

# PAW PRINTS & SKI TRACKS

*Annual ASPA membership dues are due by January 31, 2013. If you want to continue your membership, please complete the attached form and send it in with your dues. Thanks!*

## **Sunday Trail Tours**

Check Hotline (45-SKIJOR) or [alaskaskijoring.org](http://alaskaskijoring.org)

## **January 19**

### **Fun Race #3**

Location and Race Details TBD

## **February 3**

### **Practice Clinic**

Creamer's Field

Lisa Stuby,

[las@acsalaska.net](mailto:las@acsalaska.net)

## **February 9**

### **Chena Lakes Race**

Sara Tabbert

[stabbert@hotmail.com](mailto:stabbert@hotmail.com)

## **February 11**

### **Wax Clinic at Raven Cross Country.**

Pre-registration

Fred Raymond

456-5070

## **Welcome to a New Year**

I am working on this newsletter while visiting family in California. I am due to return on January 1st and happily just saw that the temperature in Fairbanks has warmed up. I miss skiing and skijoring and look forward to getting back into the groove. Hope all ASPA members enjoyed the December holidays.

## **Practice Clinic #2—February 3rd, 2013 11:00 AM, Creamer's Field**

The second of two Practice Clinics is scheduled for Sunday, February 3rd at Creamers Field. This clinic will emphasize the basics and is meant for novice skijorers. In my travels around town, at the dog park, Petco, etc. I've had folks who have tried skijoring, but are not good skiers and/or the dogs won't pull, etc. Well, this is the clinic for you! This year in particular we are going to discuss and practice SKIING basics. I will have both my skate as well as classic skis on hand. The biggest thing I've noticed keeping owner and dog from being able to skijor is the owner's inability to ski or stay upright. Having good balance and confidence in skiing is very important first step to successful skijoring. The most important thing for your dog as well as for you is to have FUN!!

We will meet at 11:00 AM at the Creamer's Field farmhouse and have a 30 minute question and answer session. Afterwards, we will practice skiing basics, using the skijor training trails at Creamer's Field across from the Farmhouse. Afterwards, if there is still interest, we can attach our dogs and continue to practice. The temperature cutoff for this event is -15F. Cost is free to ASPA members and \$5.00 for non members. See you then.

So come and practice skiing and skijoring and most importantly, HAVE FUN!! If you would like to help out with handling, advice, and/or show up with behaved dog(s) who will act as "rabbits" for novice dogs to chase later in the clinic please contact Lisa Stuby at 458-7657, or e-mail at [las@acsalaska.net](mailto:las@acsalaska.net).

## **Wax Clinic at Raven Cross Country, February 11, 2013**

Fred Raymond of Raven Cross Country will be presenting the second of two ski waxing clinics for the 2012/2013 season to ASPA members on February 11th at 6:00 PM at his Well Street shop. Fred is an expert on waxing and caring for skis and is a great source for advice on all things cross-country skiing. Space is limited, and pre-registration is recommended. Contact Fred at 456-5070 or e-mail at [ravenxc@alaska.net](mailto:ravenxc@alaska.net). Come and learn how to best take care of those new skis you got yourself for Christmas--and give them the glide you and your dogs will appreciate! Clinic is for ASPA members only. Please pre-register.

## ASPA Fun Race #2, Creamer's Field by Pat DeRuyter

A sunny 6 degree day was perfect for Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association's Fun Race # 2 on Saturday, December 29, 2012 at Creamer's field. The trail was beautifully groomed and although there were lots of fresh moose tracks, no moose were seen during the race. Nineteen teams participated in some very close races.

The 3.6 mile two dog class was the closest with Sara Elzey (Katrina & Lira) finishing with a time of 14:11. Emilie Entrikin (Rika & Rib) were second at 14:20 and Sara Tabbert (Dora & Rothko) were third at 14:28. In the 3.6 mile one dog class, Bruce Miller and Roy won with a time of 15:24. Nina Ruckhaus and Sasha were second at 16:17 and Sunnifa Deehr and Aksel were third at 18:37.

Andy Warwick with Zip, Freddie and Yogi were first in the three dog 2.7 mile race with a time of 11:40. Andy was running two new dogs including a dog he rescued by way of the Animal Shelter. In the 2 dog 2.7 mile race Hilary Schwafel with Harley and Oliver won with a time of 12:46. Amanda Byrd (Rupert & Miriam) was second at 13:25. Sara Elzey (Faero & Lucy) was third at 14:43.

