

Second Annual Design and Construction Camp n' Clean



Hi ho, hi ho! It's off to work we go!
(L-R) Donna, Chris, and Teri Gilpin; Esteban Acevedo and Allie (dog); Emily Angel and Lorelei; Ashley Bautista and Loretta Nabong



Some park visitors came to relax while the D&C crew worked.



(L-R) Emily Angel and Luke Randall collect trash. Lorelei did not do her fair share of work this year.

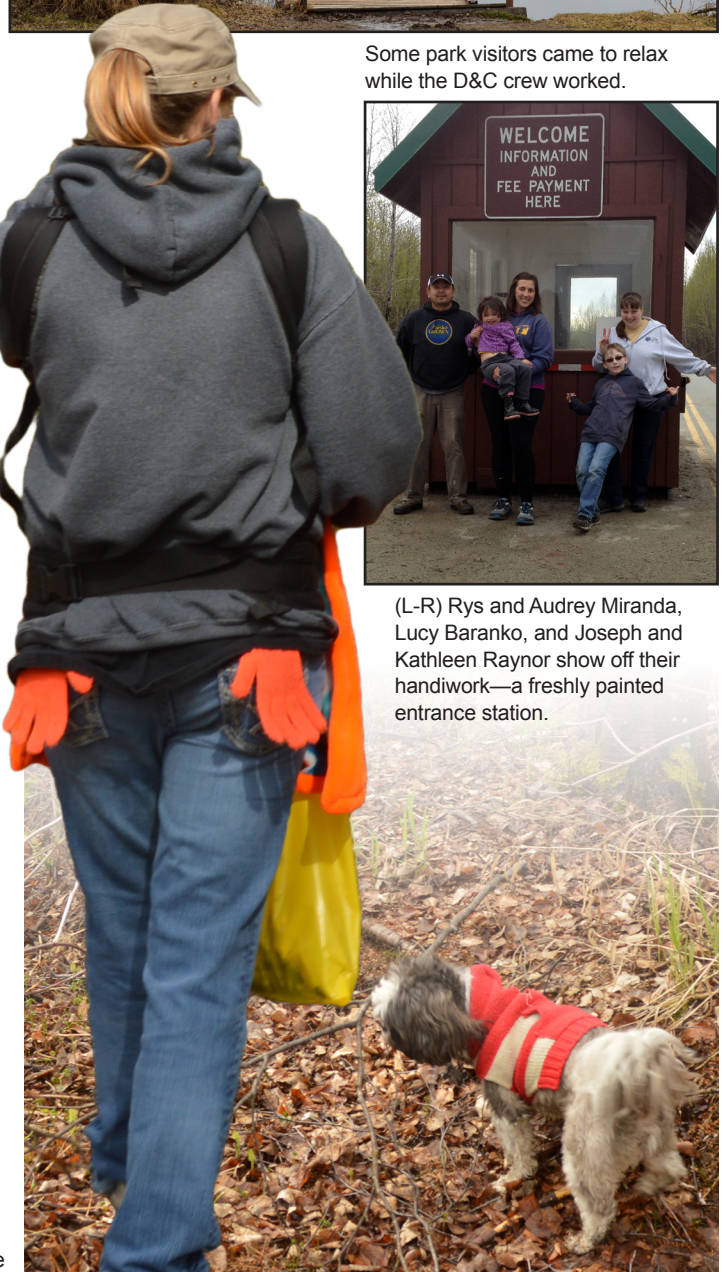
On a rainy weekend in early May the small remnant of the Design and Construction crew that was not in the field gathered at Nancy Lake State Recreation Area's South Rolly Campground with their families, significant others, friends, and dogs (the cats had better things to do, and the fish refused to leave their tanks) to camp, clean, and paint.

It was a huge success. Over 20 giant bags were filled with trash collected throughout South Rolly Campground and the entrance station got a fresh coat of "Parks Brown" paint!

