

GEOCACHE ALASKA! Inc.

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FEBRUARY 2011 NEWSLETTER

HAPPENING NOW:

Welcome to the Inaugural edition of the GeocacheAlaska! Inc. monthly newsletter. We're looking for articles and ideas from our members – so don't hesitate to contact club secretary Wes Skinner (NorthWes) at skinnerwesley@gmail.com with your contribution. This is also a forum for keeping our members up to date on Event Calendars, land management / advocacy issues, and other matters of business relating to Geocaching the Great Land!

RENEWAL TIME!

Visit geocachealaska.org today and sign up for an annual subscription Premium Membership! Help underwrite our land use advocacy outreach efforts and the annual website hosting costs. Each member makes a difference!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

- Feb 12 – **Winter Trails Day Event GC2MZR5**
Noon to 3pm – BLM Campbell Science Center
Begin at the Fire Pit and learn about the variety of winter recreation options available at the BLM Campbell Tract! Volunteers needed for a GPS demonstration course – contact NorthWes at skinnerwesley@gmail.com
- Feb 17 – **Oddball FUNdamentals Eduvent** –
BP Energy Center 7:00pm – 7:45pm Thursday
A broad review of some of geocaching's lesser-known oddities and cache types... bring your questions!

EDUCATE YOURSELF:

The GeocacheAlaska! Inc. website's EDUCATION page has PDF presentations from our entire Eduvent Series. To date, we've seen Geocaching basics, SWAG, Earthcaching, Benchmarking, Cache Placements, Cache Submittals and the role of the Groundspeak Reviewer covered. Download them online from the [EDUCATION](#) page on our website and power-up your geocaching skills! (<http://geocachealaska.org/education.htm>)

CITO SALUTE:

Every month we plan to publish noteworthy photos and reports about outstanding CITO efforts made by our members. This month highlights the unique methodology one cacher has developed to 'go green' in reducing landfill impact as he CITO's his way from cache to cache. Yup – he simply tosses the trash into the bed of his pickup, where the on-board CITO manager reduces it to a compostable product... *Keep up the good work!*



GEAR GUIDE – ALASKA STYLE:

Ever wonder how a particular piece of gear actually performs in the field? From time to time some of our experienced cachers will provide field-proven feedback on their favorite caching equipment. You can be one of the first to report on your indispensable TOTT (Tool Of The Trade).

LAND ACCESS HIGHLIGHTS:

This year's Chugach State Park (CSP) Geocaching Permit Number is **11-007**. It must appear on your CSP cache container and on your cache listing page. Thanks to the Advocacy Committee members for working hard and complying with all the information requests to secure that permit which allows us to continue geocaching in Chugach State Park!

See GeocacheAlaska! Inc's Land Access data at the [Land Managers](#) link on our geocachealaska.org website.

NEW “FAVORITES” FEATURE on geocaching.com...

In future editions I'd like to highlight *your* 'Favorite Caches' of the month, but did you know that Groundspeak's geocaching.com website gives its premium members a way to share their 'favorite caches'? For every ten caches found by a premium member they receive a 'favorite' point, to be awarded by the cacher to hides of their choice. This new feature allows cachers to 'reward' placements they've enjoyed (for whatever reason), but it also lets other cachers see exactly who's favorited the cache, and to get a snapshot of a region's 'most-favorited' caches when making travel plans. There's currently two dozen caches in Alaska with 6 or more 'favorites' to their name, and as you'd expect a great many of them are located near areas of high tourism interest. Let's look at five of the top rated Alaska hides to see what sets them apart.

Top vote-winner is **GCG627 Skagway Cliffs** (located in Skagway on the Inside Passage), with 26 favorites. This virtual is located right next to the cruise ship dock, making it hands-down one of the most popular caches in the state for cruise visitors to find. There's 851 visits as of this newsletter, with about 3% of finders marking it a favorite.

Most popular regular cache is **GC127XV Anchorage – Big Wild Life**. This full-sized Anchorage cache, found right downtown at one of the city's most iconic locations, has 16 favorites to its name. It's popular with locals and visitors alike, with a well-deserved reputation as an secure travel bug hotel and great spot to warm your hands by the fire. There's 860 visits logged to this location, with about 2% of finders marking it as a 'favorite'.

It's no surprise that eight of the top twenty 'favorited' caches in the Great Land are EarthCaches. Leading the group (with 16 favorites) is **GCN6YV Turnagain Arm Tidal Bore**, which requires the cacher to chase down one of North America's most unusual outdoor spectacles. As if the scenic backdrop of the Chugach and Kenai mountains isn't enough, it seems there's often a moose, bear, sheep, eagle or beluga whale sighting thrown in to make the visit a memorable standout. With 123 finds to date, it's favorited by 13% of its visitors.

Another perennial Alaska favorite is **GCK0J6 Chocolate Waterfall**. This indoor virtual is a chocolate-lover's delight, located inside arguably one of the best places to bring a visitor to Anchorage. As a result of its uniqueness 4% of cachers logging a find here rank it as one of their 'favorites' (that's sixteen votes out of 387 visits).

Moving a bit north, we find **GC1D5FT Denali Travel Bug Lodge** – a regular full-sized cache perched above the Nenana River alongside the paved bike path/walking trail connecting all the major hotels in 'Glitter Gulch' on Denali National Park's eastern edge. This hide has been favorited by ten of its 273 finders for a 'favorited' rate of nearly 4%.

An analysis of the top eight EarthCaches shows a favorite rating issued by 10.5% of finders, a rate double that of the most popular other types of caches. I'm delighted to see the geological learning requirements don't cause a decrease in the 'wow' factor present at our state's incredible variety of EarthCache sites. It would appear that all the work necessary to set up a well-done EarthCache gets a significantly higher than average appreciation rating by visiting geocachers!

Meet your 2011 GeocacheAlaska! Board of Directors:

President	Paul Miller – <i>caprahircus</i>	Member at Large	Scott Aleckson – <i>SSOJOAT</i>
Vice President	Joe Edwards – <i>akfossil</i>	Member at Large	Trish Stowe – <i>stoweak</i>
Treasurer	Roberta Bromlow – <i>Polgera</i>	Member at Large	Robin Braaten – <i>northernrobin</i>
Secretary	Wes Skinner – <i>NorthWes</i>	Member at Large	Randy Cler - <i>cavyguy</i>
Webmaster	Mike Malvick – <i>Ladybug Kids</i>		

Opportunities are open to serve on GeocacheAlaska!'s Advocacy, Education, Events, and Fundraising committees. See more information on the member forums about each committee. Just an hour or so a month working with like-minded cachers helps build the game in Alaska!

Visit geocachealaska.org today and sign up for an annual subscription Premium Membership!