



Wood-Tikchik Super Volunteer



Mike Weagley silhouetted by the Wood River Mountains and setting sun



Volunteer Mike Weagley prepares to move the pile of wood he and Ranger Ali Eskelin collected by removing an old tent platform.



Mike Weagley geared up for the flight to Tikchik Lake

It is a well-known fact that volunteers are the lifeblood of Alaska State Parks. Volunteers keep the parks running smoothly; they work hard to maintain our park units and they sign up for some of the dirtiest jobs around. Mike Weagley is no exception. A relative newcomer to the Dillingham area, Mike travels from New York every spring to spend as much time as he can in Wood-Tikchik State Park. Mike has volunteered for Wood-Tikchik SP for two summer seasons and he is invaluable to operations out west. Always willing to help, Mike fills in to clean the latrines when the one employee at Wood-Tikchik is out of town. He weed eats, cuts brush, edges the concrete, burns brush piles, fixes fences, checks on the airplane when it's windy, and loves every minute of it.

On a calm sunny day in early October, Mike and Ranger Ali Eskelin flew to Tikchik Lake to complete the clean-up of Eagle Island, an incredibly scenic spot with a white sand camping beach and 360° views of Tikchik Lake and the surrounding granite domes. Mike and Ali spent the day burning wood from a decade old tent platform and cleaning up the remaining debris on site. After feeding the fire and hauling buckets of water from the lake all day, Ali thanked Mike for all his hard work this year. With classic volunteer modesty, he responded, "I get a lot of fulfillment from helping you care for this beautiful place. I'm grateful and glad to be on your team." We are happy you are part of our team, too, Mike. Thanks for all you do!



Wood-Tikchik State Park Volunteer Mike Weagley starts a fire to burn the debris collected from cleaning up Eagle Island.

ALASKA STATE PARKS
Official Store

Open for Business!

<http://www.alaskastateparks.org/store>

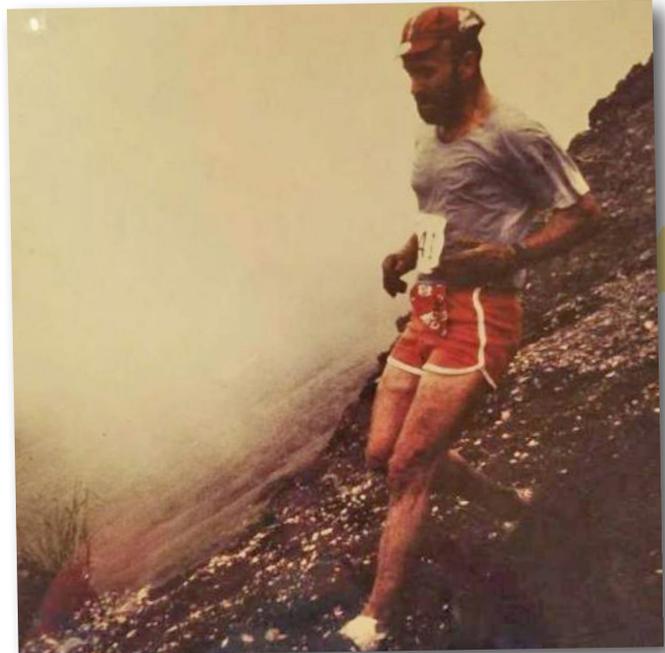
Avid Recreationalist and Park Supporter Passes Away

Edmund Josef Eduard Schuster, who donated the land that created Eveline State Recreation Site in Homer in honor and memory of his late wife, Eveline, passed away this month. He also funded multiple trail projects within Chugach State Park near his home on the Anchorage Hillside.

According to his obituary published in the Alaska Dispatch News on Nov. 18, 2016, he “was born in Hirscheegg, Austria, to innkeepers Leopold and Sofia... In 1959, after working as a coal miner in Germany, he immigrated to Canada, where he put his mining knowledge to use in the uranium mines of Elliot Lake. In 1964, a fascination with Alaska brought him north.

