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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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## Alaska State Parks welcomes two new superintendents

**(Anchorage, AK)** – Alaska State Parks has recently welcomed the promotion of two chief rangers into regional park superintendent positions, with William “Ben” Corwin stepping up in the Chugach Region, and Ian Thomas taking the helm in the Northern Region.

For management purposes, the parks division has divided the state into five regions, each managed by a superintendent: Northern, Matanuska-Susitna/Copper River Basin, Chugach, Kenai Peninsula/Prince William Sound and Southeast. The Kodiak area is managed by a chief ranger, and Wood Tikchik State Park is overseen by a chief ranger and managed by the Chugach superintendent.

Thomas stepped up from chief ranger of the Northern Region into an acting role after Brooks Ludwig retired from Alaska State Parks in March 2020. Thomas accepted the superintendent position last June.

Thomas began with the division in 2003 in a seasonal position with the Alaska Conservation Corps (ACC) on the Kenai Prince William Sound. He served on crews running boats in the Western Sound, building boardwalks, and maintaining cabins and tent platforms.

“Our crowning achievement was a huge outhouse project on Ester Island complete with a 500-gallon above-ground tank,” he recalled. Thomas became a park ranger I in Chugach State Park in 2006 in Eagle River and later moved to a Hillside position.

“Chugach was an incredible place to work,” Thomas said. “Without a doubt the highlight was search and rescue missions that I worked on with the state troopers. I’ll never forget flying in Helo 1 and bringing lost and injured people out of the park to their families and medical care. It was a great period in my career.”

Thomas accepted the Chief Ranger position in his hometown of Fairbanks in 2010. “Returning home to manage and protect parks that I grew up recreating in was really

rewarding. I'm glad to again be a member of the Fairbanks community and to contribute to the quality of recreation opportunities in the interior," he said.

Corwin served as acting Chugach superintendent for several months succeeding Kurt Hensel, and accepted the permanent job in March 2021.

Corwin moved from Montana to Alaska in 2006 to participate in Alaska Pacific University's Outdoor Studies Program, and in 2009 began working for Alaska State Parks as an ACC on the Chugach State Park trail crew. The following summer, Corwin was promoted to natural resource technician II. In 2014, he became a park ranger assigned to the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area, and in 2016 returned to Chugach State Park, where he was promoted to park ranger II in 2018.

"My office is also my playground, where I can be found regularly hiking, skiing, hunting, climbing, and rafting with my family and friends," Corwin said. "I am attuned to the current events and needs of the park both for the recreating public and the natural resource."

"We have been fortunate to have had quality staff in these positions for many years and in each situation the chief ranger of the region easily stepped up to serve in the superintendent role," said Alaska State Parks Director Ricky Gease. "This made the transition as seamless as possible, and benefit the parks in their regions and the many visitors who enjoy them."

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***Ben Corwin, superintendent of Chugach Region, Alaska State Parks.***



***Ian Thomas, superintendent,  
Northern Region, Alaska State Parks.***