



Poems in Place



Poet Aleria Jensen unwraps her poem, "A Soldier's Station."
Photo by Carol Griswold

The Poems in Place project began with a successful collaboration between Homer writer Wendy Erd, Chugach State Park staff, the Interpretation and Education program, and the Alaska State Council on the Arts to place the poem "What Whales and Infants Know" by Kim Cornwall at Beluga Point.

Last month the last four poems were installed in Alaska State Parks, marking the end of the three-year program spearheaded by Wendy. Poems are now installed in each of the seven Alaska State Parks areas.

The parks graced with poems include Chugach State Park, Totem Bight State Historical Park, Chena River State Recreation Area, Independence Mine State Historical Park, and Lake Aleknagik State Recreation Site.

The Poems in Place project is supported by the Rasmuson Foundation, Alaska State Council on the Arts, the Alaska Humanities Forum, the Usibelli Foundation, the Alaska Poetry League, Alaska Center for the Book, and numerous generous individuals.



Caines Head Poems in Place dedication attendees
Photo by Carol Griswold

Caines Head State Recreation Area

Alaska State Parks and Alaska Center for the Book installed two of their latest poems at Caines Head State Recreational Area last month. The pieces selected, written by Seward muralist Justine Pechuzal and Aleria Jensen of Juneau, had been entered in a statewide contest of poems celebrating Caines Head.

Community members gathered at a local pavilion in Seward where refreshments were provided along with a brief presentation by local historian Doug Capra. Shortly after, everyone piled into their cars and headed out to Lowell Point where the first poem, "A Soldier's Station," was unveiled and read by the poem's author, Aleria Jensen.

When Aleria first saw the Poems in Place project soliciting poems for the Caines Head SRA, she quickly became fascinated with the area and its history. She learned that the military used to provide one pack of smokes for the soldiers on Christmas Day. Aleria felt that this particular gesture was a lonely one at best and she was inspired to learn more about Fort McGilvray before she wrote her poem.

Justine said that she had often visited Caines Head SRA both on her personal time and as a kayak guide. She hiked out to Ft. McGilvray and sat for hours as she overlooked Resurrection Bay and wrote her poem, "Pilgrims." Coincidentally, the location park staff had chosen to install her poem was the spot she was hoping for. Head down to Seward and check them out!

Continued on Page 2

Fort Abercrombie State Historical Park

Twenty-five poems were submitted in a statewide contest for poems about Fort Abercrombie, the natural beauty of this park, or its historic resources. Two poems were selected, “Tideline” by Leslie Leyland Fields and “The Compass Rose” by Fred Stager. Both poets are Kodiak residents.

The photos selected to accompany and highlight the poems also spotlighted local talent and were generously donated by Kodiak photographers Corey Pederson and Stacy Studebaker.

A small group (including poet Leslie Leyland Fields, photographers Corey Pederson and Stacy Studebaker, and poet Fred Stager’s wife and son, poet and Poems in Place coordinator Wendy Erd, Alaska State Parks field operations manager Claire LeClair, and ranger Preston Kroes) gathered at Fort Abercrombie on a Saturday in September for the unveiling of the poems.



Poet Fred Stager's wife and son, Sulua and Wyatt Stager, and photographer Stacy Studebaker



Poet Justine Pechuzal read her poem, “Pilgrims,” at Caines Head SRA
Photo by Carol Griswold



Poet and Poems in Place coordinator Wendy Erd with poet Justine Pechuzal's poem, “Pilgrims,” at Caines Head SRA.

Leslie’s poem, “Tideline,” was installed at the Cry of the Wild Ram site, which is managed by Alaska State Parks as part of Fort Abercrombie SHP, on a small, sloping bluff overlooking Monashka Bay, the beach and one of the park’s best tidepooling spots. A short trail nearby leads park visitors down to the beach.

According to an article in the Kodiak Daily Mirror about the unveiling of the poems at Fort Abercrombie, author Leslie noted that the first part of her poem “Tideline,” describes looking over the ocean “with a few leaps of imagination here and there.”

“I was really excited because I live a five-minute walk from here,” poet Leslie said, according to the Kodiak Daily Mirror. “I spend a lot of time in the park, so it’s like my neighborhood.”

