



Historic Preservation Month



Participants of the 2016 annual workshop for cultural resources professionals held by the Office of History and Archaeology display a #ThisPlaceMatters banner.



Fort Abercrombie State Historical Park



Rika's Roadhouse in Big Delta State Historical Park



Big Delta State Historical Park

May is National Historic Preservation Month. This year it is calling attention to the 50th anniversary of passage of the National Historic Preservation Act. Since Congress passed the law in 1966, thousands of properties have been recognized and rehabilitated, contributing to healthy local economies and education programs. In recognition of the act's 50th anniversary, Governor Bill Walker issued a proclamation declaring May 2016 "Historic Preservation Month in Alaska."

In celebration of Preservation Month, the National Trust for Historic Preservation launched a #This Place Matters social media campaign. According to their website, "This Place Matters is national campaign that encourages people to celebrate the places that are meaningful to them and to their communities."

Alaska State Parks' wonderful employees participated by sending photos featuring visitors at state historic sites and parks to be posted on Alaska State Parks social media accounts. Continuing the theme, the Office of History and Archaeology has developed *This Place Matters Alaska*, an interactive web-based map where the public can submit photos of sites that matter to them and view others' photos. Join in! <http://arcg.is/1TvOrj2>

April is Alaska Archaeology Month and the month the OHA holds its annual workshop for cultural resources professionals. Those attending this year were encouraged to think about the places that matter to them in anticipation of Historic Preservation Month. At the workshop, OHA also kicked-off the update of Alaska's historic preservation plan. All Alaskans are invited to complete a survey, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AKHPP>, to help determine the goals, objectives, and strategies for preserving the historic and archaeological sites of the state.



Independence Mine State Historical Site



Ernest Gruening State Historical Park



Wickersham State Historic Site

Three Cheers for Volunteers!

Kachemak Bay



Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park level an outhouse lifted by the freeze thaw cycle.

Anchor River



Anchor Point community members pulled together to repair an eroded grade and save the parking area for a local tractor launch from collapse in Anchor River State Recreation Area.



Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park repair old stair treads for the Halibut Cove public-use cabin. Just a few more to go!

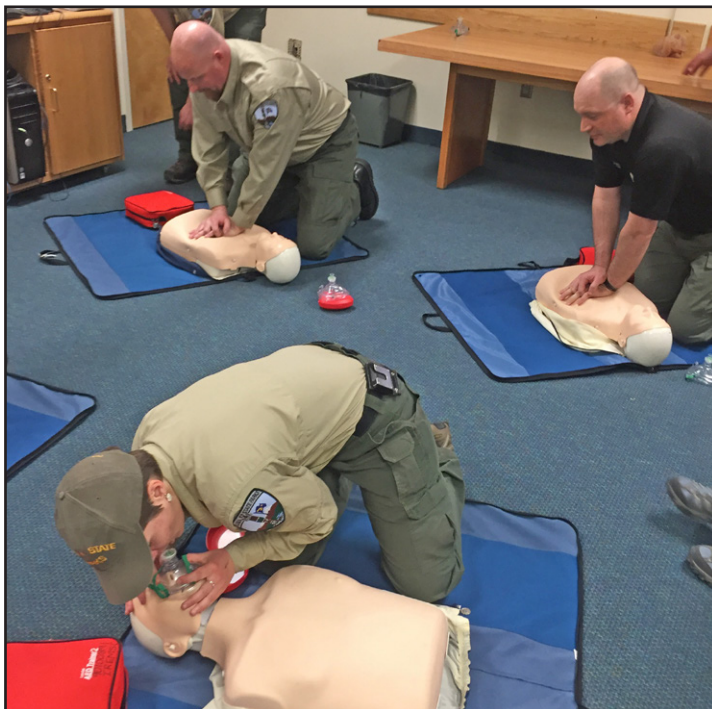
Independence Mine

In late April, volunteers Bethany Buckingham Follet with MATSAR, Roger Holland with the Anchorage Snowmobile Club, and the winter volunteer caretaker for Independence Mine State Historical Park, Bernard Federspiel, assisted rangers Damon Hampel and Dan Amyot with the taking down of hundreds of winter signs and markers at Hatcher Pass. Unseasonably warm temperatures made the task more challenging than usual as the snow became soft and difficult to navigate even by snowmobile. MATSAR conducts regular training in the Hatcher Pass area and its members frequently help the rangers on various projects.



