



Celebrate the Sun!



Lindsay and Wes Pinkleman and their children enjoy what's left of the snow.



Right: Ellie Mason drives the dogs for the dog mushing demo

Photos courtesy of Steve DuBois



A “Celebrate the Sun” event took place at Quartz Lake State Recreation Area on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in late March. The “Celebrate the Sun” event is intended to be an annual event, provided facilities are available and weather conditions cooperate. Participants ice fished (and actually caught fish this year!), cross-country skied, and did some snowshoeing and sledding.

The Jr. National Honor Society from Fort Greely School organized curling competitions on Quartz Lake their way—with home-made throwing stones and brooms. The lake was plowed for curling and the Rural Deltana Fire Department watered the curling sheet, making for a fun and creative event.

Other highlights included a dog mushing demo by Ellie

Mason, a bonfire, and Mexican food sold by Chocolate Gypsy. A cabin was also available for warming up.

During this event, participants had the opportunity to become members of the Delta Junction Trails Association, or renew their membership, for a chance to enter a drawing for a hat. The trapper hat was made out of local Alaskan furs, by Rachelle Stebbins, owner of Alaska Music and Art Company.

The celebration was a smashing success thanks to all the volunteers who helped put it together, organizing and leading the different activities that got more than 125 people outside playing and having a great time.

According to Delta Junction Trails Association chair Mindy Eggleston, “It was a perfect day in the park.”

An Alaska State Park Legend Retires

April was chief ranger Roger MacCampbell's last month with Alaska State Parks. Over the course of his career, he devoted over 30 years to Alaska State Parks—the vast majority of which he spent as chief ranger for Kenai/PWS Area's southern district. Kachemak Bay State Park and State Wilderness Park was his baby.

Roger described his job to the Homer News like this, "We protect the people from the park, the park from the people and the people from the people." When it came to wielding the law, he adopted a philosophy to practice the lowest effective level of enforcement. "Ninety percent is just education or just a presence being here."

Since Roger became chief ranger for the southern Kenai Peninsula state parks, Kachemak Bay SP & SWP, Alaska's first state park and only wilderness park respectively, has grown from a little over 300,000 acres of park with about 10 miles of trail to nearly 400,000 acres and over 85 miles of trails. Eveline State Recreation Site and Diamond Creek State Recreation Site, both near Homer, were also added to the Alaska State Park system during Roger's reign.

According the January 31, 1985 Greensheet, Roger met with 35 hikers and skiers in the Homer area "to lend guidance and assistance toward the formation of a search and rescue organization" shortly after being selected as "Ranger II for the South Kenai Ranger District."

Roger was heavily involved in helping to establish many such organizations over the course of the next 30 years, including the Friends of Kachemak Bay State Parks nonprofit advocacy group. Most of these organizations, in turn, lent their support to improving, maintaining, and advocating for Kachemak Bay SP & SWP.

Kenai Area superintendent Jack Blackwell told the Homer News, "As a park manager, he [Roger] is part of the community. He listens to the community, its needs and wants and recommendations. That's one of the things I've admired."

"We're all going to miss him, even those who had disagreements with him," Mako Haggerty, a water-taxi operator and member of the Kachemak Bay State Parks Advisory Board, said to the Homer News. "We just lost a real advocate for the park. He's going to be very difficult to replace, especially in these fiscal times."

A retirement party was held for Roger at Land's End Resort in Homer on the last Friday of his career with Alaska State Parks. Friends and colleagues got together for an evening of catching up, reminiscing, well-wishing, ribbing, and rambling MCing. You will be missed, Roger!



Eric Clarke and Roger MacCampbell pause for a photo on an elevated walkway on Saddle Trail in Sept., 2012.



Jeff Johnson and Roger fish comfortably.



Above: Roger is a man who wears many vests.

Below: (L-R) Jeff Johnson, retiring chief ranger Roger MacCampbell, Steve Smith, Joe McCullough, and Eric Clarke pose with Roger's inflexible double at his retirement party.



First Ever Council of Geographic Names Authorities Conference Held in Anchorage

The Alaska Historical Commission and the Office of History and Archaeology coordinated the 2015 national conference of the Council of Geographic Names Authorities held in Anchorage at the end of May.

Every year, COGNA brings together representatives of states, members and staff of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, and interested individuals to talk about geographic place names. This is the first time COGNA has met in Alaska.

A number of Alaskans took the opportunity to attend the meeting of the federal board that makes names official for geographical features in the U.S. This was the board's only meeting outside of Washington, D.C., that was part of the conference.

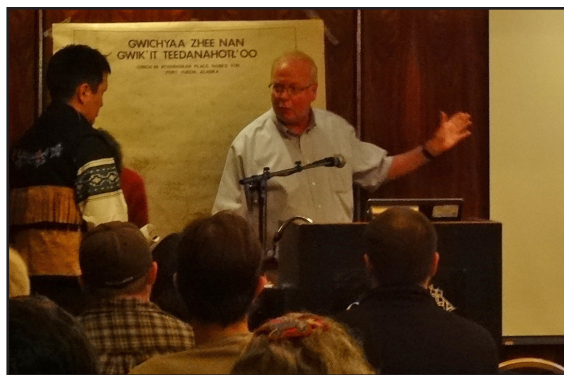
The Alaska Historical Commission also met with and heard from more than 25 Alaskans about place name issues in the state.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks' Alaska Native Language Center was a conference partner and held a day-long workshop profiling Native place name projects.

Exciting work is underway! Robert Charlie, an Elder from Minto, and Eliza Jones, an Elder from Koyukuk spoke eloquently about their pioneering work in language preservation and collecting Native place names.

