

Around The State



September 2016

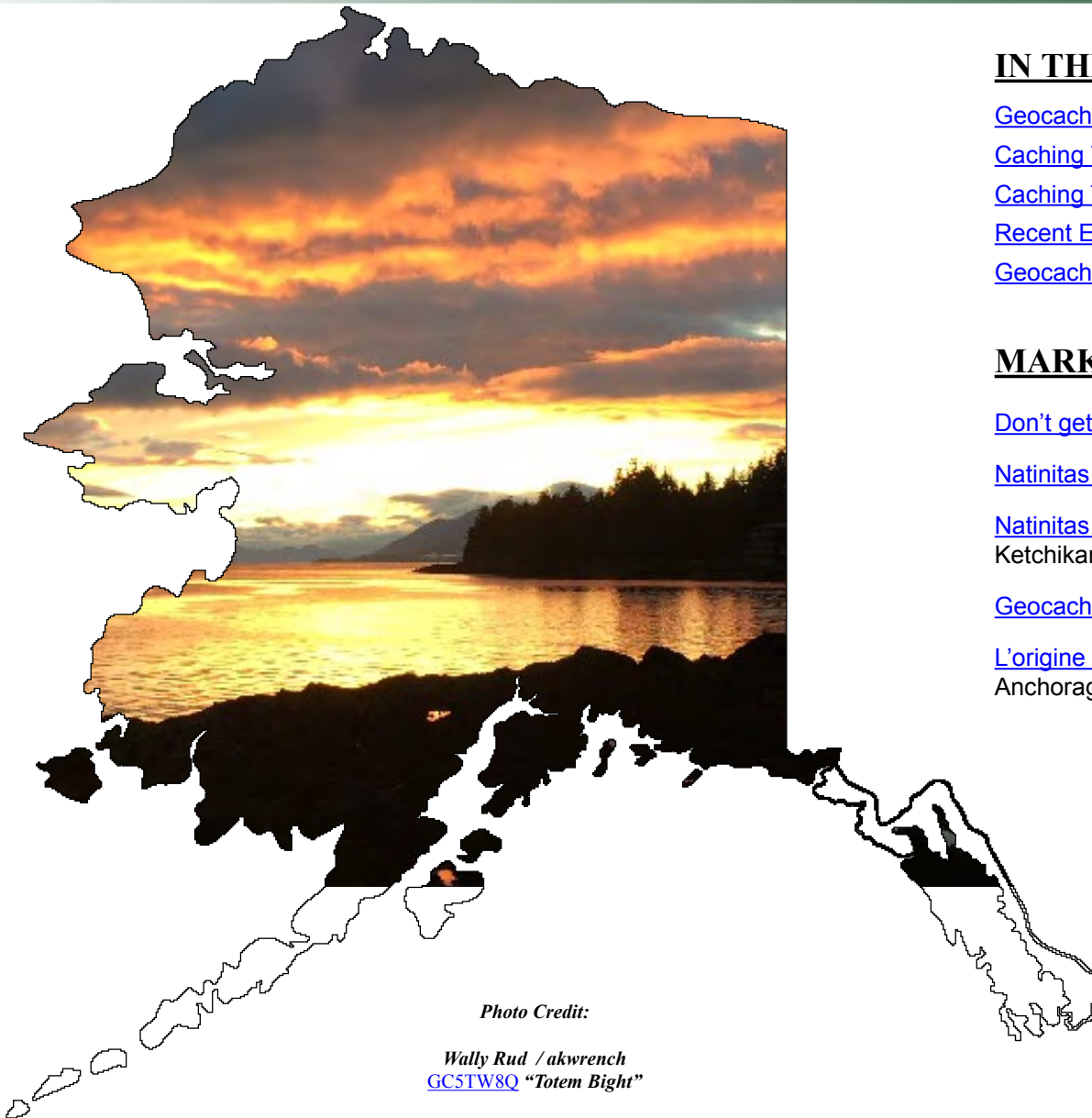


Photo Credit:

