



## DNR Leadership Accept the Ice Bucket Challenge



(L-R) DNR Deputy Commissioner Ed Fogels, DNR Commissioner Joe Balash, and Alaska State Parks Director Ben Ellis get doused in ice water by the Alaska Office of Boating Safety's Annie Grenier, Kelli Toth, and Joe McCullough after accepting the ALS/Alaska Office of Boating Safety Ice Bucket Challenge.

Challenged to the ALS/Alaska Office of Boating Safety Ice Bucket Challenge, DNR Commissioner Joe Balash, Deputy Commissioner Ed Fogels, and Alaska State Parks Director Ben Ellis accepted the challenge and called out others to participate.

Commissioner Balash challenged the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Cora Campbell, ADF&G's Director of Wildlife Conservation Doug Vincent-Lang and Deputy Commissioner Stefanie Moreland. Deputy Commissioner Fogels called out co-DNR Deputy Commissioner Bob Swenson and the commissioner's special assistants Elizabeth Bluemink and Esther Temple. Parks Director Ellis targeted ADF&G special assistant to the commissioner Kelly Helper, Holland-America Princess' Bruce Bustamante and Denali National Park and Preserve Superintendent Don Striker.

One Facebook poster said, "That is awesome. It's great to see Alaska's public officials stepping up to the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge!"

According to the ALS Association website, between July 29 and August 12, the group and its 38 chapters received an astonishing \$4 million in donations compared to \$1.12 million during the same time period last year. "The ALS Association is incredibly grateful for the outpouring of support from those people who have been doused, made a donation, or both.

Contributions further The Association's mission to find a cure for ALS while funding the highest quality of care for people living with the disease."

"It was great fun for two great causes," said Ellis. "I especially liked how the Alaska Office of Boating Safety added the element of cold water immersion and the need for Alaskans to wear a lifejacket to this nationwide effort to promote the fight against what most of us know as Lou Gehrig disease."

To watch the video, go to the Alaska State Parks or the Alaska Boating Safety Program Facebook homepages.



## Connections Are Hard Work!

Natural Resource Specialist Blaine Smith, Natural Resource Tech Ben Corwin and their crew of ACCs, Mike Fuller, Dawson Foster, John Mathot, and Jordyn Steele are working to connect the Flattop Trail at Glen Alps to the new satellite parking lot, while making it more sustainable. So far, they have moved and placed over 25.5 tons of barrier rocks and 91 tons of D1 and pit run gravel. Wow!



John Mathot and Blaine Smith work together to build a retaining wall



The whole team hard at work building the trail connection



Jordyn Steele shows off her hard work



Mike Fuller and Jordyn Steele moving heavy barrier rocks



## Tuesday Talks in Chugach State Park

This summer with the help of their Citizen Advisory Board, Chugach State Park began “Tuesdays in the Park” a series of informational talks given every week from May to September. The speakers covered a wide variety of topics such as geology, wildlife, and paragliding in the park.

There will be three more programs this summer. On Sept. 2, Steve Gruhn will be talking about mountaineering. Jake Schapler will discuss paragliding on Sept. 9, and Rick Sinnott will cover moose on Sept. 16. All talks are held at the Glen Alps Overlook from 6 to 6:45 p.m.

Volunteer speaker Sanjana Greenhill (at center in green jacket) talked about outdoor photography and explained how to take great pictures of the aurora.

## Northern News

- Deputy Commissioner Ed Fogels and Parks Director Ben Ellis took a four wheeler ride on the Compeau Trail in Chena River State Recreation Area to see how well sustainably built trails hold up under extreme weather events such as the Interior's record-breaking 2014 rainfall.
- The Northern Area Trail Crew worked on Granite Tors Trail this past month clearing seven miles of trail corridor. They also repaired sections of boardwalk and rebuilt the Rock Creek bridge at mile 1.5 of the Granite Tors Trail. ★
- Chief Ranger Ian Thomas got called out on a search and rescue at Angel Rocks Trail this month. A person fell and needed emergency assistance. Ian helped carry the 280-pound visitor back to the trailhead where he was transported via helicopter to Fairbanks.
- Maintenance workers Doug Avara and Marty Schatz started work on rerouting the Stiles Creek Extension Trail. The reroute will be constructed using today's best management practices and will eliminate a very dangerous and steep section of trail. ★
- Moose season is underway in the Northern Area. Cow hunts started in mid-August and will run through mid-November. Each year, dozens of hunters fill their freezers with moose harvested from Chena River SRA.



Deputy Commissioner Ed Fogels and Parks Director Ben Ellis ride the Compeau Trail. They are big supporters of public access and wanted to ride on a sustainably built trail.



The new Rock Creek bridge replaced an old rickety bridge as part of a three-bridge Recreational Trail Grant project in Chena River SRA. ★



Park specialist Brian Charlton and volunteer ranger assistant Max McKernan replaced an outhouse roof at Whitefish Campground in Lower Chatanika SRA.



Rain didn't put a damper on the 2014 volunteer picnic at Rosehip Campground in Chena River SRA. Staff celebrated the volunteers with certificates of appreciation, good food, and a state park thermos.



As part of the major renovations for Lower Chatanika SRA, Olmes Pond and Whitefish Campground received CXT toilets in August. Design and Construction engineer Roxanne Risse helped oversee installation of both these CXT toilets in addition to two at Twin Bears Camp in Chena River SRA.

# Design and Construction Project Updates

## Deferred Maintenance Partnership

Alaska State Parks' Design and Construction has been working with Design Alaska and the Division of Forestry to get deferred maintenance projects through the design and construction phases. Rangell Soriano has been busy this summer completing some of those projects. In June, he oversaw a project to upgrade lighting to high efficiency LED lights in Tok, and in July, to build a replacement pole barn in Fairbanks, and to replace an aging and leaking roof in Delta Junction. Division of Forestry staff has been very pleased with these projects.



