



A Bridge, an Educational Opportunity, and a Partnership



Luke Randall, D&C Engineer leads a meeting with UAA students.

Alaska State Parks is partnering with the University of Alaska Anchorage to come up with design concepts, ultimately leading to the selection and refining of a design for the all too loved and aging Byers Creek Suspension Bridge. The project will task the Civil Engineering Senior Design Class at UAA with completing a type study, preliminary design, as well as an engineering design to develop a 65% plan submittal. Alaska State Parks' Design and Construction section will then use the 65% plan to develop the final design that will eventually be used in construction.

This partnership is beneficial to both parties. The UAA Senior Design Class will gain experience in developing a design for a real-world project while Alaska State Parks, at minimal cost, gains fresh perspectives and ideas on a design for one of its facilities. Alaska State Parks will act as a client to the UAA team. They, in turn, will gain professional experience by communicating with clients and meeting their needs.

Alaska State Parks provides the class with the project scope, schedule, and budget. The UAA team schedules and attends meetings; learns the project goals; works within the project's scope, schedule, and budget; and produces professional, quality deliverables. The class' anticipated product for this specific project has an estimated value of over \$30,000, while costs incurred by D&C are minimal at two to three man-hours per week to attend meetings and provide guidance to the design class.

UAA and Alaska State Parks have enjoyed the benefits of an unofficial and official partnership for a very long time. Many of the past and present D&C Engineers graduated from UAA. Some past employees include former Project Engineers and Managers: Chuck Casper, Mike Schroeder, and Jessica Miranda and former Project Engineers Ana Taylor and Jake Vesotski. There have also been a slew of Engineering Interns from UAA.



D&C Chief Rys Miranda balances precariously over Byers Creek on the swaying suspension bridge.

UAA has already partnered with D&C on a couple of other projects including our current South Denali Development and the Eagle River Greenbelt Multi-Use Trail. Sarah Wells was part of the Senior Design Class that tackled a portion of the South Denali Project and now, curiously enough, is involved with the design and construction of the South Denali Access Road and Campground Project, as well as the new walk-in campsite design as Project Engineer.

Of the current engineering staff, Chief Rys Miranda, Project Managers Jake Gondek and Luke Randall, Project Engineers Sarah Wells, Loretta Nabong, Edgar Tinajero, Kirk Louthan, and Rangell Soriano are all UAA Alumni. Alaska State Parks has also used UAA as a talent pool for Engineering Interns. Seven of the eight current employees listed above were initially hired as interns.

We look forward to the remainder of the semester and the continued support of the university and the bright minds that will hopefully lead us across Byers Creek on a solid and well-designed bridge.

RIKA'S CAFE & PANTRY

The concessionaire at Big Delta State Historical Park, Debbie & David Curtis with Chocolate Gypsy, LLC., and the state have selected a name for the park restaurant. The new name is "Rika's Café and Pantry." We look forward to sampling their amazing "Arctic Fusion" cuisine, which utilizes locally grown foods common to northern lands.



Please join the Northern Area in welcoming Melissa Smith to Alaska State Parks. She joins us as the Fairbanks Area Park Ranger. Melissa grew up in Palmer and graduated from the University of Alaska with a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Biology. Her natural resource background includes seasonal fishery work in the bush, two years as a Fishery Biologist in Aniak with the Kuskokwim Native Association, and two and a half years with the Department of Fish and Game as a Wildlife Technician III. Melissa honed her people skills anchoring the public information desk in Fairbanks. We are thrilled to have her on our team!



I am delighted to be a new hire for the State Park's Design and Construction section. I grew up in Anchorage, Alaska and graduated from South Anchorage High School. Last May, I completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering at Montana State University. Working for State Parks has been a goal of mine for some time because of a personal appreciation for our parks and a desire to gain both design and field experience in civil engineering. Though I haven't worked here long, I enjoy working with the staff in the Design and Construction office and am excited to meet more of the Parks staff.

New Stars Around Parks



Mild winter weather has created ideal conditions for hiking in Seward. Park Specialist Tom Kain has been assessing trail conditions and planning maintenance work for this coming summer. Here, he is shown at Tonsina Point, along the trail leading to Caines Head State Recreation Area, near Seward.



I was born and raised in Anchorage. I attended the University of Alaska Anchorage, where I got my Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering. Before coming to State Parks and Design and Construction, I worked at the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Southeast Region for almost two years. I wanted to work for State Parks for the opportunity to grow as an engineer and the chance to work on diverse projects throughout the state. I look forward to learning from everyone here, while gaining valuable experience. So far, the people have been great, and the view from the office is amazing. I am really excited to be part of the Parks team.