Wally Rud / akwrench
[GC5TW8Q](#) "Totem Bight"

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- [Don't get that new T-Shirt Dirty!](#), August 31, 6pm, Anchorage
- [Natinitas going west 2016 - Alaska](#), September 6, 9am, Juneau
- [Natinitas going west 2016 - ver. Alaska](#), September 7, 4:30pm, Ketchikan
- [Geocaching FUNdamentals - ANC](#), September 15, 6:55pm, Anchorage
- [L'origine de Stammtisch et Rencontre Riviouveau](#), September 17, 6pm, Anchorage

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

President's Corner

By Wes Skinner / NorthWes



Summer has passed us by, and we're on to the glorious colors and sights of fall. I've got a plan ready to get around to my more popular in-town and roadside caches to replace cache logs and dry out containers as necessary in preparation for the winter that's closer than most of us want to admit.

We're right on the edge of one of the busiest times of the year for GeocacheAlaska! Inc. The organization manages its election cycle for the board across September and October, with voting occurring in early November. As part of the election process we purchase a 'Survey Monkey' monthly account, which gives us options for voting, for conducting member surveys, and for running contests such as the photo contest for our upcoming 2017 calendar. You're on notice now to expect email contact from GeocacheAlaska! Inc. during October and November, inviting your participation in elections, in giving your board feedback about how things are going, and in submitting photos to be used on our calendar / website / social media to promote geocaching in Alaska.

This year, the Vice President, Treasurer, and two Member-at-Large positions are up for voting. Please be thinking about who you'd like to see working to accomplish GeocacheAlaska!'s missions, and representing your interests as we move forward into 2017. Contact our Vice President Dana Rosso to submit names you'd like to nominate for consideration.

Editor's Note

By Cathy Wilmeth / The_Firefly

Submission deadline for the next issue of *Around The State*:

September 20, 2016

Sending your time sensitive submissions by the deadline helps me to get your newsletter out to you in a timely manner! I'm happy to help with any questions or concerns you may have about submitting! Send to editor@geocachealaska.org. Thank you!

2017 Board of Directors Elections

By the Nominations Committee

It's election time again! Four positions on the Board of Directors for GeocacheAlaska! are up for election this November. We have positions as Vice President, Treasurer, and two of our Members at Large that need to be filled. The Vice President and at least one Member at Large are vacant seats for this election.

The Nominations Committee is currently accepting any and all nominations for service in these Board positions. All Board members must be Sourdough members of GeocacheAlaska! with their dues paid current at the time of nomination and maintained throughout their 2-year term of service.

Service on the Board is a volunteer position with requirement to attend monthly board meetings either in person or via teleconference. Meetings are generally on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 5:30pm to 7:00pm, though they sometimes run longer on months that do not have an EduVent presentation following the board meeting. Board members are also required to participate in ongoing electronic business that is conducted via private boards on our internet forums. Board members are expected to materially participate in at least one of our organization's committee areas; Education, Advocacy, Events, Fundraising, Communications, and Membership. Details on the responsibilities of each board position can be found in our [By-Laws](#).

The elections will be by electronic ballot from November 1-15, 2016. Only Sourdough members who have their dues current as of October 31, 2016 will be allowed to vote. Voting will be conducted via an electronic ballot on SurveyMonkey. Sourdough members who are eligible to vote will receive an email via SurveyMonkey on November 1st with a special link to their personal ballot.

If you are interested in serving on the board, please contact our current [Vice President](#) by email as soon as possible. The nominations committee is currently reviewing the membership roster and actively soliciting members for board service.