Sunnifa Deehr and Clyde won the 2.7 mile one dog race with a time of 13:42. Erik Schoen & Lefty were second at 13:54 and Ted Wu and Ty were third at 14:22.

In the 1.5 mile one dog race, Emilie Entrikin and Licorice were first with a time of 6:51. David Brooks and Monty were second at 7:52 and David Brooks and Sheriff were third at 8:07.

Thanks to Jim Altherr for grooming the trail, Sara Tabbert for registration, Pat DeRuyter for starting and Peggy Raybeck and Chloe for timing. Thanks to Jenny Lessner for taking and providing good photographs of the event.

### 3.6 mile 2 dog

1. Sara Elzey (Katrina, Lira) 14:11
2. Emilie Entrikin (Rika & Rib) 14:20
3. Sara Tabbert (Dora, Rothko) 14:28

### 3.6 mile 1 dog

1. Bruce Miller (Roy) 15:24
2. Nina Ruckhaus (Sasha) 16:17
3. Sunnifa Deehr (Aksel) 18:37
4. Megan Hoffman (Cerberus) 27:26

### 2.7 mile 3 dog

1. Andy Warwick (Zip, Freddie, Yogi) 11:40

### 2.7 mile 2 dog

1. Hilary Schwafel (Harley, Oliver) 12:46
2. Amanda Byrd (Rupert & Miriam) 13:25
3. Sara Elzey (Faero & Lucy) 14:43
4. Rebecca Gilbert (Sharlee & Pepper) 16:20

### 2.7 mile 1 dog

1. Sunnifa Deehr (Clyde) 13:42
2. Erik Schoen (Lefty) 13:54
3. Ted Wu (Ty) 14:22

### 1.5 mile 1 dog

1. Emilie Entrikin (Licorice) 6:51
2. David Brooks (Monty) 7:51
3. David Brooks (Sheriff) 8:07
4. Keith Hannerman (Kiana) 10:25



Below is an interesting and informative article written for the Alaska Fish and Wildlife News which emphasized the importance of vaccinating your dogs.

### **Rabies in Alaska, a Rabid Wolverine Found on North Slope**

By Riley Woodford and Kimberlee Beckmen

Despite the cliché “worse than a rabid wolverine” there has never actually been a documented case of a rabid wolverine. Until now.

Veterinarian Dr. Kimberlee Beckmen with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game completed a necropsy of a wolverine that was found dead on the North Slope. The Centers for Disease Control confirmed it was infected with a strain of arctic fox rabies.

The story starts in June, when state wildlife biologists Lincoln Parrett and Patrick Jones were flying in a helicopter about 25 miles northwest of Umiat. They were visiting sites where caribou calves were killed by predators, part of caribou survey and research work, when they spotted the dead wolverine. It was completely intact and had not been scavenged. Parrett called it a serendipitous finding.

“It was obvious from the air, lying on the tundra,” he wrote. “It was actually amazing to me that it was still frozen – there was no snow anywhere near it, except for what it had been insulating underneath. The pelt was so nice we skinned it for taxidermy.”

“There was no obvious cause of death, no sign of trauma.”

Beckmen had previously put the word out to biologists that she wanted to examine dead wolverines if they became available.

“I’ve been asking for them specifically because I want to learn more about their diseases, and the parasite loads of wolverines,” she said.

Beckmen also saw no obvious cause of death. The wolverine had only a single minor injury.

“She had a bite wound from a wolf to her jaw that was not a fatal injury, but likely indicates she fought with a wolf shortly before her death when she likely transmitted rabies to the wolf. Rabies is transmitted through saliva into a wound or mucous membrane. This bite penetrated the area of the salivary gland so the wolf would have been exposed this way - and if the wolverine made additional bites to the wolf.”

Beckmen said the wolverine was in estrous when it died, and in that area, that usually occurs in May, implying the animal had died a month earlier and frozen shortly afterward. Another clue reinforced this: the wolverine had a goose egg in her stomach, and by June geese eggs have hatched.

In addition to studying parasites, Beckmen is very interested in rabies. The Division of Wildlife Conservation has a disease surveillance program and is certified to test wildlife for rabies using a new screening method that is simpler than the traditional method. The Department of Health and Social Services’ Section of Epidemiology (the Alaska State Virology Laboratory in Fairbanks) generally tests for rabies if there has been a potential exposure of a person to rabies, typically a bite. Animals may also be submitted for testing if there is community concern, if a domestic animal has been exposed, or if there is reason to believe the virus is appearing in a new region.

