

GEOCACHE ALASKA! INC.

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SEPTEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER

HAPPENING NOW:

Read on about EduVents, voting for the finalists in the 2012 GeocacheAlaska calendar contest, Nominations for the 2012 GeocacheAlaska Board of Directors, and the new 2011 GeocacheAlaska Pathtag & Jade Geocoins.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Sept 8 - **Pizza and Frozen Buns Meet and Greet** – [GC32WZE](#) – Guido's Pizza at 6:30pm
Your first chance to acquire the newest 2011 GeocacheAlaska Pathtag & Jade Geocoins, & to meet Beverly Edwards (Frozen Buns) of GxProxy. This is a Dutch-Treat Event...

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 – **By the Numbers: 8-9-10-11 Flash Mob** - [GC32X19](#) - hosted by **Polgera** in Nulbay Park (7th & O St) to celebrate the numbers...
8am 9.10.11! A great way to start the day!

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 – **Spenard's Indian Summer Event!** - [GC32X1Y](#) - 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. Log your plan to attend so we know how much food to buy!
We have fun and games for all ages and skills!
The GeocacheAlaska Store will be open for business too, with GeocacheAlaska's 2011 Jade Geocoins and 2011 Pathtags on sale!

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 opens on the evening of September 29th with a focus on **Cache Hunting - Cache Pack Contents and Tips for Finding Difficult Caches**. The October 27 Eduvent is titled "Building and Solving Puzzles 201" – by SSO JOAT, while November 17 brings "GSAK and a quick overview of the new GC.com features."

The GeocacheAlaska! Inc. website's EDUCATION page has PDF presentations from our entire Eduvent Series. Browse GeocacheAlaska's forum threads for information and resources available for caching here in Alaska. Another great source for geocaching how-to information is found right on Groundspeak's Support Center Page. The "Knowledge Books" found here answer questions you've never dreamed of as well as those nagging how-to queries you may have been too shy to ask. Check them out here: <http://support.groundspeak.com/>

Member Photo Highlight:

A typical **Baradora** cache log photo - the note reads "Need to attend Cachers Anonymous" – too true! Baradora logs are whimsical, funny, and always have a *terrific* photograph...



The third annual GeocacheAlaska! Inc. photo calendar contest polls are now open for your voting through Sunday, September 18.

Similar to past years, you get to choose the Alaskan geocaching photos that will grace the cover and pages of the limited run calendars. What's different this year is we're using the GeocacheAlaska! Forums polls rather than SurveyMonkey. Due to being limited to one question per poll and one poll per forum thread, voting for each category is in its own thread. Each thread contains a link to a webpage that will open in a separate browser window so you can easily switch between the photos and the poll.

The seven categories/threads are:

Whimsy/Fun	Containers
Adventure/Extreme	Places/Locations
Flora	People
Fauna/Animals	

An eighth category, "Caching with Children" had only one entry, so a separate poll was not created for it.

The most popular photo in each category will automatically be published in the calendar. The remaining pages will be filled with the photos receiving the next highest number of votes.

To make your selections, navigate to the 2012 Alaska Bling Projects Board at <http://geocachealaska.proboards.com/index.cgi?board=2012bling> and visit each of the seven "2012 Photo Calendar Voting" threads.

The GeocacheAlaska! 2012 calendars will be available for purchase at November and December events and online.

Many thanks to Tom Noble/tomanoble for organizing this year's photo contest!

2012 GeocacheAlaska! Board of Director Nominations Now Open

Nominations are now being accepted for GeocacheAlaska!'s 2012 Board of Directors through Saturday, September 24. An on-line election will then be held and the new board will be announced in October. The GeocacheAlaska! [by-laws](#) specified holding elections in September to allow a transition between incoming and outgoing Board Members. So, if you've wanted to up your involvement in the game by helping with education, land manager relations, events, and/or GeocacheAlaska! trackable swag, here's your chance to ease into things.

The Board meetings are usually hosted in Anchorage, but remote attendance is facilitated by use of a toll-free phone number and WebEx (when required). A lot of Board business is also conducted online via the Board's forums, so members can initiate, discuss, and vote on initiatives at a time that is most convenient to them.

