

Around The State

March 2016



*Photo credit:
Kacy Grundhauser / twinkywalks*

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

[Stammtisch Taco Tuesday IV Return of the Taco!](#), March 1, 5pm, Anchorage

[Thirsty I am...](#), March 10, 6pm, Eagle River

[4th ANNUAL MARCH BIRTHDAY FLASH MOB \(AN EVENT\)!!](#), March 12, Noon, Seward

[MO' PIE! RIDES AGAIN!](#), March 14, 6:28pm, Anchorage

[Geocaching APP FUNDamentals - ANC](#), March 17, 6:55pm, Anchorage

[Geocaching 101](#), March 19, Noon, Ketchikan

[SQUARE ROOT DAY 4/4/16 6-7 PM](#), April 4, 6pm, Wasilla

[Carlanna Trail Head CITO](#), April 23, 9am, Ketchikan

[CITO NEAR THE SUITCASE 2-3PM 4/24/16](#), April 24, 2pm, Palmer

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

President's Corner

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes



One of the things that appeals to me most about geocaching is the Cache In – Trash Out (CITO) ethic. It's fun to be part of a game that encourages us to leave the outdoor world a better place than we found it. In addition to practicing CITO by bringing along (and filling) a trash bag when you go for a geocaching jaunt, you can participate in CITO Events where a particular park or place is targeted for cleanup. Better yet – you can host a CITO Event, inviting fellow cachers to join you in cleaning up one of your favorite places. We're pushing to make geocachers more visible to land managers around the state this year by helping keep the spaces where we get to play cleaner than we found them, by boosting the number of CITO events held statewide.

GeocacheAlaska! Inc. is putting together CITO kits complete with all the gear needed to carry out a CITO event in a local park or public place. These kits will be available to check out from the Event Committee to help you host your very own CITO. Event hosts get credit on their geocaching.com profile for 'owning' a CITO event, and our Membership Committee's Golden Ammocan Award program gives credit for event hosting too. Come out to our next Eduvent at the BP Energy Center on March 17th to see one of the kits (or check it out). Contact a board member if you're ready to get your very own CITO Event going now!

Editor's Notes

By Cathy Wilmeth / The_Firefly

Ahoy there! Your monthly newsletter needs you! All geocachers are both **encouraged and welcomed** to submit articles, photos, and ideas. Have you found a great cache lately? Have a DNF story to share? Want to suggest an event? Send your thoughts this way!

The submission deadline for the next issue of *Around The State* is **April 20, 2016**. I'm happy to help with any questions or concerns you may have about submitting! Send to editor@geocachealaska.org

Top Tens: Caching Achievements of Alaskan Cachers

By Scott Aleckson / SSO JOAT

This month we have a brand new Top Ten list of Alaskan Cacher's Caching Achievements. This one is looking at the Alaskan cachers with the most Trackable discovery and movement logs. The following list of familiar Alaskan cachers have logged thousands of trackable items over the years. Check out these numbers!

- #1 [cavyguy](#) = 5,416 Trackables
- #2 [dmzlstone](#) = 3,563 Trackables
- #3 [Ladybug Kids](#) = 2,488 Trackables
- #4 [li1gray](#) = 2,422 Trackables
- #5 [ftl-ak](#) = 1,404 Trackables
- #6 [coloReido](#) = 1,371 Trackables
- #7 [MC_Dahm](#) = 1,232 Trackables
- #8 [NorthWes](#) = 1,196 Trackables
- #9 [RCWard](#) = 1,022 Trackables
- #10 [skifast](#) = 931 Trackables

Look for another new Top Ten list next month!



Caching Tricks, Tips, and Tools

Reviewer's Corner

By Michael Malvick / Greatland Reviewer



Reviewing by the Numbers

I am continuing my late Winter/early Spring cache reaping efforts as originally discussed in the February newsletter. Some of the content in this article has previously been published, but because I am seeing the same issues continue in the field, I feel some of the material needs to be repeated.

