. It turns out I have been remiss in sharing with my husband the geekery that is geocaching statistics. He was impressed and amazed by all the crazy nitty-gritty details you could obtain. One of the not so difficult general searches we did was for most favored caches in Minnesota. Aaron was

pretty sure one of his favorites was top in the state, and sure enough, it was. Lucky for us, [The Sword in the Stone](#) was going to be only a couple blocks out of our way (which means not out of the way at all, of course) when we headed to Wisconsin a couple days later!

After a few days of lovely weather, the day for our trip to Wisconsin was cold and rainy. We made a quick stop to grab the aforementioned Sword in the Stone and the nearby [Happy Meal Haven](#). We tried for [Ask The Kids](#), which we'd

solved for correctly, but the little one was cold and had to use the potty by then, so when we didn't find it right away, we decided to come back another time. We met an old friend of mine, his wife, and new little one for lunch, before wandering off to find some caches while walking off the pizza and ice cream lunch. We started with [Lake St. Croix ~ A Wide Spot in the River](#), which was a neat earthcache.



Lake St. Croix - A Wide Spot in the River

The water was higher than normal, so it was an interesting exercise to try to determine the width of the channel. (My darling husband made sure to inform me that if he had a rangefinder, the task would have been much easier!) Then while he and the girls went to play on the sand for a few minutes, I slipped over to make a quick find of [Hudson's Bridge to MN on the Yellowstone Trail](#). It was starting to rain again as we walked back, so we decided our last cache attempt for the day would be, [Expand Your Horizons](#), a puzzle at the library! After making the actual find more challenging than it needed to be, we signed the log and headed back to the rental geo-rig and aimed for dinner back across the river.



Hudson, Wisconsin Public Library Expand Your Horizons!

After our fun over in Wisconsin, it was time to get back to wedding preparation. One of my tasks was to get the girls in for haircuts! We made appointments at a place just for kids. Well, they were in and out in short order, so we headed over to a nearby park to play for a while. They were having such fun and didn't need my intervention, so guess what? I pulled up my caching app and sure enough, there was a cache in the park! As the girls were starting to tire, I called them over, handed my 5 year old the GPSr, and told her to go find the cache. She oriented herself, and led us to a tree area. In the end, I made the actual find of [Welcome To The Hive](#), but she had led us to GZ with no trouble!



Okay, so next time the 2 year old gets the GPSr!

This turned out to be our last find in Minnesota, as all our attention turned toward making sure my littlest sister's wedding day turned out the way she wanted it!

After a jam-packed couple weeks culminating in the wedding, we were off to the next leg of our grand adventure. Colorado, here we come!

Around The State

GEOCACHEALASKA! MEMBERSHIP

There are two membership levels at GeocacheAlaska! Inc.

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

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

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

1. Navigate to the [GeocacheAlaska! webpage](#) and click on the "Subscribe" button to set up an automatic subscription which will renew annually. Please enter your caching name in the provided box.
2. Navigate to the [GeocacheAlaska! webpage](#) and click on "Add to Cart" to purchase an annual membership.
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.

Find us online at:

1. GeocacheAlaska! Website: <http://www.geocachealaska.org>
2. GeocacheAlaska! Forums: <http://geocachealaska.proboards.com/index.cgi>
3. GeocacheAlaska! on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/geocachealaska/>
4. E-mail to contact@geocachealaska.org
5. Interior Alaska Geocachers: <http://alaskageocachers.org/>

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK & Twitter!

Like our official [GeocacheAlaska! Page](#) on Facebook to keep up to date on things happening with GeocacheAlaska!

Also, join the official [GeocacheAlaska! Group](#) on Facebook to stay in touch and share your activities with fellow members of the geocaching community. This is where GeocacheAlaska! members can plan caching adventures, post photos, and pass messages within the membership ranks. This Facebook Group is designed to be yet another member benefit for Sourdoughs and Cheechakos alike. Visit our Group and request to Join so you can start viewing and participating with GeocacheAlaska! and your fellow geocachers.

 [@GeocacheAlaska](#) Follow GeocacheAlaska! Inc. on Twitter!

STATE PARKS PERMITS

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NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

The editors of *Around the State* would like to hear from you. Submit articles or suggestions to editor@geocachealaska.org Subject: Around the State.

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](#).