These varied means of conducting business have made it possible for Board members to actively participate despite living in Soldotna, Valdez, Big Lake, Wasilla, and Anchorage. So don't let perceived distance from letting you toss our hat into the ring. We'd love to increase the regional diversity of the Board with members from Interior, Southeast, or other parts of Alaska!

All Board positions have one year terms, so nominations for all slots are being accepted. Eligibility requirements are that the nominee have an active Geocaching.com membership at any level and a GeocacheAlaska! Premium membership. GeocacheAlaska! memberships may be purchased [online](#), at local events, or mailed in. The position descriptions as excerpted from the by-laws follow below.

GeocacheAlaska! Board of Director Position Descriptions:

President

- Preside over all Association meetings and Board of Director meetings.
- Cast the deciding vote in the event of a tie during voting at Business Meetings.
- Sign contracts and agreements on behalf of GeAK!
- Appoint members as necessary to perform the tasks agreed upon by the Board.

Vice-President

- Perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President.
- Make arrangements for scheduling meeting dates and locations.
- Supervise the Nominating Committee.
- Tabulate ballots for all GeAK! elections.

Treasurer

- Be responsible for all income and expenses.
- Keep accurate financial records.
- Make timely deposits of all monies received.
- Bill all those who owe money to GeAK!
- Pay duly authorized expenses.
- Make available financial records to GeAK! for inspection and audit.
- Recommend a budget to the Board.
- Recommend appropriate changes in the dues structure.
- Make an annual report to the members at the first/last Business Meeting each year.
- Maintain a ledger describing GeAK! property.
- Send out membership renewal notices in a timely manner.
- File required annual paperwork to maintain nonprofit status.

Secretary

- Record minutes of all Business Meetings, General Membership Meetings, and Executive Committee Meetings.
- Maintain a file of legal documents and licenses of GeAK!, past minutes, newsletter archives and other official documents.
- Record and receive all copies of contracts and agreements consummated by GeAK!
- Provide written notice of the date, time and location of meetings to the membership at least two weeks prior to the meetings, including, as needed, notice of proposed bylaw changes and elections to fill vacancies on the Board.
- Maintain a list of members, officers, Members-at-Large, and committee members.
- Conduct and respond to correspondence as required.
- Provide for the publication of the monthly newsletter of GeAK!
- Act as registered agent for GeAK!

Webmaster

- Manage content on the GeAK! Website.
- Manage the GeAK! forums.
- Maintain domain status and GeAK! forums.

Members at Large

- Facilitate event planning.
- Facilitate regional chapter formation.
- Assist other members of the Executive Board where needed.

In addition to the specific Board Member accountabilities listed above, Board Members can expect to help with training sessions, host/co-host events, meet with land managers, help design, manage, and distribute bling projects and handle other duties as they come up. Time commitments vary by individual and level of involvement, but at a minimum involve a monthly Board meeting and a few hours a month of committee or individual work to keep projects on track.

Nominations may be submitted either via a post in the [GeocacheAlaska! forums](#) or by e-mailing Ladybug Kids at ladybugs@geocachealaska.org who will place the nomination in the thread. Individuals may nominate themselves or have another geocacher nominate them. Nominees will be requested to post a "Statement of Purpose" that will serve as an introduction to the membership and provide a description of why they are interested in serving on the GeocacheAlaska! Board.

Coming Soon - 2011 GeocacheAlaska! Pathtags and Jade Geocoins

The 2011 GeocacheAlaska! pathtags will initially be available during September at the "[Pizza and Frozen Buns Meet and Greet](#)" event on September 8 and the "[Indian Summer](#)" event on September 10. After those events, online sales will begin. Many thanks to Capra Hircus/Paul Miller for coordinating this project.



Also available for the first time at the same events will be the 2011 GeocacheAlaska! jade geocoins. The jade comes from Alaska's Kobuk River Valley and was cut and polished at the Kobuk Valley Jade Company in Girdwood. The laser engraving was done by GxProxy and the front design is inlaid with gold fold. The gold nuggets are handpicked 6-screen raw nuggets, weighing an average of 1/80 ounce. Each geocoin is truly one of a kind in color and shape.