Fred’s poem was installed at a scenic overlook along the Wildflower Meadow Trail and was unveiled by his son, Wyatt. Photographer Stacy was excited that the panel bearing this poem and her photograph of a Nootka rose was installed within feet of where she had taken that photograph. Ranger Preston was also happy to point out that the panel had been positioned in such a way as to ensure that “North” on the compass rose featured on the panel actually pointed north.

If you happen to be in Kodiak, spend some time at Fort Abercrombie SHP to explore the trails through the mossy forest and wildflower meadow, historic World War II structures, and dramatic views of the ocean, but make it a point to check out the poems.



Poet Leslie Leyland Fields and photographer Corey Pederson

Northern News

- Northern Area maintenance workers teamed up with the Office of Boating Safety to repair a boat launch at Clearwater State Recreation Site. The ramp was repaired in time for the October run of silver salmon.
- September is a time of transition from summer to winter operations in Northern Area. Water systems get shut down; volunteer housing becomes public-use cabins; the rangers trade in ATVs for snowmachines; and the maintenance guys fire up the plow trucks. This year, the area got enough snow last month to remind everyone why.



Natural Resource Technician Ashley Seldon paints outhouse doors for Whitefish Campground in Lower Chatanika River State Recreation Area. When Ashley isn't working for Parks, she and husband, Tyler, run a trap line in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. They are featured on Animal Planet's show "The Last Alaskan."



Canon Cogan partnered with Alaska State Parks to complete his Eagle Scout community service project. Canon and Troop 1001 logged over 600 hours of volunteer service constructing a picnic shelter at Olnes Pond in Lower Chatanika River State Recreation Area.

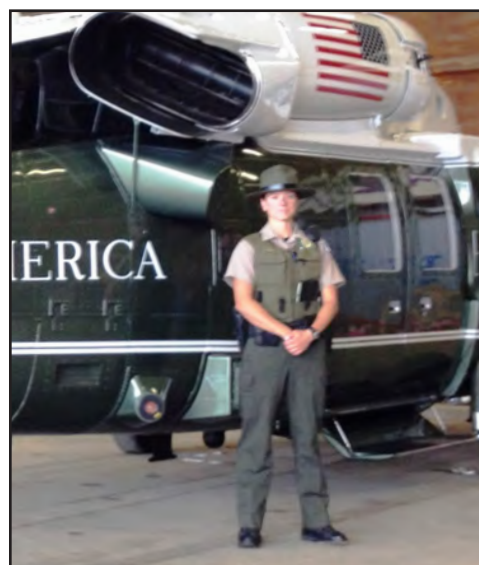


The Northern Area Trail Crew enjoyed great views while working on the Angel Rocks Trail in Chena River State Recreation Area this fall.

POTUS in Dillingham



A parks vehicle helps provide a perimeter for the crowd during President Obama's trip to Dillingham.



Ranger Ali Eskelin participated in President Obama's security detail during his visit to Dillingham.

Park Retirements

Bill Berkhahn

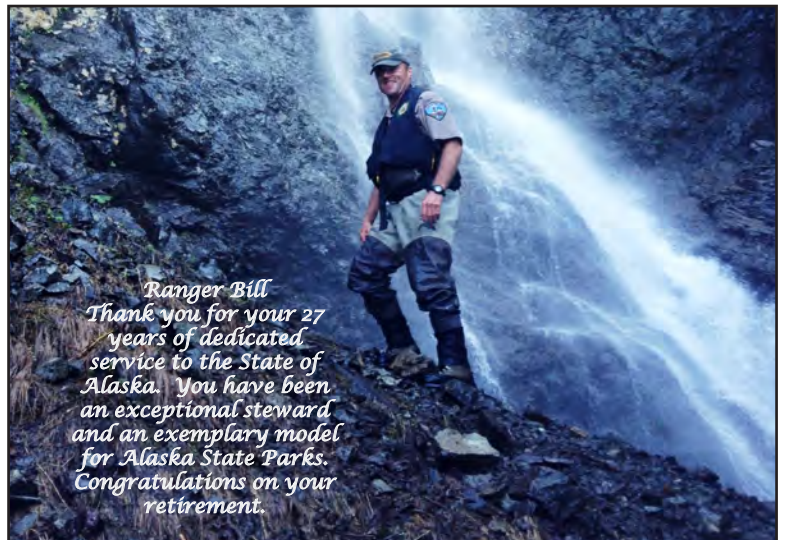
After 27 years of service to the State of Alaska, ranger Bill Berkhahn retired this past June. Bill had a rich history in natural resource management even before moving to Alaska in 1983. He worked for both the Superior National Forest in Boundary Waters in Minnesota and for the U.S. Forest Service in False Pass, Heceta Island, Yakutat, and Thorne Bay. He went on to study at UAF where he received his bachelor's degree in Natural Resource Management in 1986.

