


Alaskan Adventure



June 2012

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Background

In June 2012, my travels for work brought me to Alaska for the first time. I decided to take a weeklong vacation following that work trip to get out there and experience Alaska. My last big adventure had been in December 2006 to Africa, and again the urge for a big trip weighted heavy on me. I arrived in Fairbanks on June 9th, on the 10th I was able to go through Denali National Park seeing a grizzly bear, moose, Dahl sheep and several scenic views. On the 11th I arrived in Anchorage. On the 13th I arrived in Juneau while there I was able to visit the Mendenhall Glacier on the 14th.

Highlights From Denali







Mendenhall Glacier



Saturday, June 16, 2012

I said goodbye to my teammates from work who had traveled with me throughout Alaska for the last week. The clouds that had hung over Juneau for the last few days descended even lower and finally and rain dominated the morning. Determined to still see the city, I walked a few blocks to the Sandpiper Café for breakfast for some pancakes and bacon. Walking back through a brief downpour I passed by the Alaska State Capitol and the St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, built in 1894.

I had been toying with the idea of participating in a sled-dogging experience, but learned from the various excursion salespeople that due to muddy conditions none of the operators were running that day. Looking over other options I decided to go on a whale-watching tour. The only problem was that bus with the last tour group for the day had pulled out 5 minutes earlier. After trying to think of alternate ways to get me to the boat, the operators agreed to pay for my cab fare to the dock, on the opposite end of town. Though overcast the rain stopped and within a few minutes of pulling out we caught a glimpse of a humpback whale.



A small sea lion searches for a place to rest



Above: A humpback whale dives into the deep sound outside Juneau

Right: A pair of bald eagles overlook Auke Bay

For the next few hours we rode to various spots catching views of humpbacks jumping out of the water and sea lions fight for position on a buoy. Half the time I would try look through the viewfinder for minutes on end, hoping to capture the picturesque moment of a whale breach. The rest of the time camera was turned off and I just took in the amazing experience. Arriving back at the dock, we were greeted by a pair of bald eagles, which are a common sight through Juneau and lower Alaska.



Stopping by the world famous Red Dog Saloon, I threw a hat that had my co-workers and I had signed on a moose's antler the adorned one of the walls. The saloon was covered in memorabilia from past guests, including Wyatt Earp's gun, and we wanted to add to the tradition. I then walked town to the Twisted Fish Company for dinner – fresh halibut stuffed with crabmeat.

Sunday, June 17, 2012

Traveling from Juneau, I arrived in Anchorage and decided to rent a car for the day, without a plan of where I should go. The counter at the rental car desk had a brochure to the Alaska Wildlife Conversation Center which takes in injured and orphaned animals. The trip would take me along the scenic Seward Highway and provide me a chance to pull off the road and get some shots that I knew I wouldn't be

able to get the next day. Additionally, I would be able to see all of Alaska's wildlife in a safe way. After stopping several times along the way, at the scenic vistas, I finally made it to the center. I decided to stretch my legs and walk through the center rather than drive from area to area. While there I was able to see moose, musk ox, bison, grizzly bears, caribou, black bears, eagles, and a lynx. Towards the end of my visit it was time feeding time for a baby moose. It was a sight to see them run up to the caretakers, jump all over them and down a bottle in no time flat. I then began my trip back to Anchorage and was able to view Mt. McKinley, which I had not been able to see when visiting Denali a week earlier. After snapping some quick pictures of the mountain I went to the REI store to get some last minute items for my upcoming adventure and finish off the day over at the nearby Moose Tooth for some pizza and beer.



Our hat hangs alone on the giant moose antlers at the Red Dog Saloon

Seward Highway and Alaska Wildlife Conversation Center Highlights









Monday, June 18, 2012

I woke up early to check my duffle bag one last time and grab a quick breakfast at the hotel prior to my 7:40 a.m. pickup time to start my “Double Exposure” trip with Alaska Exposure. Right on time a white 15-passanger van nicknamed “Frosty” pulled up to the hotel and out came the lead guide for our adventure - Amanda, or Mandy as she went by.

This was Mandy’s fourth year as a guide with the company, a veteran with a single company, and at only 23 she had traveled and worked across multiple countries including an ice climbing guide in New Zealand.

Riding shotgun was our assistant guide Brian. Brian was between semesters at college, and although a seasoned river guide on the Arkansas River, this was his first year with the company and his first trip out.

