

Around The State

December 2016



Photo Credit:

*"Foul Ball Cache" [GC64ZN0](#)
by Twinkywalks*

IN THIS ISSUE

[GeocacheAlaska! Updates](#)

[Caching Tricks, Tips, & Tools](#)

[Caching Travelogues](#)

[GeocacheAlaska! Information](#)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

[FTL-AK comes to Kodiak](#), December 14, 6pm, Kodiak

[GeocacheAlaska!'s 12th Annual Holiday Geofest](#), December 16, 5:30pm, Anchorage

[I've got the coffee jitters Stammtisch](#), December 16, 6:30pm, Eagle River

[Holiday Habanero](#), December 18th, 5pm, Anchorage

[I DARE YOU...](#), January 1, 2017, 2pm, Anchorage

[Bugbug's Hot Chocolate Event - :\)](#) 2nd Year, January 7, 2pm, Anchorage

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

President's Corner

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes



December brings us results of our recent elections. Be sure to read the accompanying article about who has been selected by membership to represent their interests on the GeocacheAlaska! Inc Board of Directors. Your board is keenly interested in how you'd like this organization to act out its responsibilities for advocacy, education, and social interaction. Please take time to complete the survey in your email in-box to tell us how to better serve you in 2017.

Coming education efforts are to include a special in-classroom workshop for a Mat-Su School District elementary school about geocaching, followed by field classes to introduce students to the game in the out-of-doors. We'll have a report on this project next month. In the meantime, watch for opportunities to invite your own friends out to learn about our 'get outdoors' game!

Editor's Note

By Cathy Wilmeth / The_Firefly

This - December 2016 - is my last issue as Editor for your Around The State publication. Thank you so much for your support, submissions, laughs, and camaraderie over the last three years. It has been fun! I'm looking forward to finding a new niche within GeocacheAlaska! that is not newsletter editor!

Please continue to send your newsletter submissions to editor@geocachealaska.org. Your tips, travelogues, photos, and stories are so enjoyable. Thank you!

2017 Board of Directors Elections

By the Nominations Committee

Election Results!

Four positions on the Board of Directors for GeocacheAlaska! were up for election for the 2017-2018 Board of Directors. The positions for Vice-President, Treasurer, and two of our Members-at-Large have been filled. Ballots were sent out to 166 Sourdough members and 70 of them participated in the election.

The Vice-President position had **Sean Gaither** running unopposed and he was elected as our Vice-President for the next Board. Sean moves to that position from a Member at Large seat where his term was expiring at the end of this year.

The Treasurer position had **Roberta Bromlow** running unopposed and she was also elected to be the Treasurer for the next Board. Roberta has served as our Treasurer before and took a break for the last couple years.

The Members-at-Large positions had five candidates competing for your votes. It was a very tight race and the membership selected **David Thomson** and **Michelli Warren** for the two vacant positions. We would like to thank candidates **Heather Fooks, Valeria Manfull, and Suki Patterson** for running for these Board positions.

GeocacheAlaska! certainly has other tasks that could use volunteer assistance beyond just Board service. Anyone interested in helping out with committee work on Events, Education, Advocacy, Member Recognition, or Fundraising should get in touch with a Board member or President Wes Skinner to express your interest.

Caching Tricks, Tips, and Tools

Reviewer's Corner

By Michael Malvick / Greatland Reviewer



Cache Page Related Timetables

Occasionally, questions arise about how long a cacher may “reserve” a location following a coordinate check, requesting a specific date and time for a cache to be published, or how long it should take for their cache to published.

Groundspeak's [Guideline](#) is that “Geocache listings should be submitted for review within three months of creation.” However, cachers can show consideration for each other in particularly cache-dense areas by progressing their cache(s) toward publication more quickly than required to minimize frustrating other cachers who also try to place a cache in the same general area. When more than one cacher submits a coordinate check for a location, I am not at liberty to tell either cacher who else has requested the spot.

