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Commissioner

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Department of  
Natural Resources

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: December 30, 2024

## Start 2025 with Adventure & Nature: Parks First Day Events

**(Anchorage, AK)** — Alaska State Parks invites everyone to welcome the New Year by participating in First Day Hikes and unique Alaskan events. Celebrate the beginning of 2025 with fresh air, breathtaking views, and unforgettable experiences while connecting with nature!

“These events are part of a nationwide effort encouraging people to begin the year outdoors and embrace the mental and physical benefits of nature,” said Ricky Gease, Director of the Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation. “From scenic hikes to invigorating activities like the Polar Bear Plunge, Alaska State Parks offers opportunities for every adventurer.”

### First Day Hike at Chugach State Park

Kick off 2025 with stunning views and great company on the **Eydlu-Bena Loop Trail at Eklutna** in Chugach State Park. This 2.2-mile adventure is perfect for starting the year outdoors.

#### Details:

- **When:** January 1st, 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM
- **Where:** Meet at Eklutna Day Use Area
- **What to Bring:** Micro-spikes, sturdy footwear, water, warm clothing, and snowshoes if needed.

Join park staff for this guided hike and enjoy coffee and donuts after the trek. For questions, contact Ella Fitzwater at [ella.fitzwater@alaska.gov](mailto:ella.fitzwater@alaska.gov).

### First Day Event in Ketchikan: Polar Bear Plunge

Celebrate the New Year with a splash at **Refuge Cove Beach** in Ketchikan. The Polar Bear Plunge 2025 supports mental health awareness while offering participants a thrilling way to start the year.

#### Details:

- **When:** January 1st, 10:30 AM
- **Where:** Refuge Cove Beach
- **What to Expect:** A cold water plunge with benefits like boosted energy, improved cardiovascular health, and skin refreshment.

This event is free and brought to you by the **Ketchikan Wellness Coalition and Alaska State Parks**. For more information, contact Stephanie at [stephanie@ketchikanwellness.org](mailto:stephanie@ketchikanwellness.org).

### First Day Event in Delta Junction: River Walk Park

Start the New Year with an outdoor adventure hosted by the Delta Junction Trails Association at River Walk Park. This family-friendly event offers opportunities to hike, ski, or snowshoe on an

easy trail while enjoying a unique StoryWalk® presented by the Delta Community Library. Sociable pets on leashes are welcome.

- **When:** January 1<sup>st</sup>, 12:00 PM
- **Where:** River Walk Park
- **What to Expect:** Participants can hike, ski, or snowshoe on this easy trail. Make sure to come prepared with your own equipment, warm clothing, and snacks or drinks by the fire.

This is a free event and hosted by the Delta Junction Trails Association. For more information, contact: [www.deltajunctiontrails.com](http://www.deltajunctiontrails.com)

### **Join the Tradition**

Since its start as a national program in 1992, First Day Hikes have grown into a cherished annual tradition across America. Events connect people to nature while promoting conservation, health, and outdoor exploration.

Alaska's unique First Day events provide a chance to experience the beauty of our state parks in winter. Share your adventure with #FirstDayHikes and celebrate the start of 2025 outdoors.

For more details, please visit <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/> or contact us by email at [dnr.pks.community@alaska.gov](mailto:dnr.pks.community@alaska.gov).

*The Department of Natural Resources' mission is to develop, conserve and maximize the use of Alaska's natural resources consistent with the public interest.*

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