Next we picked up Brittany and Michael. Brittany is from New Jersey and is a master’s student at Rutgers studying botany and throughout the trip she came to provide insight on several occasions regarding native Alaskan plants and some of their benefits. Michael also attends Rutgers and is a PhD candidate in mathematics, statistics in particular.

After hitting some dead-end streets and learning Mandy’s exceptional skills with maneuvering a 15-passanger van we arrived at C.J.’s hotel. CJ lives in San Francisco and works for Google, providing a variety of marketing services to 12 countries throughout Asia. In her spare time she is the lead singer of an AC/DC cover band called Colonel Angus. Throughout the trip her musical selections on Mandy’s iPod kept us rocking out while driving to each destination.

Our final stop introduced us to Robert and Helen from Minnesota. Robert is a chemical engineer and Helen is a veterinarian. This trip was a 25th anniversary gift from their four kids in college.

After a quick check of our gear to ensure that we were ready for whatever Alaska would throw at us, we left Anchorage and began our trek along the Seward Highway towards Whittier. Prior to reaching Whittier we stopped at Portage Lake Visitor’s Center for a quick photo opportunity and to view a three dimensional map of the area we would be kayaking for the next few days. The cloudy conditions made me wonder what we would be in for. Leaving the Visitor’s Center we got in line to go through the Portage/Whittier Tunnel. The tunnel is only way to access Whittier by land is about 2.5 miles long. The tunnel was originally built to fit railcars and is still used as such.

Between the trains, lines of cars go through from one side then the other as it still only wide enough to fit one vehicle. Upon exiting the tunnel into Whittier, the skies were clear and we saw two building that dominate the



Portage Lake

skyline – the abandoned high-rise building the military had constructed and the newer high-rise building which houses 95% of Whittier’s residents. After picking up our kayaking gear and packing our personal gear in dry bags we set off for our launching point – First Salmon Run.

As the weather at Portage Creek had been overcast, we initially placed our rain gear on, looking like the newest members of a crabbing boat from the *Deadliest Catch*. The clear weather stuck and prior to launching we were all able to shed a few layers so that we would paddle in comfort. C. J. sat in the front of our two-person kayak and I took control of the rudder. After a few minutes, we were off in a straight line and heading out through the Passage Canal of Prince William Sound with the rest of our group. The next couple of hours gave us our first glimpses of both the beautiful



Preparing to Put in at First Salmon Run

landscape that lie ahead and the repetitive motion of paddling that our muscles would remind us of over the next few days. We paddled east along the southern shore for the next hours, stopping for lunch in a small bay just before Shotgun Cove. I have to admit, I was curious what kind of food would be in order since we wouldn’t be resupplying along the way. Lunch consisted of smoked salmon, bagels and cream cheese and carrots. Each of us brought water bottles with us which throughout the trip would be filled from various freshwater streams and treated with water treatment drops.



Lunch Break

Between our conversations and jokes as we got to know each other paddling that afternoon, one concept kept dominating my thoughts. The landscape seemed to be out of a Lord of the Rings movie, with endless mountains, drop-offs into the sea, clear blue-green water, and deep blue skies.. After a few more hours of paddling we arrived at Decision Point, our camp site for the night. We unloaded our kayaks and had to move them pretty far up the rocky beach. The strong tides throughout the sound can raise the water level up to 15 feet from low to high tide.

While Mandy setup our dining area and instructions regarding some basics knots that we would need to know to setup our tarps over our tents. With that knowledge C.J. and I headed off to setup our tarps and tents. After some frustrating time trying to find tie-off points for our tarp and trying to tie our knots correctly, we setup our tents and unrolled our sleeping bags and headed back down the trail for dinner.

From the Coleman Stove came the smell of Thai curry, which was to be served over a bed of rice. We all sat under a huge dining fly sitting in reclining camp chairs, enjoying our meals. We washed our dishes in a nearby stream and after brushing our teeth we placed our remaining food and all of our toiletries in a bear box, to keep all of our “smell good” items away from our tents. Being so far north, and so near the summer solstice even when the sun went behind a mountain for the night, it never got dark enough to need a flashlight to read. I think it was about 10:30 when we turned in that night, but due to the light, I would wake up every few hours each night and fight to convince my body it was not time to get up.