Since my autumn 2015 reaping efforts, thirty more caches are displaying the "Needs Maintenance" (NM) attribute. The addition of thirty more caches needing maintenance brings the statewide total to 435, which is pushing the historical high number, but not the highest percentage because there are more caches than ever in Alaska. I wrote informational notes to each of these thirty caches and will not take further action unless a DNF streak begins or other symptoms of further issues become apparent.

A Cache Owner may clear the NM attribute by writing an "Owner Maintenance" log by logging onto their account > going to their cache page > clicking "Log your visit" in the top right corner of the cache page > selecting "Owner Maintenance" > writing your comment > and scrolling down and clicking "submit log entry." Cachers who perform community maintenance for a cache needing maintenance or who are aware of a cache that is actually all right even though it has the NM attribute may send me an e-mail with the details and I can administratively remove the NM attribute.

I also wrote reminder notes to fifty new caches that have been temporarily disabled for thirty or more days. Alaska currently has 99 temporarily disabled caches which is consistent with historical levels. I did not look at each cache page during this reaping cycle because there are a few hundred temporarily disabled caches in all the areas I review. I do know some cache owners had already written a "Note" log to the cache page to let the local Reviewer and caching community know what was happening, and I thank those Cache Owners for providing that information. That note will be helpful when I do look at the individual cache pages when I begin the follow-up archival process in about a month. Cache pages with Cache Owner notes will be given more time for Cache Owner

action. Cache pages with no Cache Owner notes will be archived, especially if the Cache Owner has not been online during the past few months.

Seventy-two new caches are indicating potential problems with a growing trend of three or more consecutive "Didn't Find It" (DNF) logs. Cache Owners who begin receiving DNF logs after their cache is typically found are encouraged to check on the condition of the cache. Cache Owners who own high difficulty caches that routinely receive DNF logs do not need to worry about cache archival because I do look at each page during the archival page and consider difficulty and past history. Note that an occasional Note posted to the Cache Owner confirming that the cache is still there is also helpful both to Cache Seekers and the Local Reviewer.

In addition to frustrating cache seekers and cluttering pocket queries, unmaintained caches can lead to environmental and subsequent public relations issues for geocaching. These issues can arise because the more determined cachers drift away from the "leave no trace" caching ethics and let their frustration lead to climbing/lifting/trampling/disassembling more things at ground zero during their search efforts.

Unmaintained caches also don't receive as many visits, in part because cache seekers will use Geocaching Swiss Army Knife (GSAK) or other filters to eliminate caches with the NM attribute, that have been unfound for an extended period of time, have several consecutive DNFs, or have other signs there may be a problem.

I *really* do much prefer publishing caches than archiving caches. Everyone who plays the game can reduce the number of archival by maintaining their caches. If circumstances arise that prevent cache maintenance (construction, illness, temporary unsafe situation, etc.), regular Notes (at least quarterly) written to the cache page can keep the cache from being archived. Communication between the Cache Owner, the local Reviewer, and the Community is critical to keep the game healthy.

Caching Tricks, Tips, and Tools

Latest in GPS Satellite News...

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes

The 12th next generation GPS IIF navigation satellite successfully launched from Cape Canaveral AFS, Fla., Friday morning, Air Force Space Command announced. The satellite blasted off atop a United Launch Alliance Atlas V booster at 8:38 a.m. local time on Feb. 5. "Today's launch marks a momentous milestone. ... It is the 12th and last GPS IIF satellite and closes out nearly 27 years of launches for the GPS Block II family of satellites," 45th Space Wing Commander Col. Shawn Fairhurst said in a release. "The GPS IIF satellite performance has been exceptional and is expected to be operational for years to come," added AFSPC commander Lt. Gen. Samuel Greaves. The [first GPS IIF satellite](#) was launched on May 28, 2010, and production of the next GPS IIIA is already in production, with the first launch tentatively slated for 2017. The next generation satellites will improve accuracy, availability, integrity, and resistance to jamming. The last Block IIA launched in the 1990's will be decommissioned this year, and the remaining constellation will comprise a total of 31 satellites divided between Blocks IIR, IIR Modernized, and IIF. (GPS [factsheet](#).)