“Edmund received a GED; a B.A. in History and Economics; an M.A. in Industrial Relations; and a Ph.D. in Industrial Sociology. Edmund taught at the University of Alaska Anchorage for 20 years, where he also organized and led the University’s first cross country ski team. He was an avid hiker and runner, competing in Mount Marathon for 26 consecutive years.

“His love of the mountains was a driving force that inspired him throughout his life. After finishing his education, Edmund resumed his visits to Austria, where he met his future wife, Eveline Blanca Mueller. They spent many happy years in the home they built together in Glen Alps, overlooking Anchorage, Alaska. Eveline passed away in 1994. His love for her is memorialized at the Eveline State Recreation Park site in



Edmund Josef Eduard Schuster

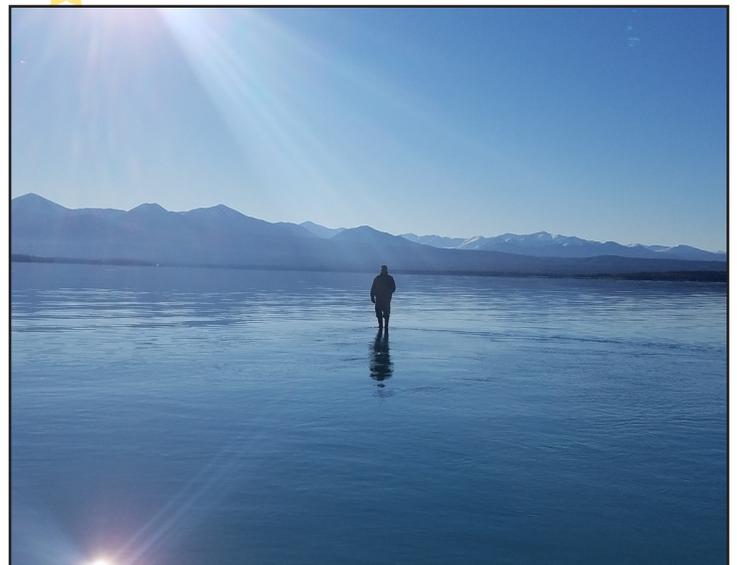
Homer, which he donated to the state of Alaska in her name.

“Edmund supported many charitable organizations around the world and was a lifelong member of the Cook Inlet Historical Society and the Alaska German Club. He is survived by his children, Martin and Andrea; his niece, Hedwig; and his wife, Nattikarn. A celebration of life will be held at a future date in Anchorage. ‘May there be no sadness of farewell when we embark.’”

Peninsula Post



Park Specialist Eric Clarke operates Kenai Area’s 28-foot Munson Landing Craft on Kachemak Bay near Homer. Kachemak Bay State Park is only accessible by boat or aircraft and staff regularly commute by boat to access the park. The park offers many recreation opportunities such as public-use cabins, campsites, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and approximately 90 miles of hiking trails.

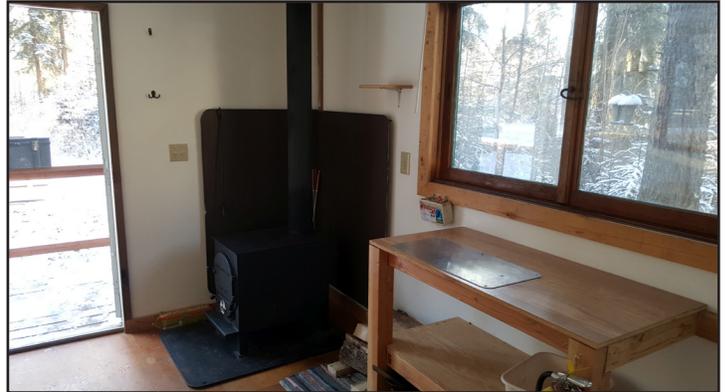


Kenai River Park Ranger Tom Anthony patrols Skilak Lake, which is part of the Kenai River Special Management Area. You might think that Tom is walking on water in this picture, but if you look closely, you might see that he is actually standing on a rock.

