Trail Condition Report
Caines Head State Recreation Area
August 15th, 2020

Overall Conditions: Caines Head State Recreation Area continues to see steady traffic despite Covid-19 concerns. Latrines and cabins are open, and we are doing our best to keep these facilities safe and clean, but it is a use at your own risk scenario. Parking at the trailhead and beach remains an issue, please do not block emergency access or other cars. Trail conditions in CHSRA are reflecting the August weather as water, mud, and brush are present on most trails. Be advised bears are out in CHSRA, the pink and chum salmon are showing up in Tonsina creek (along with the silvers in the bay!), which always brings more bears into the area. Please carry bear spray or other deterrents and follow safe travel/camping practices while in the backcountry. Weather conditions can change quickly along the north gulf coast, please travel/camp prepared.

Public Use Cabins: All CHSRA/Thumb Cove area cabins are currently open and mostly booked for the 2020 summer. Reservations are made through www.reserveamerica.com. We are asking cabin renters to sanitize common surfaces before and after their stay due to Covid-19 concerns. BE ADVISED-CHSRA streams are currently low and freshwater sources may be difficult to find, especially around Callisto Canyon Cabin. Adversely, access to Callisto Canyon and Derby Cove cabins may require a stream crossing depending upon seasonal snow melt and/or periods of heavy rain. In addition, these cabins are tide dependent and most easily accessed during a low tide of +3ft or lower. Please refer to the Seward area tide tables when booking your stay and be familiar with the tide cycles for the duration of your stay at either of these cabins. Tide Tables are available here: https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/noaatidepredictions.html?id=9455090&legacy=1. The Tonsina Point Cabin is not tide dependent although it may require hiking above the mean high tideline during large tide cycles or active storm surges. Go to: http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspcabins/index.htm for cabin information.

Tent Platforms: Four tent platforms have been added to the Resurrection Bay Marine Parks over the last two summers with two additional platforms in the works. The Sierra Club built two 12x12 platforms in 2018, 20 yards SE of the day-use area at North Beach. A camping sign along the beach designates these sites. Sandspit State Marine Park located on the NE side of Fox Island has a new 10x12 platform. Its tucked on the south side of a small, treed outcropping of bedrock that lies on the west end of the spits popular north beach. The outcropping is bordered by a brackish lagoon to the south and the beach to the north. A beautiful and popular site for kayakers, divers (a shipwreck is submerged just off the beach), and boaters alike. The newest 12x12 tent platform lies at the east end of South Beach, NW of where the South Beach trail meets the coast. Its tucked back in the trees at one of the most popular camping areas at South Beach. Accessible by foot or boat, South Beach is a beautiful spot with great views of the islands of Resurrection Bay, the Gulf of Alaska, and Aialik Peninsula. Tent platforms are first come, first serve, and FREE!!, photos of each site included at the end of this report. Go check them out!
Advisory:

- CHSRA trails and public-use cabins are accessed on foot from Lowell Point State Recreation Site (LPSRS), which is located 2.5 miles south of Seward. Follow State route 9 into Seward townsite where it becomes 3rd Avenue. Follow 3rd to a T-intersection near the Alaska Sea Life Center and take a right onto Railway Ave. Travel 2.5 miles and turn right onto Pinnacle View Rd. then make an immediate right into the upper parking area for LPSRS or continue along Pinnacle View Rd. and turn right into the lower parking area for LPSRS and access to Lowell Point Beach. The Tonsina Point Trail leaves from the southwest corner of the upper parking area. There is a connector trail between the lower and upper parking areas that begins behind and right of the lower parking area latrine.

- CHSRA trails and cabins can also be accessed by boat via water taxi. Go to http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/units/caintaxi.htm for a list of authorized carriers.

- Bear activity has been recently reported within the park and carrying bear spray or other deterrents is encouraged, as is a review of safely travelling and camping in bear country. Information regarding bear safety can be found at: http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/safety/bears.htm.

