

Around The State

October 2014



Photo credit: Darren Hull / MTBoy
[Nutirwik's Erratic \(GC4N616\)](#)

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

[2014 Adopt-A-Highway Fall CITO](#)

Saturday, October 11, 11am, Girdwood

[Pocket Query Creation and Filtering Eduvent](#)

Thursday, October 15, 6:47pm, Anchorage

[Pocket Query Creation and Filtering Eduvent](#)

Thursday, October 15, 6:47pm, Fairbanks

Geofest, Friday, December 19, Anchorage

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

President's Corner

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes



September 23rd saw the passing of the Autumnal Equinox, and now our days are shorter than our nights. Those days will keep getting shorter until the Winter Solstice on December 21st, when we turn the corner and reverse the trend once more. These changes are as old as time itself, and everything from popular literature through medical journals are replete with tales of our battle against the effect of darkness on our lives, and the victory over darkness accomplished by the sun at every winter solstice. Sites such as Stonehenge attest to the fascination and deadly seriousness which has been accorded to the change of seasons. A recent Anchorage Dispatch news article cited statistics which show that October and November are the deadliest months for accidents in Alaska, due in large part to the encroaching darkness and onset of colder weather. As geocachers, we know how important it is to get outdoors and play year-round. However, I encourage you to slow down a bit at this time of year and think about your preparedness for outdoor activities as the dark sets in sooner and the weather turns chillier. Make sure you're not one of the unfortunate statistics which has set up this time of year as the deadliest time for Alaskans to be out-of-doors!

It's time to check our caches one last time before snow sets in. Drying out 'wet' containers will help them make it through winter successfully, and replacing wet logbooks makes the cache fun to find for the cold season geocachers. I'll be out checking my night caches soon to ensure the markers haven't disappeared or been obscured over this summer – getting ready for all the winter-happy geocaching visits they can only enjoy when there's actually a 'dark night' out there.

Our last Seward Highway CITO is coming up on Saturday October 11 at 11am down near Girdwood. Here's a chance to attend an event for an hour or two, give back to our great state, and then link up with fellow cachers to 'cash in' on some of the great new hides that have popped up in the Girdwood area. Be on the prowl on Sunday October 12th to accomplish an EarthCache and earn a new International EarthCache Day souvenir from Groundspeak as well. I've heard rumors there may be a new earthcache in the area soon ... so don't miss out on a chance to learn something about geology and earn a new souvenir on Sunday October 12!

GeocacheAlaska! Inc is recruiting candidates for board member elections coming up in November. If you're interested in serving, or would like to nominate an individual, contact any Board Member by phone, email or in person.

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 most Found It logs. Remember that quantity is not necessarily a measure of quality and most of these long-time caches are easily accessible to numerous tourists in order to boost their find counts. For fun, I'm also including the DNF and Favorite Point counts for each cache. As with all our Top Ten lists, only Alaskan caches are counted here. Found counts as of September 30, 2014.



- #1 [Lil Miss Mollie](#) = 2,213 Finds & 71 DNFs with 21 Favorite Points
- #2 [Bin Caching TB Hotel](#) = 2,132 & 36 DNFs with 63 Favorite Points
- #3 [Camp Skagway No.1](#) (Virtual PMO) = 1,859 & 1 DNF with 179 Favorite Points
- #4 [Anchorage – Big Wild Life](#) = 1,772 & 5 DNFs with 95 Favorite Points
- #5 [Skagway cliffs](#) (Virtual) = 1,585 & 24 DNFs with 133 Favorite Points
- #6 [Revilla up Hilla](#) = 1,295 & 23 DNFs with 28 Favorite Points
- #7 [Museum Trading Post](#) = 1,124 & 64 DNFs with 14 Favorite Points
- #8 [Juneau Coin & Token Reserve](#) = 1,123 & 12 DNFs with 15 Favorite Points
- #9 [A Tribute to Patsy Ann](#) = 1,019 & 118 DNFs with 73 Favorite Points
- #10 [Denali Bruin Breath](#) = 1,013 & 15 DNFs with 26 Favorite Points

Look for another Top Ten list next month.

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

2015 Board of Directors Nominations Now Being Accepted

By Cameron Gilchrist / AlaskaCariboozer

The GeocacheAlaska! 2015 Nominating Committee will be working during the next several weeks to compile a ballot for election of the 2015 Board of Directors. The Nominating Committee is Cameron Gilchrist/AlaskaCariboozer (chair), Dana Rosso/DR-AK, Robert Burton/Burtosinak, and Sean McErlane/MAC5115.

