



Wildlands Update for Early Winter

Alaska Public Lands

Information Center

Your Adventure Starts Here

Winter Solstice is Monday, December 21, at 2:38pm AST, but Barrow will still not see the sun until January 23. This month's full moon will be on December 31. The most reliable meteor shower of the year, the Quandrads, occurs January 1-5. Until daylight increases in earnest, remember to drive with lights on. Bikers, walkers and runners are advised to wear lights and reflectors.

Helpful sites before you head off on your winter adventures:

Snow Depth- <http://aprfc.arh.noaa.gov>

Avalanche Information- <http://www.cnfaic.org>

Road Conditions- <http://511.alaska.gov>

Holiday Trees

Various state and federal agencies allow holiday tree-cutting in designated areas. Call or visit the internet for maps and regulations:

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge
(907) 262-7021

<http://kenai.fws.gov> (visit the newsroom)

Chugach National Forest

Anchorage office (907) 743-9500

Seward District office at (907) 224-3374

Glacier District office at (907) 783-3242

Alaska Division of Forestry

Mat-Su Area Office (907) 761-6300

<http://dnr.alaska.gov> (Christmas trees in right-hand menu)

Anchorage Christmas Bird Count

takes place Saturday, December 19, from sunrise to sunset. Data tabulation takes place at the Pioneer Schoolhouse from 4:40-7:30pm. Call (907) 929-8051 for more information.

<http://ak.audubon.org/events/1259>

Alaska State Parks

2010 Annual Day Use and Boat Launch decals are now available. Day Use passes are a great holiday gift for the outdoor enthusiast, \$40 for one or two for \$60 for a second vehicle. You can order online, phone (907) 269-8400 or find where to purchase in-person at <http://alaskastateparks.org> Denali State Park, Bird Valley, Peters Creek, Ptarmigan Valley, the Eagle River 7.4 Access, and Eklutna Lake are open to snowmobiling; the Anchorage Hillside in Chugach State Park remains closed.

Check on openings at

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

Quartz Lake State Recreation Area

A new public use cabin at **Quartz Lake** near Delta Junction is now available for rent from September 1 to May 15. The cabin is much bigger (20'x24'), accessible by road, and has a large wood stove (firewood not provided). For reservations, call the Fairbanks Public Information Center at (907) 451-2705 or the Anchorage office at (907) 269-8400. All cabins and ice fishing huts (near Fairbanks and Delta Junction) can be reserved at

<http://alaskastateparks.org>

Chugach State Park

If you plan on booking a group site at **Ekluntna Lake Campground** for this upcoming summer, reservations begin on 2/1/2010; call Chugach State Park Headquarters at (907) 345-5014.

Nancy Lake State Recreation Area

has received enough snow to open the entire area to snowmobiling. Call (907) 761-3786 for the recorded hotline.

Hatcher Pass Area

All of the East Hatcher Pass Management Area and Summit Lake State Recreation Area are closed to snowmobiling due to insufficient ground cover (12/18/09). The Independence Mine Bowl cross-country ski trails are groomed. Remember this mountainous area is an avalanche hazard area! Be prepared with beacons, shovels, and probes. Hatcher Pass requires a State Day Use pass or a \$5 parking fee at most trailheads. Call (907) 745-3975 for more information.

National Park Service

Kenai Fjords National Park and Preserve

The **Willow Winter Public Use Cabin** is now available for rent with sufficient snow on the road for skiing and snowmobile access. To reserve the cabin, call Park Headquarters at (907) 224-7500

For the latest news and updates

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AlaskaCenters

<http://twitter.com/AlaskaCenters>

or go to

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

The Holiday Train to Seward has been cancelled due to avalanche danger.

Denali National Park and Preserve

Southern portions of the 1980 park additions to Denali are now open for snowmobiling for traditional activities. Please call the park or visit the park website for details. The Denali Park Road has been closed for the winter at Mile 3 (Park Headquarters). The *Murie Science and Learning Center* (MSLC) is open daily from 9am-4pm for information and backcountry permits. Bear Loop at Riley Creek Campground is open for camping all winter, but with no services other than a vault toilet. Water can be obtained at the MSLC. Entrance fees are collected year-round; remember Denali has an annual pass for \$40. For more information, call (907) 683-2294. Denali bus and campground reservations for 2010 are now being taken by phone, internet, mail, and fax. Visit the park's website for directions on making reservations:

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

Other national parks in Alaska are open year-round, but access and services may be limited. For more information, visit <http://www.nps.gov/alaska>

Chugach National Forest

Trails that allow motorized use in the Seward Ranger District are now open. For more information on the winter use of cabins (some are not recommended due to avalanche danger) and winter access, call (907) 224-3374. Please visit the Chugach National Forest Avalanche Information Center for information on the current snow conditions at

<http://www.cnfaic.org>

The *Begich-Boggs Visitor Center* is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00am to 5:00pm (weather permitting). Special winter openings are scheduled for December 28-31 and February 16-March 7. No fees are charged for the movie or exhibits during the winter months. Call (907) 783-2326.

