



Trail Condition Report

Caines Head State Recreation Area

March 1st, 2023

Overall Conditions: A landslide that occurred in January 2022 has partially obstructed the beach access trail that leads to Caines Head State Recreation Area. The slide is located along Resurrection Bay between Tonsina Point and Callisto Canyon. Hikers are urged to use caution and cross the landslide at their own risk. All cabins and trails remain open.

The snow is relatively deep throughout CHSRA with alder and small spruce trees bent down into many trail corridors. Expect snowy, icy, and generally difficult travel throughout the park system. The sub-alpine and alpine areas of the park are avalanche terrain. Educate yourself and ensure you have the proper rescue gear if you choose to venture into these areas. See attached trail breakdown for specific concerns and conditions.

Bears have also been reported over the winter months in the vicinity of Lowell Point and across the greater Seward area. With spring around the corner, carrying a bear deterrent is recommended. Additionally, weather conditions and seas can change rapidly along the north gulf coast, please travel/camp prepared.

Public Use Cabins: All cabins are open and summer dates have been filling up, make your reservation now! There is a new website for reservations that still uses the Reserve America platform, but is specific to Alaska State Parks. It can be found at:

www.alaskastateparks.reserveamerica.com.

BE ADVISED Access to Callisto Canyon and Derby Cove cabins may require a stream crossing depending upon seasonal snow melt and/or periods of heavy rain. In addition, these cabins are tide dependent and most easily accessed during a low tide of +3ft or lower. Please refer to the Seward area tide tables when booking your stay and be familiar with the tide cycles for the duration of your stay at either of these cabins. Tide Tables are available here:

<https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/noaatidepredictions.html?id=9455090&legacy=1>.

The Tonsina Point Cabin is not tide dependent although it may require hiking above the mean high tideline during large tide cycles or active storm surges. Go to:

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspcabins/index.htm> for cabin information.

Tent Platforms: There are currently three tent platforms in CHSRA. They are free to use and are first come, first serve.

Two are located at North Beach near the day-use shelter. They can be accessed from the day-use shelter area or from a short trail leaving the beach. The beach access is designated with a camping sign.

The third tent platform is located at South Beach. It can be accessed from a short trail near the info. board at the southern terminus of the South Beach trail or from the east end of the beach. A camping sign designates the beach access.

Advisory:

- ✦ CHSRA trails and public-use cabins are accessed on foot from Lowell Point State Recreation Site (LPSRS), which is located 2.5 miles south of Seward. Follow State route 9 into Seward townsite where it becomes 3rd Avenue. Follow 3rd to a T-intersection near the Alaska Sea Life Center and take a right onto Railway Ave. Travel 2.5 miles and turn right onto Pinnacle View Rd. then make an immediate right into the upper parking area for LPSRS or continue along Pinnacle View Rd. and turn right into the lower parking area for LPSRS and access to Lowell Point Beach. The Tonsina Point Trail leaves from the southwest corner of the upper parking area. There is a connector trail between the lower and upper parking areas that begins behind and right of the lower parking area latrine.
- ✦ CHSRA trails and cabins can also be accessed by boat via water taxi. Follow this link for: [Taxi Services to Caines Head State Recreation Area and Resurrection Bay State Marine Parks \(alaska.gov\)](http://alaska.gov) for a list of authorized carriers.
- ✦ **CHSRA is bear country and carrying bear spray or other deterrents is encouraged, as is a review of safely travelling and camping in bear country. Information regarding bear safety can be found at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/safety/bears.htm>.**
- ✦ The Coastal Trail is the beach between Tonsina Point and Derby Cove. It also provides the only foot access from Lowell Point State Recreation Site to the Caines Head trails south and west of Derby Cove (Overland, Alpine, Fort, South Beach, and Rainforest (Loop)).
- ✦ **It is only passable during a low tide of +3ft or lower and the beach rocks and outcroppings can be very slick due to biofilm and seasonal ice.**
- ✦ As per Alaska State Parks regulations, all firewood collected for use at public use cabins must be from **dead and down trees**. Visitors should be prepared to harvest wood in the vicinity of the cabins or bring in their own. The Tonsina Point Cabin has an oil heater that burns kerosene or diesel only.
- ✦ Treat all water in the park by filtration, boiling, or water purification tablets.
- ✦ Please use LEAVE NO TRACE/PACK OUT WHAT YOU PACK IN ethics to minimize your impact while in the recreation area. Check out www.lnt.org for more info.

Caines Head State Recreation Area	
Tonsina Point Trail	Please do not cut switchbacks! Currently packed snow. Switchbacks and areas around small drainages are prone to icy conditions. Ice cleats are highly recommended! Alder and spruce impeding trail, especially after fresh snowfall. Staff is currently working to clear trail corridor.
Coastal Trail	The beach between Tonsina Point and Derby Cove, it is only passable during a low tide of +3ft or lower. Beach rocks and outcroppings can be very slick due to biofilm and seasonal ice.

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Overland Trail	Please do not cut switchbacks! Minimal winter use. Expect snow, ice, down trees and impeding alder and small spruce.
Alpine Trail	Little to no winter use. Trail is not marked for winter travel and may be very difficult to follow. Expect deep snow, snowshoes or skis are recommended. Travel through avalanche terrain in sub-alpine meadows and alpine areas will be required!
Fort Trail	Minimal winter use. Expect deep snow, ice, down trees and impeding alder and small spruce. Entrance to Fort may be blocked or obstructed by snow. No down trees as of mid. February.
South Beach Trail	Minimal winter use. Expect deep snow, ice, down trees and impeding alder and small spruce.
Rainforest (Loop) Trail	Little to no winter use. Trail has some trail markers and flagging between South Beach and the Alpine Trail Jct. ONLY! Trail will be very difficult to follow. Expect deep snow, snowshoes or skis are highly recommended.

Distances in Miles and Elevation Gain/Loss:

Lowell Point Road: Seward to Lowell Point SRA: 2.5 miles, flat

Lowell Point to Fort McGilvray: 7.3 miles, +930'

Tonsina Trail: Lowell Point to Tonsina Point: 1.7 miles, +200'

Coastal Trail: Tonsina Point to Derby Cove: 3.0 miles, flat

Overland Trail: Derby Cove to North Beach: 0.6 miles, +150'

Fort Trail: North Beach to Fort McGilvray: 2.0 miles, +580'

South Beach Trail: North Beach to South Beach: 2.8 miles, +/- 380'

South Beach Trail: Fort McGilvray to South Beach: 2.3 miles, -580'

Rainforest (Loop) Trail: South Beach to Overland Trail junction: 3.1 miles, +850'

Alpine Trail: from junction with Rainforest Trail: 1.6+ miles, +750'

Alpine Trail: from South Beach: 1.7 miles, +850'

Alpine Trail: from Overland Trail: 1.4 miles, +700'

An overview map of CHSRA trails available here:

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/kenai/chsraoverlandtrl.jpg>

Please contact us with questions, concerns, or reports by phone or email:

Seward office- 907.224.3434, Jack Ransom (District Ranger)- 907.362.0014,

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