



Design and Construction Camp n' Clean



And so it began

In early May, Alaska State Parks' Design and Construction team took advantage of the unusually warm weather to camp and clean at Morgan's Landing within the Kenai River Special Management Area. The event, which was landscape architect Lucy Baranko's brainchild, brought about half of the D&C crew and their families together for a weekend of camping, roasting hotdogs, repairing a pedestrian fence, cleaning, painting, brush clearing, and chasing balls, children, and dogs.

Engineer manager Luke Randall took Lucy's idea and organized the event, coordinating with superintendent Jack Blackwell and rangers Jacques Kosto and Jason Okuly. He and Interpretation and Education manager Emily Lochart showed up early to meet with area volunteers to ensure things got started on the right foot.



Ready to get hands and paws dirty (Audrey Miranda and Lorelei Lochart)



Fencing it up (Chris Gilpin and landscape architect Lucy Baranko)

The rest of the Camp n' Clean team trickled in that evening. By the time the last person arrived, they had a campfire going and a picnic table covered in food. What no one suspected was that temperatures would dip to 28°F and a magnitude 5.5 earthquake would wake many up in the wee hours of the morning.

After some reviving coffee, breakfast sandwiches, and the team's favorite donuts from Soldotna, the crew exchanged epic tales of shivering bodies and shaking ground and then got to work.

One group repaired the pedestrian fencing along the Kenai River, another painted picnic tables, Lucy sanded and painted a memorial bench, and yet another group did brush clearing along the trails. Some of the kids even pitched in!

Continued on Page 2



Painters and overseers (Ethan and Jessi Miranda and administrative officer Teri Gilpin)

Continued From Page 1

In keeping with D&C's unofficial motto, "Work hard, play hard," when the work gloves and paintbrushes were put away, the bubble maker and laser lights came out and the games of catch and beanbag toss got lively.

A special thank you to Lucy for the idea, Luke who made it happen, Emily who went out early to set things up, and everyone who participated. The Camp n' Clean was a grand success and, if weather is this cooperative, is sure to become an annual event!



Finished bench (landscape architect Lucy Baranko)



After-work laser party



Putting up fence (D&C chief Rys Miranda and Chris Gilpin)

Camp Host Training: Let the Season Begin!

The Kenai/Prince William Sound Area recently held their volunteer campground host orientation in Soldotna. Staff provided training and orientation for twenty volunteers in radio operation, emergencies, park regulations, wildlife safety, duties of a campground host, and the division's mission.



Camp host volunteers for the Kenai/Prince William Sound Area listen intently as Ranger Jason Okuly discusses emergencies that may occur while working as a campground host.



Photos courtesy of
Melisse Reichman

Chugachik Island Gets a Toilet

A group of 'Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park' and 'Water Trail' volunteers took advantage of the great weather and a free boat ride to go the Chugachik Island, camp out, and erect a new latrine over the previously dug and SHPO-approved outhouse holes.



Breakfast with the Birds

The community of Ketchikan celebrates a month-long series of events during its Hummingbird Festival, a seasonal event recognizing migratory birds. One of the most successful vehicles for public education on migratory birds is to get community members out, helping them identify the birds in their backyards.

According to the Environment for the Americas' "Bird Day" website, "Citizens who are enthusiastic about birds, informed about threats, and empowered to become involved in addressing those threats, can make a tremendous contribution to maintaining healthy bird populations. By modeling what can be done and involving people, their interest and involvement in stewardship can grow."*

The Ketchikan State Parks Advisory board hosted the fourth annual "Breakfast with the Birds" in early May at Totem Bight State Historical Park as a final event for the Hummingbird Festival. It was a gorgeous sunny day.

Teri Hoyt led more than 50 citizens along the beach and trail system identifying 28 different bird species within an hour. She is truly knowledgeable about birds, their songs, and she can tell you all about habitats for different species.

Ranger Mary Kowalczyk added cultural notes, referencing some of the bird figures carved on totem poles.

Megan Dorman headed up the craft corner where youth decorated bird masks and other crafts designed to disguise them for their search for birds.

