

Refuge webpage never “closed for the winter”

by Pam Ables

Have you ever wondered what birds can be found on the Kenai Peninsula? Or needed information on which lakes you can land your plane? What about a map of the ski trails located up here on Ski Hill Road? Well, you can find all that and more on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge web site.

In 1998, I was assigned by the refuge manager to create a comprehensive web site for visitors that is useful in helping them plan trips to the Kenai Peninsula.

I got to thinking about this assignment on a trip to Anchorage one day. As I was looking for somewhere to make a “pit stop” with a squirming 10 year old in the passenger seat, I noticed that many of the summer conveniences were “Closed for the Winter.” Then I came upon the Refuge’s visitor contact station and profusely thanked the refuge manager for deciding to keep at least one outhouse open for the winter.

After our stop I realized that making the website only useful for visitors was the same as closing all the outhouses from here to Anchorage for the winter. This would not do and one can only buy so many so-

das at the “Restrooms for customer’s only” establishments, and that only has you planning your next stop thus creating a vicious cycle. Consequently the Refuge website became a project for not only visitors but for local residents as well.

Want to take the kids on a short snowshoe hike or did you get a permit for a special hunt and need information about how you can access the area? Check out our web site and look up popular day hikes or hunting information.

Visit the Kenai Refuge website at <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/kenai/> and find out what’s happening on your refuge this week. If you can’t find what your looking for, email me with comments at Pamela_Ables@fws.gov.

Pam Ables is the computer specialist for the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge and has worked on Alaska Refuges for 13 years. She lives in Kenai with her husband, Myke and his daughter, Destiny. Previous Refuge Notebook articles can be located at <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/kenai/>.