



Trail Condition Report

Caines Head State Recreation Area

March 12th, 2024

Overall Conditions: A landslide that occurred in January 2022 is still partially blocking the Coastal Trail that connects Tonsina Point to Caines Head State Recreation Area. The slide is located along Resurrection Bay between Tonsina Point and Callisto Canyon. Hikers are urged to use caution and cross the landslide at their own risk.

Winter's grip remains on CHSRA. Expect deep snow, ice, and running and/or pooling water on area trails. Additionally, there are numerous down spruce tops, alder and cottonwood limbs impeding trail corridors. Tonsina trail is currently packed snow and ice and can be traveled with relative ease by foot. Snowshoes may benefit hiker's looking to explore the trails out at CHSRA, such as the Fort Trail. **As always, ice cleats are highly recommended for travel on any Seward area trails. See attached trail breakdown for specific concerns and conditions.**

Bears: Bears have not been reported as of late throughout the greater Seward area, but with warming temperatures and spring around the corner, we expect to see them emerging from denning areas soon. So, please travel prepared and consider carrying a deterrent.

Public-Use Cabins:

- ✦ There is a new website for reservations that still uses the Reserve America platform, but is specific to Alaska State Parks. It can be found at: www.alaskastateparks.reserveamerica.com.
- ✦ **Callisto Canyon cabin is currently closed due to flood damage**
- ✦ **BE ADVISED:** Access to Derby Cove cabin may require a stream crossing depending upon seasonal snow melt and/or periods of heavy rain. In addition, this cabin is 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:

- ✦ There are currently five tent platforms in CHSRA. They are free to use and are first come, first serve.
- ✦ Four are located at North Beach near the day-use shelter. They can be accessed from the day-use shelter area or from a short trail leaving the beach. The beach access is designated with a camping sign. **The two newest platforms built by local Eagle Scouts feature ridge and eave poles for a tarp/rain cover!**
- ✦ The fifth tent platform is located at South Beach. It can be accessed from a short trail near the information board at the southern terminus of the South Beach trail or from the east end of the beach. A camping sign designates the beach access.

How to Get There:

- ✦ CHSRA trails and public-use cabins are accessed by foot from Lowell Point State Recreation Site (LPSRS), located 2.5 miles south of Seward. Follow the Seward Highway into Seward where it becomes Third Avenue. Follow Third Avenue to the end and take a right onto Railway Avenue. This becomes Lowell Point Road. Travel 2.5 miles to Lowell Point and turn right onto Pinnacle View Road, then make an immediate right to the upper parking lot for Lowell Point State Recreation Site and the Tonsina Trailhead. The trail to Tonsina Point and the Coastal Trail to Caines Head State Recreation Area starts at the southwest corner of the upper parking lot. Or continue along Pinnacle View Road and turn right into the lower parking lot for LPSRS and trail to Lowell Point Beach. A trail connects the lower and upper parking lots from behind the lower parking lot latrine to the south side of the upper parking lot.
- ✦ CHSRA trails and cabins can also be accessed by boat via water taxi (**except October-April**). Follow this link for a list of authorized commercial water taxi services: <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/kenai/cainesheadtaxi.htm>

Advisory:

- ✦ **CHSRA is bear country 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, upper parking area trailhead to the Caines Head trails south and west of Derby Cove (Overland, Alpine, Fort, South Beach, and Rainforest Loop).
- ✦ **The Coastal Trail is only passable during a low tide of +3ft or lower; the beach rocks and outcroppings can be very slick due to biofilm, water, 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**. **Firewood is often scarce and wet; visitors are highly encouraged to bring their own wood.** 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 information.

Trail Breakdown: Conditions and Concerns

Tonsina Point Trail	<p>High use. Please do not cut switchbacks! Expect packed snow and ice along with areas of running and/or pooling water. Ice cleats are highly recommended! Alder, spruce, spruce tops, and cottonwood limbs have all come down into the trail corridor this winter. Staff is working to clear the trail of these obstacles. Expect additional overhanging alder and spruce along the trail during periods of heavy snow. Please keep your pets on a leash.</p>
Coastal Trail	<p>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. A landslide is still partially blocking the Coastal Trail that connects Tonsina Point to Caines Head State Recreation Area. The slide is located along Resurrection Bay between Tonsina Point and Callisto Canyon. Hikers are urged to use caution and cross the landslide at their own risk!</p>
Overland Trail	<p>Moderate use. Please do not cut switchbacks! Expect areas of running and/or pooling water, deep snow, and ice.</p>
Alpine Trail	<p>Low use. Trail is not marked for winter travel and may be very challenging to follow. Expect deep snow and difficult travel. Avalanche terrain exists on the upper half of this trail, please travel prepared and exercise caution in this area.</p>
Fort Trail	<p>Moderate use in winter months, with a few reported hikers. Expect running and/or pooling water, deep snow, and ice. Reports of a lot of down alder and spruce in trail corridor.</p>
South Beach Trail	<p>Moderate use. Expect areas of running and/or pooling water, snow, and ice. Deepest snow is usually around Fort Trail Jct. Overhanging or down spruce and alder is likely during winter months. Be aware of “holes” opening in the trail tread approximately .75 miles after Fort Trail Jct.</p>
Rainforest Loop Trail	<p>Low use. Trail has markers and flagging only between South Beach and the Alpine Trail Jct. Trail can be difficult to follow, especially in snowy conditions and navigates a stream bed for a ¼ mile on south side, which may be hazardous to travel after heavy rain. Expect areas of running and/or pooling water, deep snow, and ice.</p>

Alpine Trail: from Overland Trail: 1.4 miles, +700'

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/aspunits/kenai/chsraoverlandtrl.jpg>

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Comments, Concerns, Bear Sightings:

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