Rabies in Alaska is endemic (meaning always present) in a small number of arctic fox only along Alaska’s coast but spills over frequently to red fox, sometimes in epidemic numbers of cases. The highest number of cases in foxes occurs in late winter, especially in the year after a high lemming/vole population explosion, which leads to increased fox numbers. An outbreak occurred in 1990 and affected red fox in Bristol Bay and the North Slope, arctic fox in Atkasuk and Barrow, and wolves around Ambler.

Rabid foxes will enter villages and attack dogs left out on chains or running free, and it is mainly from the dogs that people are at risk. Thus, all dogs need to be vaccinated to protect people from fox rabies.

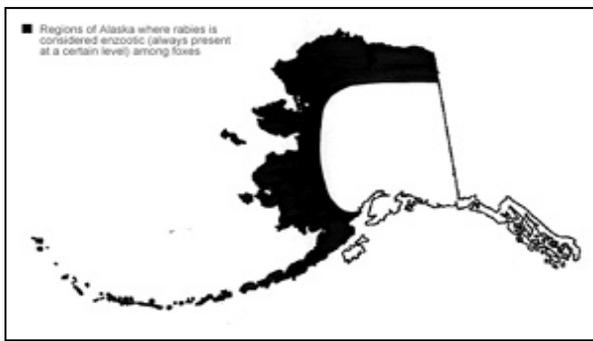
After foxes, wolves are the animal in Alaska most likely to attack dogs or people when rabid. In two separate incidents in 1942 and 1943, a Native hunter in Noorvik and a 10-year-old boy in Wainwright survived attacks by rabid wolves and later died from rabies.

### Rabies in Alaska, cont.

Since 1971, more than 100 wolves have been tested and of those, 24 have been positive for rabies. A pack of nine wolves was found dead in Northeastern Alaska during the spring of 1985, and five of the animals tested positive for rabies. In 1977, biologist Richard Chapman was studying a pack of 10 wolves in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and observed one member fighting with his packmates. The next day that wolf approached him at his camp behaving in an increasing threatening manner; he shot it and it tested positive for rabies. A month later he found six dead wolves near his camp, two were tested and both were positive for rabies.

One of the most recent incidents was in 2007: a pack of wolves attacked dogs in a dog yard in Marshall and killed six. One of the wolves was killed and it tested positive for rabies. Unfortunately, many dogs in the village that were exposed to the wolves had not been vaccinated for rabies and had to be killed to protect the village.

Beckmen said ADFG is now capable of testing more wildlife and is putting a concerted effort into learning if rabies is present in Alaska besides the North Slope and western coastal areas. In the past two years Beckmen has tested more than 600 animals, including hundreds of foxes and more than 100 wolves, 19 bats and four wolverines – including the recent find. Beckmen has also tested road-killed moose that were also being checked out for Chronic Wasting Disease.



Regions of Alaska where fox rabies is considered to be endemic - always present at some level.

In many cases the animals are found dead, hit by vehicles, killed in defense of life and property, killed in predator control programs or donated by trappers. “We found 2.8 percent positive for rabies, but these were all foxes except the one wolverine,” she said.

Beckmen said that in addition to the disease surveillance program, ADF&G is involved in collaborative research with Dr. Karsten Hueffer at the University of Alaska Fairbanks to examine rabies transmission dynamics with the expanding red fox populations displacing arctic fox in a changing climate.

More than 330 trapper-killed “normal” foxes from the Bethel area were examined for rabies and six were positive (1.8%).

“We want to increase trapper awareness about rabies, and make sure they wear gloves when skinning, and if they cut themselves, contact their health care provider so the fox’s head can be submitted to the Department of Health and Social Services for testing,” Beckmen said. For more information: <http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/id/rabies/default.htm>

All mammals are considered susceptible to rabies but not all are efficient transmitters of the virus. The amount of the virus in an animal’s saliva is a big factor - some species of mustelids (weasels) and most rodents tend to shed virus in saliva at a lower rate than other species such as bats, foxes and dogs.

Rabies has been found in animals that people don’t usually associate with the disease such as caribou, reindeer, white-tailed deer, river otter, domestic and wild cats, polar bear and black bear. This fall, there were two separate cases of aggressive rabid beavers reported in Virginia.