Jim Pomplun and Chris Newbill whipped up breakfast while birders were out on the trails. Jim made his secret recipe for homemade pancakes and Chris cooked up 120 sausages. Other Citizen Advisory Board members contributed eating utensils, coffee, juices, and griddles. Ketchikan Area State Parks staff extends a special thanks to the Ketchikan CAB members who helped ensure that this event was a success and are already making plans for next year.

* Environment for the Americas, "International Migratory Bird Day-Why Celebrate Migratory Birds?," <http://www.birdday.org/birdday> (accessed May 29, 2014)



"Breakfast with the Birds" participants, drawn by the enticing aroma of pancakes wait in line to load up their plates with Jim Pomplun and Chris Newbill's breakfast delicacies.



Community members gather for the fourth annual "Breakfast with the Birds"



Children disguise themselves as birds with masks they created at the event and go searching for feathered friends.

Northern News

- As part of the deferred maintenance at Olness Pond in Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area, four acres of brush around the pond were hydro-axed to increase visibility. The site, which had been in passive management since 2002 until last year, will be under construction later this summer.
- Trees have been cleared and a contract awarded for rerouting a section of the campground loop at Upper Chatanika State Recreation Site. A section of road that is caving into the river will be closed and four new campsites developed along the new loop. The campground will be closed in June during construction.
- Four thirty-foot beams and twenty boardwalk planks were staged along the Granite Tors Trail in preparation for summer trail and bridge work. The beams were purchased through a Recreational Trails Program grant to shore up a bridge on the Granite Tors Trail.
- Chief Ranger Ian Thomas submitted a grant request to Yamaha for 50% off vouchers for purchasing ATVs and to help with trail maintenance. If funded, this will be the first grant Yamaha awards in Alaska.
- Maintenance staff are busy moving a cabin to Granite Tors Campground in Chena River SRA. The cabin originally provided volunteer housing at the maintenance shop at mile 33 of the Chena Hot Springs Road. The new location will attract campground hosts needing housing and will provide an additional roadside public-use cabin in the winter.



Olness Pond after its "haircut"



Doug Avara puts the new Sutter trail dozer to work hauling in beams for Mastodon Trail.



Northern Area Park Specialist Brian Charlton and volunteer Mike Hitte use a strap to demonstrate a back-friendly technique for lifting heavy beams. Thanks, Mike, for sharing this lifting technique.



The first campers were spotted in mid-April at Granite Tors Campground in the Chena River SRA. Ironically, the first mosquitoes got wind of it and were on hand to feed on the early birds.

National Trails Day Events

Hatcher Pass

Come out and help with construction on the Hatcher Pass Mile 16 Bike Trail for National Trails Day 2014! Meet at mile 12 Palmer Fishhook Road (the parking area) at 10 a.m. and look for the Alaska State Park banner. We will be working on trail construction (ever wonder what it takes to build one of those awesome turns?) and maintenance throughout the 1.8-mile bike trail. Alaska State Parks will provide all tools, but bring work gloves if you have them. All ages and skill levels welcome, but please leave the four-legged variety of helper at home. Feel free to bring your bikes and take a few turns down the trail at the end of the day!

What: Trail construction and maintenance throughout the 1.8-mile Hatcher Pass Mile 16 Bike Trail

Max. number of participants: All welcome

Where: Mile 12 Parking area, Hatcher Pass

When: Saturday, June 7, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Contact: Ranger O'Connor at (907)354-1807 or at amy.oconnor@alaska.gov

Nancy Lake SRA

Nancy Lake State Recreation Area will be hosting a National Trails Day event at the Red Shirt Lake Trail. Participants will rally at 10 a.m. at the South Rolly Overlook for a 45-minute sign-up and orientation. Then they will tool up and head out on the trail at 11 a.m. This is also the Red Shirt Run Day so participants will have to wait until runners are off the trail.

The skill level will be basic and kids and dogs are welcome. A naturalist display for kids and adults at the overlook will begin at 2 p.m. and last until 5 p.m. The trail work will be followed by a potluck with baked beans and cornbread provided. People are welcome to bring their own lunch, loppers, and gloves, but we do have plenty to share.

What: Trail maintenance work, naturalist display, and potluck. Daily parking fees for trail volunteers will be waived.

