

Around The State



September 2014

IN THIS ISSUE

- GeocacheAlaska! Updates
- Caching Tricks, Tips, & Tools
- Recent Events
- Upcoming Events
- Caching Travelogues
- GeocacheAlaska! General Information



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Saturday, September 13: [Fairbanks Cachaplooza 2014](#) 4pm, Fairbanks.

Friday, Sept 12: [2014 Fall HOBO CITO - Tenderfoot Camping Social](#), 8:30pm

Saturday, September 13: [2014 Fall HOBO CITO - Turnagain Pass Leap Frog](#), Noon

Saturday, September 13: [2014 Fall HOBO CITO - Trail River Camping Social](#), 6:30pm

Sunday, September 14: [2014 Fall HOBO CITO - Seward Highway Leap Frog](#), Noon

Thursday, September 25: Tools of the Trade Eduvent, Anchorage (with additional sites TBD)



Photo credit: Bill Van Couwenberghe / AlaskaVans
[GCZ7H0 - Anchorage Crossing Zone](#)

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

President's Corner

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes



Fall is just around the corner. Sunset's occurring early enough that hunting night caches has become a reasonable late evening activity again. Fireweed has bloomed all the way to the top in my neighborhood, and I glance at the mountaintops every morning to see if any other signs of the end of summer are in sight. It also means Groundspeak's Seven Souvenirs of August challenge has ended. I hope you were able to explore more of the geocaching universe beyond the everyday 'regular' geocache in pursuit of that special seventh 'Achiever' souvenir! My family made acquiring the Seven Souvenirs a goal that took us from the abandoned stretches of the Old Glenn Highway to the Jessie Lee Home in Seward and on to the Botanical Garden and its environs in Anchorage. The challenge spurred us on to do exactly what was intended – try out *all* aspects of geocaching and get outdoors – and while my wife, grandsons and I earned that 'Achiever' souvenir together we reinforced our love of geocaching as a tool for exploring the world around us.

GeocacheAlaska! Inc. is sponsoring a series of CITO events, social events and EduVents this coming month. Keep an eye on new listings to make sure you don't miss out on an opportunity to spend time with fellow geocachers while exploring, socializing and learning. Our store will be open during many of these events, bringing you the opportunity to acquire our fabulous 2014 geocoin as well as necessary tools of the trade to enhance your geocaching fun.

Members of the Board's Election Committee are seeking individuals to serve on the Board of Directors of GeocacheAlaska! Inc., and will be reaching out to persons they believe fit the profile of a successful board member. If you're interested in helping the geocaching game grow in Alaska, or in developing a particular idea, or in serving fellow members with event activities, please submit your name to a Board. Don't hesitate to nominate a fellow cacher whom you feel could bring great action and ideas to the organization. Service on the board requires only a willingness to put in between ten to twenty hours a month in (fun) activities – some which are public time, such as the monthly board meeting and event attendance/work time, and some hours which are 'behind the scenes' such as the occasional committee meeting, online collaboration with fellow board members via email conversations, and in development and implementation of 'great ideas'. While we certainly need technical skill sets to carry

out responsibilities such as webmaster activities and to fulfill the secretary and treasurer roles, our Members at Large need only to have a sense of enthusiasm and an attention to completing the activities they became involved with on the Board. If you have questions about what it involves or if you have a person to nominate, contact Wes Skinner by email at: president@geocachealaska.org

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 Alaskan Geocaches with the longest time since the last find or longest time unfound since placed. Some of these caches are quite controversial. Do they still exist? Did they ever exist? Perhaps we will never know, or perhaps someone will finally make the trek out there and find a box with a log. Only time will tell. As with all our Top Ten lists, only Alaskan caches are counted here. Day counts as of September 1, 2014.

- #1 [Kougarok](#) = 4,819 Days
- #2 [Toothy Travel Bug Cache](#) = 4,431 Days
- #3 [Willow Waquaa](#) = 3,360 Days
- #4 [Sleeping Otter](#) = 3,343 Days
- #5 [Lost Arrow](#) = 3,310 Days
- #6 [Little Island Cove Cache](#) = 3,011 Days
- #7 [rainy day](#) = 3,004 Days
- #8 [Vista Del Agua](#) = 2,975 Days
- #9 [Got your Goat?](#) (PMO) = 2,966 Days
- #10 [Sylvester Glacier](#) = 2,945 Days



Feeling lonely? Adventurous? Go have a look and see if you can knock one of these guys off the list. Please remember that cache pages are NOT a place to discuss the merits of the cache!

Look for another Top Ten list next month.

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

GeocacheAlaska! 2015 Calendar Photo Contest

By Scott Aleckson / SSO JOAT

Once again, you have the chance to be the envy of geocachers all over Alaska and have your favorite photograph grace our 2015 GeocacheAlaska! calendar. Calendars will be published on Zazzle shortly after the winning photos are selected at the end of October and the club will purchase a very small number of calendars to have at events in December. People will be able to order calendars directly from Zazzle as soon as the format is completed. Entry into the contest is limited to Sourdough and Cheechako members of GeocacheAlaska! (joining as a Cheechako member is free).

