



**Observations** from the **Mendenhall Glacier**

# Measuring change: Mendenhall Glacier in 2008

January 29, 2009

## Upcoming ... Fireside lectures

Friday, January 30 \* 6:30 & 8pm  
**Mendenhall's 2008 Changes**

University of Alaska faculty and student researchers unearth the changes in the Mendenhall Glacier during the summer of 2008. See story on this page.

Friday, February 6 \* 6:30 & 8pm  
**Glaciers of Alaska**

See glaciers from space! Get the satellite view with geologist Bruce Molnia, author of the new US Geological Survey's publication revealing images of Alaska's glaciers. See [www.usgs.gov/global\\_change/glaciers/default.asp](http://www.usgs.gov/global_change/glaciers/default.asp)

Friday, February 13 \* 6:30 & 8pm  
**Juneau's Winter Whales**

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration researcher John Moran studies humpback whales in Juneau. Do they all swim to Hawaii for the winter? Plunge into the information on where they are, what they are doing, and why scientists are studying them. NOAA's website to identify local whales is [www.afsc.noaa.gov/ABL/Humpback/JuneauCatalog.htm](http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/ABL/Humpback/JuneauCatalog.htm)

Friday, February 20 \* 6:30 & 8pm  
**Black Bears for Neighbors**

Alaska Department of Fish and Game biologist Ryan Scott and his associates have radio-collared several Juneau black bears over the past five years. Dig into the behavior and habits of our urban black bear neighbors with data collected from the radio collars. See how this information will be used in the future management of Juneau's black bears.

*More to come! Full schedule at  
[www.mendenhallglacier.org](http://www.mendenhallglacier.org)*

Fireside lectures are free and occur on Friday nights in January, February and March. Visitor center doors open at 5:45pm with the first lecture at 6:30pm and repeat at 8pm.

Friday, January 30 the Fireside lecture guest speakers will be the University of Alaska Southeast's faculty and students whose research provides details about the Mendenhall Glacier changes from year to year. Learn how the glacier is measured from the people who do it. Join Drs. Matt Heavner, Eran Hood and Cathy Connor of UAS's Environmental Sciences department and their assistants.

UAS staff have created a web site that displays their research at [www.Seamonsterak.com](http://www.Seamonsterak.com). Explore the site to find photos and information about icefield and glacier research.

SEAMONSTER is the acronym for the South East Alaska Monitoring Network for Science, Telecommunications, Education, and Research. The three-year project is funded by the NASA Earth Science Technology Office and the NOAA Interdisciplinary Scientific Environmental Technology Cooperative Science Center. Information pertaining to current research, environmental data, and a virtual educational tour can be accessed through thisportal.

According to the Seamonster web site, "The aim of the project is to develop a wireless sensor web which will harvest high volumes of geospatial environmental data from on and around the Juneau Icefield in Southeast Alaska, USA. The smart sensor web will be used to monitor glaciological, meteorological, and hydrological phenomena occurring in this beautifully unique, dynamic, and challenging environment."

"A large component of the SEAMONSTER project is the emphasis on secondary and university level education," says Dr. Heavner, a UAS professor since 2003. "In addition to collecting research-quality data, the project helps to raise awareness of environmental processes and to train the next generation of earth scientists. It's really fun, too!"

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*UAS student researchers Nick Korzen and David Sauer measure the terminus of Mendenhall Glacier using a GPS unit mounted in a canoe. Photo Seamonsterak.com*



*The black wolf of Mendenhall Glacier. Juneau residents have nicknamed the wolf "Romeo."*

## Naturalist's Notebook

### Wolf Watching Tips

- ◆ Do not encroach on the wolf
- ◆ If the wolf approaches you, yell and clap your hands to reinforce an appropriate distance between people and the wolf
- ◆ Do not let dogs play with the wolf and keep dogs on a leash
- ◆ Do not feed the wolf

The black wolf dissolves into the spindly spruce forest, his long slender legs camouflaged among the skinny black tree trunks. If I had not seen him walk into the woods, he would remain hidden from my view. Despite knowledge of his location I still need to study the trees to

discern his solid body. I find him by his movement as he lay down on the rock-hard frozen snow.