The 45th Space Wing supported the 12th launch of a Boeing-built Global Positioning System IIF satellite aboard a United Launch Alliance Atlas V from Cape Canaveral AFS, Fla., Feb. 5, 2016. ULA photo.

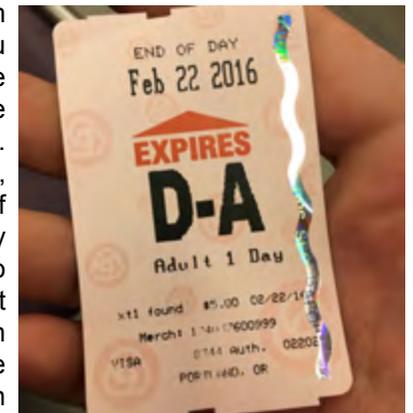
GeocacheAlaska! Info Note: *Want to know more about the GPS satellites that are integral to the geocaching game? Visit this link to learn more about the ['space segment'](#) of our nation's **Geospatial Positioning Satellite system** (yes – there's a pretty sophisticated 'land segment' too, but this article covers the space hardware in exquisite detail).*

Have a Long Layover?

By Sean Gaither / flt-ak

Have you ever had a long layover? Have you ever wondered if you would have enough time to get out of the airport and get a Geocache during this layover? My week of vacation I flew to Santa Rosa, California, but I had an 8 hour layover in Portland. I know the area fairly well and feel comfortable using public transportation. Around the airport there are multiple geocaches that are easy to get and you should have time to get one prior to a flight, depending on your time. If you leave the airport it's just like arriving for the first time for your flight - give yourself a few hours - you don't want to miss your flight. Remember, you'll have to walk through security again, so make sure to check how busy they are before you go through.

Portland has the most amazing transit system called the MAXX. From Portland Airport you can hop on the MAXX to take you to Cascade station; its not far at all. At Cascade you have a handful of geocaches that are available. In Cascade station there's also an IKEA, Best Buy, and some fun food eateries and of course a Starbucks. I paid \$5 for an all day pass for the MAXX. If you take the Red Line to bring you to Cascade station, remember to get off at Cascade or you'll end up in downtown Portland! For this trip I really wanted some Voodoo donuts so I took the Red Line train





to the Lloyd Center then walked to voodoo donuts. After having Voodoo donuts I walked around the neighborhood to collect a few caches then I hopped back on the red line train to Cascade Station. I sat there for a while and did some homework and signed up for my summer classes because that was the day that I was allowed to. Then I walked around and got four of the nearby caches. After that I went back to the Portland airport and awaited my flight to Santa Rosa. Going to Voodoo Donuts and

getting about 10 geocaches took me less than 3 hours.

This is just something to consider if you're ever on vacation and can select a long layover. This is also a great way to get one geocache in the state so that you then have that state on your stats page. Again I cannot stress enough the importance of making sure that you have time to get back to the airport and get on your flight! I don't ever want you to miss your flight because you were geocaching. Geocaching does turn a 20 minute drives into two hours. Also it's smart to take the time and do research and look at the caches around the airport and what modes of transportation you have available to you. In larger cities like San Francisco and LA they have other forms of transportation



we do not have an Alaska, like Uber, lift, and more available taxis. Do your research to make sure the cache is available and doesn't have a slew of DNF's. If you have any questions about Seattle, Santa Rosa, San Francisco or Portland let me know I fly there quite frequently.