The Photo Contest categories are:

Adventure (extreme)

Containers

People

Whimsy (fun)

Winter

Children

Flora

Places

Wildlife



You may enter up to THREE photographs in each category. To be eligible for inclusion in the Calendar Contest the photographs must be taken in Alaska. Thirteen photos will be displayed full-size on the calendar with at least one picture chosen from each category. The photo garnering the most overall votes will be placed on the cover. Entries will be accepted through October 19, 2014, with the voting taking place during the next week. The Fundraising Committee reserves the right to review all submissions prior to opening public voting to accept or reject any photo entry for any reason.

By submitting your photo to this contest you grant GeocacheAlaska! Inc. the right to use and reprint the image in the Calendar, the Newsletter and on the GeocacheAlaska! website. Photo credit will be given to the photographer. There is no compensation awarded to the contest winners. Winners get the honor of having their picture grace a monthly page or the cover of the calendar and the happiness in knowing that their photograph was chosen to receive this honor.

Photographs may be submitted by emailing a **high resolution** copy to PhotoContest@GeocacheAlaska.org. Please use the tag **[PHOTO CONTEST]** as the Subject Line of your message to help our email system sort your entries directly to our inbox instead of junking them to the SPAM box where they could get lost in the clutter.

In the body of the message, please state which category the photo is being submitted to, the names and/or geonickname of any recognizable people appearing in the photo as well as the geocache the photo is associated with. Please provide the GC number and the cache name, or link directly to the cache page using the url format `coord.info/GCxxxxx`. Include the photographer's real name and their geonickname. Please include a title or caption for the image if you have one.

All photos submitted to the Calendar Photo Contest will be posted on the GeocacheAlaska! website and will appear in the GeoFest Slide Show in December. Some photos may be selected and published in the GeocacheAlaska! Newsletter.

All photo submissions must be sent to the official photo contest email account AND include all the requested information above in order to be included in the contest. Rejected entries will receive one notice of missing information, inadequate photo size or resolution, or inappropriate content. The submitter will have until the close of the contest to correct any issues and resubmit their photo for further consideration. If you have geocaching photos from your vacation or from outside of Alaska, these may also be submitted for inclusion in the GeoFest slide show by sending them to the same email account as above, but using the tag **[SLIDE SHOW]** in the subject line of your email. We still request that you include the info listed above, excluding the category. There is no limit to the number of photos you may enter into the slide show pool, so any and all geocaching-related photos are welcome. Rejected photo contest entries may be moved to the slide show at the discretion of GeocacheAlaska!

Note that ALL photo contest entries will automatically appear in the slide show at GeoFest. Other Alaskan sites that wish to show the slide show at their December or January events may request a copy of the slide show DVD at the conclusion of the photo contest.

If you have any questions, send an email to the photo contest email account. Thank you for participating!

Caching Tricks, Tips, and Tools

Reviewer's Corner

By Michael Malvick / Greatland Reviewer



I took half of our dog pack for a trail run up Potter Valley before hopping a plane for a business trip the other night and pulled up short as I came around a bend and saw the first golden aspen of the upcoming Autumn season. This particular tree always turns colors and drops its leaves ahead of the rest of the forest, but the fact that it actually gets dark at night coupled with the tree's foliage reminded me the season for Reviewer Autumn Sweeps is coming up. This is a good time to verify your caches are ready for winter and to check you cache pages for "Needs Maintenance" attributes and tend to any cache problems before the first snowfall makes the task more difficult.

To help with the review process, cachers are reminded to NOT use the "Needs Maintenance" log if you didn't actually find the cache you sought. A cacher can't possibly know if a cache needs maintenance if he didn't find it. Inappropriately using the "Needs Maintenance" log can lead to other cachers filtering the cache out of their pocket queries and messes up this reviewer's DNF filters when looking for caches with developing DNF strings. Filters (and Garmin GPSs) count "Needs Maintenance" as a "Found It," which breaks up DNF strings and diverts Reviewer attention to other caches. If a cacher really believes the cache is not present and has noticed the Cache Owner has been unresponsive to other Cacher and Reviewer logs, the "Needs Archived" log should be used to bring the cache to the Reviewer's attention.

Finally, cachers who cache exclusively using their smart phone with a geocaching application need to be aware of a glitch that indicates event dates in terms of the date Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). If only the date in the app is referenced, a cacher will be a day early for Alaskan events. However, reading the event page itself in the app or on a desktop computer will provide the correct date. Groundspeak is aware of the problem and is working to correct it.

