

WAYPOINTS



News and stories from Alaska's public lands



Seasonal 2017 Park Ranger in **Denali National Park and Preserve**.

Supporting Alaska's Public Lands

At Alaska Geographic, we recognize the critical role seasonal employees play in maintaining and operating Alaska's national parks, forests, refuges, and conservation lands. Every year, our agency partners hire hundreds of seasonal workers to ensure visitors have safe, meaningful experiences in these wild and scenic places. These dedicated professionals support visitor services, maintain trails, protect natural and cultural resources, and respond to emergencies—essential functions that keep public lands accessible, safe, and well-maintained.

In Alaska's remote and rugged landscapes, where extreme weather and wildlife encounters add to the complexity of land management, seasonal employees are indispensable. Their presence often determines whether visitors experience a well-organized, safe, and enriching visit or encounter confusion, disorganization, and inadequately maintained facilities. However, recent hiring restrictions have made it increasingly difficult to fill these essential positions, leading to potential staffing shortages during Alaska's short but intense summer visitor season. Delays in hiring may have an outsized impact on operations, including limiting visitor services, closing visitor centers, and reducing the overall quality of a visit to these lands held in trust for the American people.

We hope the hling freeze will be lifted soon. In the meantime, Alaska Geographic remains committed to supporting our federal partners however we can, ensuring that visitors continue to have enriching experiences despite staffing challenges. We will work closely with our partners to bridge operational gaps where possible, helping to keep Alaska's public lands welcoming, well-maintained, and accessible for all.

With Gratitude,
Andy Hall

OUR PARTNERS



In times of uncertainty and challenge, it is the strength and collaboration of our partners that truly make a difference. As we navigate through these uncertain times, we want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude to our agency and community partners. Your unwavering support, tireless dedication, and commitment to the shared mission have been invaluable to us all.

We are honored to work alongside such passionate individuals and organizations, whose dedication and effort continue to inspire us every day. Thank you for standing with us through thick and thin, and for making a lasting impact on our community.

Hands-on Learning with Denali's Scientists

NPS Photo by Ken Conger

Each summer, small groups of adventurous lifelong learners head out into the field with Denali's preeminent biologists and other scientists to get a behind-the-scenes look at their work in the park. Denali is a living laboratory with many studies spanning decades. By attending an Alaska Geographic field course, participants can learn about bears, wolves, birds, and more - right from the source! In addition to some of our long-running

courses on Denali's geology, wildflowers, and large mammals, we're excited to offer two new courses this summer:

Monitoring Birds in Denali: why, how, where, and recent discoveries

Denali is home to some of the longest-running bird monitoring programs in Alaska. These studies focus on both year-round residents and migrants that travel thousands of miles to get here. Join long-time Denali wildlife biologist Carol McIntyre to look for these birds and learn more about the monitoring programs and what scientists are discovering from them.

Discovering Denali's Micro Wilderness: Insects and other Arthropods

Denali's insects, spiders, and other arthropods play a critical role in its ecosystems but have only recently been the subject of more in-depth research. Join Jessica Rykken and Adam Haberski for a behind-the-scenes look at their five-year arthropod study in Denali. We'll visit several sites at different elevations to explore this fascinating world and learn more about Denali's smallest wildlife and the important roles they play.

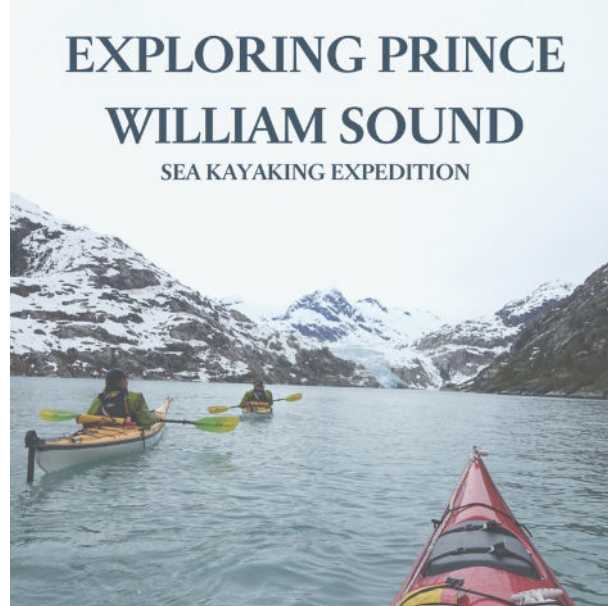


Please visit our [field course page](#) to register or for a complete list of field courses.



