

GEOCACHE ALASKA! Inc.

Exploring the Last Frontier • www.geocachealaska.org



AUGUST 2011 NEWSLETTER

HAPPENING NOW:

It's been a great summer – but daylight is getting shorter, the temperatures aren't getting any warmer, and kids are headed back to school. Fireweed has bloomed all the way to the top in most places, and high country hikers are noticing the pushki has already started to turn yellow from the effects of lower overnight temps. No worries – this just means those great night caches you've been anxious to hunt will start being available again in another month or two. Meanwhile – enjoy late summer Alaska!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Set aside **9/10/11** for an all-day **Cacheapalooza** – it's your best chance to qualify for Alaska Challenge #5: One Busy Day, <http://coord.info/GC30EQK>. There are two events and a CITO happening around Anchorage, so you just have to find a couple of other types to qualify – there's lots of regulars / multis / earthcaches / puzzles with a few virtuals and letterbox caches thrown in for good measure! Spend the entire day afield caching with a friend or solo – and be sure to visit these events too:

Sept 10 – **All About the Numbers Flash Mob**
This soon-to-publish event hosted by **Polgera** will take place in Nulbay Park (7th & O St) to celebrate the numbers... **8am 9.10.11!**

Sept 10 – **Adopt A Highway CITO - GC2XD0Z**
Hosted by **saidbystacy** and sponsored by **Geocache Alaska!** We're starting at 10am to let us get finished in plenty of time for...

Sept 10 – **Indian Summer in Spenard!**
This year's Geocachealaska! **Indian Summer event** kicks off at 2pm in Sisterhood Park, right behind the Spenard Rec Center. We've reserved the covered shelter, so don't let a rainshower keep you away. **We're expecting big things to happen during this event** – so watch for the cache page to publish, and log your plan to attend so we know how much food to buy! The GeocacheAlaska! Store will be open for business too - See you there!

LAND ACCESS HIGHLIGHTS:

Possibly the single biggest barrier to getting your cache page published on the first try is taking care of that guideline about where it's ok to put your cache. Your best local source for that information can be found on the GeocacheAlaska! Website's Land Manager link at: <http://geocachealaska.org/landmanagers.htm>. Check out area land manager guidelines, and if you're placing a cache in **Chugach State Park** make sure the cache listing and the cache itself are marked clearly with the permit number (currently **#11-007**). Caches in **MatSu State Parks** (and associated state lands with State Park oversight in the MatSu region) should reference permit **#S10-047**. Caches in the **MatSu Parks** region are placed with special stipulations – read more online at our website to make sure your cache meets current Land Manager guidelines!

EDUCATE YOURSELF:

Our Eduvent Education series will begin again on the evening of September 29th. 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](http://geocachealaska.org/education.htm) page on our website and power-up your geocaching skills! (<http://geocachealaska.org/education.htm>)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWS:

In May 2011 Paul Miller resigned as President of the board of directors due to work scheduling conflicts which he felt were impacting his ability to serve. The board accepted Paul Miller's resignation, and selected Joe Edwards to move from VP to President. In subsequent action the board acted to have Scott Aleckson become Webmaster, and then moved Mike Malvick to VP, where he is focusing on fundraising efforts.

The board of directors currently has an unfilled member at large position. Nominations for board of director positions open soon – watch your email for updates!

Trail Report – August 2011

Persons looking for an easy “Wild About Anchorage” backcountry adventure suited for any skill level, with a great trail and easy access only minutes from downtown Anchorage need look no further than the **Portage Pass Trail** on Chugach National Forest in Whittier.

Chugach National Forest encompasses a huge swath of the Kenai Peninsula and most of Prince William Sound. At its wildest you need a boat or a ski-plane to access the backcountry of this National Forest, but there are many well-maintained trails which provide adventure at an easy pace. One of the least-known is found just beyond the **Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel** from Portage to Whittier - find tunnel schedules and more information at www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/whittiertunnel/schedule.shtml Parking for the **Portage Pass Trail** is accessed by turning right (over the railroad tracks) several hundred yards after you leave the tunnel on the Whittier side.