Add GeocacheAlaska! Geoart to Your Cache Pages

By Michael Malvick / Ladybug Kids



You can show you are a proud member of GeocacheAlaska! and encourage others to join by including GeocacheAlaska! artwork on your cache pages. Once you have typed your cache description in the Short and Long Description boxes of the cache page, open a new browser window, go to <http://www.geocachealaska.org/gakartwork.htm> and choose the artwork you want to add to your page. Copy the html code (acronym for hypertext markup language which is the code that tells a webpage how to display information) from under the artwork by highlighting the text, clicking your right mouse button, and select Copy. Then, return to you cache page, click "Source" in the edit bar for the description box you want to add the artwork to, click your right mouse button, and select Paste. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click "Submit Changes."

You can retroactively add the artwork to your cache pages by clicking "Edit" in the Admin Tools box in the upper right corner of each page and then following the above steps. The big difference is that there is not a "Source" button to select, but you will have to check the box next to "The descriptions below are in HTML," and then copy and paste the html block into the box.

After you click "submit changes," click "View Geocache" to see the result. If you see only the html text rather than the graphic, you either forgot to click "Source" for a new cache page or "The descriptions below are in HTML" for an already published cache page. To correct the problem, repeat the above steps and replace the old html block of text with a fresh block from the GeocacheAlaska! web page.

Recent Events

GeoCruise 4th of July Meet n' Greet

By Denise Canavan / shizengiggles

I want to take a moment to thank all the Anchorage Geocachers that came to Sourdough Mining Company to welcome our Traveling Band of 38 Geocachers arriving into Anchorage from our 7-day cruise. This is our second year having [this event](#) and the reception both times has been overwhelming. You have an extremely friendly group in your area. They have graciously assisted us with planning our Geocaching Adventures in the Anchorage area and some have even guided us along the way. I look forward to meeting you all again next year when I bring another group of Geocachers, but this time it will be in August as we start in Fairbanks and head southbound to end at the Geocaching Block Party in Seattle. Perhaps some might want to come along for the ride. Until we meet again...Happy Caching!



Geocachers!! Photo by ellinas

Great Land Flash Mob - Int'l Geocaching Day!

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes

Ten geocachers and several geo-canines managed to brave intermittent rain showers to attend the Great Land Flash Mob - Int'l Geocaching Day event held at large roadside pullout just a ten minute drive north of Seward on August 16th. This event allowed attendees to purchase the new 2014 geocoin as well as the Seven Souvenirs of August tag set while swapping stories about the caches found up and down the Seward Highway in the course of the day's caching travels. The event paid tribute to CohoFive's Seward Highway Cache Tour series here at the site of [GC29TFZ The Great Land](#), part of a long string of caches placed to enhance the joy of traveling one of America's most scenic highways.



Event attendees at one of the most scenic turnouts along the Seward Highway...

Recent Events

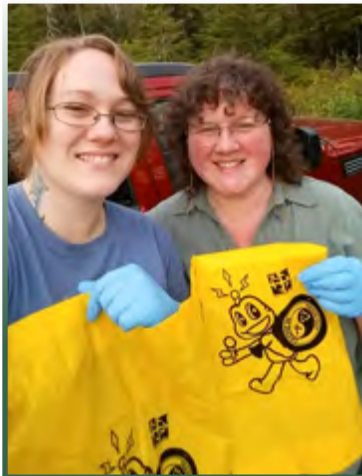
Harriet Hunt CITO

By *Erica Rud / AKRUD*



In August, Ketchikan hosted the [Harriet Hunt CITO, GC5AEM8](#). Luckily the weather held out for the event. (Anyone who has ever been to Ketchikan knows you always have a 50/50 chance whether you are going to get sunshine or a complete downpour.) Nine cachers and several K9 buddies showed up and picked up a dozen bags of trash along with several other larger items, including a toilet seat, sheets of wood, and a huge block of foam. Everyone had a great time sharing stories, giving advice, and getting to know other fellow cachers.

Harriet Hunt is known for its recreation, including Geocaching, riding ATV's and snow machines, kayaking, and hiking. We were thrilled to be able to help clean it up and make it a wonderful place for people to continue to enjoy nature and, of course, Geocaching.



wild child ak & AkMotherbear



student camper, aksushigirl, alaskantman & akwrench



Group Photo - from left to right: akwrench (bottom), student camper, wild child ak holding silly salmon, AkMotherbear, alaskantman, AkRud, aksushigirl, KetchGirl

Recent Events

Caching on the Kenai for the 7 Souvenirs of August

By Scott Aleckson / SSO JOAT



As the 23,116th geocacher to complete the [7 Souvenirs of August](#) challenge, I made it a point to do my part in helping folks on the Kenai get the Event and CITO souvenirs by hosting four events in August. On August 16, we gathered at the original Kaladi Brothers coffee shop in Soldotna for a quick [Cup'a Joe with Puzzlemaster JOAT](#) that turned into an hour and a half of fun conversation with a national group of cachers from Soldotna and Homer and tourist cachers from New Mexico, Texas, and North Carolina!