“Rodent bites aren’t usually considered a risk and people aren’t usually given vaccinations even when the rodent isn’t tested. However, the recent beaver attacks remind us that rodents do get it and die from it,” Beckmen said.

Not every animal that gets exposed to the rabies virus becomes infected. The incubation period can range from months to years, so the animal may die of something else, may not have gotten large enough virus dose and so was able to mount an immune response, may have already had antibodies from previous exposure or vaccination, or the species seems to be resistant (but none are wholly immune) to certain strains. However, once clinical signs appear, rabies is fatal.

## **Rabies in Alaska, Cont.**

“If you get vaccinated in time it can save your life, but once you start showing symptoms, you’re going to die,” Beckmen said. “Just washing the wound immediately makes a huge difference, reduces the amount of the virus present and can greatly reduce the risk of rabies transmission.”

The early symptoms of rabies include fever, headache, and general weakness or discomfort. As the disease progresses, more specific symptoms appear and may include insomnia, anxiety, confusion, slight or partial paralysis, excitation, hallucinations, agitation, increased salivation, difficulty swallowing, and hydrophobia (fear of water). Death usually occurs within days of the onset of these symptoms. In the U.S. the number of deaths from rabies has declined from more than 100 per year in the 1800s to just one or two a year. Fatalities typically occur in people who fail to seek medical attention, usually because they were unaware of the exposure.

The disease becomes fatal when the virus reaches the brain. So the progression depends on where a person has been bitten, the disease can progress much faster if someone bitten on the face than on than foot. There are different strains of rabies, named for the natural host that sustains it in the ecosystem or where it originally evolved. In the Lower 48, most rabies is either skunk, raccoon or bat rabies.

Some strains of rabies are more virulent than others, with the arctic fox strain endemic to Alaska being of low virulence and the red bat rabies (detected in a Keen’s long eared bat on Prince of Wales Island in 2006) being highly virulent. It is notable that the only other case of rabies in a bat in Alaska was in 1993, in a little brown bat near Ketchikan which was infected with a highly virulent silver-haired bat rabies strain. That risk is another reason why it is critical that people do not pick up or try to ‘save’ bats that appear to be sick or can’t fly.

Worldwide, rabies kills about 55,000 people annually, and according to the Centers for Disease Control, in about 99 percent of the cases it is transmitted by dogs. About 31,000 people die from rabies each year in Asia and about 24,000 people in Africa. Most of the deaths in Asia are in India - 20,000 people a year die from rabies in India, which passed a law in 2001 that forbids killing stray dogs. The New York Times reported in an Aug. 6, 2012, article that tens of millions stray dogs roam free in India, mostly feeding on garbage, and bite millions of people each year.

In the United States, animal control and vaccination programs have effectively eliminated the dog rabies strain. In several countries, including Australia and Japan, rabies carried by terrestrial animals has been eliminated entirely.

The true dog rabies virus has been eliminated in the US, but dogs are still susceptible to the other rabies viruses and can effectively transmit rabies. Current legal requirements for vaccinating dogs against rabies are to protect people from getting wildlife rabies transmitted by the dog.

Rabies manifests in two different forms, called furious rabies and dumb rabies. Animals with furious rabies exhibit aggressive behavior including attacking inanimate objects and biting anything that moves. The dumb form (named when the term was commonly used to mean speechless) is less dramatic but more common especially in horses and cows. The cow may appear to have something caught in its throat but that is actually a paralysis that prevents it from swallowing saliva. Wild animals infected lose their natural fear of people; appear lethargic and wobbly or partially paralyzed.

An animal with this form of rabies will not necessarily be aggressive, but it is still dangerously infectious. “People think if it’s not foaming it’s not rabid, but foxes can have rabies and not show the signs people think of. A fox with the dumb form will appear lethargic, lose its fear of people, and just sit there,” Beckmen said. “People in some villages are pretty aware of the potential for rabies, and especially in fox, but it’s important to know a rabid fox is not always going to foam at the mouth (in fact most foxes do not do this) or attack things. It might just be looking wobbly or lame or unafraid.”

Beckmen said it’s important that people do not feed foxes or leave things out for them to eat. It’s also important to get pets vaccinated. “Vaccinate dogs,” she said. “The most common exposure risk for rabies to people is via dogs; wildlife such as foxes expose the dogs and then dogs expose people.”