The woman standing beside me with the long telephoto lens speaks in hushed tones. She whispers that she loves seeing the wolf, but worries about his long term survival because he spends time around dogs and humans.

We both watch as a truck arrives with a dog seated in the front seat. The man emerges slowly with his dog on a leash. He has figured out what we are doing with cameras in our hands. The wolf moves from the trees to the edge of the forest and whines when he sees the dog. The dog strains at its leash, ready to play. The man holds it tightly and speaks soothingly to his restrained pet before leading the dog in the opposite direction. The wolf melts back into the forest and lopes away.

Other people with leashed dogs arrive but stay far from the wolf. A woman with a large husky quietly walks her calm and

disinterested dog in another direction to avoid contact. The wolf turns away and lopes along the forest perimeter.

Many wolf watchers and skiers have been careful to remain at a safe distance from the wolf. I noticed a change in behavior after the negative publicity last year caused by the local man who sent his pug onto the frozen lake so the man could use his new camera to photograph the wolf. The wolf picked up the pug but dropped it moments later. The dog was not injured. People continue to disparage the man's foolish threat to the wild wolf's existence.

There is another black wolf making its appearance now inside the visitor center. It is one of three wolves depicted on a 1,026 piece jigsaw puzzle. The other wolves are gray and white. This puzzle is more challenging to assemble than the previous puzzle we put on the table by the big observatory windows. That design featured an aerial view of Skagway.

The Puzzle Ladies came Friday night to the early Fireside and remained to work on the wolf puzzle. They returned Saturday morning to enjoy the daylight view with their morning coffee and work on the puzzle. I am pleased when people feel at home here. These ladies are dedicated — and skilled — jigsaw puzzle aficionados.



*Naturalist Laurie Craig and raven puppet*

### **Observations from Mendenhall Glacier and Naturalist's Notebook**

are written by US Forest Service naturalist Laurie Craig in Juneau, Alaska.  
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US Forest Service  
8510 Mendenhall Loop Road  
Juneau, AK 99801  
907.789.0097

Winter Hours Thursday-Sunday 10am to 4pm

*City and Borough of Juneau Deputy City Manager Kim Kiefer poses an East Coast Flat Stanley on the Mendenhall Glacier model inside the visitor center.*



## Flat Stanley visits the glacier in winter

Flat Stanley came to the visitor center on Saturday, January 24. Because the winter weather was very cold, he wore extra heavy clothing.

Flat Stanley is a paper cutout of a boy. Using a template, children create and color their own paper version and send it via mail (or hand-carried) to exciting places.

Flat Stanley is based on a real little boy whose father wrote a children's book 40 years ago. The real young boy worried that the bulletin board over his bed might fall on him during the night. Attempting to comfort his fearful son, the author made up a story character named Flat Stanley who was painlessly flattened after a bulletin board slowly falls on him. In a classic tale of overcoming adversity, Stanley learns to take advantage of his new circumstances.

He can be a kite or a boat's sail. He can also be folded into an envelope and mailed anywhere.

Encouraged by a friend, eventually the father wrote a book about Flat Stanley, then another book and another. In 1995, a Canadian teacher created the Flat Stanley international literacy project for school children. The paper cutout is used to teach children about other cultures, people and places.

Several summer visitors bring a child's Flat Stanley along on vacation and take photos of the paper cutout in various locations around the glacier. They write a story about Alaska and the paper boy's adventures in Juneau.

Details about this wonderful evolution of a father's imagination are at [www.flatstanley.com](http://www.flatstanley.com).

*Where does all the plowed snow go to melt? Huge dump trucks haul some of the valley's snow to the glacier's bus parking lot. The large volume requires the city's contractor to bulldoze mounds into a mountain of dense snow.*

*The winter of 2006-07 deposited almost 200 inches of snow in Juneau. That summer the parking lot snowpile never melted completely.*

*The city tests the runoff to assure the discharge meets water quality standards.*

*This photo was taken January 24, 2009.*

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