The 2015 election will be electing the Vice-President, Treasurer, and two member-at-large seats, all of which are for 2 year terms.

You can submit nominations through any one of several avenues:

- Email Cameron Gilchrist at vicepresident@geocachealaska.org

- Text Cameron Gilchrist at nine oh seven - three six zero - nine four one four

- [E-mail](#) any member of the Board of Directors.

The nominating process and schedule is:

September 15-October 15: Accept nominations and explain Director responsibilities 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 this thread or e-mailing a member of the Nominating Committee.

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

November 1-November 15: Online elections open.

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.)?

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

2015 Board of Directors Nominations Now Being Accepted

The specific duties for the Directors up for election for 2015-2017 term are defined in the [By-laws](#):

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 GCAK! 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 GCAK!
- Pay duly authorized expenses.
- Make available financial records to GCAK! 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 GCAK! property.
- Send out membership renewal notices in a timely manner.
- File required annual paperwork to maintain nonprofit status

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)

What is GeocacheAlaska!?



GeocacheAlaska!, Inc. is a not for profit 501(c)(3) organization under the IRS code.

The purposes of GeocacheAlaska! are to:

- Promote geocaching as an exciting, family-oriented activity that increases awareness of parks and trail systems.
- Provide opportunities for the geocaching community to enjoy geocaching in the area and to meet and socialize with like-minded geocachers.
- Increase awareness of geocaching issues in the area through interaction with other outdoor activity groups, geocaching clubs, and the public.
- Educate geocachers on low impact geocaching and promote stewardship of our natural resources.
- Educate other outdoor enthusiasts on geocaching.
- Represent geocaching interests in public forums and to recreation land managers.
- Actively promote the "Cache In Trash Out" (CITO) program to help in the maintenance of parks and trail systems.

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

GeocacheAlaska! 2015 Calendar Photo Contest Deadline Approaching!

By Scott Aleckson / SSO JOAT

Time is running out to get your photos submitted for the 2015 Calendar Photo Contest. Entries must be in by end of day October 19. 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)
- Children
- Containers
- Flora
- People
- Places
- Whimsy (fun)
- Wildlife
- Winter



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.

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.

If you have any questions, send an email to the photocontest email account.

Thank you for participating!

GeocacheAlaska! is still seeking a bad purple Trek Tag

By Scott Aleckson / SSO JOAT

Sometime in July or August, a purple Trek Tag was purchased at an event, most likely in Anchorage. This Trek Tag has a bad tracking number and must not be activated. We will replace the purchased Tag with a new one as soon as we find the buyer. The tag is purple (magenta) and has a white wolf against a dark moon with a white band under the word "Alaska" and the tracking number. This etching pattern is different than all the other tags we are selling right now. This tag has two 5's and a 7 in the tracking number. If you have a tag that matches this description, please contact us immediately so we can replace that tag with a good one!



Caching Tricks, Tips, and Tools

Reviewer's Corner

By Michael Malvick / Greatland Reviewer



Fall Maintenance

The Chugach peaks above Anchorage have termination dust which means the first snowfall at lower elevations is only a matter of days or weeks away. In anticipation of that snow which significantly impacts many cachers' outdoor explorations, I began the Autumn Sweep process over Labor Day Weekend. The sweep process involves identifying geocaches that may need attention and then posting a Reviewer Note on the affected cache page suggesting that the Cache Owner check on their cache before the snow makes cache maintenance more difficult.

Criteria for whether a cache needs attention include the period of time a temporarily disabled cache has been disabled, a growing string of Did Not Find (DNF) logs, the date of the Cache Owner's last online visit, and other factors. After posting a Reviewer Note, I will typically give the Cache Owner a month or more to respond before again looking at the cache page. If the Cache Owner does not respond to the Reviewer Note by performing Owner Maintenance or by writing a Note to the cache page explaining the reason the cache has not been maintained, I will usually archive the cache with an offer to unarchive the cache if the Cache Owner contacts me. I will not archive a cache if the Cache Owner communicates with the caching community with status Notes to the cache page or directly with me via e-mail or an in-person conversation, so communication is key. I don't automatically archive caches on a set timeline because there are a number of extenuating circumstances (local construction, flooding, illness, slow replacement parts deliveries, etc.) for not maintaining a cache within days or weeks of an issue arising.

