

GEOCACHE ALASKA! Inc.

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NOVEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER

HAPPENING NOW:

Premium Members of GeocacheAlaska! should have received an e-mail with information about how to vote for the 2012 GeocacheAlaska! Board of Directors. The subject line of the e-mail reads **“PLEASE VOTE! GeocacheAlaska! 2012 Board of Directors”** and the sender is *survey-noreply@smo.surveymonkey.com on behalf of ladybugs@geocachealaska.org via surveymonkey.com <member@surveymonkey.com>*.

If you are a Premium Member of GeocacheAlaska! and didn't receive the e-mail, please e-mail Ladybug Kids at ladybugs@geocachealaska.org after checking your spam and junk e-mail folders.

The voting period will run through midnight, Wednesday, November 16, and the results will be announced at the [November 17 Trip Planning FUNDamentals Eduvent](#).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Nov 17 - **Trip Planning FUNDamentals – GC373CV**
Learn how one geocacher wove geocaching into a family roadtrip from Missouri to Georgia – and make your geocaching road trips more effective and efficient! Topics include Caches Along a Route, Pocket Queries, Geocaching Swiss Army Knife, GoogleEarth, The Jasmer Challenge, Identifying Those Really Cool Locations / Those Really Cool Caches / Those Really Cool (Mandatory) Rest Stops, and more.

Dec 9 - **7th Annual Geofest – GC32WBK** - Rev up your holiday spirit by attending Alaska's Seventh Annual Holiday GeoFest featuring caching fellowship, a pizza party, dessert contest, games, and door prizes. The 2012 GeocacheAlaska!, Inc., Board of Directors will be introduced and the full GeocacheAlaska! store including the 2012 calendars will be available, so you can take care of some of your Christmas shopping needs.



LAND ACCESS HIGHLIGHTS:

Your advocacy committee is working to renew existing State Park geocaching permits and establish new ones. Stay up to date on area land manager guidelines at the GeocacheAlaska! Website's Land Manager link: <http://geocachealaska.org/landmanagers.htm>
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:

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/>
For example, if you were to access the correct section of the Knowledge Books, you'd learn what's required to allow cache placements aboard spacecraft and other planets. Copy and paste that answer into an email to NorthWes (his email's available on the GeocacheAlaska! Inc. website) and if you're one of the first to reply with a correct answer you'll win a barely-coveted prize from the extensively-equipped GeocacheAlaska! Inc Store!!!



Member Photo Highlight –

A salute to our fellow K-9 Cachers:

A typical **Fuzzybelly** cache log photo – the caption reads “*You got my name on the log too, right?*” Sugar stars in many of Fuzzy's cache logs – and is a star to meet on the trail, too!

Trail Report – November 2011

With the changing of the seasons we find ourselves facing snowfall across our beloved Anchorage trail system. Snow brings an entirely different kind of trail etiquette – one based on sharing the trails and pathways with skiers and mushers. Under Municipality of Anchorage rules our trails are managed differently in the wintertime versus the summer. In wintertime trails are classified as either multi-use, ski only, or mush only. Each classification carries different rules of use designed to make winter trail use safe for designated users.

Most ski trails in Anchorage are groomed during winter by the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage (NSAA) under agreement with the Muni. This grooming is entirely funded by fees paid by NSAA members. A family membership costs \$300 annually, and the NSAA trail grooming budget extends to six figures. Many Anchorage trail users are unaware that NSAA trail maintenance extends to summertime trail work and new trail development. When it comes to having good trails throughout our large city parks NSAA is arguably the geocacher's best friend! Learn more about the NSAA at anchoragenordicski.com Check out their fantastic set of trail maps for each of Anchorage's large city parks.

Geocachers must abide by land manager rules and guidelines if we want to maintain our status as an approved land use group. This means we have to 'play fair' with other park land users – especially the single largest organized group of parkland/trail users in Anchorage – NSAA!

Familiarize yourself with these tips, guidelines and frequently asked questions about winter (and summer) trail use in the Anchorage area:

- ♦ Do not walk or run on groomed ski trails.
- ♦ Horses and dog owners are responsible for picking up any dropping on multi-use trails.
- ♦ Dog mushing trails are closed to all other users due to dog team speeds and for safety.
- ♦ Do not take mountain bikes, dogs or horses on groomed cross country ski trails. Use only designated multi-use trails.

Which trails do the NSAA groom for skiing?

Kincaid Park, Hillside Trails, parts of the Tour of Anchorage Trail, APU, Bartlett, Beach Lake and wherever the high school teams race on any given weekend in Anchorage and Eagle River.

Which trails do the Muni groom and maintain?

The Coastal Trail and Russian Jack Park.

What are the best ways to ruin cross country ski trails in the winter?

FOOTPRINTS – whether they are dog paws, horse's hooves, or people's feet.

Skiing on the trails when they are wet, soft and/or rainy; when they are soft and haven't been groomed and packed; during the process of grooming.

Skiers who make unnecessary and radical moves (like hockey stops).

FECAL MATTER! Even multi-use trails should never have dog and horse poop.

Don't moose leave fecal matter and footprints??

They certainly do, but they don't have human owners!

What can hikers and bikers do to help the trails in the summer?

Don't "ride the rut!" Don't even walk in the rut.

The narrow rut in the middle of the trail which is created by everyone following the same bike path becomes a ditch for water and mud and eventually ruins the entire trail. Ruts are better if they are on either edge of the trail. It would be better if everyone spread out over the trail. Grassy trails are periodically mowed during the summer, but not every week like your lawn!

The Municipality owns the trails; why can't I walk my dog or go running on them in the winter as well as other times of the year?

The Municipality has designated some trails as cross country ski only trails in the winter. Basically ski trails are to ski on in the winter, and everyone else gets to use them the rest of the year! There are many parks and woods and multi-use trails available in Anchorage other than the designated cross country ski trails. Walkers with or without dogs on ski trails put themselves in a dangerous position. Dog poop makes a mess of the trails for all users. There are now dog parks for dogs, just as there are ski trails for skiers, dog mushing trails for mushers, horse trails for horseback riders, and multi-use trails that everyone uses. **Respect other trail users by respecting the trail use designations!**

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"