Caches along the trail have excellent waypoints on their cache pages to guide you to the trailhead, and great tips on the trail itself as it climbs 700 feet above the shore of



western Prince William Sound to a fabulous overlook of both Passage Canal and Portage Glacier. If you time the tunnel openings just right, you can be at the trailhead just a little over an hour

after passing Potter Marsh on Anchorage’s south side.

The trail itself is a bit steep in its first half-mile, rising right up to 700 feet. The trail surface is a well-maintained wide rocky gravel bed, ideal for hikers of any skill level or age who can climb stairs. At the top of the pass be prepared to have your breath taken away by the incredible vista as

Portage Glacier and Divide Lake come into view. The sound of running water is everywhere as it cascades from glaciers and flows north to Prince



William Sound and south to Turnagain Arm. The pass

has served as a travel route for centuries between the Sound and upper Cook Inlet. The US Forest Service has plans to clear the trail on down to Portage Lake beyond its current terminus at Divide Lake on the south side of the Pass. It’s currently only ¾ miles in length, but you’ll enjoy exploring all across the subalpine tundra terrain at the pass itself. The eastern side of the top of the pass is riven with rock gullies showing the effect of glacial passage. Ice was once thousands of feet deep here – even in the pass.



Hikers should bring a compass, spare batteries for their GPS, and a printed copy of the cache map from the geocaching.com website to best experience the pass area. We suggest good footgear and carrying raingear or windblock clothing – even on a sunny day the wind up in the pass can cool you down quickly!

Here’s a list of the half-dozen caches currently placed along or adjacent to the **Portage Pass Trail**:

GC2ZE3G	Portage Pass Glacier Vantage
GC17Q1N	Portage Glacier
GC3097X	Bulwark (and a nearby 1914 benchmark)
GC2ZG9D	Pillars of Portage Pass
GC307DM	All of Whittier
GC2ZG8W	Whittier Canal View

All six can be accessed on an afternoon hike. Don’t be fooled into thinking you can reach GCJQ3E Whittier Bunker from this trail! It’s across a deep divide, and is accessed from the same road as the Portage Pass Trailhead – just don’t turn right at the trailhead sign!

Once you’re through the Tunnel to the **Whittier** side, make a full day trip out of your experience and look for some of Whittier’s other classic hides (at least 9 within easy driving or hiking distance, including **Trove Rover’s** fabulous **Horsetail Falls Cache**.) The gateway to western Prince William Sound is a delightful place to visit, including a new museum offering a concise and vivid history of this little town on Passage Canal!

The editors of ‘Around the State’ welcome your articles. We’d love to publish your favorite trails in your own back yard! Send your articles, photographs and ideas to skinnerwesley@gmail.com, attention “Around the State”

THE 2012 CALENDAR CONTEST IS UNDERWAY!

**More than 60 entries have been submitted for consideration!
Voting will open soon in the forums in these categories:**

**People
Places/Locations
Containers
Flora**

**Wildlife/Fauna
Adventure/Extreme
Whimsy/Fun
Caching Children**

You'll receive an emailed invitation to visit the GeocacheAlaska! Forums and place your votes in the Calendar Thread for winners from the various categories. Stay tuned for more information!

Visit GeocacheAlaska!'s link below at the geocachealaska.org website to see all the products available, including specially-marked GeoacheAlaska! swag, cache containers, trackable items, and more. These products are not currently available through online sales, but may be purchased at GeocacheAlaska! events and the monthly Eduvent meetings. Here's the link to view the fabulous new offerings -

(WARNING – MAY AGGRAVATE CACHING ADDICTIONS):

<http://www.geocachealaska.org/coinsales/merchandiselist.pdf>

The 2011 Alaska Geocoin Project is in pre-production phase and will be available soon too!

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