Then we gathered at the site of the annual Kenai picnic event at [Kenai Municipal Park](#) on August 17th to do a CITO of the park. Over a dozen cachers came out on a nice sunny day to spend an hour and a half walking the entire park and picking up every scrap of trash we could find. Great work

in giving back to the City of Kenai for the use of the park for our annual picnic event.

On Sunday, August 24th, I ran a twofer of events in Cooper Landing starting with a morning CITO event at the south trailhead of the [Resurrection Pass Trail](#). We had quite a few cachers with 9 folks from Homer, a couple from Soldotna, and one from Anchorage collecting up every bit of trash we could find around

the trailhead parking lot and the first 3/4-mile of the trail. I'm happy to say, the place was pretty clean and we had to use our geo-senses to find the trash that we did. Needless to say, we left the place spotless and had a group find on the geocache about 1/2-mile up the trail.



We then went a couple miles up the road to the [Kenai Drifter's Lodge](#) where we cashed in on a half-price scenic raft float coupon that JOAT scored at the Peninsula Rec & Trade Show a couple months ago. All the folks from the CITO were joined by a few more cachers from Anchorage and Seward. We managed to fill up two boats with a total of 19 cachers for a 2-hour guided float down the river from just under Kenai Lake down to the Russian River. It had been drizzling rain all morning and for most of the trip, the skies opened up and dumped on us. That didn't dampen our spirits and we had a great time seeing this area from a new perspective.



Photo by
Louise Kempler / freeweaz

Recent Events

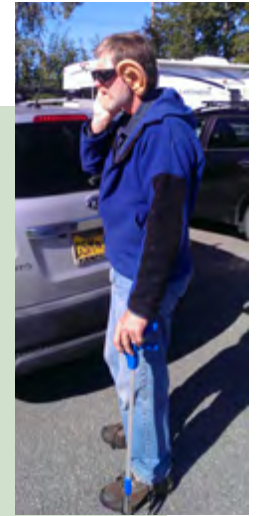
[Let's pick up things at Russian Jack Springs](#)

By Andrew Harrell / OP_Beardo

Cachers gathered on August 30th at Russian Jack Springs Park in Anchorage to BBQ and CITO!

The event was a success: 32 bags of trash, 2 tires, and a door... Anchorage Parks & Recreation generously placed a dumpster for our accumulated trash!

Thank you to everyone who participated - what a great turnout!



Upcoming Events

2014 Fall HOBO CITO Camping & Cleaning Weekend

By Scott Aleckson / SSO JOAT

We're doing it again! Once again we are running a traveling cleaning camping weekend to close out the summer season on the Kenai Peninsula. This year, we will be kicking it off Friday night, September 12 with a camping night in the [Tenderfoot Campground](#) behind Summit Lake on the Seward Highway near MP 46. We will host a campfire social event starting at 8:30pm to allow the Friday workers some extra time to make their way out to the campground, which is about an hour and a half drive from Anchorage.

On Saturday, September 13, we will pick up the campground and pack up our camp, then proceed up the highway to the top of Turnagain Pass for a [Leap Frog CITO](#) event starting at 12 Noon. Once we've all gathered, signed in and put door prize tickets in the can, we will proceed to clean up the rest area at the published coordinates and then drive south on the Seward highway cleaning every pullout, trailhead, and campground all the way to the highway junction at Tern Lake. The process involves the first vehicle of Hobos to stop at the first pullout they find; the next vehicle to pass them and stop at the next pullout; and the next to continue on to the next pullout and so on. When the first hobos finish a quick cleanup of their pullout, they saddle up and head down the road, passing the other hobos until they find the next pullout that needs cleaning. When the group reaches a campground, all hobos will stop and participate in a joint cleanup of the whole campground. This also serves to keep the hobo groups from getting spread out too far on the highway as we go. The last time we did this, it was very fast, fun, and effective. There is plenty of time to stop for the occasional park-n-grab cache along the way. Upon arrival at Tern Lake, we

will draw for prizes, have a photo op, and then go to our next camping location at Trail River.

Saturday evening at 6:30pm we will have our campfire social event at [Trail River Campground](#) on Kenai Lake in Moose Pass near Seward Highway MP 24. Once again, the Hobos will pitch our tents and cuddle up around the fire to share stories. GeocacheAlaska! will be providing fixings for s'mores and such at both campfire socials.

Finally, on Sunday, September 14, we will pick up the Trail River campground and break camp before heading back up to Tern Lake at 12 Noon to resume our [Leap Frog CITO](#) run all the way in to Seward. This will be run the same as Saturday with a final gathering point in Seward to be determined on the fly. After drawing prizes and the photo op, those who wish may join in for an informal group dinner at a local eatery (TBD), or simply wander off to do some caching around the area.

Cachers are welcome to attend all or part of this event series. If you're not into camping, there is plenty of time to drive in to meet us for either (or both) CITO events. One request that we make is that campers are traveling small and light to ease the camp transitions. We hope to see some new Hobos this year!