Tuesday, June 19

After lying awake for what seemed like hours, Brian walked over to let everyone know that it was 7:30 a.m. and the coffee was ready. A locally, fresh ground coffee put through a French press was a great start to our morning. Blue skies again dominated our views. While breakfast was being prepared we each went back to our campsites and began packing our tents, tarps, and gear for the days voyage – about 12 miles. Sipping a second cup of coffee our breakfast of scrambled eggs and reindeer sausage hit the spot removing the slight chill we would get from sitting around. After another round of dishes we loaded up the kayaks and launched our kayaks into the glassy waters, rounding Decision Point into Blackstone Bay which included the Blackstone and Beloit Glaciers. We paddled throughout the bay stopping for a lunch of fresh vegetables, hummus, and tortilla wraps at 12-Mile Beach, so named because it lies 12 miles from Whittier.



Kayaking Through Blackstone Bay

Waterfalls were prevalent throughout the trip, but during the afternoon we passed through a number of fantastic waterfalls in a continuous half-mile stretch known as Waterfall Alley. The glaciers were now in clear view, but without a concept of their size, I didn't how much further we had to go. Stopping at 16-Mile Beach provided us with the opportunity to play in patches of snow that remained on the ground and view a stream shooting out water from underground tunnels, sending it through the air like a kid launched off a slide.

Continuing on with the glaciers in sight all afternoon, we passed Hershey Kiss Mountain, named by our guide for its distinctive shape. No matter how much we paddled the mountain never seemed to change position, constantly being ahead on our left. After finally passing the summit, we started to encounter some small icebergs, at first the size of a microwave, but increasing in size as we approached the glacier until they were bigger than our double kayaks. After weaving through the field of icebergs, we stopped paddling a mile from the face of Beloit Glacier and drifted through the area. During our visit we saw several chunks of ice release from



Beloit Glacier

the glacier and crash into to the sea, accompanied by the distinctive bass-filled crackling and splashing sounds. We then turned our kayaks around and paddle back, again passing Hershey Kiss Mountain until we reached our campsite, Willard Island which lies in the middle of the bay. We camped along the peninsula on the northeastern edge of island, which during some high tides can be cut off from the main island.

Setting up our tarp continued to be a challenge, clouds in the distance horizon meant rain was a distinct possibility, and the tarp a necessary precaution. After several unsuccessful attempts of joining our tarps together and finding adequate anchor points, coupled with failing knots, C. J. and I decided to shove our tents as close as possible and make do with one tarp.

Dinner that night was again a welcome meal. Bowtie pasta with a brie cheese sauce, garnished with tomatoes and basil and pine nuts. Again we were all impressed with the meal and presentation, as Brian stated, "It's all about the presentation," words he would soon regret. During dinner he had been preparing his first camp-site food, a no-bake cheesecake. While the recipe listed all the ingredients, it failed to ever mention how much water to include. While none of us had ever seen a cheesecake look like that before or since, we tried to cover it with blueberries, and it tasted just fine.

Doing dishes that night on the south end of the peninsula, we had one of those great unexpected moments. We saw Helen come running up the beach, yelling something that we were at first unable to make out – was some hurt I wondered. Finally, we heard, clear as a bell, the word "whale". Throwing our dishes down we dashed across the peninsula to the northern shore, where just off the coast a humpback whale was feeding. During the next 45 minutes we ran up and down the beach following it as it fed on small fish. The sea gulls hovering overhead helped guide us as the whale swam throughout the cove. We stood there mostly silent, watching in awe and waiting for it to surface again, only with occasional comments or insight into the lives they live. Since we had been in the middle of cleaning up, none of us had a camera on us, and none of wanted to leave, in fear of missing this opportunity. Returning back to our dishes we realized that the tide had come in quite a bit and had the whale stuck around a little longer the dishes would have been washed to sea.

Going to bed that night, there was a light rain and a slight breeze for a few ten minutes, but our tarp withstood the test. Again I drifted in and out of sleep all night, waiting to hear the words that morning coffee was ready.