Mat-Su/Copper Basin Area superintendent Wayne Biessel, ranger Drew McElvain, and park specialist Victor Stanculescu were wonderful hosts and helped the D&C crew coordinate their efforts to get the work done.

Afterward, Wayne thanked the crew saying, "The Willow crew is really short-handed this year and I truly appreciate the "boost" you gave them both in product and spirit."

Teri Gilpin and Allie



(L-R) Rys and Audrey Miranda, Lucy Baranko, and Joseph and Kathleen Raynor show off their handiwork—a freshly painted entrance station.

Second Annual Kenai River Spring Cleanup

The second annual Kenai River spring cleanup was held in early May. Over 500 kids from the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District helped Alaska State Park and City of Soldotna staff clean up trash along the Kenai River. Community members also joined in the cleanup and helped collect nearly 4,020 pounds of trash along the river, including a transmission from a car!

The main partners for the event included Kenai River Sportfishing Association, Kenai River Professional Guide Association, Alaska State Parks, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the City of Soldotna.

All the Kenai River staff participated in this event and did an outstanding job. On the last day a community picnic was held to thank the community volunteers and rangers Don Barber and Melissa Smith grilled about 300 hot dogs.



Nearly 4,020 pounds of trash were collected from the Kenai River during the cleanup.



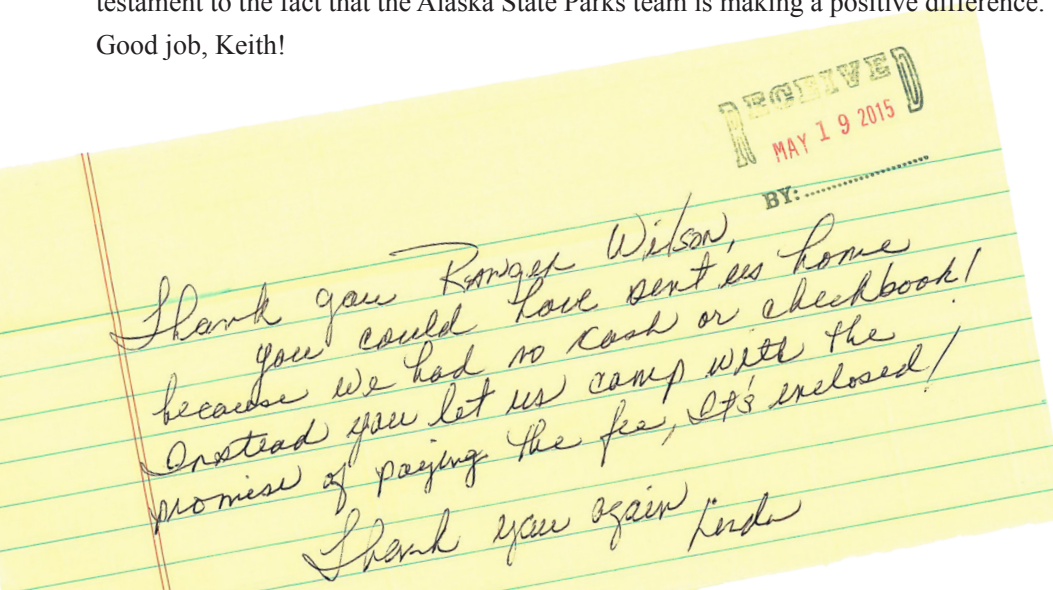
Kenai River Sportfishing Association volunteer Dennis Gease and rangers Don Barber and Melissa Smith cook hot dogs for all the volunteers who participated in the cleanup.

Making the Difference

Sometimes life presents us with the opportunity to do something small that will make all the difference for someone else. Last month ranger Keith Wilson was presented with an opportunity like this. Visitors arrived with no cash or checks to pay the camping fee and Keith allowed them to stay and enjoy camping at the Eklutna Campground in Chugach State Park in exchange for a promise to pay the fee. The campers kept their promise and sent their fee payment in along with a note thanking Keith for trusting them.