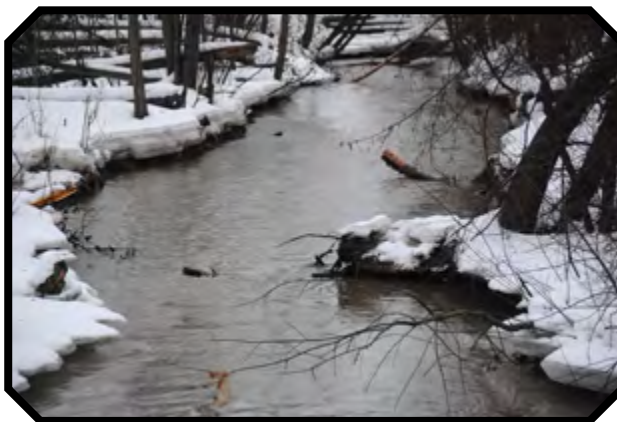


Caching Travelogues

MacGyver in Alaska

By Alan Geraldi / CACCBAG

I was on my first business trip to Alaska in January of this year (I have been back almost every other month since). While grabbing a new state cache (I am 50% of the way done now), I did a check on some older caches. Wow! There was one about a mile from our offices that filled in my last 2002 month. It was [“Quick and Easy” GC3ED5](#). Hmm...so I wandered over there during lunch. Did you guys know it snows in Alaska? And snow sometimes turns to ice? And both are a bit of a challenge in work shoes? I discovered all that. I really wasn't giving up so I trudged around GZ, sometimes the snow came up to me knees – in my business slacks and shoes. But I could not find the darned thing. So, with my fingers nearing frostbite and my clothes and shoes getting soaked, I slipped on the ice back to my car. I put out a call for help to a couple recent finders and armed with the clue “Under a log”...I went back a few days later to search for a log. Did you know logs get buried under snow? Anyway, this time I was prepared...well, kind of. Usually I travel with my running shoes/clothes but this was a last minute trip and I rushed out of the house without them. So, I was still limited to my work shoes and clothes. But, in the spirit of MacGyver, I fashioned my own version of snow shoes. Two plastic laundry bags from my hotel room and two rubber bands from work. I trudged around the trails I created a few days ago and finally found the correct log. Trouble was, the cache was almost frozen in, under it. The cap was getting caught on the log, but finally I pulled the cache out (now I know how delivery room doctors feel). With my now frozen fingers, I barely opened the container, signed the log, snapped a few photos, and replaced everything. Phew! 2002 complete. I am now down to just a few year 2000 caches to complete Jasmer. So much for “Quick and Easy” being quick and easy!



*“So much for
‘Quick and Easy’
being quick and
easy!”*

Caching Travelogues

A Tale of Two Caches

By Seth Steben / barnacle9

As the captain of a fish tender vessel (we buy fish) on Prince William Sound, I often pass by remote cache locations and wish I had the time to go ashore and hunt for them. Rarely do I actually get the opportunity. Well, this season I found myself with a little time on my hands and a couple of chances to hunt for remote caches near Valdez. The finds were on different days, with very different weather, but each involved my anchoring the big boat in a beautiful bay (Sawmill Bay and Jack Bay both just outside Valdez Narrows opposite each other), kayaking to the beach, and hiking to find the cache. Since few people ever get (make) the opportunity to go after these caches, I thought I'd share.

[Skinny Dipper GC14E23](#)

The first one is the Skinny Dipper cache ([GC14E23](#)) in Sawmill Bay, which is also home to Blueberry Blitz cache ([GC29F5](#)). So we had a couple of beautiful days, and we were anchored in Sawmill Bay overnight initially thinking we would buy fish near Potato Point in the morning. Plans were changed, and we were put on standby until 1400 August 2nd. The first thing I did was put my kayak in the water and hunt for Blueberry Blitz. Please read my [log](#) or the [cache page](#) for more info and pictures on that excellent cache.

Waking up the following beautiful morning, I resolved to find Skinny Dipper. The night before, I had paddled around and identified the small waterfall mentioned in the cache description, although from the water I could not spot the trail I was to take. So I paddled ashore and hauled my kayak up the beach, securing it to an old snag. A brief look around, and I was headed uphill on what the cache page accurately describes as a 'rough trail.' The first part is easy enough to follow uphill and through the woods a bit at the top, but after crossing a creek in a beautiful meadow, the route gets a little confusing. I ended up doing some bushwhacking after losing the



trail completely (it was there, I just didn't see it).

Finally, I emerged from the brush into a meadow running down to a beautiful little lake stretched out in front of me. Approaching the water's edge, I could see I was a ways from GZ, and I was going to have to either swim across the lake or do some more bushwhacking to get there. Fortunately, this proved not to be too difficult, and soon I was approaching the published coordinates. It only took a couple of minutes to make the find, although things apparently had changed a bit since the cache was hidden. The view back across the lake from the cache is quite peaceful.