Wednesday, June 20

Following the same morning routine as the previous day, we began packing up as breakfast was being prepared. On the menu this morning were blueberry pancakes. We loaded up our kayaks ahead of schedule and noticed in the distance that the tides had deposited a huge piece of driftwood and an iceberg on the beach. Like kids with a new toy we played, climbed and posed with it, with views of the glacier it came from in the background. We then set-off for our return trip to 12-Mile Beach. Though it remained overcast throughout the morning, a drop of rain never fell, making for pleasant paddling. By this time, my shoulder and arm muscles were starting to



Playing on an iceberg, with Beloit Glacier in the background

become sore and I looked forward to having a day of hiking ahead. We arrived at 12-Mile Beach and enjoyed a lunch of deli meat, wraps, and fresh veggies. As we were eating, our water taxi arrived on the beach and we began to load up our kayaks and gear. During the 45 minute ride back to Whittier, I recalled the various places we had kayaked past. Arriving back in Whittier, we unloaded the kayaks, and got quickly got back in the van for to make our return through the tunnel in time, listening to some podcasts about Georg Stellar, his expedition with Bering to Alaska, and the curse of animals being named for him becoming endangered or extinct and a first-hand account of someone's encounter with grizzly bear. As we were about to enter the tunnel I prepared to take a picture of the entrance way, when a lone coyote was spotted, scampering along the mountainside. I quickly swung my camera and snapped a picture just hoping just to get the coyote in frame, a moment later we entered the darkness of the tunnel.

We arrived on the other side, again stopping at the Portage Lake Visitor's Center. This was our first opportunity to see ourselves in a mirror and we all took advantage of the sink, soap, and mirrors from the restroom. We continued our trek back to Anchorage, stopping to get our groceries for the remainder of the trip, followed by dinner at the Firetap Alehouse for some pizza and beer. Following dinner, we continued our drive north to the town of Palmer, spending the night at the Valley View Colony Inn. After a much needed shower and reorganizing my duffel bag, I called it a night, only waking up a couple of times that night.

Thursday, June 21

We were able to “sleep-in” and didn’t have to ready to leave until 8:30 this morning. Leaving the hotel, we stopped at a local eatery, the Vagabond Blues, for some coffee and breakfast burritos. Brian had stayed at the Alaskan Exposure headquarters check the group gear and prepare for the evening meal. We then began our search for the Lazy Mountain trailhead. After a phone call and a Google Search, we arrived and prepared for our ascent up the 3,720 foot mountain. Being from Florida, and not used to “hills”, I quickly flashed back to climbing Kilimanjaro in 2006. Bringing only one water bottle for hike was a mistake I quickly learned. Despite falling behind a few times, and asking myself several times if it was wise to continue, we all trekked on, reaching the peak - capped with an American flag for Wounded Warriors and backed by snow-capped mountains and deep blue skies. Not having a daypack, I made the regrettable decision of leaving my camera in the car. Thanks to travel companions, pass along their photos I able to share some memories from the trail. A few hundred feet below the summit was a picnic table suitable for lunch, and some snow melts, which provided me an opportunity to fill my water bottle.

Coming back down, we decided to take the alternate Lazy Moose Route, which was a series of winding switchbacks, instead of the more direct Lazy Mountain Trail we had climbed up. With the scenic mountains in and river in the background we posed for a group shot along the way, only to have another one of those unexpected highlights. Getting back on the trail, we rounded a corner and 50 feet in the distance on the trail was a young male moose. I instinctively yelled “MOOSE!”, and placed my right hand

up with a fist, signaling the rest of the team to stop. The moose didn’t seem interested or distracted by us and continued eating for a few minutes. Then it looked in our direction and decided to sit down on the trail. Mandy began walking off-trail down the mountain, looking for the next switchback that we could link back into. Just as the group began going down the cut through the moose got up took a look at us and ran away – truly one of those memorable Alaska moments!!



Don and Tina’s cabin

The remainder of the hike the uneventful, and after stopping for a quick picture of Lazy Mountain from across the river, we headed for dinner at Don and Tina’s place. Don and Tina were the husband and wife owners of Alaska Exposure, along with the

Matanuska Ice Climbers Adventures (MICA) and Glacier View Adventures. Their property consisted of several wooded acres, about 1.5 miles off the main highway. Arriving at the immediate areas around their home we were greeted by lush green grass, and all kicked their shoes off for the night. Brian had a fire going for us to sit around, and there stood Don and Tina’s house - a handmade Alaskan log cabin, complete with a front porch. Don greeted us all provided us with a tour of their cabin, explaining that he had no prior experience in large-scale construction and had simply read a few books. The logs had all been placed using homemade pulleys, and they never had a contractor on-site. They spent their winters in Antarctica, and with the summer sun are able to use only solar panels to provide the electricity they need. Next to the house were a garden, greenhouse and hot tub. The hot tub had been built by a hopper (barrel-maker) and was wood-heated. Tina arrived home from MICA and dinner was ready. Sitting in the grass we enjoyed fresh salad, barbecue chicken, grilled salmon, and garlic bread. Following dinner all enjoyed a relaxing soak in the hot tub. Down a short path from their cabin a number of large tents had been setup for each of us to spend the night. As is tradition, I signed the outhouse with a personal message, noting what a great time I was having.