Representatives of the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board made presentations as well. Their program has funding and staff, and they regularly photograph the features that they name. Canada also has a "terminologist" based in Ottawa who attended the meeting.

During one conference session, two descendants of the climbing party that made the first successful ascent of Denali (officially Mt. McKinley) discussed the name dispute. At the end of the session, Art Davidson, a member of the party that made the first successful winter ascent of the mountain and the author of *Minus 148 Degrees*, urged the official name of the mountain be changed. He blamed his publisher for making him use Mt. McKinley in the subtitle of his 1967 book that is still in publication.



Gary Njootli, Government of Yukon (left), and John Ritter, Yukon Native Language Centre presenting at the COGNA conference.



Jonathon Ross, Vice-Chair, Alaska Historical Commission, welcomed those attending the COGNA conference with thoughtful opening remarks about the importance of Alaska Native place names.



Alaska State Parks Employee Shuffle

Mario Ayerdis began his (hopefully long) career with Parks as the new Publications Specialist II in late February. He comes with a master's degree in Arts in Teaching and a bachelor's degree in Music with an emphasis on Education. He previously worked for the Department of Public Safety as a Criminal Justice Technician auditing and training criminal justice agencies in the use of APSIN (Alaska Public Safety Information Network). He brings a great deal of experience writing scholastic, informative, and technical documents, editing, and website maintenance. He also has been a part of many local volunteer projects and has extensive volunteer community involvement. Welcome to Parks, Mario!

Northern News

- Early last month, Northern Area staff cut trail corridor for the new Mastodon Trail in Chena River State Recreation Area and came across a decently sized moose shed. Barring floods and wildfires, this new, year-round, 11-mile trail to Nugget Creek Public-Use Cabin will be completed this year.
- ★ To protect trails during break-up, the Northern Area closed the Compeau, Stiles, and Angel Creek Hillside trails in late April. These trails re-opened in time for Memorial Day weekend. Thanks to a recreational trail grant, these trails now have locking gates at the trailheads, which will be locked and signed during trail closures.
- Rika's Roadhouse Café & Gifts opened in May under the management of Smiling Moose Gifts, owned by Kim White. Park staff is busy cleaning and getting the kitchen ready for summer operations. Work includes cleaning ovens, sinks, tables, walls, replacing linoleum, plumbing repairs, and painting.
- ★ Outdoor repairs are underway at Twin Bears Camp in Chena River SRA. Work includes upgrading decks, railings, boardwalks, landings, and parking pads to meet accessibility standards.



Cutting Mastodon Trail corridor



Moose shed found along new Mastodon Trail



(L-R) Engineering project manager Luke Randall, park specialist Jackie Cheek, park specialist Brian Charlton, ACC Mike Hitte, and natural resource spec. Dave Griffin at Twin Bears Camp.



Compeau Trail gate



Northern Area staff Irene Gardner, Allen Funk, and Ben Garasky clean Rika's Roadhouse Café in preparation for summer operations.

National Trails Day Events

Kachemak Bay State Park

Volunteers from our local community will gather at 7 a.m. on Sat., June 6, at the Seafarer's Memorial at the Homer harbor. From there, small groups will be escorted to water taxis to travel across the beautiful Kachemak Bay to various trailheads for trail-clearing projects in Kachemak Bay State Park. Improving our trails and maintaining them can be fun, providing a sense of accomplishment and the satisfaction of being able to hike on the very trails you helped clean up. Come join the fun!

If you are willing to lend a hand and spend a fun day earning a good night's sleep, please RSVP to mako@xyz.net or (907) 399-4133. For more details about this event, go to <http://www.nationaltrailsday.org/events/trailsday/> or to <http://www.friendsofkachemakbay.org>.

Chilkat State Park

Come out to help support Alaska State Parks with the Battery Point Trail in Chilkat State Park. The project will focus on trail hardening, including gravel transport and causeway/turnpike installation. Volunteers will meet with park staff at 9 a.m. on Sat., June 6, at the Battery Point Trailhead at the end of Beach Road near Haines. A pizza lunch will wrap up the event at noon.

Please walk, bike, or carpool to the trailhead and arrive by 9 a.m. in order to sign up and receive safety equipment. Bring hiking boots and gloves, as well as weather-appropriate clothing. All tools will be provided. We hope to see you out there!

If you plan on participating in this event, you may RSVP to thomas.kain@alaska.gov or (907) 766-2292 (phone preferred), but RSVPs are not required. For more details, go to <http://www.nationaltrailsday.org/events/battery-point-trail-hardening-project/>.



One of Kachemak Bay's 2014 National Trail Day clean-up crews, including Paul Allen, Tom Soltis, Amy Holman, Kris Hoderied, Kathleen Reeves, Cody Anderson, and Erin Brinkley (not in order)

Historic Windows and Doors Preservation Workshop

Summer Rickman, Office of History and Archaeology, and Doug Drexel, Alaska State Parks Southeast Area attended the Historic Windows and Doors Preservation Workshop put on by the National Park Service Western Center for Historic Preservation's Vanishing Treasures Program in late April at Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park in Skagway, Alaska.

Summer assisted NPS staff from the Alaska Regional office and the Western Center for Historic Preservation in presenting information on historic preservation in Alaska and provided an introduction to the varied programs of the Office of History and Archaeology and Alaska State Historic Preservation Office.

Doug gained hands-on experience in window and door removal, condition assessment and preservation project planning, window repair techniques, including how to reproduce profiles of historic windows and doors using shaped scrapers, window glazing and pane replacement, safe methods of dealing with lead paint, including using infrared paint removers, and repair techniques for historic paneled wood doors. It was a great opportunity for Parks staff, NPS, and the public to work together.



Doug Drexel at the window and door workshop