Well, by this time I was hot and sweaty, so I decided to do what the name of the cache suggests – after all, there was nobody around, and I hadn't brought any shorts. So I headed back around the lake to a nice spot with something like a beach and tons of lily pads, and went ahead and blinded any critters unfortunate enough to be watching me swim :-)

After a great little swim in a beautiful spot, it was time to head back down the hill, and I managed to find the missing trail through the brush – had I seen that on my way up, things would have been easier for sure :-). This was really a fun little adventure, and I highly recommend making the effort to get to this cache, especially if it's a hot and sunny day! I am sure nobody would mind if you didn't take your clothes off to go swimming here, but where's the fun in that?

Please visit the [cache page](#) and my log to see more pics and info!



Caching Travelogues

[Snootleather #1 - Jack's Grotto - GCKC3N](#)

The second hunt was for the venerable Snootleather #1 – Jack's Grotto [GCKC3N](#) on an island in Jack Bay. This was on a rainy and gloomy day, but lousy weather couldn't keep this one from being fun. We were suddenly put on standby when seining was closed due to low hatchery escapement numbers, and so we had some rainy off days. Well, I had known of this cache for a couple of years, but every time I had anchored in Jack Bay I was busy taking fish – this was a welcome exception.

Having no internet connectivity in the bay, I had to go with what I remembered about the cache and just the coordinates, which were overlaid on my plotter as the results of an old pocket query for Prince William Sound. As I run by cache locations, they show up on my chart and I am able to pull coordinates off them. So I plugged the coords into my GPSr, splashed my kayak, put on some rain gear,



and went for it. First I visited the West end of the island, which was closest to the boat and looked interesting. Walking around, I found a couple of undeveloped campsites that I would love to spend some time at if I ever have the chance. After a few minutes I decided that if I was going to be out in a downpour, I might as well be moving, so I pushed off and headed towards the other end of the island, where I knew the cache was.

By this time, the downpour had thankfully slowed to a drizzle, so I was able to enjoy my paddle around the interesting rock formations making up the northern shoreline of this little island, which incidentally is a state marine park. At this point, I was headed for a tiny cove I knew to be in the vicinity of the cache based on it's position on my plotter. My Oregon was stashed away in a small dry bag with my box of trackables (it goes with me whenever I cache), so I didn't get a look at GZ from the water. Had I done so, or had I been able to read the cache page and hint, I might have found this one much more easily. I was able to make

landing in the cove in spite of an extremely high tide which put me on an awkward part of the 'beach.' From here, I just had to check out the beautiful point just to my East, which can only be described as nature's perfection.



Well, I lingered there for a while before deciding I needed to move on and find the cache, which was a few hundred feet West. To get there, I followed a fairly well defined trail over the hill and through the woods to a point right above GZ. Below me was a hole dropping down into a grotto at the edge of the island – I had paddled right past it. My Oregon consistently had me looking on one side of that hole, although I looked over at the other side but didn't see any likely hiding spots. After hunting higher and lower, and up above on the other side, I started to think the cache was gone.

As I was about to give up, I decided there was one little spot still to check, but it seemed unlikely. I checked it anyway, and lo and behold – a cache! I had to take a selfie with a waterfall across the bay in the background. The ammo can had seen better days, but I drained the water out and added ziplocks to the logbook. It has since had some maintenance performed on it by another cacher.

Well, afterward I returned to my kayak and explore more of the island – to see what I found please visit the [cache page](#) and my log for pics and info. This was certainly a fun cache to go after – I hope more people decide to go after remote PWS caches like this – as someone who has hidden a couple, I know it is great when they actually get found.



Caching Travelogues

Ladybug, Ladybug, Fly Away Home

By Michael Malvick / Ladybug Kids



This summer, two of my family's travel bugs completed their missions. First, the [Alaska Moose on the Loose #1](#) returned to his Fairbanks point of origin after starting a voyage in the Netherlands in May 2005 and traveling more than 17,000 miles. The travel bug started his travels at the [The Golden Heart of Alaska](#), an international exchange cache by Dutch cacher [Johny Cache](#). He spent a lot of time wandering around Scandinavia before hopping across the ocean and eventually being left in [All Fun and Games](#) in Fairbanks. By sheer coincidence, I

had a business trip scheduled for Fairbanks a few days after the moose was dropped off. Once I got a chance to break away from my work colleagues and jogged down the Chena River Bike Trail to the cache, which I'd originally found a few years ago with Fairbanks cacher firemanak. Hoping against hope that the cache hadn't been visited since the Moose had been dropped off, I opened the container and found the Moose just hanging out on the south bank of the Chena River.

Then, just two weeks ago, [Mommy Ladybug's Ladybug Travel Bug](#) showed up in [Ra-A Tribute to Our Caching Buddies](#) by DeLong Lake after spending nearly a decade in the field. One of the first travel bugs we released, this travel bug's journeys are particularly notable because she's completed two missions. First, she flew from Fairbanks to the cache nearest my wife's parents' home in New York via Hawaii. Then, she flew back to Alaska, but not before disappearing for five years between 2008 and 2013, reappearing, and continuing her journey. After more than 14,000 miles, she flew home to Anchorage where I was able to pick her up.