48 Hour Escape to warmth and sunshine... (NorthWes & Mrs NW yield to Airline sales efforts!)

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes

January had been a tough month for Mrs NW and I. Making matters worse, the winter weather we enjoy so much had once again been sent south to places like Michigan and New York. We were having a serious case of the winter blues... and then we saw direct round-trip flights to Phoenix on sale for less than what the great sale prices to Seattle offered! After checking the weather forecast to make sure Phoenix was truly going to be sunny and warm, we were set up for a 48-hour weekend jaunt to the Valley of the Sun. Our goal – lazy geocaching hikes where it was sunny and seventy-warm.

We managed a decent sleep on the redeye flight, and after picking up our rental car we headed out right at sunrise for South Mountain (oddly enough, located on the south side of Phoenix). A two-lane paved road wound its way up two thousand feet of elevation gain to a stunning view across the entire valley. Dodging packs of bicyclists, our route took us all the way up to a stone lookout built by Civilian Conservation Corps workers back in the 1930s. This location featured an earthcache, which



Mrs NW looks back across to the main ridge atop South Mountain from letter-box geocache [GC28FQM](#)

Caching Travelogues



Travel Bug photo time at [GC28FQM](#)
'SMHIC #4 – Follow the Old Road'
one of our best cache journeys ever!

taught us how South Mountain differed from Camelback and the other peaks scattered around the north side of Phoenix. Just a mile further east along the ridgetop we came to what turned out to be the best cache of the day – an old-style letterbox hybrid. The walking directions took us several hundred yards back and forth across one of the valleys on South Mountain's north side, ending up atop the next ridge away. Our path followed the barely-visible remnants of the original road across the mountain, cutting coyote tracks as it wove around giant cactus and boulder outcroppings. The Sonoran desert bioclimate was fascinating to hike across in the 72 degree sunshine, and we lingered far longer than necessary on this one single caching journey to soak in the desert setting. Later in the day we visited the Desert Botanical Garden, set in one corner of the vast reaches of Papago Park near the Phoenix Zoo. As the sun set our day was capped by the antics of a half-dozen hummingbirds chasing each other in their frantic efforts to make the most of all the desert flowers in bloom at the garden.



[GC387](#) 'Back in the Saddle Again'
– found by Sourdough Members of GeocacheAlaska! Inc, - with Phoenix on the horizon.

After a lazy start to our Sunday at the hotel, we returned to Papago Park to hike the trails and climb the buttes in search of some of the city's oldest and most scenic caches. I was tickled beyond belief at finding the park's arguably most well-hidden cache

container within five minutes of starting my search. Most cache placements here involve a suspiciously-organized pile of pebbles or rocks, yet they were still in play 15 years after they'd been originally hidden. I'd brought a fistful of travelers along to leave in suitable caches, and these Papago Park ammo cans were great for dropping them off... Imagine my surprise at the recent Eduvent where RC Ward's nifty TB display board was showing off one of the Travelers I'd dropped at Papago Park! They were only a few hours behind us in Phoenix, having been up north at Grand Canyon earlier in the week. What a small world!

We made our way to the airport in time to catch a northbound flight that had us home in time for a good night's rest before returning to work on Monday morning. The sunny warm geocaching days have inspired us to watch for special fare sales within Alaska. Several years ago we flew up to cache around Barrow in early May for a day trip, thanks to Alaska Airline in-state sales. We think it's time to go to the other end of the state next and visit Ketchikan... we're just waiting for the seats to go on sale!

