



Anchorage Alaska Center theater upgrade phase 2 is nearing completion

Wildlands Update for April

Nature in April

April bursts forth with spring activity. It is prime viewing time for Gray whales as they migrate north from Mexico; boat tours are available in Kenai Fjords. Large numbers of raptors and caribou will be visible from the road system. Black and Brown bears emerge from their winter sleep, so make sure you are alert and educated on bear safety. Hares begin to breed and may be seen running about in daylight. Northern Hawk-Owls call from atop spruce trees. Dall sheep travel in large herds and come to lower elevations looking for spring vegetation. Ptarmigan and grouse start courtship and migratory waterfowl return to nest. Chum and King salmon fry emerge from their egg sacs and prepare for the long migration to the sea. Share your first sightings at Journey North at www.learner.org/jnorth.

Earth Day and National Park Week

April 22nd is Earth Day and National Park Week is April 19-27. Watch for events and opportunities to learn and volunteer. For details, go to <http://www.earthday.gov/> and <http://www.nps.gov/npweek>.

Avalanche Safety:

For information on avalanche conditions, call the appropriate agency or go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/rro/chugach/glacier/snow.html>

Road Closures

The Taylor and Top of the World Highways should be open later this month; however, border customs will not be open until mid-May. The Denali Park Road is open to Savage River (Mile 15). Roads can be dangerous this time of year with freezing rain and unexpected snow. For updated road conditions, visit <http://511.alaska.gov/> or dial 511 in Alaska, (866) 282-7577 outside Alaska. For road condition webcams: <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/iways/roadweather/forms/AreaSelectForm.html>

Alaska State Parks

Get ready for the summer by purchasing a 2008 Alaska State Park day-use pass at \$40 each or \$60 for two. Boat Launch passes cost \$75 each or \$100 for two. Passes are available on-line and at the AAPLIC, DNR Public Information Center, Potter Section House, REI, AMH, and Sportsman's Warehouse.

Chugach State Park:

All of Chugach State Park is closed to motorized use as of March 24. Trails vary in condition from clear on south-facing slopes to snowy with shade and elevation. Consider making cabin reservations for the summer by calling (907) 269-8400. Campgrounds are still closed, but the cabins and yurts at Eklutna and Eagle River Nature Center remain open year-round. Call (907) 345-5014 or go to <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/asp/chugachwinter.pdf>

Matsu Area State Parks:

Independence Mine / Hatcher Pass: Hatcher Pass is open to snowmachining, but wind loading is significant. There are dangerous cornices and loaded gullies as of March 14. Snow coverage is variable at upper elevations. Due to areas of thin coverage in the Fishhook Parking Lot area, snowmachiners are asked to stay on the main trail. Independence Mine Bowl has good skiing and groomed x-country trails. Be aware of avalanche hazard areas. For more information, visit <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/asp/hpsnowreport.pdf>

Nancy Lake State Recreation Area:

The area is open to snowmachines, but warm temperatures have made snow soggy. The snow depth ranges from thin to 20 inches. All area trails are hard-packed. Snow is slushy and wet on lakes; creeks are open or have thin ice. Remember snowmachines are not permitted on maintained roads. Call (907) 495-6273.

Denali State Park:

Denali State Park is open to the use of snowmachines and other registered off-

highway vehicles (as of 3/27). Check for closures every week as snow degrades. Snow cover is low at Curry & Kesugi Ridges so tundra plants are at risk for damage. The Veterans' Memorial remains closed, but cabins at Byers Lake are open. For information in Matsu Area State Parks, call (907) 745-8950 or go to <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/asp/nancydenali.htm>

Kenai Peninsula Parks:

Kachemak Bay:

Nomad Shelters is operating two yurts at Humpy Creek and Wright Beach; call (907) 235-0132. For general information, call (907) 262-5581.

Caines Head:

Thumb Cove and Callisto cabins are open for rental; Derby Cove is closed for repairs until May.

Kenai River Area:

Remember that travel on the ice is at your own risk, especially in the spring. For more information, call Alaska State Parks in Soldotna at (907)262-5581 or the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge at (907)262-7021.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Check out the monthly publication "Alaska Fish and Wildlife News" at <http://www.wildlifenews.alaska.gov/>

Some good websites

Alaska outdoor information:

<http://www.nps.gov/aplic>

Alaska weather information:

<http://www.arh.noaa.gov/>

Alaska Volcano Observatory :

<http://www.avo.alaska.edu/>

Sunrise-Sunset:

<http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/>

Road Conditions:

<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/>

Bureau of Land Management

The Denali Highway is closed. Campgrounds remain open year-round, but are without services. The Iditarod celebrates its Centennial this year through 2012. Stop by for this year's Archaeology poster that features the Iditarod.

National Park Service

Kenai Fjords National Park

The park is open year-round, but all visitor centers remain closed until late May. Exit Glacier Road is closed at Box Creek Canyon. ATVs are not allowed in the park, even on the road. The road has enough snow for snowmachine use at this time (March 31). Areas that are restricted are posted on bulletin boards and signs. Visit the website at <http://www.nps.gov/kefj>

Denali National Park and Preserve

On Wednesday, April 2 at 7:00 p.m. Roger Kay will make a presentation entitled "Wilderness and the Human Spirit" at the Murie Science and Learning Center, located at Mile 1.3 on the park road. MSLC is functioning as the winter visitor center from 9a.m. to 4p.m. daily. Denali rangers will lead two-hour hikes on snowshoes, when possible, on or near trails at the park entrance. Bring lunch and snacks. A few snowshoes are available at the center. Guided hikes are free, but park entrance is \$10 per person or \$20 per vehicle. Entrance is free if you have an America the Beautiful Lands Pass (Annual, Access, or Senior) or Denali National Park Pass. The Denali Park Road is open to Savage River (Mile 15).

