



## Public Lands Day at Chugach State Park



This summer Chugach State Park partnered with local non-profits Alaska Trails and Alaska Geographic to host a series of volunteer events. The final event of the season took place on National Public Lands Day. To help Alaska State Parks celebrate, more than 25 people turned out at Glen Alps that morning.

The group set their sights on the Middle Fork Loop Trail, as the trail has a long legacy and, in many ways, has been the flagship for sustainability in Chugach State Park. Not so long ago, knee deep sucking mud was the norm. This summer, under supervision of park staff, volunteers put in three re-routes that provide a much better alternative to this mess. No longer tearing straight through mud pits, the new alignment takes users on a much more pleasing, and most importantly, sustainable route. This means that the new sections of trail will withstand heavy use and require very minimal maintenance. Thanks to these efforts we are now 1,000 feet closer to sustainability!

Thanks to all the volunteers who came out and to Alaska Trails and Alaska Geographic for their support this summer. See you next year!



*Photos courtesy of Mike Downs*



The Official Alaska State Parks online store is almost ready for primetime, but in the meantime you can still order parks merchandise by mail and email at the storefront page. Follow the link above.

# Chugach Chronicle



Chugach State Park would like to welcome Ben Corwin as the new hillside area Park Ranger I. Ben started his career with Alaska State Parks in 2007. He worked in Chugach SP as an ACC for two years and a Natural Resource Technician for five years. He spent the majority of those years working as a lead with the Chugach SP trails program. Ben has spent the last two years as a Park Ranger I in Nancy Lake State Recreation Area.

Prior to working for Chugach SP, Ben completed a degree in Outdoor Studies from Alaska Pacific University. Ben is a very capable and highly skilled outdoorsman. His dynamic skill set, combined with his knowledge of the park, and work experience make him a great asset to the park. We look forward to Ben working as a park ranger back in the Chugach!



Chugach staff sadly bids farewell to Park Specialist Blaine Smith and Maintenance Chief Leo Dresnek and thanks them for their combined 20 years of outstanding public service and meritorious achievements in support of Chugach State Park. Both will be hugely missed, but Parks staff anticipate seeing them out in the park on a regular basis.

## K'esugi Ken Site Visit

On the second weekend of September, about 25 folks showed up to inspect and help with work in K'esugi Ken campground in Denali State Park. The weather was great, as was the company. The new facility was still bustling with contractors and construction, but space was available to assemble the crowd into the group campsite. During this weekend area staff met with Parks' Design and Construction engineers and contractors as the public-use cabin project nears completion.



Superintendents Wayne Biessel (Alaska State Parks) and Don Striker (National Park Service) spar about their respective Denali parks. Striker tried to lure Biessel to the "dark side" with a crisp NPS ball cap.



(L-R) Staff Contractor Jared meets with Project Manager Luke Randall, Park Ranger Chris Love, Project Engineer Loretta Nabong, Jared's daughter and Luke's stepdaughter to check out the new park host/public-use cabin.



A walking tour on the Moose Flats Trail enticed kids and dogs to join the fun.



The K'esugi Ken Interpretive Center is scheduled for completion in December.



The newly constructed West Hoodoos Trail partially surrounds the facility.

# Northern News



Maintenance worker Doug Avara spent three weeks doing trail maintenance on the Compeau Trail in Chena River State Recreation Area last month. Using the Sutter Trail Dozer, he cleaned out all the drainage features, ruts, and climbing turns along the first 8.5 miles of the trail. There were lots of thumbs-up from ATV riders, according to Doug.



College student Caitlin Barron catalogs trail conditions at Olnes Pond within the Lower Chatanika River State Recreation Area. As part of a UAF class on writing grants, Caitlin is drafting a Recreation Trail Program (RTP) grant for Northern Area state parks to harden a mile of trail around Olnes Pond. She was also on the trail crew this summer.



As part of Alaska State Parks strategy to become more self-sufficient, Northern Area is adding 14 new fee sites for 2017. Locations were chosen wherever the infrastructure already existed to charge fees.



Doug Avara installs a fee station Mile 48 Pond in Chena River State Recreation Area.

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## Fort Abercrombie SHP Volunteers Tidy Up the Grounds

In late September, 17 members from the Church of Jesus Christ in Kodiak volunteered at Fort Abercrombie State Historical Park to help with a number of small projects on the park's to-do list. Natural Resource Tech Rodney Sutton and Park Ranger Preston Kroes assisted the group with projects including: re-staining a fence, transplanting eight Sitka spruce trees to dress up the "Billy Bumps" in the main parking lot, doing a little hand excavating to reclaim a section of a WWII bunker, pruning and weeding the flower boxes in front of the office, and trimming overgrown bushes and brush along a trail from the office to the road.

Members of the group worked for 2 ½ to five hours and then were treated to a tour of the Kodiak Military History Museum housed in the Ready Ammunition Bunker at the park's Miller Point gun emplacement area.

Kodiak District staff would like to thank everyone who participated in the project service day. Without them, park staff would still be doing it all themselves. Thank you, Tom Schwantes, Elder Bacon, Elder Fawson, Chad Burnside, Samantha Burnside, Gertrude Beng Roy, Lila Schwantes, Staci Jones, Cali Jones, Katya Jones, Alyssa Burnside, Jen Stanford, Alyssa Martin, AJ Martin, Crystal Burnside, Connor Burnside, Kaylin Burnside, Amber Hill, and Dan Hill! Kodiak District staff truly appreciate the great work and look forward to your help next year.



Gardening in the flower boxes in front of the Kodiak District office



Re-staining the maintenance yard fence



Volunteers explore and enjoy the Kodiak Military History Museum after all their hard work.