The geocoins are trackable on geocaching.com and will come with a matching "Nomad" proxy that can be released into the wild. They also feature a custom 2011 Alaska Geocoin icon:



Many thanks to Ladybug Kids/Mike Malvick, NorthWes/Wes Skinner and Frozen Buns/Beverly Edwards for helping this project become a reality.



Left to right, top to bottom: Jade w/ gold nugget, jade, jade back, proxy. Actual size is 2" w x 1.5" h.

Trail Report – September 2011

Welcome to Chugach National Forest's **Trail of Blue Ice** - linking the three glaciers of Portage Valley.

Connections are made from the trail to all of the valley's developed sites – from its eastern beginnings at the Visitors Center parking lot westward to Williwaw Nature Trail, Williwaw Campground, Williwaw Fish Viewing Platform, Black Bear Campground, Explorer Glacier Pullout, Five Fingers Hike-in Camping Area, Aspen Lake fishing platforms and the Moose Flats Day Use Area (the trail's west end). A trip along the length of the



trail crosses streams and borders ponds as it passes Byron, Middle and Explorer Glacier, and encloses visitors in an intimate experience of a typical glacial Alaskan valley. Wildlife abounds here, from salmon during the spawning run to bears visible on mountain slopes above you.

The **Trail of Blue Ice** was built at a cost of 4.4 million dollars – translating to nearly a million dollars a mile for its 4.7 mile length of primary pathway. Federal Highway Funds for trails adjacent to road projects provided a whopping 91 percent of that cost – a nice side benefit for Alaskans. Criticism of the trail's expense is best met by traveling the trail with an eye to the habitats traversed, and with an understanding of the trail's intended users. The US Forest Service (land managers here on the Chugach National Forest) classifies trails from Class I (primitive) to Class V (elaborate and often wheelchair-accessible), and the **Trail of Blue Ice** falls into the Class V designation. With nearly a third of the



trail being paved at its eastern end near the Visitors Center (down to the paved Williwaw Campground), there are no barriers to wheelchair users or persons with strollers. This opens a significant portion of the valley's habitat to being experienced by all visitors here. The remainder of the Trail is topped with fine densely-packed gravel, metal or yellow cedar boardwalk sections over wetlands, and seven bridges (including two



spectacular tied-arch bridges). The Trail's broad width easily accommodates two adults walking side by side, with well-planned line of sight

considerations balancing the need for bikers and hikers to see what's coming up against a desire to maintain an intimate feel for each few dozen yards of the trail itself.

This trail is ideal for day trippers, for families with children of any age, for bicyclists (including youngsters), and for persons camping out in either Black Bear or Williwaw Campgrounds. The many side connections to the trail let you break it into sections to enjoy across a summer of visits, or you can hike the trail as an out and back 9.4 mile trip, or post a car at both ends to make it an easy thru-hiking experience. If you're mountain biking the trail, consider starting at Moose Flats Day Use Area so you can really make good time on the slight downhill grade as you return after finding all those caches on the eastbound leg. Helmets are recommended for bikers – the trees of the forest are very close on this trail, and the temptation to speed must be tempered by the twisty nature of some graveled sections of trail (I kept overrunning caches on my visit because I was enjoying the thrill of the ride on a well-kept trail far too much!) Bring water too – the only drinking water available on the trail is in Williwaw Campground at the pumps

At the time of this newsletter, there are a total of twenty-six caches located along the **Trail of Blue Ice** or its immediate connectors. All of these caches could be scooped up in one day's bike ride of perhaps six miles total length one way. There are several more caches up Byron Glacier's valley which require a hike on a lesser-developed path, and one terrain five cache which lies on an island in Portage Creek tantalizingly close to the road. Check cache attributes carefully if you want to hunt these in the wintertime as it snows heavily here.

Please exercise the best of your geocaching "Leave No Trace" ethics here to help keep the **Trail of Blue Ice** a premium geocaching destination.

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 skimmerwesley@gmail.com, attention "Around the State"