Riley Creek Campground is open, but water remains turned off. A vault toilet is provided for campers and water can be obtained at the Murie Science and Learning Center. All other campgrounds are closed. The opening date for campgrounds may be delayed because of ice in the buildings and water system. Doyon/ARAMARK is accepting reservations for shuttle buses and campgrounds. Reservations can be made by phone, on-line, mail, and fax. The Teklanika River Campground will be open to tents and RVs this year. Call (907) 683-2294 or go to <http://www.nps.gov/dena>

Fish and Wildlife Service

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge

The refuge is now closed to snow machine use due to poor snow conditions. The word on ice fishing is check, check, check! Skilak Lake is not recommended. The visitor center is open 8a.m. to 4:30p.m. on weekdays and 10a.m. to 5p.m. on Saturdays.

There are 13 public use cabins for rent on the refuge. For more information, call 262-7021 or check the web at <http://kenai.fws.gov/>

National Forest Service Chugach National Forest

Check out the 2-for-1 special for Whistle Stop service to Spencer Glacier this summer on the Alaska Railroad. It's a new and great backcountry adventure. See details at alaskarailroad.com. Twenty-mile and Placer River drainages are open to snowmachine use as of March 20 due to recent snows, but watch for overflow conditions. Skookum drainage is closed as of April 1st. Natural avalanche danger is high. Campgrounds are gated but campers are welcome to walk in. For information, call the Glacier Ranger District (907) 783-3242 or the Seward Ranger District (907) 224-3374 or go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/>

Urban Public Lands

Municipality of Anchorage and the MatSu Borough

The Anchorage Parks and Recreation Activity Guide and calendar are available on-line. Get out and stay healthy! Check their website at <http://www.muni.org/parks/>

Wildlife Wednesdays

Free Lecture Series at the Wilda Marston Theater at the Loussac Library at 7:00 p.m. The April 16th lecture is "The Wilderness Inside Ourselves." For more information, call (907) 343-2915.

Local Anchorage Outdoor Opportunities

The Sea Kayaking Symposium is May 9-11 at Alaska Pacific University. Cost is \$225 for the weekend; lecture series only is \$50; individual lectures are \$5. Contact (907) 275-PADL or info@aksk.org. There is a Knik Canoers safety meeting at 7 p.m. on April 10 in Wilda Marston Theatre at the Anchorage Loussac Library. Join like-minded outdoors folks for Alaska Outdoors weekly hikes on Mondays and Thursdays from 6:30-8 p.m. Cost is free. Contact (907) 770-0440 or www.alaska-outdoors.org for details.

Southcentral Visitor Centers

Eagle River Nature Center

Located at mile 12 of Eagle River Road, ERNC is open Fridays and weekends 10:00a.m.-5:00p.m. May 10 is the Seymour 10K Challenge; register at the web site. The 2008 Spring Auction is Friday, April 25, from 6:00p.m. to 9:00p.m. at the BP Building in Anchorage. ERNC rents its

facility, a cabin, and two yurts. The center offers many free programs; parking is \$5 for non-members. Call for updates at (907) 694-2108 or go to <http://www.ernc.org>

Campbell Creek Science Center

The visitor center is open Monday through Friday 7:30a.m. to 4:00p.m. The Fireside Chat on April 16 at 7:00p.m. is "A Cultural and Historical Geography of Campbell Creek." Call (907) 267-1247 or check <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sciencecenter.html>

Begich-Boggs Visitor Center

The visitor center is closed for the winter except for education programs. Call (907) 783-2326 for more information or visit http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/chugach_pages/bbvc.html

Alaska Islands and Ocean Visitor Center

The visitor center is open Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 5:00p.m. Learn how to care for our beaches at Tide Guide training on April 9 from 9:30-12:30. The center will be celebrating Earth Week April 18-26 with programs on living green. April 26 is Jr. Ranger Day. Call (907) 235-6961 or visit <http://www.islandsandoocean.org>

Alaska Public Lands Information Centers

The *Downtown Anchorage* location is open 10a.m.-5p.m. Monday-Friday. Movies are available on request (if not previously scheduled by school classes). Saturday April 19 is Junior Ranger Day (in association with Kids Day). Stop by from 10:00a.m. to 4:00p.m. and earn a Jr. Ranger badge! Call (907) 644-3661 or 1-866-869-6887. Check out the website at <http://www.nps.gov/aplic> <http://www.nps.gov/anch>

The *Fairbanks* location is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10a.m.-5p.m. FAPLIC participates in the First Friday Art Walk from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. with temporary exhibits. A special film, *Arctic Tale*, will be shown at 2:00p.m. on April 19. April 26, from noon to 4:00p.m. is a Migration Celebration and Jr. Ranger Day with a puppet show and a chance to earn a Jr. Ranger badge. Explore Alaska Lecture Series takes place on Thursday evenings at 7p.m. Call (907) 456-0527 for details and the schedule of daily movies.

The *Tok Center* location is open Monday to Friday 8a.m.-4:30p.m. Call (907) 883-5667 for more information or (888) 256-6784 for Alaska Marine Highway reservations. 3/31/08