



Trail Condition Report

Caines Head State Recreation Area

September 16th, 2020

Overall Conditions: With ongoing concerns regarding Covid-19, latrines and cabins will remain open and we are doing our best to keep these facilities safe and clean. However, 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 fall weather as water, mud, and brush are all present on the trails. In alignment with our fall storm cycle, heavy rains and strong winds are common in CHSRA this time of year. **Flooding may occur**, especially around Callisto and Derby Cove cabins along with Tonsina creek depending on tide cycles. Please keep close tabs on the weather and plan your trip accordingly. Also, be advised bears are out in CHSRA, the pink and chum salmon are actively spawning in Tonsina creek and both brown and black bears are being seen on a regular basis in this area and at North Beach. 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. 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-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.

Caines Head State Recreation Area	
Tonsina Point Trail	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. Bears are active in this area!
Coastal Trail	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
Overland Trail	Please do not cut switchbacks! Areas of mud and water on trail, brushy in areas
Alpine Trail	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
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Fort Trail	Good condition overall. A flashlight is recommended to explore the various rooms of Fort McGilvray. Park staff has been working on installing some new interpretation panels at the fort.
South Beach Trail	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.
Rainforest (Loop) Trail	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.

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>

Please contact us with questions, concerns, or reports by phone or email: Seward

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New Tent Platforms in Resurrection Bay:



North Beach (upper)

North Beach (lower)



Sandspit Point (brackish lagoon seen behind)



South Beach



