



## Alaska State Park Sitka Community Announcement September 2019

September 16, 2019

With the return of Alaska State Parks active management of the Sitka area State Park units starting July of 2018, we have successfully re-staffed, reopened and are well on our way to reclaiming the park facilities. Seasonal Park Specialist Nick True, returned and had additional assistance of an Alaska Conservation Corp position for most of this summer season, as well as volunteer hosts. The primary focus last season and this summer has been to continually catch up on the backlog of maintenance and services of the road-based park units. Please continue to be patient as we make progress toward regaining and re-establishing management of the parks from the previous 3-year hiatus. The Halibut Point office has been re-opened as a local field office, (907)747-3007, but only offers limited management and administrative duties to the public. In order to allow for the staff to focus on the park needs and maintenance during the limited staff season, the primary contact number for Sitka State Park information and business, will remain with the main Southeast Regional office in Juneau, at (907)465-4563 or [dnr.pkssoutheast@alaska.gov](mailto:dnr.pkssoutheast@alaska.gov). There has been some management and procedural changes that accompanied the re-staffing and re-opening process for the Sitka area State Parks, and we will continue to have more changes over the next few months and years to help ease congestion, minimize impact on the natural, cultural and facility resources in the parks, and generate State Park revenue to hopefully prevent a future shutdown of facilities and services. Some of these new changes will include re-instituting the previous Old Sitka/Starrigavan boat launch fee and initiating the statewide daily use fee or the more convenient and cheaper alternative, an annual decal. A quick summary and more detailed information regarding the Alaska State Park policies, procedures, updates and upcoming changes are outlined and explained below.

### **QUICK REFERENCE SUMMARY:** MORE DETAILED INFORMATION COVERED BELOW FOR THESE SAME TOPICS

- PICNIC SHELTER RESERVATIONS – a **NEW** on-line reservation system is in effect starting 9/10/2019 for all the Halibut Point SRS picnic shelters, at <https://www.reserveamerica.com/camping/halibut-point-state-recreation-site/r/facilityDetails.do?contractCode=AK&parkId=1181650>. Or go to the Reserve America website to locate the Halibut Point SRA reservation page.
- SPECIAL USE PERMITS – are required for most events, activities and gatherings in all state park units, contact the Juneau office, (907)465-4563 or [dnr.pkssoutheast@alaska.gov](mailto:dnr.pkssoutheast@alaska.gov), to submit a permit application or to verify if requirements.
- DAY USE FEE PROGRAM – voluntary support for the Sitka State Parks through on-line purchases of a 2019 annual day-use parking decal at <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/passes>, or the same link after early November for the required 2020 calendar year pass. Otherwise a \$5.00-day fee per vehicle is required.
- OLD SITKA/STARRIGAVAN BOAT LAUNCH – The City of Sitka annual boat launch decal is honored and preferred at the Old Sitka/Starrigavan State Park boat launch, otherwise a \$10-day fee for a launch and retrieval. **The annual launch decal or \$10 launch fee covers the day-use parking fee requirement.**
- COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS IN ALASKA STATE PARKS – All commercial activities require an Alaska State Park permit.

- CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD – We are recruiting for new member for our Sitka area State Park Advisory Board. Meetings are generally held at noon on the second Thursday of the month at Centennial Hall. Applications can be found at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/misc/advisboardapp.pdf>, and submitted at an upcoming meeting or at the Halibut Point SRA office.
- POTENTIAL FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS – as funding becomes available, our project priorities include replacing the Halibut Point SRA main outhouse, building reservable public use cabins, and trail improvements.

## **DETAILED INFORMATION**

### **PICNIC SHELTER RESERVATION SYSTEM:**

As of September 10, 2019, Reservations for the Halibut Point SRA picnic shelters are now exclusively available on-line at: <https://www.reserveamerica.com/camping/halibut-point-state-recreation-site/r/facilityDetails.do?contractCode=AK&parkId=1181650>

Using this link, you can check the availability, then make the reservation and a credit card payment on-line to finalize the transaction. This simpler and quicker on-line process will be the only way to make pavilion reservation, we no longer can process any pavilion request through any of the state park offices. We will be available to answer questions and assist you with the new system at the Juneau office contact information mentioned above. Reservations can be made as far as seven months in advance of your event date, or as short as a few hours the same day, if the pavilion is available. We realize this is a new process for the Halibut Point SRA pavilion rentals, but this streamlined system is more efficient and effective. After completing the on-line transaction, you will receive a receipt and pavilion reservation confirmation by e-mail, please have the confirmation message with you during your reserved pavilion rental time.