Caching California

By Sean Gaither / ftl-ak

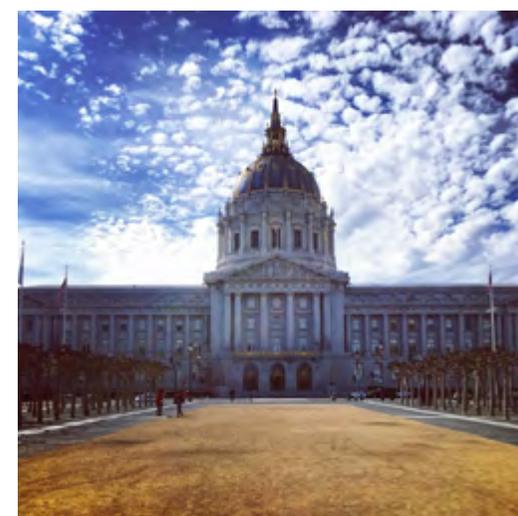
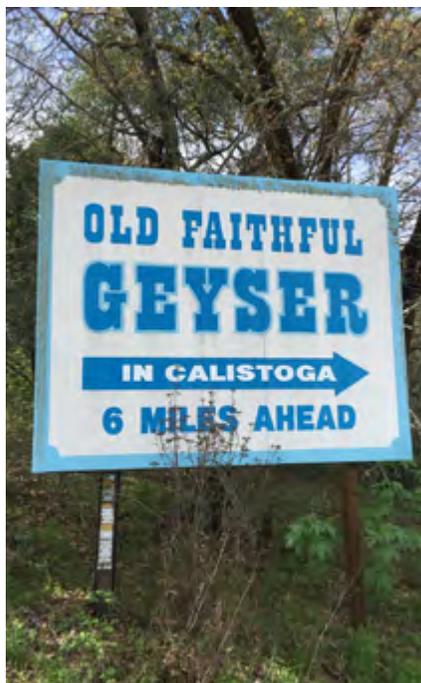
So I took a week vacation in between quitting my old job and starting my new one. I decided to fly into Santa Rosa, to visit my dad. During the day when he worked I took the rental car I got and I drove out to get some geocaches. On this trip I got a lot of Earthcaches. This was fun for me because I've already been to these areas growing up as a child. It was nice to go again and experience something I remembered, but in a different life with geocaching. I went to the Petrified Forest, Old Faithful, stopped at Robert Mondavi winery to visit my friend Quinn who is a wine sommelier. The geocaches I got along the way were fun and very interesting, Here is a photo of a fun one that I really enjoyed, with a wooden stick.



Caching Travelogues

After spending time in Northern California, I went to San Francisco. There I was able to pick up a few more Earthcaches, and a few more fun urban geocaches. The long black tube was at the top of a large staircase. This is very interesting to me because it was a nice vista point and I had to wait 10 minutes for all the Muggles to leave. This was truly a geocache hidden in plain sight that thousands of people probably look at every week. The weather in San Francisco was amazing as seen in all the photos. I had no rain and it never got below 30.

If you're ever interested in geocaching in the Bay Area or in San Francisco and have any questions please contact me and let me know. I have over 1 thousand finds in California primarily in Northern California.



Recent Events

Check out the cache pages for these recent events!

[Light Up The Night - Queso and Cocoa](#), Anchorage

[Pop-up picnic](#), Anchorage

[Stammtisch Burrito Tuesday: Burrito Strikes Back](#), Anchorage

["ROMANCE???"](#), Anchorage

[Geocaching Event Hosting FUNdamentals - ANC](#), Anchorage

[Resolution 21+](#), Anchorage

[PRE-LEAP FLASH MOB FEBRUARY 28, 2016 3-330PM](#), Palmer/Wasilla

[Who made this extra day!](#), Anchorage

[Leap Year Souvenir Event](#), Bethel

[All Hopped Up on Leap Day!](#), Homer

[Leap Day Late Breakfast Stammtisch](#), Anchorage

[Leap Into March](#), Seward

[Leap'n'Greet](#), Fairbanks

Upcoming Events

OFF THE LOG.....

Best Laid Plans – Disasters – Lessons Learned

By Louise Kempker / freeweez

Thursday, April 21st- come and listen as GeocacheAlaska! brings Alaska Cachers to share their personal stories: funny, sad and sweet
There's always a place where Cachers gather and stories are told! This evening features true stories born from those moments when the best laid caching plans maybe turn into disaster and then lessons are learned! OR...when we just want to tell someone, "You'll never guess what happened..."

