



Wildlands Update for Early Winter

Alaska Public Lands

Information Center

Your Adventure Starts Here

Fall Nature Notes

The snow is coming and the animals of Alaska are getting ready for it. Bears are finishing their autumn fattening and are getting ready for the deep sleep; many small animals are packing away the food they will need to make it through the long Alaska winter; and birds are either heading south, beginning torpor (a method of winter energy conservation) and/or searching food to maintain their winter fat.

Closures

Roads

The road over Hatcher Pass will be closed until July for public safety reasons. The east side of Hatcher Pass (Palmer side) remains open for recreational purposes. This is the typical closure over the Hatcher Pass summit road that occurs during the winter months. For more information contact the Mat-Su Area Office at 745-3975. Taylor Highway has no winter maintenance from the Alaska Highway to Milepost 159 from October 15 to April 6 and the ferry to Dawson City does not operate during this time. McCarthy Road is not maintained in winter. Denali Highway is closed October through mid-May

Campgrounds

Camping spots are still available free of charge on a pack-it-in, pack-it-out basis. Most state and all federal campgrounds have shut down water and toilets and many are gated. For suggestions on pack-it-in, pack-it-out, visit <http://www.alaskacenters.gov/leave-no-trace.cfm> If camping is not for you, many public use cabins are available to rent year-round. Visit <http://www.alaskacenters.gov/cabins.cfm>

Winter Access

Despite the shutdown of summer activities, all public lands remain open. Private concessions will offer winter activities once snow conditions are good. The railroad operating on a limited schedule still offers winter vacation packages and special occasion trains <http://www.akrr.com> Other tour operators still offer dogsled rides, flight-seeing and other opportunities as we move into winter.

Most tour operators have ceased for the winter: Cruises out of Whittier, Seward and Homer have ceased for the winter.

Access to the Matanuska Glacier across the

Matanuska Glacier Company's land has ceased until Memorial Day weekend. Remember transportation and lodging are limited this time of the year, so plan accordingly.

Winter Recreation

Snow is around the corner. Get your winter gear and winter safety mind-set dusted off, geared up and ready to go! For winter recreation ideas and links, go to <http://alaskacenters.gov/winter-activities.cfm>.

For information on groomed trails visit:

<http://www.anchoragnordicski.com>

<http://grooming.cooperlandingsnordicskiclub.org>

<http://www1.matsugov.us/communitydevelopment/trail-conditions>

Healthy Adventures in Anchorage

Check out adventures under Parks and Recreation Activity Guide, at

<http://www.muni.org/departments/parks>

Winter Safety

Check out the helpful sites below before you head out on your winter adventures:

For winter camping tips and safety check out these Glacier National Park videos:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDvDMvowkjU>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWXI6Zk4hYo>

Snow-depth and current conditions visit:

http://aprfc.arh.noaa.gov/sd_pafc_sites.html

<http://ambcs.org/current.htm>

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/asp/curevnts.htm>

For ice safety information and videos:

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/ice/index.html>

Avalanche Information:

www.cnfaic.org

For more information on road conditions visit

<http://511.alaska.gov> or call 511. The 511 website also has real-time webcams showing current road conditions.

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Firewood

State Lands: Firewood is available in the Mat-Su Valley and Kenai Peninsula. Maps and permits are available at <http://forestry.alaska.gov/wood/firewood.htm> Chugach National Forest: Click on the firewood quicklink at <http://fs.usda.gov/chugach> Kenai National Wildlife Refuge: Visit <http://kenai.fws.gov/overview/news/11061sam.pdf>

Campground Hosts

Summer campground host positions fill up quick, so if you or someone you know are interested for next summer, start looking now.

State of Alaska:

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/vip/host.htm>

US Fish & Wildlife:

<http://alaska.fws.gov/volunteers.htm>

US Forest Service: Contact individual Ranger Districts.

Alaska State Parks

The 2012 State Park Day Use Passes could be available as soon as mid-November this year, so keep an eye out for them. They sell for \$40 for one and \$60 for two (for the same address) and can be purchased online, at REI, AMH, or Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center.

For more information on current events in State Parks, visit <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/asp/curevnts.htm>

Chugach State Park

Visit the new webcams at the Glen Alps Trailhead <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/units/chugach/webcam.cfm>. You can check out trailhead conditions from home. For winter activities, trail conditions and more visit <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/units/chugach/winter.htm> or call (907) 345-5014.

Denali State Park & Nancy Lake State Recreation Area

Cabins are available. It's a great way to see the northern lights.