(L-R) Bethany Buckingham Follet with MATSAR, volunteer Bernard Federspiel, Ranger Damon Hampel, and Ranger Dan Amyot

Northern News



Northern Area staff receive Heartsaver® First Aid CPR AED training. Rangers Brad Garasky and Ian Thomas and Park Specialist Jackie Cheek work on Rescue Anne.



The mighty Tanana River is threatening historic structures at Big Delta State Historical Park. Extreme erosion, due to the sudden release of an ice jam this spring, encroached within 23 feet of the Billy Mitchell Cabin, also known as the Military Residence. Chief of Design and Construction Rys Miranda and Engineering Manager Luke Randall visited the site in mid-May to assess the situation and develop a plan of action to stabilize the river bank and protect the historic structures near the river.



Winter takes its toll on parks in the Northern Area. This past winter, ice took out the dock at Lost Lake Campground in Quartz Lake State Recreation Area. Northern area maintenance staff will have the dock repaired within the month.

Western Alaska Interdisciplinary Science Conference

The Western Alaska Interdisciplinary Science Conference was held at the UAF Bristol Bay Campus in Dillingham this spring. The science conference offered over 50 science sessions including one by Masters of Science candidate Rebekah Esau of the University of Saskatchewan, who presented “Adapting a Protected Areas Assessment Tool for Northern Regions.” Rebekah will be conducting research for her master’s thesis this summer in Dillingham in an attempt to assess the value the protected areas of Wood-Tikchik State Park, the largest state park in the U.S.

Below: Ranger Ali Eskelin (far left) provided an interpretive presentation on Wood-Tikchik State Park to a group of Western Alaska Interdisciplinary Science Conference presenters and attendees at Lake Aleknagik State Recreation Site.



Halibut Cove Cabin Fire

This spring, Kachemak Bay State Park's Halibut Cove West Cabin was damaged by a fire caused by using white gas to start a fire in the wood stove. A cabin user splashed gas from the canister into the wood stove, which had embers inside. The embers ignited the white gas and burned back to the canister, which was dropped to the floor.

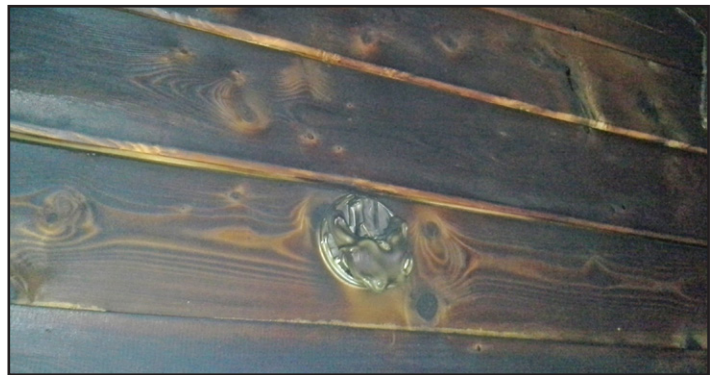
According to Ranger Jason Okuly, the "cabin renters used the fire extinguisher, but it failed to fully extinguish the fire before being exhausted." They evacuated from the cabin and closed the doors with the fire raging. "Once the all white gas in the canister burned, the fire suffocated due to quality windows and airtight doors." Thankfully, no one was hurt.

The cabin sustained significant damage, but the renters repaired it and the cabin is now available for further use.

This is a good reminder of how dangerous it is to use white gas to start fires inside public-use cabins and how important it is for cabins to have fire extinguishers and smoke detectors.



Damage to the cabin was extensive, even with the use of a fire extinguisher.



This smoke detector probably would have appreciated a little warning itself.



Anchorage Bike to Work Day

Anchorage's 12th annual Bike to Work Day was held on a Wednesday in mid-May. On that overcast morning, 10 of the bicyclists pedaling their way through Anchorage were Alaska State Parks employees on their way to the Atwood Building.

According to the Municipality of Anchorage webpage, Anchorage Bike to Work Day is based on a national event started by the League of American Bicyclists in 1956. It promotes bicycle commuting as a safe and fun way to improve air quality, traffic congestion, and personal health. An article in the Anchorage Dispatch News by Loren Holmes stated, "more than 50 Anchorage businesses and other groups participated."

Alaska State Parks' Bike to Work team: (L-R top row) Chester Fehmann, Caitlan Dowling, Jean Ayers, Ryan Thomas (L-R bottom row) Summer Rickman, Kirk Louthan, Justin Wholey, Shina duVall, Darcy Harris, and Diane Houston