The direct link for all four of the Halibut Point SRA pavilions is - <https://www.reserveamerica.com/camping/halibut-point-state-recreation-site/r/facilityDetails.do?contractCode=AK&parkId=1181650>

If any shelter is not reserved, a group up to 19 people can use the shelter on a first come, first serve basis, but must exit the area if a permittee arrives. All pavilion users, whether permitted, temporary walk-ins or first come basis, are required to clean-up the area prior to departing.

The fee and capacity structure outlined in the Alaska State Parks Director’s Order #288 for the Halibut Point SRA shelter reservations are:

Large(main)shelter	- \$40 for up to a six-hour block for 1 – 49 people or \$200 for up to a six-hour block for 50 – 150 people maximum
Small shelters	- \$30 for up to a six-hour block for a <u>maximum</u> of 50 people

### **SPECIAL USE PERMITS:**

The non-shelter type of Special Use Permits for all Sitka area State Parks units will continue to be issued from the Southeast Regional Juneau office by submitting the simple permit application form to the Juneau office for processing. The applications can be found on-line at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/permits/supapp.pdf>, by clicking the “Special Use Permit Application (PDF)” link on the page, or by contacting us to receive an application by e-mail. You can submit the filled out application by e-mail to [dnr.pkssoutheast@alaska.gov](mailto:dnr.pkssoutheast@alaska.gov), or calling (907)465-4563 for additional assistance. Special Use Permits generally have a fee associated with them, and the Juneau office can accept credit card payments over the phone. Some examples requiring a permit include, but not limited to, are; any gathering of 20 or more people (other than the pavilion system requirements), organized activities, performances, gatherings or sporting and community events. Special Use Permits must be issued in advance of the event or activity. No gathering of sand, gravel or aquatic vegetation will be allowed without a Special Park Use Permit issued from the SE Regional office, and then, the amount and method will be limited.

Special Park Use Permit - \$25 processing fee and additional charges may apply depending on the event or activity. Educational/student events and certain community events may have the fee waived, but a permit is still required.

Thank you to everyone for supporting the Sitka area State Parks by utilizing the permit program, we have had over 65 permits issued to Sitka community members who have participated in the pavilion reservation or special permit system during the 2019 season.

#### **DAY USE FEE PROGRAM:**

The Alaska State Park day-use parking fee program (AS 41.21.026) was legislatively enacted in 1993 and initiated the following year in most larger parks, since then it has been implemented in most areas of the state park system., It was most recently initiated in the Kodiak area in 2016, and generated over \$67,000.00 in the first year. The Southeast Alaska State Park region has not participated in contributing in this statewide program for over 25 years and relied on the visitor's fee program from all the other state park regions, to generate the revenue contributed to operate the SE Region park units. The lack of revenue generation was a major criterion to determine the elimination of the services and staff to the Sitka State Park areas in July 2015 – July 2018. By re-opening and re-staffing the Sitka State Park units in good faith in mid-July 2018, we voluntarily transferred a staff position, equipment and vehicle to Sitka, without any increase to the SE annual budget or staff, previously lost in 2015 upon the Sitka shutdown. In order to avoid possible future closures, and to keep operating and maintaining the Sitka area road-based State Park units, and strive to make future improvements to the parks and staffing, the Sitka community will spearhead supporting State Parks through the day-use parking fee program starting on January 1, 2020. The day-use vehicle parking program requires a \$5.00 per day per vehicle fee or a much more convenient and economical option of a \$50 annual vehicle decal can be purchased for unlimited use for the entire calendar year at all the park units. We ask community members to support Alaska State Parks early by considering the purchase a 2019 decal for the remainder of 2019 calendar year, at <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/passes>. Starting this January 2020, a annual decal or the \$5.00 per day fee, will be required for each vehicle at Halibut Point SRA or Old Sitka SHP. The only exception is the annual boat launch decal or daily launch fee at the Old Sitka/Starrigavan SHP, includes the parking requirement, as described in the boat launch fee section below. The benefits of an annual decal over the day-use payment include - Annual vehicle decals are valid for the full calendar year, allow unlimited visits at the same cost as ten normal day-use visits, eliminate the need to make a cash day-use payment with each visit, will generally be available for on-line purchases at approximately the start of November for the up-coming year at the same above link. The decals are issued for only one vehicle and are non-transferable, they must be affixed to the inside lower driver windshield to be valid and may require multiple decals for households with multiple vehicles.