Alaska State Parks employees and volunteers are frequently put in situations in which their actions and attitudes can be the difference between a great outdoor experience and a bad one. Happy campers like the one who wrote this note are a testament to the fact that the Alaska State Parks team is making a positive difference.

Good job, Keith!



Kodiak District Welcomes Two New Team Members

Two new Natural Resource Technician IIs, Jared Conrad and Mario Pagni, joined the Kodiak team in May.

Jared lived in Fairbanks for the past eleven years and has one semester left to complete at the University of Alaska Fairbanks this fall before he gets his Natural Resources Management degree with a concentration in forestry. He started with Alaska State Parks last season as a non-perm NRT trail crew leader in the Chena River State Recreation Area. He has wanted to relocate to Kodiak for the past two years and is now the Kodiak road system NRT II.



Jared Conrad and Mario Pagni

Mario Pagni is the new Shuyak Island NRT II. He is a relatively new Alaska resident who moved to the state in 2014 after graduating from Iowa State University with degrees in Forest Ecosystem Management and Public Service & Administration in Agriculture. Mario lived and worked in the Pacific Northwest and Upper Midwest before deciding to make the move to the last frontier state.

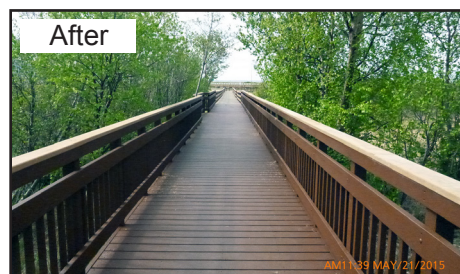
Jared and Mario, welcome to Alaska State Parks!

Ranger Keith Wilson and a thank you note from an appreciative park user



Potter Marsh Facility Repairs Completed

At Potter Marsh, a section of concrete sidewalk was sinking and about a hundred feet of boardwalk was badly frost-jacked. Beginning in late April, Alaska State Parks project engineer Roxanne Risse and Polar North Construction, LLC worked together to fix these problems. They completed the project in a month and the boardwalk and concrete sidewalk were ready for visitors by the end of May.



The new section of boardwalk is now ADA accessible and sitting on helical piles to prevent further frost-jacking.

The repaired concrete sidewalk is no longer sinking and is also up to ADA standards. In addition, the Department of Fish and Game imprinted eagle, bear, duck, moose, wolf, and beaver footprints into the concrete sidewalk to add to the facility's aesthetic appeal.

New Natural Resource Technician for the Little Susitna Public Use Facility

Mat-Su welcomed Taya Much to the team in mid-April as the new Natural Resource Technician for the Little Susitna Public Use Facility. Taya has a Forest Management degree from Oregon State University and has been teaching PADI-certified diving programs for many years in Anchorage. With the early spring this year, Taya took the lead to get the facility cleaned up, mowed, and in good shape for the Memorial Day weekend and the June king salmon run.

A hearty welcome to Taya!

New Park Specialist for Independence Mine State Historical Park Starts

Mat-Su's newest staff member started last week and is hitting the ground running to get Mat-Su's #1 attraction, Independence Mine State Historical Park, up and running for the season. Heather Sinclair, the new Park Specialist for IMSHP, comes to us as a fresh graduate from Pennsylvania State University with a Master's degree in Geography and a Bachelor's degree in Northern Studies from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

The balmy mid-70s temps in the Valley this past week have created a veil of summer here—a stark contrast to the two to three feet of snow still on the ground at the mine. Heather had just over a week to get fully briefed on Independence Mine operations and get her volunteers hired and trained (and shovel some snow). A big task, but she is up for it.

Please help welcome Heather to the ranks. And if the name sounds familiar to State Parks—it is! Heather is the daughter of former Alaska State Parks ranger and Kenai/PWS superintendent Jack Sinclair and Diane Sinclair.

Chugach Corner



Student Conservation Association crew leaders who volunteered to help Chugach State Park install a wetland crossing on the Lower Eagle River Trail. Thanks SCA!