I attribute both travel bugs' successes to having a mission card attached with the

travel bug tag. The card clearly states on one side that the item is a travel bug, not a trade item. On the other side is the specific mission. We print the card to be the same size as the travel bug tag, laminate it, punch a hole in it, and add it to the travel bug chain. That way, everyone who finds the travel bug can quickly ascertain that it is to keep moving and where it should be moving toward. Also, Mommy Ladybug's Ladybug Travel Bug was small enough it could fit into most small and larger caches, making it easy to drop her off at a new location. The Alaskan Moose, however, was an exception because he could slum only in large containers and in retrospect, and we feel fortunate he traveled much at all. However, the European cachers took great care of him, snapping photos along the way, until a suitable cache could be found. Being both cute and from Alaska definitely worked in his favor.

So don't give up on trackables. There are happy endings, the chances of which can be increased by following the basic tenets described in [Snoogans' TB Longevity Clinic](#).

Streets of Laredo and Other South Texas Adventures

By Michael Malvick / Ladybug Kids

I'm definitely doing something wrong because I keep traveling to Texas during the summer when the weather is just plain hot on a good day and hot and humid on a not so good day. However, the trips to the second largest state in the union are made enjoyable due to the hospitality of Houston cachers Kirbydox and Rich & Lola. In July, I altered my flight itinerary to land in San Antonio where they picked me up at the airport. From there, we launched on a near-epic 800 mile road trip that included cache finds in 23 Texas counties in about 24 hours (which added 21 new counties to my Texas County Challenge bookmark list) and a quick hop across the border into Mexico.



The trip didn't get off to the smoothest start because my flight between Houston and San

Caching Travelogues

Antonio was delayed a couple of hours for mechanical reasons. Being the ubercachers that they are with more than 20,000 finds each, Kirbydox and Rich and Lola didn't stress out and instead spent the time finding caches including a new Wherigo that highlighted little known features of The Alamo. I eventually made it to San Antonio and we headed west into Medina County to find a cache in Hondo, one of the communities featured in the Texas "I've Been Everywhere" Challenge. From there, we cached west and then south through Uvalde, Kinney (including Bracketville, another "Everywhere" town), Maverick, Dimmit, Zavala, and La Salle Counties, letting the caches guide us to cemeteries, historical markers, and historical landmarks. One of the highlights of this part of the route was visiting [I 'Yam' What I 'Yam'](#) in Crystal City, the self-proclaimed "Spinach Capital of the World," which has a statue of Popeye that dates back to 1937 in the town square.



We entered Webb county north of Laredo and pulled into the rest stop visitor center to find [RJ's I-35 Rest Area Cache v3.0](#). This is easily the most posh highway rest stop I have ever visited and features tiled archways, tiled domes on the main buildings, and tiled picnic shelters. From there, we drove into Laredo to find two virtual caches and keep alive Rich's hope of finding every Texas virtual cache. It was hard to tell whether we were in Texas or Mexico when driving through downtown Laredo because the store names were all in Spanish and the way the colorful goods were displayed along the sidewalk in front of the stores. Continuing south, we visited Zapata County at [Rilekyle's River View Cache](#) where I was serenaded by cooing doves as I jogged down the trail to the edge of the bluff above the Rio Grande, snapped some photos of the view, and scanned the river for water fowl (and swimmers). I was intrigued by the yellow rock in the area and wished for an EarthCache to explain it to me.



Next, we detoured off the highway to mix some international caching into our big Texas County day. We checked in at customs before proceeding through the gate to verify the rules of engagement (don't drive across the border, there's plenty of parking on the American side, etc.). We then alternately walked and drove across the dam, admiring the immensity of the structure which holds back water for the twin hydroelectric plants on either side of the border, watching the hawks glide past riding the upwelling breeze over the dam, and waving at the fishermen in the boat below.



Rich found a relatively recently deceased tarantula along the way, too, but no one was too interested in keeping it as a souvenir. Once at the border, we took photos to document our visit, enjoyed the peaceful time of day just before sunset and then set about seeking the cache.

Rich made a relatively quick find of [PRESA FALCON \(DAM SOUTH\)](#), signed us all in, and we returned stateside without meeting any *Federales*. Back at the customs station, we chatted a bit with one of the agents who warned us there would be a lot of law enforcement officers on the way to McAllen because there had been an LEO shooting earlier in the day. We'd seen four already along the highway and one parked at the four-way stop at the nearby intersection, and later saw a law enforcement vehicle about every mile thereafter. On our way back to the highway, we also stopped at the "Welcome to Texas" sign for a photo op and then continued toward the next county and McAllen.