Bill was hired by the state as a seasonal park ranger for the Kenai River Special Management Area in 1988 and took on the Ranger II position in the mid-90s. Bill worked on the Kenai River for 18 years until he accepted the Ranger II position in Wood-Tikchik State Park in 2006. There he worked happily in the remote wilderness of Southwest Alaska until his retirement.

Bill and his wife Patti, who also retired this summer from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, both volunteered for Wood-Tikchik for the month of July and plan to return in the future to enjoy the wild lands out west. We wish Bill and Patti well in their well-deserved retirement!



Bill and Patti Berkhahn



John Kimmel



John Kimmel at the helm in the Kodiak office on his last day

The Kodiak Area administrative super specialist, John Kimmel, retired at the end of September after keeping the Kodiak district running smoothly for just over five years. John joined the Alaska State Parks team in July 2010 after a 24-year active duty career with the U.S. Coast Guard and an additional six years as a civilian employee with them.

John maintained a steady presence in the Kodiak Area park operations during two different management and ranger staff vacancies and change-overs. He was a big part of making both management transitions smooth and functional.

We wish John good luck in all his future plans and we'll miss his consistent work ethic, organization, guidance, and comradery, but we know we will see him out enjoying the park more now that he is out of the office.

A Visit to Kodiak

In mid-September, landscape architect Lucy Baranko and interpretive specialist Niki Acevedo visited the Kodiak Area state parks that are on the road system to assess the area's infrastructure and interpretive needs and to inspect interpretive panels newly installed in Fort Abercrombie State Historical Park. Ranger Preston Kroes acted as tour guide, explaining the type and amount of use each park receives and what the biggest needs are. ★

Buskin River State Recreation Site

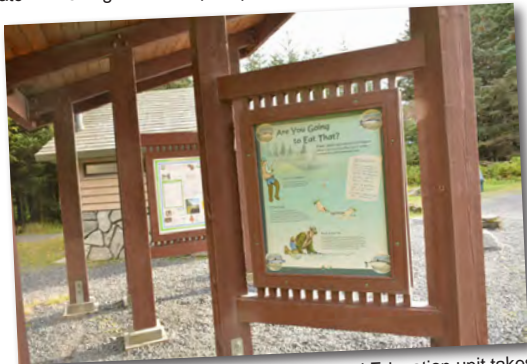


Left: The wheelchair accessible fishing platform looks great. ★

Below: Kodiak possesses a dramatic kind of beauty as seen at Buskin Beach.



Fishing was good the day of the visit. Niki Acevedo and Lucy Baranko witnessed a number of successful fishers reel in their catch. This angler's catch put up quite the fight. ★



The Alaska State Parks Interpretation and Education unit takes pride in making sure that interpretive materials are always relevant to the site and its resources.

Pasagshak River State Recreation Site



Landscape architect Lucy Baranko and ranger Preston Kroes follow the wheel tracks down the beach.



A gravel berm built up naturally at the outlet of Pasagshak River making fish passage difficult, if not impossible, unless there is an exceptionally high tide.

Continued on Page 6



Ranger Jennifer Culbertson takes a short break to talk with landscape architect Lucy Baranko while NRT II Jared Conrad works in the background.



Ranger Jennifer Culbertson and NRT II Mario Pagni create a path to a new walk-in campsite at Ft. Abercrombie.



Interpretive specialist Niki Acevedo and landscape architect Lucy Baranko enjoy a quick tour of Fossil Beach in Kodiak guided by ranger Preston Kroes.



New guided tour signs mark the location of historic features highlighted in the guided walking tour brochure.

Chugach Corner



A snowman made an appearance at the top of Peak 3 in Chugach State Park.



Get Into **Alaska State Parks**

[@alaskastateparks.facebook@alaska.gov](https://www.facebook.com/alaskastateparks)