**Explore and Learn with
Chugach National Forest
Staff**

Join a six-day adventure in Prince William Sound with Chugach National Forest Wilderness Manager Tim Lydon. Kayak and hike to see glaciers, whales, sea lions, and shorebirds. Develop nature-based curriculum with fellow Alaska educators while camping at a beach camp. The course aims to inspire teachers to connect students with nature, focusing on America's public lands and wilderness. Topics include Alaska Native history, early Euro-American activities, the Exxon Valdez oil spill, and local climate change effects. Priority registration for educators from Exxon-Valdez Oil Spill communities.



[Learn More Here](#)

Expeditions for Alaska Teens

As part of our mission, we proudly offer [teen expeditions](#) on Alaska's public lands at no cost to the students. To be considered for this opportunity, students must be Alaska residents, apply, and receive a [nomination](#) from a community member.



During these expeditions, students adventure into spectacular peaks, whitewater creeks, and lush forests; meet and work alongside rangers and community members while making observations, collecting data, and learning about ecological and environmental relationships; and spend days living, camping, and working on the stunning views of Alaska's wildest places. Through these trips, we inspire outdoor learning, overcome obstacles to participation in our public lands, and foster deep commitments to Alaska's public lands.

As a 2024 backpacking participant said, "One important thing I learned is to work with others and protect our public lands. I like making it a better place."

[Nominate](#) a student today!

[Teen Expeditions](#)

RECENT AID TO PARTNER

Your support in the form of in-store purchases, donations, and membership allows us to give back to our public land partners. Read on to learn more about recent projects funded by Alaska

UAF Native Games Club



Photo from @uafnativegames

Alaska Geographic is proud to support the UAF Native Games Club in leading a training and demonstration for Fairbanks North Star Borough School District (FNSBSD) educators. Our partners at the National Park Service have teamed up with FNSBSD to provide place-based workshops as part of their 24-25 School Year Professional Development. This initiative focuses on integrating Native Games into the physical education curriculum, enriching the educational experience, and promoting cultural awareness among students.



A Traveling Boutique

by Liz Munns

Here & There Boutique is an Anchorage-based jewelry and metalworking business founded by Jessie Snyder. Jessie's journey as a business owner began while her family lived in Guam. However, being the spouse of a military service member, she and her family inevitably had to move. Due to the wild success of her business, she was able to keep it growing when they received their orders to come to Alaska.

Jessie and her family have explored many parts of the state, collecting sand, silt, and other natural materials for her handcrafted jewelry and ornaments. From Kotzebue to Bristol Bay, Jessie has sourced unique elements that bring her pieces to life, offering customers one-of-a-kind creations. Although her time in Alaska is nearing its end, Jessie cherishes every moment of this chapter, which has been her home for the past few years. She plans to

continue her business as usual, even from a new location, carrying the spirit of Alaska with her.

Relocating for work or family can present its fair share of challenges, but it also highlights the resilience and adaptability required to navigate these transitions successfully. Jessie's ability to maintain her business and grow it during periods of change is a true testament to her determination and creativity. Each move brings new opportunities and fresh perspectives, and Jessie has embraced these changes with an open mind and a willingness to adapt. Her journey shows that with hard work and a passion for what you do, you can build something meaningful no matter where life takes you. The way she has integrated Alaska's natural beauty into her designs is a perfect example of turning every location into an inspiration, creating connections that transcend geographic boundaries.

Thank you, Jessie, for sharing your beautiful and thoughtful jewelry with us! We are so grateful to collaborate with Here & There Boutique and look forward to continuing our

partnership for years to come.

Check out these AK Public Lands themed items from Here & There and support AK Geo!



Steel Rectangular Fireweed
Here & There Boutique
Earrings



Alaskan Mountain Horizontal
Bar Necklace



Northern Lights Mountain
Small Dangles Earrings

Alaska Geographic works in support of our agency partners:



Alaska Geographic | 3400 Spenard Rd Suite 106 | Anchorage, AK 99503 US

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