Further down the road, we found [Sugar Shack](#) to color in Hildalgo County, my eleventh new

Caching Travelogues



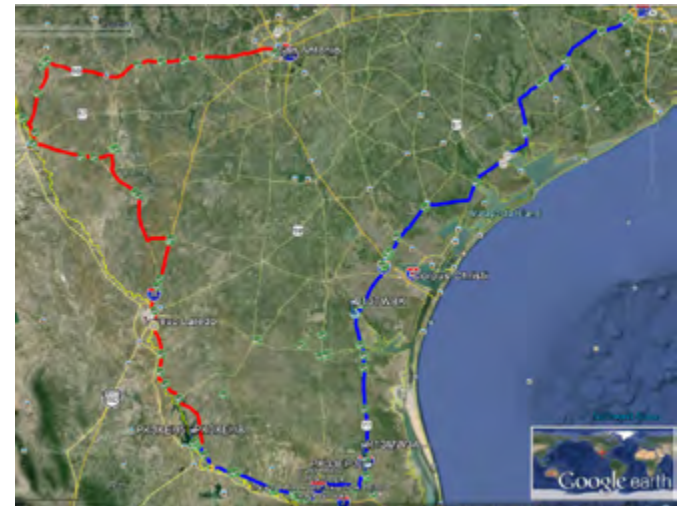
county and my third Texas “I’ve Been Everywhere” Challenge community (this is also the closest cache to Santa Rosa) of the day. The nighttime brought the creepy crawly critters out in force, but we successfully fended off the ants, roaches, and crickets to access the container and sign the log. The cache is located on the site of a sugar mill and I’d never before connected sugar with

this region of Texas until visiting this cache and finally realizing that Sugar Land to the northeast got its name from the same crop. Driving further into the night brought us to [Tie One In](#) in Willacy County where we swarmed one side of the architectural feature and couldn’t come up with the find, so I walked around the back side, spooked a bird in the tree, got spooked by a large roach, and made the find. By this point in the evening, we were wishing we could all tie one on, but we still had quite a ways to go before shutting down for the night.

Next, we entered Kenedy County (yes, only one “n”) after crossing a “big empty” near Texas’ Tropical Coast with no towns or cell service. I was fixated by the cool plants growing in the bark of the tree and then thinking [Just another crossover – Kenedy](#) (“crossover” is Texan for a legal place to pull a U-turn to switch directions on a divided highway) could be hidden in one of them that I completely missed the cache (as did the rest of the group, initially). I’d looked at one feature in the area and thought I should check it out, but then went back to the plants and it was Kirbydox who eventually looked out the feature and exclaimed, “well, that was too easy!” She signed the log for us and we continued north up the road. While we drove toward the next county and cache, I started pulling up hotels on the Nuvi and looking for beds for the group. I ended up calling several locations with “No Vacancy” before eventually finding a place in Robstown in Nueces County. Once there, no one wasted any time heading to their room and bed since it was 0130 and we needed to be up for breakfast by 0600 in order to make the [Alien Invasion DT Houston – July](#) Event in Houston at 1100, which was critical since Kirbydox was the hostess.

0600 came way too quickly for all four of us, but everyone was up on time for breakfast and check-out and we continued north and east after making a quick stop [Tribute to our “Little Cachers”](#) in Nueces County. We greeted dawn by finding [Hanging at Pedro’s place](#) in St. Pedro’s (Peter’s) Cemetery in San Patricio County followed by a cemetery two-fer with [Dying to get in](#) and [Oakwood](#) to close out Refugio County north of Corpus Christi. A short drive brought us to [Mucho Zancudos](#) (translates to “Many Mosquitoes”) where fortunately they weren’t present and Wharton County’s [Wharton TB Hotel](#) where we swapped several trackables and then took advantage of Buc-ee’s “cleanest rest rooms in Texas” across the street. I managed to make it past all the reasonably priced souvenirs and snack food and back without holding up the team in our quest to make it to downtown Houston on time. Houston traffic treated us fairly and we arrived at the Flying Saucer restaurant just in time to grab a seat and order the lunch special (French dip, fries and a soft drink). While we waited for our food, Rich took me on a tour of the trackable plates (one earns a plate by sampling 200 different beers) affixed to the ceiling and then I tore into my tasty lunch. One local cacher tried to pawn off a hand grenade TB, but I declined, not wanting to get to know TSA better.

Once lunch was over, my hosts drove me to Hobby Airport so I could pick up a rental car to begin the working part of my trip. Although we were tired, we spent some time scheming about the next batch of counties we should cache out during my next trip. Little did I know that I’d be back exactly four weeks later and rack up 26 more counties, but that tour is worthy of an article all its own.



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. Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/geocachealaska/>
4. GeocacheAlaska! Facebook Page: [GeocacheAlaska! Page](#)
5. E-mail to contact@geocachealaska.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

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.

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](#).

The Cache In Trash Out Logo is a trademark of Groundspeak, Inc. The Geocaching Logo is a registered trademark of Groundspeak, Inc. Each is used with permission.