Max. number of participants: All welcome

Where: Meet at South Rolly Overlook in Nancy Lake SRA, work along Red Shirt Lake Trail. Directions: Turn off Parks Highway mile 67 onto Nancy Lake Parkway, proceed six miles to the South Rolly Lake Overlook picnic/staging area.

When: Saturday, June 7, meet 10 a.m. work begins 11 p.m.

Contact: Ranger Victor Stanculescu at (907)495-6212 or at victor.stanculescu@alaska.gov

Kachemak Bay

Kachemak Bay State Park and State Wilderness Park is hosting a variety of events in honor of National Trails Day, which is the first Saturday in June. Some of the events include:

What: A family hike led by naturalist Ed Berg

Max. number of participants: Sixteen people

Where: Glacier Spit Trailhead to Grewingk Lake for lunch and then over the Saddle Trail

When: 7 a.m. on Saturday, June 7

What: Work toward the Goat Rope Spur Trail, brushing, clearing, widening the corridor and tread. A former park trail crew leader and a trail crew volunteer will lead this event.

Max. number of participants: Six people

Where: Overlook Public-Use Cabin and Ranger Station facilities

When: Overnight Friday, June 6 through Saturday, June 7

What: Corridor clearing and tread reconstruction led by park specialist Eric Clarke (hard work)

Max. number of participants: Six people

Where: Lagoon Trail from Alpine Trail junction off the Saddle Trail

When: 7 a.m. on Saturday, June 7

What: Beach Clean-Up Coast Walk

Max. number of participants: Full

Where: Meet at Seafarers Memorial

When: 7 a.m. on Saturday, June 7

What: Tutka Lakes Trail deadfall clearing and small footbridge construction with an overnight in the local rental Yurt after a hard day's work. A park trail crew leader and a volunteer will lead this event (moderate to difficult work).

Max. number of participants: Room for two more

Where: Tutka Lakes Trail

When: 7 a.m. Saturday, June 7 through Sunday, June 8

What: A local Girl Scout troop will help dig a new latrine hole and move the current building, secure, and re-paint it. They will overnight at Grewingk Lake.

Max. number of participants: Eighteen girls and chaperones

Where: Grewingk Lake trail cairns

When: 7 a.m. on Saturday, June 7

What: Fly in to Leisure Lake to work on the China Poot Trail and Coalition Trail. The return trip will include a hike and a water taxi trip. There is a fee of \$50.

Max. number of participants: To be determined

Where: Leisure Lake

When: 7 a.m. on Saturday, June 7

Several other volunteer organizations will also be helping with various projects at Diamond Creek, Eveline State Recreation Site, and Chugachik Island.

Sign up at Homer Wildlife Leaders headquarters, corner of Ocean Drive and Airport Road.

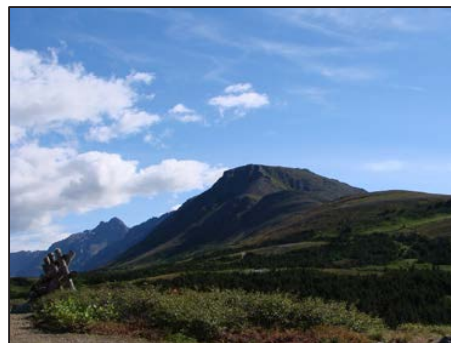
Cost is \$20.00 for the water taxi. Participants for all events, except the Goat Rope Spur Trail work, will meet at 7 a.m. at the Seafarers Memorial on the Homer Spit for your water taxi to be assigned.