Remote Cache Placement

Switching topics, cachers must educate themselves about who owns/manages a potential cache location before they place a cache, especially if the cache is going to be placed in a remote area. For example, all caches on Adak Island are in danger of being archived because land on the island is either under the jurisdiction of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or is *privately* held by the Aleut Native Corporation. USFWS has a very clear policy prohibiting

caches on refuge lands and as far as I know, the Aleut Native Corporation has not granted permission for caching on their lands. All potentially affected Cache Owners have been informed via a Reviewer Note on their cache pages of the need to obtain permission or remove their cache(s).

Also this past summer, there were several caches placed near McCarthy that could not be published. The land around McCarthy is either Wrangell-St. Elias National Park (where caches are not allowed) or *private inholding* (which requires *explicit* permission from the land owner to place a cache). So, know before you go, to avoid the frustration of placing a cache that cannot be published!

A cacher interested in placing a cache in a remote area can research land ownership/management at the [Alaska Public Lands Information Centers](#) in Anchorage and Fairbanks, by visiting the applicable City, State, and Federal websites, or by using the applicable online Geographic Information System (GIS) resources. Cachers may also contact me through my online profile and I will try to assist.



Editor's Notes

By Cathy Wilmeth / *The_Firefly*

The submission deadline for the November issue of *Around The State* is October 25, 2014. Don't be shy - I encourage everyone to submit a photo, an article, an idea, or a request! What do you want to see in your newsletter? I'm happy to help with any questions or concerns you may have about submitting! Send to editor@geocachealaska.org.

As always, many thanks to all who have submitted for this and past issues!

Recent Events

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

Steller Geocaching!

By *Kacy Grundhauser / twinkywalks & Bob Vandergriff / bobdriveak*



GeocacheAlaska! came and talked to the class.

When people hear that school has started they think of textbooks and studying, teachers and homework, but what about geocaching? Steller Secondary School is an alternative junior and high school made up of about 300 students. Each semester they take on a two week intensive about a topic of their choice. From August 25th- September 5th, 2014, 24 students (in grades 8th through 12th) took an intensive all about Geocaching! Led by bobdriveak (Bob Vandergriff) and twinkywalks (Kacy Grundhauser), the students learned the basics of geocaching, wilderness safety, how to use a GPS, and much more. The first week consisted of learning the basics and putting them to use on caches around the school and downtown. Even some folks from GeocacheAlaska! came in and talked to the class.



Small created Geocaches (Thanks Burtonsinak for donating the containers!)

That Friday (August 29), the group headed downtown to grab some caches and attend an event cache: [Meet and Greet: Steller Edition](#)

[\(GC5A9BF\)](#). Here they were greeted with new faces from around the state and country. The long-time experts also got to see some new faces too.

The next week, the group was excited to cache in some places around town, just barely making a mark in Kincaid, Campbell Creek Science Center, and Powerline Pass.

The group found 36 caches around town, and some even went geocaching on their own. That's a total of 864 finds at the bare minimum! One devoted new geocacher got 73 caches (in total) in the 2 weeks, and hasn't broken his streak since. Way to go ToastToastToast!!



Learning GeoLingo

The students also each created 2 geocache containers that they decorated and filled with contents. Maybe some will post them?!

Overall, it was a great and exciting experience to give the students a taste of geocaching and get them back into the woods.

Thank you guys for all your support and help! We couldn't have done it without you. Happy caching!



Learning how to use a GPSr for the first time.

Recent Events

More Steller Geocaching!



Looking for "Dining out in the shadow of E.E. Cummings"



Students find "Quick and Easy"



Happy cachers!



Looking for "On the way to Somewhere" (Can you see it? ;)