Northern News



This streambank erosion control project at Rosehip Campground in Chena River State Recreation Area will provide excellent salmon habitat for the second-largest run of Yukon River king salmon in Alaska. The project was a partnership between State Parks, the USFW Service, and the Department of Fish and Game.



Left over root wads from the Rosehip Campground project are being trailered to Big Delta State Historical Park to be used next spring on a bank project there.

Granite Tors Public-Use Cabin in Chena River State Recreation Area is coming online and will be ready to rent in December.

Southeast Storm Watch



During the first half of this month, Southeast Area dealt with some strong wind action. The trees proved to be no match for the gusts. Boardwalk was damaged at Eagle Beach State Recreation Area in Juneau.



Totem Bight State Historical Park in Ketchikan also had wind damage resulting in fallen trees.

First Day Hikes

New Year's Day of 2017 will mark the sixth year Alaska State Parks has participated in the First Day Hikes event promoted by America's State Parks. This is an event that promotes healthy lifestyles by encouraging individuals and families to get outside and move on the first day of the year, jump-starting what will hopefully be an active year, full of outdoor fun and adventure.

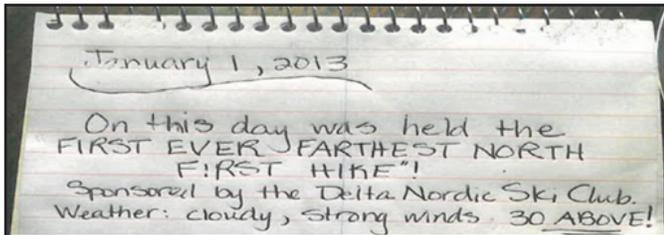
According to America's State Parks website, all 50 states participate in this event offering guided First Day Hike programs. "Last year nearly 55,000 people rang in the New Year, collectively hiking over 133,000 miles throughout the country on the guided hikes." These hikes not only bolster physical and mental well-being, they also foster shared stewardship of the community's natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

State Parks are an important part of our country's fabric, enhancing an increasingly urban population's quality of life. In Alaska, the state park system as we know it today was established in 1970 through grass-roots movements resulting in the creation of our first state parks—Kachemak Bay State Park, Chugach State Park, and Denali State Parks. Today, Alaska's city dwellers frequently escape to Chugach State Park, Chena River State Recreation Area, and Hatcher Pass Special Management Area, the Kenai River Special Management Area, or any of the other numerous state park units to fish, hike, ski, camp, and generally recharge.

Several events are already being planned for the first day hike including one in Homer, one in Sitka, and one in Delta Junction. If you will be near any of those locations on New Year's Day and would like to participate in any of these events, contact Alaska State Trails Program Coordinator Darcy Harris at darcy.harris@alaska.gov or (907) 269-8699.



Delta Junction First Day Hike, 2014



New Member of the Kodiak Team

Rodney Sutton, the new Natural Resource Technician for Shuyak Island State Park, was born and raised in northwest Wisconsin and still has family there including a sixteen-year-old son. Rodney's outdoor interests include hiking, camping, rock climbing, and traveling—he has been "everywhere in the United States but Hawaii."

"I drove up to Alaska in 2005 from Wisconsin and back, fell in love with its beauty, people, wildlife and environment, and I had to come back. Kodiak Island has been good to me... I really enjoy living in Alaska and on Kodiak Island," Rodney said.

It's a good thing he enjoys island life, as his new position working for Alaska State Parks means a lot of time on a remote island at the top of the Kodiak Archipelago. "A lot of people dream of working out on a remote island like Shuyak, guess I'm grateful to live the dream and loving it."

The Kodiak District crew welcomes Rodney to the team and looks forward to his return in the spring after the off-season to ship him out to Shuyak Island for a productive summer.



New Shuyak Island State Park Natural Resource Tech Rodney Sutton