#### **OLD SITKA/STARRIGAVAN BOAT LAUNCH:**

In a cooperative agreement with the City of Sitka, Alaska State Parks is honoring the City \$75 annual boat launch decal at the Old Sitka State Historic Park boat launch site, otherwise a \$10 one-time boat launch and retrieval fee is required for day users without an annual decal. The City decals can be purchased from the city and must be affixed to trailer tongue per the city instructions. The annual City Launch decal or the \$10 launch payment includes the cost of the parking fee program outlined above, the additional \$5 daily fee or the need for the Alaska State Park annual parking sticker is not required with the decal boat trailer or if the \$10 receipt is clearly displayed right-side up on the vehicle dashboard. Day parking for a vehicle with a trailer is allowed in the legal designated spaces at the launch ramp parking lot, or in the overflow parking lot across the street, which also accommodates extended 10-day maximum parking for vehicles with trailers. **No parking fee payment required with the use of the annual boat launch decal or launch payment.**

#### **COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS IN ALASKA STATE PARKS:**

All commercial operators are required to have a current calendar year Alaska State Park Commercial Use Permit for any activities in any Alaska State Park unit in accordance with 11AAC18.030 non-competitive commercial use permit and abide by all regulations and stipulations.

**CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD:**

The Alaska State Park Sitka area Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) recommends and assists the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation for the planning, management and operation of the state park units with the goal to improve management, recreational opportunities, and user conflicts, while fulfilling the Alaska State Park mission. The Alaska State Park Sitka area Citizen Advisory Board meetings are open to the public to comment, inform and seek information regarding the local Sitka area State Parks, State Marine Parks and Historic Sites, and are normally held at Centennial Hall at noon on the second Thursday of the month.

We are recruiting for new additional members - The board has vacant seats open to fill, this is your opportunity to share your opinions about how best to manage and preserve the unique natural, cultural and historic Sitka community state parks, while enhancing the recreational opportunities and enjoyment for all visitors and future generations. Applications can be found at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/misc/advisboardapp.pdf>, and submitted at an upcoming meeting or at the Halibut Point SRA office. The advisory board should consist of a wide range of ages, personal interests, recreational users, backgrounds, and career patterns to better provide for diversity of the opinions, feedback and ideas.

Please join us as a board member or as an interested community member or call the Juneau State Park office at 465-4563 or the Sitka field office at 747-3007 for additional information.

**POTENTIAL FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS:**

In addition to the above programs, the Halibut Point SRA double outhouse has been placed as the Southeast region's top priority for replacement on the state park deferred maintenance list, a recommendation for one or more State Park Public Use Cabin (PUC) be built within the next few years, and two trail grant submissions for 2020 trail improvements are among the current planned or recommended projects once funding is secured.

**CLOSING STATEMENT:**

over the few months since re-staffing and resuming operations of the Sitka area state park units, we have accomplished a lot of brushing, mowing, painting and general upkeeping tasks already, The Sitka communities support and voluntary compliance for the purposed measures listed above, will help to maintain, service and eventually improve your surrounding Sitka area State Parks and help prevent the parks from being placed in future non-service management status, which we have effectively been overcoming. We ask for your patients, support and acceptance for these operational improvements, procedural modernization and fee organization, to allow us to continually provide staff and services for the Sitka area State Parks.

Alaska State Parks would like to thank the City of Sitka for the revitalized partnership and cooperation, the active members of the Advisory Board, the US Forest Service and everyone who has enjoyed the state parks and helped to keep the parks clean, safe and useable all these years. Thank you for your support.

Respectfully,

Preston Kroes  
Southeast Region Superintendent