Signing in at the Meet and Greet Event



Steller Meet and Greet Event

Recent Events

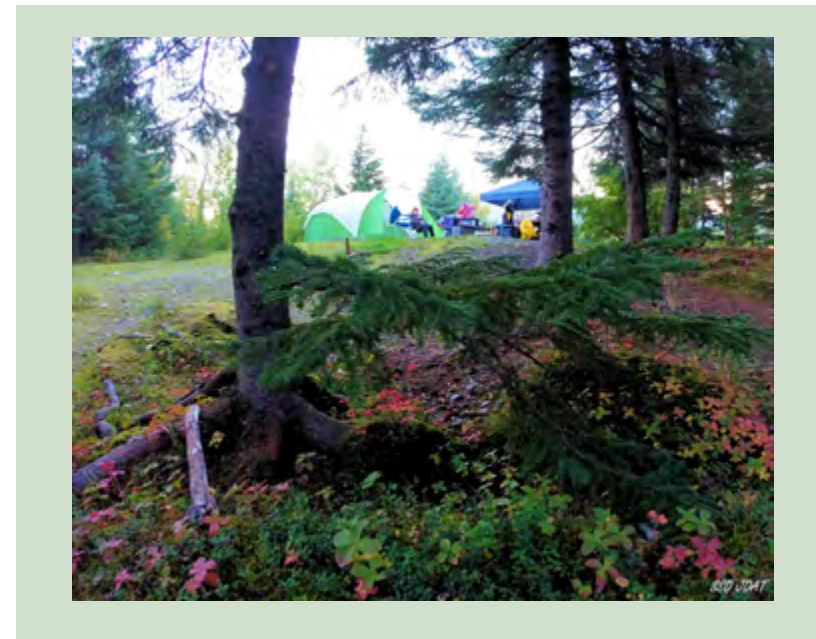
2014 Fall HOBO CITO Camping & Cleaning Weekend

By Scott Aleckson / SSO JOAT



[Tenderfoot Campground Social](#)
[Leap Frog CITO](#)
[Trail River Campground Social](#)
[Leap Frog CITO](#)

The traveling Hobo camping and cleaning crew did it again! While most of Southcentral Alaska was bathed in the wind and rains of a tropical storm, nine brave Hobo CITO catchers made their way to the middle of the upper Kenai Peninsula. Within the protection of the mountain passes surrounding the Seward Highway, we found some great weather and nearly empty campgrounds to claim as ours for the weekend. We spent two fun nights of camping at two different campgrounds and two full days of traveling the Seward Highway from the top of Turnagain Pass all the way to the city of Seward. Along the way we stopped and picked up trash at every campground and pullout in the Chugach National Forest along that section of Seward Highway. Thanks to the brave catchers who came out to join our little camping and cleaning group. We hope to see you and more come out for our next Hobo CITO series in 2015!



2014 Final Adopt-A-Highway CITO Event

GeocacheAlaska! has a section of the Seward Highway near Girdwood on the Turnagain Arm under the state DOT Adopt-A-Highway program. We are obligated to perform cleaning of this 2-mile section of highway at least three times per year. In 2014 we have cleaned the highway during two CITO events held on [April 26](#) and [July 12](#). We will be doing our third and final CITO for the year on October 11th starting at 11am. Post your Will Attend log on [GC5DVF2](#) to let us know you'll be there! The entire event takes about an hour and a half.



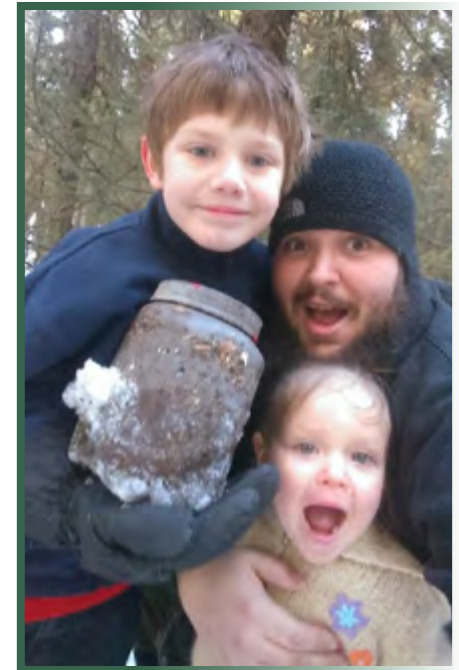
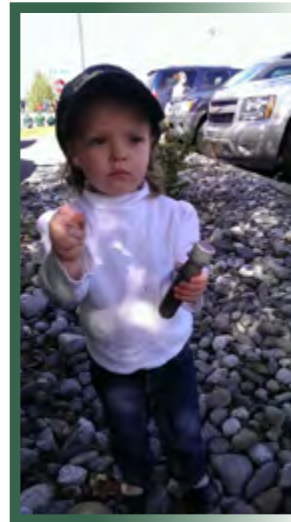
International EarthCache Day 2014



Mark your calendars now! The 2014 International EarthCache day is October 12. Cachers who log a found earthcache on that day will receive a special digital souvenir!

Family caching

Geocacher Op Beardo enjoys finding cool caches with his kids. These are a few of his favorite photos from caching in Alaska.



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](#).

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