Exposing the back window of the bunker

## Wood-Tikchik Volunteer Perks

Annette, binoculars in hand, takes in the sights from the ranger station cabin. Marty and Annette were thrilled with their six-week volunteer stint in Wood-Tikchik. They loved the daily fishing show from the park's ranger station cabin and saw plenty of wildlife, too: river otters, ducks, ospreys, bald eagles battling over trout, hundreds of thousands of sockeye salmon, moose, and brown bears. One day in early September, while hiking the mile-long River Trail, they spotted eight brown bears!



Volunteer Marty Cordano took this great photo of a bull moose from the deck of the Agulupak River Ranger Station. The moose walked across the river toward the cabin, just upstream of a few trout fishermen—a spectacular sight, and even more surprising, it happened during moose hunting season!



## Shuyak Island State Park Clean-Up

Island Trails Network's Shuyak Island State Park coastal marine debris clean-up project volunteers picked up a total of 35,036 pounds of debris over 45.1 nautical miles of Shuyak Island's western and northwestern shoreline between the first week of June and the first week of September. A separate crew onboard an 82-foot research vessel picked up all the staged debris in five different roundtrips during the last three weeks of September.

ITN drew in worldwide volunteers to work in eight- to 12-person crews for two-week segments to collect and stage the debris piles to be picked up in late September. ITN had a clean-up project during the summer of 2014 of the eastern coastline, and hope to receive future grant funding to continue the clean-up project for the entire island within the next few years.

Alaska State Parks helped support the remote island clean-up crews by hosting them at the Big Bay Contact Station compound and providing occasional use of the public-use cabin system when possible. Kodiak District Alaska Conservation Corps Steve Rennewanz assisted and hosted the clean-up crew at the Big Bay facility while he was on Shuyak Island for approximately eight weeks, and Natural Resource Tech Rodney Sutton assisted the ITN boat crew with removing the staged debris piles for a few days in late September.



(L-R) Volunteers Jackie Sarfati, Bill Burnham, Janiene Licciardi, and Kian Seng gather coastal marine debris along the northwestern shoreline of Shuyak Island State Park. Photo courtesy of Island Trails Network



Volunteers Kate Peel and Dawn Stewart paddle sea kayaks in Elephant Cove, Shuyak Island, Alaska. The Island Trail Network volunteers paddled sea kayaks to clean-up sites from campsites in Big Bay and Western Inlet.

Photo courtesy of Tom Pogson, Island Trail Network



Nets and line were common on the outer coast and on protected shorelines. Kate Peel, Dawn Stewart, and Whitney Sanford tackle a buried "hawser." Photo courtesy of Tom Pogson, Island Trail Network



Island Trails Network volunteers Fiona Trahe (Ireland), Dawn Stewart (North Carolina), Kate Peel (England), and Whitney Sanford (Florida) pose with marine debris removed from Shuyak Island this year.

Photo courtesy of Tom Pogson, Island Trail Network



Dawn Stewart delivers marine debris to Big Bay Ranger Station for stockpile. The Island Trail Network volunteers transported and stockpiled thousands of pounds of marine debris using decked expedition canoes, which made the removal much easier.

Photo courtesy of Tom Pogson, Island Trail Network



Volunteers Jason Learned and Charles Foster uncover an old fishing net washed ashore on Shuyak Island State Park. Photo courtesy of Island Trail Network

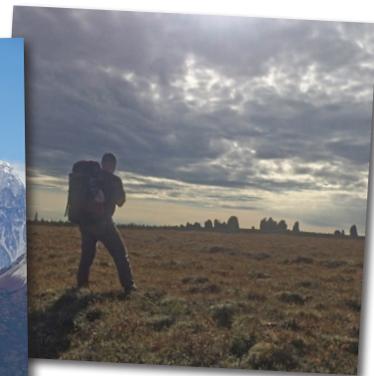
## Coming Soon: Trail Guide Videos

Last year, Alaska State Park’s Interpretation and Education program applied for and received a Recreational Trails Program grant to produce three trail guide videos—one each for the Granite Tors Trail and Angel Rocks Trail in Chena River State Recreation Area, and one for the K’esugi Ridge Trail in Denali State Park.

Filming for the Northern Area trails took place in late August and featured Interpretive Manager Emily Angel and Park Ranger Ian Thomas, who hiked the trails while providing future viewers with safety and ethics tips and highlighting special features along the way. Of course, someone had to do the filming! Kudos to Publication Specialist Mat Stephens who hiked the trails with a camera in front of his face, getting some amazing shots all while somehow managing to stay upright.

Two weeks later, Mat and Emily set out on the K’esugi Ridge Trail with Park Ranger Chris Love. This is a longer trail than the previous two, requiring three days and two nights of hiking, setting up, and filming—not to mention resting and refueling. Half-way through the hike, Chris left to deal with end-of-season tasks in Denali State Park and Park Specialist Justin DiPaola-Allen took over as guide and narrator.

Mat returned to his office in downtown Anchorage with plenty of footage to keep him busy editing, cutting, and splicing the footage into five-minute videos intended to help park visitors plan and execute their hiking trips for these trails in a safe and responsible manner, while getting the most out of their trips. Once complete, reviewed, and approved, the videos will be publically available at [alaskastateparks.org](http://alaskastateparks.org) and social media.



Above: Ranger Ian Thomas approaches the Granite Tors

Left: Emily Angel and Justin DiPaola-Allen take a breather in front of “the high one”



Mat Stephens framing a shot on the Angel Rocks Trail



Northern Area Video Crew (L-R) Mat Stephens, Ian Thomas, and Emily Angel



K’esugi Ridge Video Crew on day 1 (L-R) Emily Angel, Chris Love, and Mat Stephens

Below: Emily and Justin tackling the K’esugi Ridge Trail with a crystal-clear view of Denali

