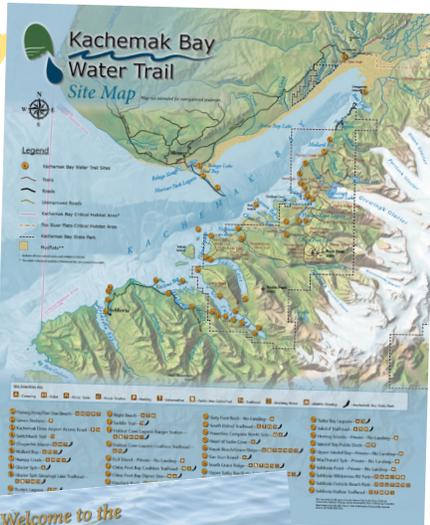
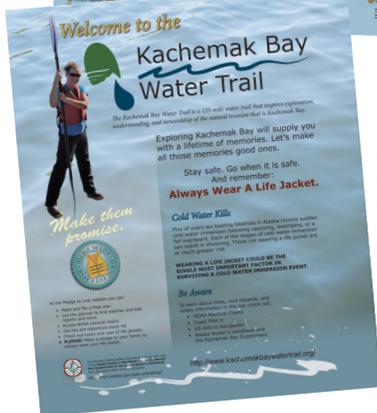




Kachemak Bay Water Trail Interagency Project Wins National Award

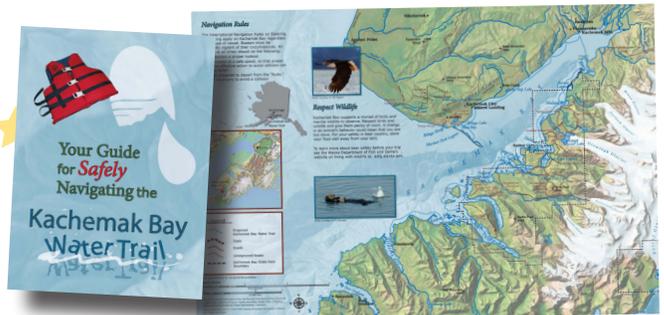


One of the ribbon-cutting ceremonies for the Kachemak Bay Water Trail inauguration in June, 2014
Front row: (left to right) Rep. Paul Seaton, Sen. Peter Micciche, Robert Archibald, Devony Lehner, Dave Brann, George Reising, Carol Kerkvliet, Heather Rice, Kris Holderied, Jeannie Woodring.
Middle row: (left to right) Morgan Warthin, Lisa Holzapfel, Mary McBurney, Director Ben Ellis, Donna Aderhold, Marie McCarty, Jack Blackwell, Dorothy Malambianakis.
Back row: (left side of rock and right side of rock) Pat Pourchot, Dep. Commissioner Ed Fogels



Safety and orientation panels created by Alaska State Parks' Interpretation and Education program

The safety brochure created by Alaska State Parks' Interpretation and Education program for the Kachemak Bay Water Trail



Every year, the Board of Directors of the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals presents a Project of Excellency Award to individuals or teams contributing to outstanding outdoor recreation projects. The Kachemak Bay Water Trail—a fine example of a grassroots project with multi-agency cooperation resulting in a well planned and executed outdoor recreation project—received the 2015 Project of Excellency Award.

In 2011, Dave Brann of Homer rallied a group of volunteers to form the Kachemak Bay Water Trail Steering Committee, representing multiple interests and communities, to get his latest idea rolling. They set out to establish an official water trail with identifiable sites, along with maps and safety information to encourage residents and visitors to recreate on the bay.

The KBWTC involved the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program. RTCA staff enthusiastically joined the effort, knowing this project would

be a real benefit to the community and visitors and KBWTC was committed to seeing it through.

Other agencies and organizations, such as the Homer and Seldovia City councils, Alaska State Parks, NOAA, and Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park, soon lent their support to the project, as well, and the water trail was chosen as one of Alaska's two Department of Interior America's Great Outdoor Projects.

Funding, time, and service donations began to roll in as the project unfolded with maps, safety brochures, promotional materials, safety panels, and the Kachemak Bay Water Trail informational brochure, which Alaska State Park's Interpretation and Education program developed.

After three years of hard work, two ribbon-cutting ceremonies to inaugurate the Kachemak Bay Water Trail were held in June, 2014.