Friday, June 22

Fresh coffee again greeted us as we woke up, along with orange juice. While packing up our bacon egg breakfast casserole baked in the oven. We loaded up as dropped off Mandy at MICA, as she was assisting with another group's glacier adventure that day. Brian drove us down the road to park at the base of Lion's Head. The hike up was a little steeper than then previous day's hike, but starting at a higher elevation; we reached the summit of ~2,800 feet in about an hour. From the top we saw panoramic view of the Matanuska River we would go rafting down and the Matanuska Glacier we would climb the next day.



Atop Lion's Head, overlooking Matanuska Glacier and River

Brian provided us with some commentary about the glacier and formation of the valley below, and after some parting pictures we began our descent. We next stopped at Glacier View Adventures where we would be camping for the night and got our first glimpse of the new 1,500 foot zipline that we would be experiencing later in the evening. We setup camp on the shores of the Matanuska River, which was the color of chocolate milk due to all the silt it collects, and due to the high amount of snow during the previous winter the rapids were running at a 10-year high. After have some deli sandwiches for lunch we set off for our whitewater adventure.

After stopping at the rafting center we joined a larger group for a bus ride up to the start of our trip. Due to the size of our group, Brian and I joined boat with some other individuals and the rest of our group occupied a boat. Due to the cold water we all wore dry suits, in addition to the standard life jackets and helmets. We launched just upstream from Lion's Head in Caribou Creek. The first 20 minutes of the trip were fairly gentle allowing us learn to work as team. Being a former river guide, Brian was truly in his element. Meeting the main river, we passed Lion's Head and learned what lie in store the next 25 minutes would be the most intense whitewater rafting I had done. The large snow melts for the year, known locally as "The Melt", lead to high water levels and swift currents, raising this section of the river in difficulty from a series of Class III-IV rapids to a solid series of Class IV rapids. Rapids above Class V are not rated or commercially run. On other trips I had taken, following a high-class rapid there was a section of calm water to collect your thoughts; this however was a continuous assault of waves splashing, sudden bumps, and holes sucking the boat in a direction you didn't want to go. The remainder of the trip threw some Class III rapids, and a slow stretch of river, of which I took the opportunity to jump out of the boat into the river.

Back at camp, we walked over to the zipline, which had opened just a week ago, and was Don's birthday present to himself. After climbing up the three-story spiral staircase, the top platform offered spectacular views of the glacier and river, as well as the end of the zipline, 1500 feet away. After a check of the safety harness I was off, tucked in a cannonball position for maximum speed. That position swung me around going down backwards and I watched the starting platform get smaller and smaller. After walking back to camp several of us helped chopped vegetables to help Mandy prepare the stir-fry we were having for dinner. During our trip to the grocery store some of us split the cost of a case of local beer – Alaskan

Amber. Don and Tina had a cooler full of beer the previous night, and drinking some of theirs, we had restocked their cooler with some of our supply. We had all saved one for the final night; however it had been sitting in the van for the last few days and the prospect of warm beer was not appealing. Using some extra rope from around camp I tied a few knots around the neck of my beer. Using some rocks of the edge of the river I made a little dam and pool along the river's edge and placed my beer in the glacier-fed river, tying the other end to a heavy rock. A half-hour later, the beer was cold and dinner was ready.



Preparing to zip 1,500 feet

Saturday, June 23, 2012

Breakfast this morning was raspberry and cream cheese stuffed French toast. After cleaning up camp one final time we headed down the road to MICA for our Matanuska glacier experience. After getting fitted for the proper gear – helmets, safety harnesses, and boots that accommodate crampons (spikes) we were off to the glacier. Arriving at the face of blue-white glacier we were given instructions to stay on the marked trail and steel tresses that had been set, due to the quicksand-like mud that encompassed our approach. The mud is used locally as a sunscreen, and also reportedly is a skin moisturizer that has anti-wrinkle properties and used by some makeup companies. Admittedly, we were just being tourists putting on “war paint” as we set off to tackle the glacier.