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

GeocacheAlaska! 2017 Calendar Photo Contest

By Scott Aleckson / GCAK! Webmaster

It's time to download the contents of your cameras! As in previous years, we are running a photo contest and it's time to submit your entries. Unlike prior years, we have greatly simplified the submission process. We are not using a vast list of photo categories this time. Each photographer may enter up to 15 photos to the contest. We will be screening all photos by committee and selecting those that meet the requirements set out below. Those that are accepted to the contest will then be voted on by the geocaching community using a 0-10 rating system. The highest rated images will get bragging rights and be published in a 2017 wall calendar that will be available for purchase this December.

Deadline for submitting photos to the contest is midnight, Sunday October 2, 2016! An online survey to vote for your favorite photos will be published later in October.

Contest Rules: Participants must be current members of GeocacheAlaska! at either the Sourdough or Cheechako level. All photos must be taken in Alaska within the last two years. The theme of our photo contest is Geocaching in Alaska, so all photos must depict scenes of geocaching activities or the sights and scenery experienced while geocaching. Every photo entry must be associated with a published geocache. Any geocache or spin-off may be used, to include any physical geocache, Earthcache, virtual, webcam, event, CITO, letterbox hybrid, benchmark, or Wherigo cache in Alaska. Caches that have been disabled or archived are still acceptable. Photos may also depict any trackable or travel bug item as long as they are taken in Alaska and there are no tracking numbers visible in the image (digital redaction is acceptable, but should be done in an aesthetically pleasing fashion).

Photos must be submitted in digital format as a High Resolution jpg image with minimal compression. Photos must be taken with a digital camera of at least 3.3MP resolution (5MP or higher preferred) and submitted to us in a format of no less than 96dpi (150-300dpi is preferred) and at the highest image resolution possible. All photos must be in landscape format (wider than they are tall) with a size ratio of about 1.3:1 to properly fit on a printed page of 11 x 8.5 inches (this aspect ratio is very close to the commonly used 4:3, which is acceptable if that is

what your camera records). Photos that are not exactly 1.3:1 aspect ratio may be subject to cropping in order to fit within our publication parameters. Photos in portrait, panoramic, or other aspect ratios that are too far out of our required range will be rejected from the contest.

GeocacheAlaska! Inc. will publish all accepted images to the photo gallery on the GeocacheAlaska! website. The images on our website will be highly compressed from the submitted images in order to facilitate network bandwidth limitations when visitors view our website. In that process, all images will be subject to cropping, resizing, and altering the image for color, brightness, and contrast. Photo credit will be given to the photographer. By submitting images to the photo contest, the entrant affirms that the photograph is their original work and they allow GeocacheAlaska! to publish the image on our website, in a printed calendar, and in any other GeocacheAlaska! electronic or printed media as part of club operations.

Photographs may be submitted by emailing a **high resolution** copy to PhotoContest@GeocacheAlaska.org. Please use the tag **[PHOTO CONTEST]** as the Subject Line of your message to help our email system sort your entries directly to our inbox instead of junking them to the SPAM box where they could get lost in the clutter. Please, submit only ONE photo per email. Processing the entries is a lot of time consuming work for the volunteers that make this contest possible. Having just one image per message really streamlines this task.

In the body of the message, please state the full name of the photographer as well as their geocaching nickname. We must have the GC# of the geocache the photo is associated with. You may include a brief description of the contents of the photo and provide a title or caption for the photo, which will appear with the photo if it is published. If there are recognizable people in the photo, please provide their name or geocaching nickname.

All photo submissions must be sent to the official photo contest email account AND include all the requested information above in order to be included in the contest. Rejected entries will receive one notice of missing information, inadequate photo size or resolution, or inappropriate content. The submitter will have until the close of the contest to correct any issues and resubmit their photo for further consideration.

GeocacheAlaska! Updates

If you have geocaching photos from your vacation or from outside of Alaska, these may also be submitted for inclusion in the GeoFest slide show by sending them to the same email account as above, but using the tag [SLIDE SHOW] in the subject line of your email. We still request that you include the info listed above. There is no limit to the number of photos you may enter into the slide show pool, so any and all geocaching-related photos are welcome. Rejected photo contest entries may be moved to the slide show at the discretion of GeocacheAlaska!