10 Cachers will each have 5 minutes to tell their stories!

Place? BP Center, Anchorage

Date? Thursday, April 21st

Time? 6:45pm

This is the GeocacheAlaska! Eduvent for April and will be available for remote listening pleasure!

The Best Laid Plans.....The Disasters.....and The Lessons Learned!
Yes! You have a story to tell!

Contact: freeweez (Louise) at lekempker@uaa.alaska.edu to get your name on the list!

Around The State

GEOCACHEALASKA! MEMBERSHIP

There are two membership levels at GeocacheAlaska! Inc.

Sourdough Membership (formerly known as Premium Membership) affords you discounts in the GeocacheAlaska! online and traveling stores and events that have an entrance fee (Geofest, etc.), voting rights in Board of Directors elections and a warm fuzzy feeling for helping underwrite the organization's operating expenses that include web hosting, printing, banners, post office box fees, event prizes, and lots of other things that are required to make things happen. Because GeocacheAlaska! is an incorporated 501(c) (3) tax exempt organization, your membership dues are tax deductible.

If you cannot join as a Sourdough at this time, you may support GeocacheAlaska! by joining as a Cheechako (formerly known as Associate) Member. This will allow you to receive the monthly newsletter and e-mail announcements. More members at any level gives GeocacheAlaska!'s more clout and credibility during land manager conversations, so sign up today!

There are a few ways you can join GeocacheAlaska! at the Sourdough level for \$20/year.

1. Navigate to the [GeocacheAlaska! webpage](#) and:
 - A. Click on the "Subscribe" button to set up an automatic subscription which will renew annually. Please enter your caching name in the provided box. OR
 - B. Click on "Add to Cart" to purchase an annual membership. OR
 - C. Download a membership form you can print and mail with your payment.
2. Attend one of the upcoming GeocacheAlaska! events and speak to any Board Member.

Find us online at:

1. GeocacheAlaska! Website: <http://www.geocachealaska.org>
2. GeocacheAlaska! Forums: <http://geocachealaska.proboards.com/index.cgi>
3. Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/geocachealaska/>
4. GeocacheAlaska! Facebook Page: [GeocacheAlaska! Page](#)
5. Follow us on Instagram [@geocachealaska](#)
6. Follow us on Twitter [@GeocachAlaska](#)

Questions? E-mail to contact@geocachealaska.org

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK, Twitter, and Instagram!

Like our official [GeocacheAlaska! Page](#) on Facebook to keep up to date on things happening with GeocacheAlaska! Also, join the official [GeocacheAlaska! Group](#) on Facebook to stay in touch and share your activities with fellow members of the geocaching community. This is where GeocacheAlaska! members can plan caching adventures, post photos, and pass messages within the membership ranks. This Facebook Group is designed to be yet another member benefit for Sourdoughs and Cheechakos alike. Visit our Group and request to Join so you can start viewing and participating with GeocacheAlaska! and your fellow geocachers.



[@GeocacheAlaska](#) Follow GeocacheAlaska! Inc. on Twitter!

Follow us on Instagram! [@geocachealaska](#)

STATE PARKS PERMITS

Caches may be published within Alaska State Parks! All caches must have the permit number on the inside of the cache along with the cache owner's contact information. On the outside of the cache, you must write "Alaska State Parks Permit #15-KA-1994 Geocache AK" in permanent marking. The cache listing must state "Cache placed under GeocacheAlaska! Park Use Permit #15-KA-1994" within the description section. Before submitting a cache listing within one of the parks, please thoroughly read the complete list of stipulations in the permit, which may be [downloaded](#) from the GeocacheAlaska! website.

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

The editors of *Around the State* would like to hear from you. Submit articles or suggestions to editor@geocachealaska.org Previous editions of *Around the State* are now on our website. If you have missed previous newsletters, check out the series [here](#).

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