A memorable view of Matanuska Glacier

Just short of the glacier we placed out crampons on our boots and learned how to walk all over again, with special techniques for walking uphill, downhill, and on flat surfaces. The crampons scraped along the rocks like nails on a chalkboard until we finally reached the glacier. After a quick we reached the first wall that we would climb up. While our guides were setting the safety ropes, we took the opportunity to fill our canteens the purest, coldest water I ever had, flowing from a glacier waterfall. After a tutorial of how to climb with our ice tools (axes) and crampons we were off.

Despite my fear of heights, I volunteered to go first. While I seemed comfortable at first, something in my brain kicked in around 20 feet high telling me that I could not climb any higher. A few more kicks upward and despite having confidence in the safety gear, I was done. I repelled down the wall, waiting for another opportunity.

Following lunch on the glacier and another round of icy cold water, I tried the higher wall, with about the same results. This wall was steeper than the first, but I still convinced myself to take a good look around from my stopping point, knowing I would never have another view like this. Following everyone else's turn, we continued hiking through the glacier stopping at a third, higher and even steeper wall, which required you to repel down first, and then climb out. I decided it was best to not even attempt this one and instead became the de facto photographer for others attempting this feat.

After dropping off our gear, we headed to Anchorage, with C. J. again playing the part of iPod DJ. As we arrived we dropped everyone off at their respective hotels and said our goodbyes. I headed to Anchorage airport to await my red-eye flight back to Florida. After checking-in and sitting at gate the exhaustion finally hit me and for the first time the entire trip I felt sleepy. After eating dinner around 10:30 p.m. the next few hours crept by, until my 1:10 a.m. flight was ready to board. The entire time my name was number one on the upgrade list, but it was not meant to be.



Climbing the the high wall

Sunday, June 24, 2012

After boarding the plane, I finally allowed myself to fall asleep and remember very little of the four hour flight to Seattle. After landing, I tried to find my next gate, as I only had a one-hour layover, of course my flight was the only one with a gate assignment and I had to make an educated guess where the other Delta flights departed from.

After arriving at my concourse and finding my gate, I walked over to the only restaurant that was open and in a half-awake state order a breakfast sandwich and a Coke. Just as I sat at a nearby table and began to unwrap the tasty goodness that awaited me I noticed someone walking up to me. He looked familiar, but not being sure what time or even day it was, I didn't give it to much thought. Then I heard, "Kurt?" Shocked I looked up and there stood an old friend from church in Tallahassee, Mike. He and his family were moving to Japan – right then!! They had flown into Seattle a week earlier to break up the trip, but their plane to Japan was boarding about an hour after mine for Atlanta. I can't imagine how I looked to them – wearing clothes that, while clean, had been sitting in the bottom of a duffel bag for the last 15 days; unshowered; and with an 8-day beard. We walked over to his gate where we were greeted by his two kids and wife – who was even more shocked that I was.

I snapped a quick picture of their youngest kid Amelia and texted it to several of our friends, asking "Guess who?" Another passenger was kind enough to then get a picture of the five of us together to send as a follow-up. I later learned that my great friend Henry was making announcements at church that morning. He decided to put the picture on-screen for the entire congregation to see. Three seconds later the power went out!!! Saying goodbye I got on my plane and headed for Atlanta.



[A welcome surprise at Seattle Airport](#)

Arriving at my gate at Atlanta, I learned that Tropical Storm Debby had formed in the Gulf of Mexico and was dumping rain and causing power outages throughout the Gulf of Mexico, including Tallahassee. I was ready to get home and since I was able to sleep on the previous leg, I debated renting a car if the plane didn't take off for my final leg home. Waiting at the gate, I ran into my co-worker T. J. who was returning from a weekend trip. Fortunately, our plane was not delayed, and after circling the Tallahassee airport a few times we landed. I didn't sleep the next few nights. I think some of that was my body adjusting to little sleep from the constant sunlight, some of may have been travel related/jet lag, but I know for sure some it was because I was reliving every moment of this memorable trip.



Left: Mandy rescues a starfish at Decision Point

Below: From left to right – Michael, Brittany, Helen, Robert, and C. J. relaxing in front of Don and Tina's cabin



Above: Brian stands ready to assist and ice climber on Matansuka Glacier

Right: Me, enjoying and Alaskan Amber in the hot tub after climbing Lazy Mountain