If you have any questions, send an email to the photo contest email account. Thank you for participating!

Upcoming GeocacheAlaska! Activities

September 17-25 is International CITO Week. You're strongly encouraged to set up an event all your own any day during that week to help clean up a favorite cache site, parking or trailhead location, or other public area of interest to cachers. GeocacheAlaska! Inc has CITO kits available for check-out which will fully equip you to conduct a cleanup and provide bling for some lucky attendees. Check out the Groundspeak website for details on how easy it is to host a CITO Event, and reach out to our event chair / Vice President Dana Rosso (or any other board member) to get your CITO Kit checked-out from GeocacheAlaska! Inc. The give-back ethic of cleaning where we have permission to cache is highly valued by land managers and is one of the premier reasons we're allowed to play our game on public lands.

Stay tuned for more information about how GeocacheAlaska! Inc is helping celebrate National Public Lands Day (and the 20th anniversary of the Campbell Creek Science Center) with activities at BLM's Campbell tract in Anchorage. We're conducting an introduction to geocaching during the Open House at the Campbell Science Center on September 24th, and will have a special event preceding the open house, as well as a nearby CITO event after the open house too. Watch your event postings for more details!

October and November Surveys are on the Way

By Scott Aleckson / GCAK! Webmaster

We've been asked why GeocacheAlaska! pushes out so many polls and surveys at the end of October every year. The answer is actually pretty simple. The website we use for hosting our surveys charges money for the service. We have to use this survey to conduct our elections during the first two weeks of November every year. The minimum purchase for the polling service is a 30-day block of time. So, we gather up all the things that we need to use the service for and plug them in during that purchased use of the service. This means that you can expect to see a survey published to vote on the calendar contest later in October, the elections ballots at the beginning of November, and somewhere through that timespan we are going to put out our Membership Survey asking for your feedback on how GeocacheAlaska! is doing and where you want to see the organization focusing its efforts. This membership survey provides valuable feedback to the Board to help prioritize our very limited resources to provide the benefit that our members want to see. We try not to litter your mail boxes with too much stuff, and hope that you will understand the increased activity through the next 3 months.

2016 Denali Geocoin and Alaska Mountain Pathtags

By the Fundraising Committee

GeocacheAlaska! has produced its annual geocoin for 2016. The design this year came to us from Dana Rosso (DR-AK) as an abstract profile of Denali rendered on a unique 2-inch oval coin. The reverse features an outline of Alaska overlaid with the Big Dipper and North Star. These coins were minted in two metal finishes: Antique Silver and Antique Bronze. Only 100 of each finish were minted. We have used a brand new vendor this year and we are happy to report that these coins are proudly Made in the USA! The coin production is complete and they expected to arrive in our mailbox within days. They will be available at the Anchorage event store and via mail order shortly after they are received and inspected. Pricing is \$14 per coin with special online discounts for coin sets and Sourdough members.

GeocacheAlaska! Updates



Our 2016 set of pathtags is a series of five Mountains of Alaska. The mountains were selected by the Fundraising Committee with input from some of our mountain climbing members to represent popular peaks throughout Alaska. The selected peaks include [Augustine Volcano](#) in Cook Inlet, [Mt. Edgecumbe](#) in Southeast, [Finger Mountain](#) in the Interior, [Pioneer Peak](#) in the MatSu Valley, and [Mt. Sanford](#) in the Glennallen (Copper River) area. Each tag features a colorful sky background behind a mountain peak profile. All are made of silver nickel with the GeocacheAlaska! back design. These are currently in production and expected to be completed by the third week of September and arrive in our hands by the end of the month. They will be sold as a set of 5 tags for \$11.50 with a discount for our Sourdough members.



Look for a special email notice to our merchandise updates mailing list when these new items are in the store and ready for online sales. You can sign up for or confirm your status on this mailing list by visiting your account on our [phpList mail server](#).