Beginning October 27, Groundspeak will archive “draft” caches that have not been worked on for several months for site maintenance and database clean-up. For each affected cache, Cache Owners will receive an e-mail from noreply@geocaching.com with a subject line of “[LOG] Owner: Geocaching HQ Admin archived *CacheName* (Archived) (*Cache Type*).” The process was beta tested several months ago and is now running every night to archive caches that are six or more months old. If you are working on a complex cache, or are waiting on permission, communicate your progress by posting regular reviewer notes to unsubmitted listings, to “reset” the archive clock. If one of your works in progress was archived, you may create a new cache page or send me an e-mail or message me through the Message Center to request unarchival.

When requesting a specific publish time and date for a cache, please submit the cache for review at least [ten days ahead of time](#). The extra time can be useful if there are guideline issues with the cache that must be resolved before the cache can be published.

Everyone once in a while, I receive an e-mail or message asking, “when is my cache going to be published?” Before sending such a note, please verify that you clicked the “Submit for review” button to move the cache page into the

review queue where a Reviewer can readily see it. If you did click the button, you should have received a pair of e-mails from noreply@geocaching.com, confirming your new cache was submitted. One e-mail will have the subject line “Cache Report Submitted: *GCnumber*” and the other's subject line will be “[LOG] Owner: *CacherName* submitted *CacheName* (Not Published) (*Cache Type*) to be published. If everything checks out up to this point, the local Reviewer strives to publish your cache within seven days. Cachers in the territories I review usually receive a response within a day and oftentimes sooner. However, when I am traveling or life in general keeps me away from the desktop computer, more time may pass. Reference this [Help Center article](#) for more information.

Anchorage Trail Watch

Information provided by Tim / Dogliest Cache



Trail Watch Members-

We would like to thank all of the Trail Watch members, both previous and new, for your interest and participation in the Trail Watch program. Just this year we had over 125 new members join Trail Watch. We have had a series of three in-person trainings over the last couple of months. During these meetings new members watched a power point presentation on Trail Watch, viewed the safety video and received their Trail Watch armbands. Also, questionnaires were handed out to gain feedback regarding priorities, concerns, and visions from members. The most common themes were:

Presence- Trail Watch members being out and visible in parks and on trails is the greatest tool!

Safety- This covers negative and suspicious behavior, illegal camping, and maintenance issues. Reporting issues will help increase safety in parks and along trails. Remember the correct way to report: **911** for true emergencies, **786-8900** for non-emergency dispatch, or online at muni.org “Anchorage Works” for illegal camps and maintenance issues.

Visibility- This covers lighting and vegetation thinning in certain areas. In 2017 we will have volunteer projects to help with visibility along certain segments of trails. Information on these projects will be available online and through email. Please keep your eyes out for this information.

Thank you for helping revitalize this program and helping make your parks and trails a safer and better place to be. See you on the trails!

Municipality of Anchorage
Anchorage Parks and Recreation



Ammo Can Deal!

Thanks to FaithfulFireMedic for the tip!

Two ammo cans for \$16 at Costco



Mingo Road Trip – or why I needed to drive nearly 600 miles round-trip one day...

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes

It all began with a Grande Raspberry Mocha an hour after sunrise – and the 8yr old cache hidden in a lamppost skirt out in the parking lot of a Denver coffee shop. That's where Mrs NW and I began our one-day geocaching road trip to claim a find on GC30 'Mingo'. By our return to Denver an hour after dark that evening, we'd found seven of eight caches attempted along the way, crossed another state off our 'needs finds' list (Kansas), added another area to our 'needs more exploration' list, and spent a wonderful time together on I-70 in intense uninterrupted wide-ranging conversation about our life together. Road trips with good buddies are the best!