Chugach State Park and
the Chugach State Park Citizen Advisory Board present

Tuesdays at the Glen Alps Overlook

6:00-6:45 PM every Tuesday
May 27-September 16, 2014, rain or shine



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| May 27 | Topic: | What's in Your Kid's Backpack? |
| | Speaker: | Jen Aist, author of <u>Babes in the Woods</u> |
| June 3 | Topic: | Cultural History & Dena'ina Use in and Around Chugach State Park |
| | Speaker: | Aaron Leggett, Special Exhibits Curator, Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center |
| | Speaker: | Jim Fall, Division of Subsistence, Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game, Statewide Program Director for Research |
| June 10 | Topic: | Biking in Chugach State Park |
| | Speaker: | Rose Austin, Alaska Dirt Divas, Singletrack Advocates, author of <u>Mountain Bike Anchorage</u> |
| June 17 | Topic: | Invasive Plants in Chugach State Park |
| | Speaker: | Laurie Thorpe, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) |
| | Speaker: | Tim Stallard, Anchorage Cooperative Weed Management Area Coordinator |
| June 24 | Topic: | Bear Aware for Kids and their Families |
| | Speaker: | Robin Dublin, former Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game Wildlife Education Coordinator, McNeil River Guide |
| July 1 | Topic: | Geology of Chugach State Park |
| | Speaker: | Sue Karl, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) |
| July 8 | Topic: | Horseback Riding in Chugach State Park |
| | Speakers: | Rosa Meehan, equestrian park user |
| July 15 | Topic: | Bear Aware (Bear Safety, Biology and Behavior) |
| | Speaker: | Elizabeth Manning, Alaska Department of Fish and Game |
| July 22 | Topic: | Leave No Trace for Kids and Their Parents |
| | Speaker: | Ute Olsson, Eagle River Nature Center |
| July 29 | Topic: | The Role Chugach State Park Plays in Protecting your Water |
| | Speaker: | Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility (AWWU) representative |
| Aug. 5 | Topic: | Hiking and Backpacking in Chugach State Park |
| | Speaker: | Robin Dublin, avid hiker and outdoor educator |
| Aug. 12 | Topic: | Photography in Chugach State Park |
| | Speaker: | Sanjana Greenhill, avid outdoor photographer |
| Aug. 19 | Topic: | Edible and Poisonous Plants |
| | Speaker: | Beth Schultz, long time Alaskan, Research Ecologist, US Forest Service, general plant enthusiast |
| Aug. 26: | Topic: | Hiking and Backpacking into Fall and Winter in Chugach State Park |
| | Speaker: | Paul Twardock, Chair of Outdoor Studies, Alaska Pacific University |
| Sept. 2 | Topic: | Mountaineering in Chugach State Park |
| | Speaker: | Steve Gruhn, Former President, Mountaineering Club of Alaska |
| Sept. 9 | Topic: | Paragliding in Chugach State Park |
| | Speaker: | Jake Schapler, avid pilot |
| Sept. 16 | Topic: | Moose in Chugach State Park |
| | Speaker: | Rick Sinnott, former Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game Area Biologist |

Ranger John Wilber Retires

After almost 30 years of working for Alaska State Parks, John's last day with us was April 30. John started out as a Natural Resource Technician on the Kenai River in 1985. He graduated from the Sitka academy as a Technician, but was quickly upgraded to a Park Ranger. During this time, he met his wife Sara who was also a "River Ranger" with State Parks. In 1989, he was deployed to help with the Exxon-Valdez Oil Spill cleanup on the outer coast of the Kenai Peninsula.

In 1987, John transferred to Nancy Lake State Recreation Area as the Ranger I. When District Ranger Dennis Heikes was promoted to Mat-Su Area Superintendent in 2002, John was promoted to Susitna District Ranger and has been there ever since.

On April 30, Mat-Su staff held a special luncheon picnic at the Nancy Lake Office as a send-off. Many tall tales were spun. Mat-Su area staff presented him with a plaque and his badge (#2), which will also be retired. The Mat-Su team also gave him a Glock Model 22.40 caliber pistol with his name engraved into it—a fitting gift for the many years he served as a firearms instructor.

John plans on spending time traveling in Alaska this summer, now that he has time to "get away." He and Sara also plan to travel in the lower 48 possibly to look for a new place to live. When asked what he will do first, he quickly replied that he doesn't want to wear pants for a while. We hope he intends to replace them with shorts.

We wish John the best in his new pursuits, and thank him for his dedication to providing quality public service to the thousands of people with whom he has interacted in Alaska State Parks.



Rangers John Wilber and Dennis Heikes after John was jettisoned out of his boat upon colliding with another boat on the Little Susitna River in 2000. Only his pride was injured.



Ranger John Wilber shows off the plaque from the Mat-Su crew.