Icy River Rampage

The Eagle River Nature Center held a cool fat tire winter bike race, the Icy River Rampage, in early February. This race started at the ERNC and took bikers down beautiful snowy trails to the Eagle River Valley, down the frozen river, and back to the nature center where a bonfire, beverages, and awards awaited the finishers.

ERNC winter volunteer Colin Tyler Bogucki, a professional photographer, shared a few photos with us specifically for the Eagle Watch. Thank you, Colin!



A fat tire unicyclist participates in the fat tire winter bike race held at the Eagle River Nature Center.



Cyclists make their way down the trails during the Icy River Rampage.



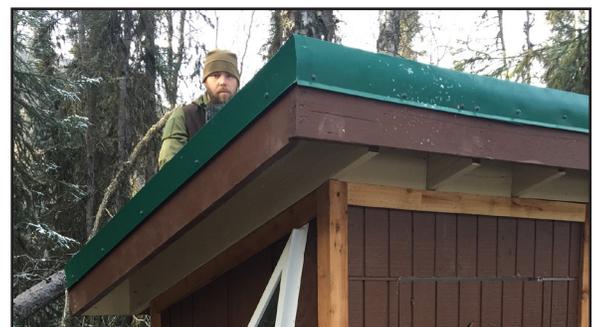
Racers bike over the frozen Eagle River.



The new outhouse majestically makes its way across the lake on a pallet serving as a sled.

Eklutna Lake Gets a New Outhouse

Ranger Keith Wilson and Natural Resource Technician Joe Hall hauled a new outhouse and footings from the Eagle River maintenance shop, where it was built, to Eklutna Lake. Then, they transported it across the lake by sled to the location of the new remote public-use cabin that is being built at Eklutna Lake.



NRT Joe Hall works on setting the outhouse in its permanent location.

Rangers to the Rescue

Some of you might remember an Eagle Watch article featured nearly two years ago about an eagle rescue in Kodiak. One-time Kodiak rangers Jack Ransom and Tom Anthony rescued a bald eagle that was floating in water, unable to get out. On their way to drop it off with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, they came across a second eagle in need of help, which they also rescued.

Well, the Eagle Whisperer is at it again. Last month, Tom, who is now working in the Kenai area, was on a float patrol of the upper Kenai River Special Management Area with ranger Melissa Smith when they spotted an eagle in distress on the river bank just upstream from Sportsman's Landing. The eagle's leg was caught in a legally set, 330 conibear trap.

With much effort, Tom was able to compress both springs and set the safeties. After being released, the eagle swam across the river and began drying itself off on the bank. It will almost certainly lose its leg, but hopefully it will heal enough to survive on its own.

Kenai Area State Parks later contacted the trapper. He was very understanding and subsequently pulled both traps he had in the area, even though they were legal.



Ranger Tom Anthony on float patrol on the Kenai River



Rangers Melissa Smith and Tom Anthony spot a bald eagle caught in a 330 conibear trap.



Ranger Tom Anthony covered the injured eagle to pacify it before attempting to release it from the trap.



The eagle found it difficult to express its appreciation for the rescue.



Ranger Tom Anthony using a strap to compress the springs and release the eagle from the trap.

Alaska State Parks Employee Shuffle



New Park Ranger - Jason Okuly

Congratulations to Jason Okuly, the new Park Ranger I for Kachemak Bay State Park. On his first official day out in the park, he noticed an illegal structure on Glacier Spit while getting some training on the *Phoresy*, the State Parks landing craft. His first official act as a K-Bay ranger was demolishing the driftwood table. He previously was a ranger in the Kenai River Special Management Area.



New Natural Resource Tech - Joe Hall

Chugach State Park is pleased to have Joe Hall as their new Natural Resource Technician II. Joe brings a long history of trail work in the private and public sectors to Chugach SP's trails program. Joe, welcome to the team!



Mettre la main à la pâte pour les Parks

(Put their hands in the dough* for Parks)

Volunteer Jean Pierre Rosay works on the Turnagain Arm Trail above McHugh Creek. He volunteers with the Chugach State Park trail crew on a weekly basis throughout the winter performing trail maintenance, and he spends his summers in France climbing the Alps and trekking through sandstorms in Morocco.

*Pitching in

Picture Stories in the Snow

Bird Flats is home to a large variety of critters including fox, coyote, beaver, eagle and stickleback, there is a huge population of voles. This area also has several beaver ponds that are great track surfaces. One fresh vole track ended abruptly near marks from a raptor's wings. Based on the size of the wing markings, ranger Tom Crockett suspects a northern goshawk got a small meal.