For more information, call (907) 745-3975 or go to

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/cabins/matsu.htm>

Independence Mine State Historical Park

The visitor center is closed for the season but the park will still remain open for hiking and self-guided tours. The visitor center will reopen next June. The Hatcher Pass road is closed for the winter on the Palmer-side until July. For further information or questions, contact Finger Lake Headquarters at (907) 745-3975.

National Park Service

Kenai Fjords National Park

Kenai Fjords National Park is open year-round. Exit Glacier Road is closed for

the season. To reserve the Willow Winter Public Use Cabin, call Park Headquarters at (907) 422-0500. Kenai Fjords will take reservations for public use cabins for the summer of 2012, the beginning of January. The Aialik and Holgate cabins are located in Aialik Bay and are accessible by water or air only. The cabins are limited to three nights per season at a current cost of \$50/night. Expect transportation to cost \$300 or more for a round trip. No toilet facilities are expected at this time. For reservations and more information, call (907) 644-3661 or toll free at (866) 869-6887 or visit <http://www.nps.gov/kefj>

Denali National Park and Preserve

The main visitor center is closed and the Park road is closed to vehicles at mile 3, but the Murie Science and Learning Center (MSLC) will be open daily from 9am-4pm for information, entrance fees and backcountry permits. Ranger led snowshoe hikes will be scheduled on weekends after the New Year. Also, the sled dog kennels are open to visitors throughout the winter daily from 9am-4pm. Bear Loop at Riley Creek Campground is open for camping, but is without services. There is water and a vault toilet at MSLC. Entrance fees are collected year-round (\$20 per vehicle for 7 days); Denali also has an annual pass for \$40. For more information call (907) 683-9532 or visit <http://www.nps.gov/dena>.

National Forests

Chugach National Forest

Campgrounds may be used, but there are no services. No restrooms or water is available. Garbage pickup has also ended, please pack out anything you bring in. Campgrounds close down completely around the 1st of November depending on weather conditions. The Begich-Boggs Visitor Center is closed and will reopen in May. Call (907) 224-3374 or visit <http://fs.usda.gov/chugach>. For cabin availability visit <http://www.recreation.gov>.

Fish and Wildlife Service

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge

The visitor center is open weekdays 8 am to 4:30 pm and Saturdays 10 am to 5 pm. Check out the snowshoe walks, ski treks, Little Peeps programs, and movie schedule. For a map as well as information on cabin rentals in the refuge, call (907) 262-7021 or visit <http://kenai.fws.gov/visit.htm>.

For winter activities go to <http://kenai.fws.gov/VisitorsEducators/visiting/winter/winter.htm>

Southcentral Visitor Centers

Eagle River Nature Center

The Nature Center is open Friday-Sunday 10am-5pm. October-April. Special December 2011 Hours: Open (10am-5pm)

Friday, December 23 and Monday thru Friday, December 6-30. Closed: Sat & Sun, December 24-25 and December 31 - January 1. Trails are always accessible. Check out cabins and yurts for rent by the center and its educational programs. For more information, call (907) 694-2108 or visit their website <http://www.ernc.org>

Campbell Creek Science Center

Enjoy the winter on the trails around the Science Center. The Center is open weekdays 7:30am-5pm. Check their calendar for fireside chats and astronomy lectures. To learn more, call (907) 267-1247 or visit the BLM website <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sciencecenter.htm>

Alaska Islands and Ocean Visitor Center - Homer

The center is open October 1 to May 3, Tuesday-Saturday 12pm-5pm. For more information on the many programs offered by the center, call (907) 235-6961 or visit <http://www.islandsandocan.org>

Alaska Public Lands Information Centers

<http://alaskacenters.gov>

Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center: Located in downtown Anchorage and open weekdays 10am-5pm. Stop by for trip planning, scavenger hunts, and exhibits about Alaska. For more information, visit the website or (866) 869-6887, toll free or (907) 644-3661.

Fairbanks Alaska Public Lands Information Center: Open Monday-Saturday 8am-5pm. The center is situated in the Morris Thompson Cultural Center. Visit their exhibits and watch a movie. For more information on winter programs or things to do in the Fairbanks area, visit the website or call (907) 459-3730.

Tok Alaska Public Lands Information Center: Sitting right on the border with Canada, it is open weekdays from 8am-4:30pm From Labor Day to Memorial. For more information, call (907) 883-5667. For ferry reservations, call (888) 256-6784

Southeast Alaska Discovery Center: This center in Ketchikan is open Thursday - Saturday 10am-4pm, October thru April and offers newly remodeled exhibit rooms, trip planning, and movies. To receive more information, call (907) 228-6220 or visit the website.



Interested in working in a visitor center for the summer?

Contact the above agencies for paid and volunteer positions, or visit the website at <http://www.alaskacenters.gov/job-opportunities.cfm>

Updated 11-7-2011