Membership Renewal Reminder!

Don't forget to renew your GeocacheAlaska! membership. Renewal/sign up information is always available on the last page of the newsletter, or on the GeocacheAlaska! website. Membership has its bonuses: make sure you're paid up and your membership is active. We are currently working on a membership giveback item! Don't miss out - make sure you're paid up today!

Save a stamp and renew your membership or join [GeocacheAlaska! online](#) today using your PayPal account or a major credit card. Alternatively, you may [click here](#) to download a printable membership form to mail. GeocacheAlaska!, Inc. is a not for profit 501(c)(3) organization, so your membership fee qualifies as a tax deductible donation.

Sourdough Members enjoy voting rights, are eligible for event and merchandise discounts, and can set up a geocachealaska.org email address. Download and read the [by-laws](#) (86k pdf) for more details. All paid Sourdough Members will be issued an official GeocacheAlaska! trackable Sourdough Nametag! To see these trackables in action, take a look at our [current member's traveling tags!](#) Sourdough memberships are now a rolling 12-month period based on your initial sign up date. (Unless you are on PayPal autopay subscription, you will receive a renewal notice near the beginning of the anniversary month of your initial membership with dues payable by the end of that month.)

Cheechako Memberships are free and allow you to "try before you buy" to see what the organization is all about. Adding your name to our membership list helps with negotiating park permits. Cheechako Memberships are available by printing and mailing the membership application form, or you scanning the form (or a legible picture of it) and emailing it to the [Secretary](#).



Caching Tricks, Tips, and Tools

Reviewer's Corner

By Michael Malvick / Greatland Reviewer



Urban Caching, Schools and Pokémon

Continuing on a topic from last month's Reviewer's column, cache hidiers as well as cache seekers are reminded to be mindful of how their actions will be perceived by non-cachers (muggles) in an area. For example, the Municipality of Anchorage supports geocaching in all of Anchorage's parks without a requirement for a permit. Many of these parks share a boundary with private property, oftentimes with a fence separating the private and the public land. Placing a cache in the park in close proximity to the fence can cause issues with the private property owner if children, dogs, or simply being seen from the kitchen or bedroom window are involved. Homeowners are protective of their privacy and many are also protective and vigilant about who uses the parks adjacent to their property. Several caches in Anchorage greenbelts and parks have been archived over the years due to conflicts with adjacent private property owners.

Recently, when I commented about the proximity of a new cache to a fence and a home, the Cache Owner responded, "*Its in the park within a thicket of trees and there is a privacy fence plenty of coverage... Even for <catcher name redacted> lol.*" I was taken aback by the flippant attitude, but since the cache complied with the Guidelines I published it and placed a watch on it so appropriate action can be taken if trouble with the neighbors does arise.

At the end of July, I didn't check the satellite photo carefully enough and published a cache on the grounds of a high school. A month passed before a cacher appropriately wrote a "Needs Archived" log on the cache page, which brought my attention to the cache for another review and subsequent archival. I never should have published the cache in the first place and apologize to the caching community. I do make mistakes and the caching community is the backstop to assure caches remain on the right side of the Guidelines.

School grounds of off limits for cache placement per the last bullet of the "[restricted area](#)" Guideline. As a rule of thumb, if a geocacher can be seen by faculty or

students from a school building or playground it is only a matter of time before police are called to investigate. Law enforcement has gotten involved even at schools where the principal has given permission for a cache hide, as not all employees and parents were aware of the cache. Cache placements in areas where cachers could be expected to be seen during all hours of the day and night without arousing suspicion from concerned parents and school employees can be published. Examples of such areas include Frisbee golf courses that are open to the public at Service and Seward High Schools and Nordic and hiking/running trailheads such as at Service and Eagle River High Schools.