- The Coastal Trail is the beach between Tonsina Point and Derby Cove. It also provides the only foot access from Lowell Point State Recreation Site to the Caines Head trails south and west of Derby Cove (Overland, Alpine, Fort, South Beach, and Rainforest (Loop)).

  - It is only passable during a low tide of +3ft or lower and the beach rocks and outcroppings can be very slick due to biofilm and seasonal ice.

- As per Alaska State Parks regulations, all firewood collected for use at public use cabins must be from dead and down trees. Visitors should be prepared to harvest wood in the vicinity of the cabins or bring in their own. The Tonsina Point Cabin has an oil heater that burns kerosene or diesel only.

- Treat all water in the park by filtration, boiling, or water purification tablets.

- Please use LEAVE NO TRACE/PACK OUT WHAT YOU PACK IN ethics to minimize your impact while in the recreation area. Check out www.lnt.org for more info.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caines Head State Recreation Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tonsina Point Trail</td>
<td>Please do not cut switchbacks! Trail has the usual areas of mud and small water crossings. Trail was recently cleared of down and low hanging alders and limbs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coastal Trail</td>
<td>Is the beach between Tonsina Point and Derby Cove, it is only passable during a low tide of +3ft or lower, beach rocks and outcroppings can be very slick due to biofilm and seasonal ice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overland Trail</td>
<td>Please do not cut switchbacks! Areas of mud and water on trail, brushy in areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alpine Trail</td>
<td>Many exposed roots on lower half of trail and heavy grass/brush around/above Loop trail jct. Be aware of rotting log boardwalks/stairs. Black bears reported around mile 1-1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trail</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fort Trail</td>
<td>Trail is in great shape and dry overall; recently cleared of some low hanging limbs and alder. A flashlight is recommended to explore the various rooms of Fort McGilvray.</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Beach Trail</td>
<td>Trail cleared of low hanging alder and spruce limbs. Lots of bear sign. New tent platform tucked in woods NW (right) of where trail meets beach (look for camping sign), photos below.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rainforest (Loop) Trail</td>
<td>Primitive trail; flooding has washed out sections on the south end. Trail markers and flagging exists as of this report; be aware of rotting log boardwalks/stairs, and occasional tread damage, several brushy sections.</td>
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**Distances in Miles and Elevation Gain/Loss:**

- Lowell Point Road: Seward to Lowell Point SRA: 2.5 miles, flat
- Lowell Point to Fort McGilvray: 7.3 miles, +930’
- Tonsina Trail: Lowell Point to Tonsina Point: 1.7 miles, +200’
- Coastal Trail: Tonsina Point to Derby Cove: 3.0 miles, flat
- Overland Trail: Derby Cove to North Beach: 0.6 miles, +150’
- Fort Trail: North Beach to Fort McGilvray: 2.0 miles, +580’
- South Beach Trail: North Beach to South Beach: 2.8 miles, +/- 380’
- South Beach Trail: Fort McGilvray to South Beach: 2.3 miles, -580’
- Rainforest (Loop) Trail: South Beach to Overland Trail junction: 3.1 miles, +850’
- Alpine Trail: from junction with Rainforest Trail: 1.6+ miles, +750’
- Alpine Trail: from South Beach: 1.7 miles, +850’
- Alpine Trail: from Overland Trail: 1.4 miles, +700’

An overview map of CHSRA trails available here: [http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/kenai/chsraoverlandtrl.jpg](http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/kenai/chsraoverlandtrl.jpg)

**Please contact us with questions, concerns, or reports by phone or email:** Seward office- 907.224.4609, Jack Ransom (District Ranger)- 907.362.0014, jack.ransom@alaska.gov, Michael Burmeister (Park Specialist)- 907.422.7155, michael.burmeister@alaska.gov
New Tent Platforms in Resurrection Bay:

North Beach (upper)

North Beach (lower)
Sandspit Point (brackish lagoon seen behind)

South Beach