Rangell Soriano inspects a leaky roof in Delta Junction



New pole barn in Fairbanks

## Finger Lake SRS Improvements

The Finger Lake State Recreation Site improvement project has been awarded and construction is underway. Project engineer Loretta Nabong is in charge of keeping the project on time and within budget.

The project is expected to be complete by the end of September with an upgraded host site, improved water well, and the existing roads and campsites reconfigured. The campground loops will be closed during construction, but the day-use and boat launch areas will remain open throughout the fall.

## Knik River Public Use Area Shooting Range

Project Engineer Edgar Tinajero recently completed the construction of a new rifle range for the Division of Mining, Lands and Water at the Knik River Public Use Area. Dave Griffin from the Director's Office laid the ground work while he was working in DMLW. This year, the grants and plans finally came to fruition.

This project was the first phase of a larger planned development. An access road, a parking area, a path to the shooting line, and a 100-yard rifle shooting line were constructed as part of this phase. The next design phase is expected to begin this winter.



(L-R) Parks Design and Construction engineering manager Luke Randall, Parks Design and Construction Landscape Architect Lucy Baranko, Parks Design and Construction engineering assistant Edgar Tinajero, citizen project proponent Kenny Barber, Rep. Bill Stoltze, citizen project proponent Dick Koontz, Gov. Sean Parnell, citizen project proponent Patti Barber, Amy Sommer and Doran Ichenburg with Tutka, LLC., Chief of Staff Rex Shattuck (for Rep. Mark Neuman), Public Safety Commissioner Gary Folger, Div. of Wildlife Conservation Acting Director Doug Vincent-Lang, and DNR Commissioner Joe Balash

## Canyon Road Gets Some Love

Prior to July, driving on Canyon Road in Chugach State Park was a bumpy ride. Poor drainage caused some serious erosion and two gigantic boulders ensured that only courageous drivers with a flair for creative driving got through.

In late July, work began and the culvert that had become plugged with debris was replaced. The inlet and outlet of the new culvert was well armored with rock to protect the road from future drainage problems.

The next major steps were removing the old gate and the culvert at the end of the road and installing a rock drainage basin to divert water effectively from the creek and uphill trail. The old gate was replaced with barrier rocks and a barrier post where the trail begins.

From then on, work focused mainly on grading the road for a new surface course. For example, the grade of the road below the first culvert was made less steep by placing material at the bottom of that hill. After that, all that remained to do was to place compost on the shoulders and cuts so that natural vegetation could take hold.

These improvements will make for a more pleasant ride, allowing less courageous or creative drivers to access the Rabbit Lake trailhead at the end of Canyon Road.



View of the end of Canyon Road from the beginning of the trail



New culvert under Canyon Road



New and improved Canyon Road

## Specialist to Ranger—Chris Love Makes the Jump

The Mat-Su Area is pleased to announce the promotion of Denali State Park Specialist Chris Love. He just made the jump, becoming Denali's bona-fide Park Ranger.

Chris has been the acting ranger for Denali SP for most of the last two summers. His deep involvement in the greater Talkeetna and Trapper Creek communities will serve the park well as the South Denali project draws new attention to the upper Susitna River valley.

Chris is also the captain of the Talkeetna EMS unit and volunteers his time with several other local non-profit organizations. He has worked at Denali SP since 2010 and juggled not only the park's front-country operations, but also several complex FEMA trail repair projects. Chris's professionalism and experience will be a true asset for the park's future.

Congratulations Chris!



## K'esugi Ken Campground Becomes Reality!

Over the past two summers, great things have happened in Denali State Park. A completely undeveloped area has been transformed into a sparkling new facility with a jaw-dropping view of the "great one."

K'esugi Ken is the Athabascan name for the "ridge south of K'esugi," which we know today as Curry Ridge. The Design and Construction crew has done a great job of designing and initiating the build-out of Phase I of the South Denali project.

Two miles of new road, a large day-use parking area, interpretive trail, a 32-unit RV compatible campground and the foundation pad for a new ranger station has been built so far. Plans are to construct the ranger station, a 15-unit tent campground and a trail to Curry Ridge next summer.

The RV campground is scheduled to open sometime next summer as well. Phase II of the project will include a road to the ridge and the visitor center sometime in the future when funding becomes available.

Earlier in August, project engineer guru/tour-guide Sarah Wells gave tours to project partners, VIPs, and staff. Everyone marveled at the work accomplished and the great views.



Director Ben Ellis shakes Denali Borough Mayor Clay Walker's hand at a viewpoint along the new interpretive trail.

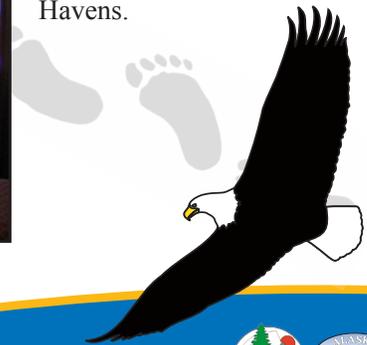


One of the new campsites



## Judge James Wickersham's Birthday Party!

Juneau Area State Parks recently celebrated Judge Wickersham's Birthday at the House of Wickersham in Juneau. Guests filtered in all afternoon for cake and juice and good stories about the judge and his collection told by our wonderful volunteer docent, Mary Kay Havens.



Eagle Watch is a monthly newsletter published by the  
Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation  
[www.alaskastateparks.org](http://www.alaskastateparks.org)