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge

Enjoy cross-country skiing trails ranging from beginner to advanced near the visitor center. At this time, there is not adequate snow cover for snowmobiling. For more information and updates on snow conditions, call (907) 262-7021 or check out the website at

<http://kenai.fws.gov/>

Bureau of Land Management

Campbell Creek Science Center

Mark your calendars for January's Fireside Chat on Endangered Water Buffalo in the Phillipines at 7:00pm on Wednesday, January 16. The program is free to the public.

White Mountains National Recreation Area

Consider an extended trip up north! The White Mountains NRA near Fairbanks is a popular winter area with 250 miles of groomed snowmachine trails and 12 public use winter cabins. For more trail or cabin information, call (907) 474-2200 or 1-800-437-7021 or search on White Mountains NRA at <http://www.blm.gov>

Urban Public Lands

Hilltop Ski Area and Alyeska Resort are now open for downhill skiing. Arctic Valley Ski Area is scheduled to open later this winter. For more information and updates, call (907) 428-1208 or visit

<http://www.skiarctic.net>

Most in-town cross country ski trails are in good condition with the new snow. Check out the grooming and race schedule at the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage website at

<http://www.anchoragenordicski.com>

The Anchorage Museum has expanded! Winter hours are 10am-6pm Tuesday-Saturday, noon-6pm Sunday, closed on Monday. The Star Wars exhibit opens February 10.

The Alaska Native Heritage Center is open from 10am-5pm on Saturdays during the winter.

Check out winter-break camps at the Alaska Zoo (open 10:00-4:00pm daily).

There will be a Polar Bear Birthday February 16 for Ahpun and Lyu. Visit

<http://www.alaskazoo.org>

If you enjoy ice-skating, check out Anchorage's many outdoor rinks. For ice thicknesses and maintenance, visit

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

Alaska Railroad

The train is a great way to see the backcountry during winter. The Hurricane Train, one of America's last flag stop trains, runs on Thursdays during the winter. Stop off for a ski or cabin visit and flag the train down on the way back. The Aurora Winter Train departs Anchorage to Fairbanks on Saturday, returning Sunday. For information, go to

<http://alaskarailroad.com>

Southcentral Visitor Centers

Alaska Sealife Center- Seward

Winter hours are 10am-5pm daily. The Alaska Marine Gala occurs January 17 at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage featuring Jean-Michel Cousteau, first son of Jacques-Yves. For more information, visit <http://www.alaskasealife.org>

Alaska Islands and Ocean Visitor Center- Homer

Winter hours are noon-5pm Tuesday-Saturday. The Christmas Bird Count takes place Saturday, December 19, 8:30am-5:30pm. Join the staff for a variety of walks and crafts during the holidays. Visit <http://www.islandsandoocean.org>

Eagle River Nature Center

The Eagle River Nature Center will host the 14th Annual Lantern Walk & Winter Solstice Celebration on Saturday, December 19. Make a lantern at 3:00pm (bring a milk or juice container) and join the walk at 5:00pm. Learn about identifying local birds at 2:00pm on December 20 and join the Eagle River-Chugiak Christmas Bird Count on December 27 (meet at Jitters). For more programs, call (907) 694-2108 or visit <http://www.ernc.org>

Alaska Centers - APLICs

The *Anchorage Center* is open Monday-Friday from 10am-5pm. Movies on the big plasma screens in the exhibit area are available on a request basis (prescheduled school groups receive priority). Stop by the Alaska Geographic bookstore for last-minute holiday shopping. Call (907) 644-3661 or toll free at 1-866-869-6887 or visit <http://alaskacenters.gov>

Fairbanks Alaska Center

FAPLIC is open Monday-Saturday 9am-5pm. Saturday, December 19, features holiday films and hot chocolate. Monday, December 21, the Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center and downtown organizations are sponsoring a Solstice Celebration with hot chocolate and s'mores as families wait for the fireworks. The first Saturday of every month from 1:00pm-2:00pm is Family Story Time for children five and younger. For a list of other events and programs, call (907) 459-3730.

Tok Alaska Center

The Tok APLIC is open Monday-Friday 8am-4:30pm; call (907) 883-5667. For ferry reservations, call 1-888-256-6784. Summer 2010 ferry schedules are available on-line.

Southeast Alaska Visitor Center - Ketchikan

Winter hours are Sunday-Thursday from 10am-4pm. For a list of events and programs, call (907) 228-6220.

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