Mingo (GC30) was placed on May 11 of 2000, and today it's the oldest still-active geocache out there. What's intriguing is how this early cache placement has survived and thrived over the past 16-plus years. Supposedly the 7th cache ever created, this was the first cache hidden in Kansas. Its location makes it necessary to take a road trip along Interstate 70 for most cachers to gain access, but be prepared to drive on dirt as you make the final approach. The site is oddly mundane in appearance and location, yet that's exactly what has enabled this particular full-sized hide to thrive across time. We're looking forward to returning to this area (with surprisingly plentiful numbers of hotels nearby) at some future point to explore some of Kansas' natural wonders like Monument Rocks (located just 45 road miles from Mingo). That's one of our favorite things about geocaching road trips – done well, you uncover



NorthWes at Mingo with Travelers

Caching Travelogues

more than you ever imagined about an area, thanks to well-done caches that highlight local attractions and history. Perhaps the capstone of our road trip was stumbling across a local diner in Goodland, where we were served a full home-style Thanksgiving meal for lunch – supremely delicious, all for only \$12.95! The quality of the meal was matched by the staff's personal service, and made the day doubly special for us. Our final find of the day was at a little fishing pond behind the gas station in Limon, Colorado – where the last light of the setting sun painted the grain elevators a lovely orange hue. There's beauty to be found everywhere – and this one-day road trip across a part of the fly-over states confirmed that in full.

A Denver Urban Caching Highlight

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes

Has a business trip or a vacation brought you to downtown Denver, Colorado? If so, set aside enough time to enjoy some of the city's stellar urban caching attractions. There's a trio of earthcaches which illustrate the varied geologic backgrounds of the building materials used to construct the city, which require a bit of time for a walking tour. A particularly interesting large cache located just a few blocks from Union Station in the 'LoDo District' on the south side of Denver's historic downtown is a must-visit site for geocachers who find themselves in the heart of the Mile-High City.

The LoDo TB and Geocoin Hotel ([GC2KCRP](#)) is hidden in plain sight, carefully disguised to match the surrounding 'terrain' and securely locked with a combination device whose code is right on the cache page. There's plenty of room for swag and travel bugs of all sizes as you'd expect with a container rated as 'large.' Best of all, cache owner Joe Friday works in the building the cache is co-located with, and loves to have visitors stop by during weekday business hours to chat about their caching experiences. Mrs NW and I strolled in and introduced ourselves, pulling out our signature TBs and a Moun10Bike geocoin for Joe to log as 'discovered.' In turn, Joe produced a fistful of Moun10Bike geocoins (including the oldest one in circulation) and Jeep TBs for us to discover! We had a great chat, and were pleased to find that Joe knows GeocacheAlaska! Sourdough Member Cavyguy quite well. This is the kind of caching experience that makes urban caching a delight, and that makes a trip into downtown Denver a must-do activity if you're in the area for any reason.

Hotel cache interior shown with several GeocacheAlaska! travelers and a Moun10Bike geocoin



Union Station is home to three benchmarks, including the iconic 'mile-high' Denver benchmarks

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 a few ways you can join GeocacheAlaska! at the Sourdough level for \$20/year.

1. Navigate to the [GeocacheAlaska! webpage](#) and:
 - A. Click on the "Subscribe" button to set up an automatic subscription which will renew annually. Please enter your caching name in the provided box. OR
 - B. Click on "Add to Cart" to purchase an annual membership. OR
 - C. Download a membership form you can print and mail with your payment.
2. 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. Follow us on Instagram [@geocachealaska](#)
6. Follow us on Twitter [@GeocachAlaska](#)

Questions? E-mail to contact@geocachealaska.org

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK, Twitter, and Instagram!

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!

Follow us on Instagram! [@geocachealaska](#)

STATE PARKS PERMITS

Caches may be published within Alaska State Parks! All caches must have the permit number on the inside of the cache along with the cache owner's contact information. On the outside of the cache, you must write "Alaska State Parks Permit #15-KA-1994 Geocache AK" in permanent marking. The cache listing must state "Cache placed under GeocacheAlaska! Park Use Permit #15-KA-1994" within the description section. 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 Previous editions of *Around the State* are now on our website. If you have missed previous newsletters, check out the series [here](#).

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