Finally, with the sudden appearance of Pokémon Go on the scene, cachers may continue to create Pokémon-themed puzzle/mystery and other types of caches because Pokémon characters fall under the "pop culture" inclusion Guideline. However, direct reference to the Pokémon Go application or use of the game's logo are currently not permitted because Groundspeak considers the application to be a direct competitor and is not in the business of providing free advertising.



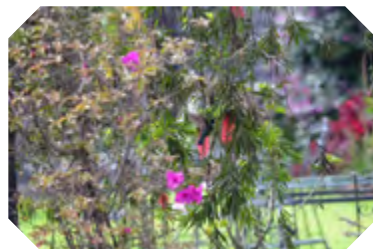
Caching Travelogues

Caching Ecuador

By John Scoblic / Scobey



Can you spot the cache location? This is one of the 65 caches in Ecuador and one that I took time to find during my whirlwind tour of Ecuador. My niece married an Ecuadorian so Mrs Ladybug and I went and enjoyed super hospitality and a two week, guided stay there.



This cache is CG6KZW1, Mural de mi Cara, located in Baños. I introduced five traveling companions to geocaching at this cache.



We also found CG934A, A virtual named The Fake Equator. One of the attractions near Quito is the Equator Monument. It claims to be on the equator, but is actually far from it as can be seen. There is another tourist attraction nearby that claims to be the location of the true equator, but it too is fake. The equator is actually near the edge of the road outside the second location. The monument was the location of the equator in 1744, but due to the movement of the earth the equator has moved.



If you are looking for a place to visit, I highly recommend Ecuador. It has a widely varied geography which is stunning as well as friendly people and good food. A guided tour would be the best way to see the country.

Recent Events

Caching on the Kenai – 8th Annual Picnic Event

By Scott Aleckson / SSO JOAT

On Saturday, August 20, about two dozen geocachers gathered at the Kenai Municipal Park for BBQ hamburgers and hot dogs provided by GeocacheAlaska! Inc. and cooked up by SSO JOAT. This marks the eighth running year of the Caching on the Kenai picnic. Due to work obligations, JOAT wasn't able to do the picnic in July as usual, but once the calendar in August opened up a bit and International Geocaching Day was announced, we targeted a 3-fer weekend to get the Kenai Picnic, an IGD souvenir, and provide a finish line event for any HQ Duck Dash trackables running around the area that would be looking for an event on this date.

Expecting a lower than usual turnout due to the date change, the Daycache Game was compressed quite a bit. We were able to form up three teams who dashed out to locate as many of the 15 day caches as they could in a very short running time of just 35 minutes. It was neck and neck as the teams basically paced each other cache for cache, but the "blue" team managed to squeak in one more cache than the others by the end of the time, coming up with the win. Each member of the winning team received a GeocacheAlaska! license plate trackable tag, compliments of GeocacheAlaska! Inc., which also donated a silver 2015 Eagle geocoin and two sets of 2015 Flower pathtags as door prizes.

We'll look forward to doing it all again next year. JOAT is tentatively looking at the weekend of July 9, 2017 for the 9th annual picnic. Hope to see you there!

Check out these recent Geocaching events!

[International Beer Day \(Stammtisch\)](#), August 7, 7pm, Anchorage

[Stammtisch Coffee Master](#), August 10, 6:30pm, Anchorage

[Stammtisch 7 Summer Reunion](#), August 11, 6:30pm, Anchorage

[CITO on C street](#), August 13, 10am, Anchorage

[2nd Annual Meet-n-Sniff](#), August 14, 3pm, Anchorage

[Chilli Dog Chill Out II](#), August 14, 4pm, Anchorage

[berkshire geobash meet greet](#), August 16, 4pm, Anchorage

[Caching on The Kenai - 8th Annual Picnic](#), August 20, 10:30am, Kenai

[Two if by Sea](#), August 20, 5pm, Anchorage

[Ketch Me If You Kan](#), August 25, 11:30am, Ketchikan

[Meet & Greet at Denali](#), August 30, 6:30pm, Denali

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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