*Riley Woodford is the editor of Alaska Fish and Wildlife News and the producer of the Sounds Wild radio program. Dr. Kimberlee Beckmen is a veterinarian with the Division of Wildlife Conservation and a long time member and volunteer of the Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association.*

## Dog of the Month

**Hey all you dog lovers! REMINDER, we started this feature with the spring newsletter – the Dog of the Month. We invite you to submit a brief write-up (300 words or less) and photo of your dog by the monthly deadline. We’ll include one or two each month. We want to hear about your best pals and what makes them so special, unique or even a pain-in-the-...Since no one submitted a January Dog of the Month article you all leave me NO CHOICE but to talk about my elkie. Please submit Dog of the Month articles to Lisa Stuby at las@acsalaska.net.**

### Killae by Lisa Stuby

Killae is an eight-year old Norwegian Elkhound. We’ve been skijoring and skiing since he was four-months old. With their square profile, elkies are not built for speed, but endurance as they have been bred to hunt game, in particular moose, which are called “elk” in most of Europe. Elkhounds hunt moose in two ways: loose and on lead in harness. When loose, the elkhound will find the moose, report back to the hunter, and then stay with the moose barking loudly and rhythmically. At races, many of you will have noticed Killae’s loud bark. When the hunter gets close, the dog will distract the moose by jumping up and down while madly barking while the hunter gets in for a shot on their unsuspecting quarry. The second way of hunting is on lead in harness where the elkhound silently leads the hunter to the moose and will sit or lie down prior to the shot. In both instances, the elkhound is completely in charge, leading his human.

As such, Killae is not an “obedient” breed and is fairly independent and stubborn. One has to be to unite a hunter with a moose. He is also super smart and adaptable. It is illegal to hunt moose with a dog in the USA. Killae knows I am a bit afraid of moose as I’ve been charged in the past and have been lucky. Killae will sniff at moose prints and I can tell how he reacts whether or not the moose is nearby and I’d better be alert. He will also point them out to me in the woods and let me know if they are close. Several times we’ve rounded a corner only to have a moose be near the trail and he has sped up to take me away from them. I never taught him how to behave around moose when we are skijoring, he just figured out what to do. I’m definitely HIS human and he tries to take care of me as much as I of him. He will bark at moose if he is loose, which is why he is rarely loose. There are many times I’ve let him choose the skijor route as he does like to lead. During one race we went past our turnoff and I thought we should keep going. Well Killae got into stubborn elkhound mode (sitting down with ears pinned back) and refused to budge until he got his way. Turned out he was right, I was wrong.

Killae loves to ski and skijor, but not for the fun of running. He loves the social scene. Killae is quite the social butterfly and loves to mingle with his buddies and his people. He particularly loves the trail tours which are more relaxed with lots of cookie breaks and more socializing. During the summer months he loves walks at Creamer’s, especially where there are school groups out. He is quite the kid magnet. He is also a goof and will be seen scooting on his tummy, tunneling into the snow, and making snow angels to get attention. He will act goofy too to make me laugh if I am having a down day. He periodically goes to doggie day care at Animal House where he is popular with the ladies, both canine and human, and apparently a good wrestler and I’ve been told, never any problem. Although stubborn and independent, he also wants to be loved and doesn’t want anyone to be angry at him. Any “corrections” have to be handled gently and with tact.. I tell folks that owning an elkhound is like having a furry two-year old.

Killae is as sensitive as he can be stubborn. A few years ago we were skijoring on ADMA trails and he jumped into a small team of German short-haired pointers. I pulled him aside and told him the two words he hates, “bad dog.” Well, feelings hurt, he now moves over and off the trail for everyone who wants to pass. This is another reason why when we “race” we are really slow. But, I won’t correct for good manners and I’d much rather come in beyond dead last having showed good trail manners than just plain ole last with a naughty dog. We are not the fastest team, but I like to think we are among the most polite.

As boisterous as he can be at skijoring events, when at home he becomes the couch potato. He is also quite the cuddler and will give me “looks” every time I get up off the couch to wash dishes, etc. He often “holds” his head up in position as he had it on my lap awaiting for me to sit back down and has been known to do this for several minutes. So, this is life with Killae. He is currently eight-years old and I’ve heard they can live to be 15 years old. I hope he makes it to 18 as I can’t imagine life without him.



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**Paw Prints and Ski Tracks** is a monthly newsletter published during the winter season by the Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association. The coordinating editor of Paw Prints and Ski Tracks is Lisa Stuby. Your comments, articles and pictures are greatly appreciated. Please e-mail the information before the 25<sup>th</sup> of every month to las@acsalaska.net.

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