Taya Much



Heather Sinclair

Office of History & Archaeology's 2015 Annual Workshop

The Office of History & Archaeology hosted its 2015 Annual Workshop in Anchorage in mid-April. Sixty-four people involved with cultural resources management from private industry, the military, and federal, state, and municipal agencies attended.

Lt. Governor Byron Mallott addressed those attending via Skype. He talked about Alaska's recent history, which he participated in making and observing, and about the many changes in Alaska that his parents and grandparents experienced. He also addressed the importance of choosing geographical placenames that reflect the history and values of Alaska residents. He urged everyone to participate in creating Alaska's history, concluding, "Think beyond yourselves; what is before you that you can influence and make happen?"

Workshop presentations included an update on the Alaska Historic Resources Survey (AHRs) website, how Alaska's historic maritime resources are being documented, and guidelines for

submitting Historic American Building Survey (HABS) and Historic American Engineering Survey (HAER) reports that are housed at the Library of Congress.

Judy Bittner spoke about plans for 2016, the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act and the 150th anniversary of the purchase of Alaska.

A panel discussion on "Disaster

Preparedness, Management and Response" featured participants from the Department of the Interior, Chumis Cultural Resource Services, the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.



Judy Bittner addresses attendees at the Office of History & Archaeology's 2015 Annual Workshop

Kodiak Staff and Volunteers Train with the U.S. Coast Guard in Helo-Evacuation Procedures

In late May, the U.S. Coast Guard hosted training for state parks personnel to familiarize them with emergency extraction and hoisting procedures in the event any helicopter rescue operations are required in the remote state park areas of Shuyak or Afognak Islands under Alaska State Parks management.

Providing the training to the park staff also benefits the USCG by limiting the time they spend hovering on scene and eliminating the need to lower the USCG rescue personnel down if there is trained staff already on the ground. Having less hoisting would shorten the time on scene and improve the flight operation safety and get the victim(s) to medical treatment quicker.

General helicopter operation safety and the possibility of future sling loading material and gear was also discussed during the training. The partnership with the USCG, who jokingly guaranteed next year's training will include a 20-mile flight out to sea to drop all park staff for a leisurely return swim, continues to improve.



USCG staff assists NRT Jared Conrad and ranger Jen Culbertson in gearing up to train for basket hoisting operations. Volunteer Jennifer Wiseley-Jungemann and ACC Mary Hostetter were also there to observe and learn.



ACC Mary Hostetter and Shuyak Island volunteer Mike Anderson are instructed by a USCG Helicopter crew member on how to tend the guide rope as the basket descends.



State Park volunteers and staff discuss helicopter operation safety.

Northern News



Northern Area Administrative Officer Lona Boyarsky presents Allen Funk a gold pan recognizing 15 years of outstanding service. Allen retired at the end of May and is moving to a farm in upstate New York. Happy trails, Allen, and thank you for a job well done!



Chief ranger Ian Thomas recognizes ranger Dane Happ's outstanding work during the winter of 2014/2015. During that time Dane was the lone ranger for the entire Northern Area due to his fellow rangers being on temporary leave or having transferred to other areas within Parks.



Chena River State Recreation Area volunteers Kristyn Kendall and Alisha Lutz take water samples at the Angel Rocks Trailhead water pump.



Representative Jim Colver held a community meeting at Big Delta State Historical Park to discuss the future of Rika's boat landing and parking lot. Fifty-five people attended the meeting, including representatives for Alyeska, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Department of Natural Resources, Delta Trails Association, Goodpaster Property Owners Association, Alaska State Parks Citizens Advisory Board, and Whitestone Farms Inc.



Ranger Dane Happ organizes a military volunteer work party to help clean up Chena River SRA. Volunteers cleaned up the shooting range at mile 36.5 of the Chena River Road, cleaned firepits, raked campsites, and did litter patrol at Rosehip and Granite Tors campgrounds. They generated six dumpsters-worth of garbage and contributed 90 hours of service.