



# Trail Condition Report

## Caines Head State Recreation Area

June 6th, 2025

**Overall Conditions:** A landslide has impeded access to the Derby Cove Cabin and Caines Head SRA (CHSRA). The slide is located approximately 300 yards south of the Tonsina Point Cabin along the “Coastal Trail” or low tide dependent, beach portion of the hike to CHSRA. The slide is passable but requires hikers to climb up and over the debris. Park staff has cut up down trees for dispersal by the tides and established a high route at the toe of the debris. Additionally, an old landslide that occurred in January 2022 just south of Bridalveil Falls may still require hikers to scale debris. Please exercise extreme caution and travel at your own risk!

Spring runoff is ramping up in the Seward area with streams on the rise. Some drainages may be deep, swift, and difficult to cross. Turbid waters may make depth hard to gauge, so please exercise caution. The trail crew is active at Caines Head performing annual maintenance on area trails along with focused projects on the Rainforest and Alpine Trails. There has been some bear sign and activity reported near Derby Cove and at Caines Head. **Please see attached trail breakdown for current concerns and conditions. Please be mindful of local weather and watch for periods of heavy rain/snow and/or flooding as these events may make access to cabins extremely difficult and trails impassable.**

**Be Advised:** During a high wind event, a cottonwood snag crushed the northwest corner of the day-use latrine at Tonsina Point. The latrine will remain open for now unless conditions deteriorate, and park staff deem it unsafe. There is also a report of a down tree that smashed the boardwalk between or after the bridges.

### Public-Use Cabins:

- ✦ **Be Advised:** Porcupine Glacier Cabin in Thumb Cove-A contractor has completed flood mitigation measures to protect the cabin, but access may still become compromised during heavy rain and/or flood events.
- ✦ **Due to flood damage, Callisto Canyon Cabin has been dismantled, R.I.P.**
- ✦ The Callisto cabin latrine remains on-site (for now) for use by campers and hikers.
- ✦ **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.**
- ✦ **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. Park staff has cleared and flagged a high tide route north of the cabin from the pinch point at the stand of Spruce trees on the beach to the water source access trail.
- ✦ 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>

- ✦ 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](http://www.alaskastateparks.reserveamerica.com).

### **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**. However, the **“ghost trees” which are remnants of the 1964 earthquake and found in areas like Tonsina Point are not to be cut or disturbed in anyway. 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](http://www.lnt.org) for more information.

### Trail Breakdown: Conditions and Concerns

Tonsina Point Trail	<p>Areas of mud and water present throughout the trail, especially on the switchbacks. Heavy rains have rutted out sections of the road easement and trail, so please watch your step. Please keep your pets on a leash and <b>please do not cut the switchbacks!</b></p> <p><b>Report of a down trees and smashed boardwalk between or after the Tonsina creek bridges.</b></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.</p> <p><b>A landslide has impeded access to the Derby Cove Cabin and Caines Head SRA (CHSRA). The slide is located approx. 300 yards south of the Tonsina Point Cabin along the Coastal Trail or beach portion of the hike to CHSRA. The slide is passable but requires hikers to climb up and over debris. Park staff has cut up down trees for dispersal by the tides and established a high route at the toe of the debris.</b></p>
Overland Trail	<p>Expect areas of mud and running/pooling water. All down or impeding trees have been cleared. <b>Please do not cut switchbacks!</b></p>
Alpine Trail	<p>Deep snow is present in the upper elevations of this trail with lingering snow beginning around 700'. Expect mud and running/pooling water in lower elevations. Beware of fog and low clouds in the alpine, which may make navigating difficult. Upper elevations pose avalanche risk, please travel prepared and exercise caution in this area.</p>
Fort Trail	<p>Expect running/channeling water and several muddy areas. Bring a light source and please exercise caution while exploring the Fort.</p>
South Beach Trail	<p>Expect the usual muddy sections along with pooling and/or running water.</p>
Rainforest Loop Trail	<p><b>Beware of cliffs on southside!</b> Expect some snow around the Alpine Trail Junction as well as small down trees, areas of running and/or pooling water and several muddy sections. <b>Trail markers and flagging exist on south side but may be inconsistent and difficult to follow. The trail navigates a stream bed for a ¼ mile on south side and may be hazardous or impassable to travel after heavy rain.</b></p>

Alpine Trail: from junction with Rainforest Trail: 1.6+ miles, +750'

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

Park Specialist- Michael Burmeister- 907.422.7155, [michael.burmeister@alaska.gov](mailto:michael.burmeister@alaska.gov)

**Comments, Concerns, and Bear Sightings (for bears: please include species, approximate location, date, time, and any other relevant details)**

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