



National Park Service News Release

Release Date: March 5, 2014

Contacts: Tom Vandenberg, tom.vandenberg@nps.gov 907-697-2619

The Whale is Up! Killer Whale Skeleton Completed and on Display

GUSTAVUS, AK –After nine years of anticipation, Glacier Bay’s killer whale calf has finally found a permanent home in the Gustavus Community Library. Found dead in Glacier Bay in August 2005, the entire skeleton was collected for future educational display. After nine years, the dreams of many were finally realized when the skeleton was hoisted to the ceiling on February 14, 2014.



Lee Post makes final adjustments to the skeleton display.

The park was fortunate to host well-known articulation specialist, Lee Post, from Homer, Alaska, who has articulated over two dozen skeletons. He spent most of his time in the Gustavus School woodshop, welcoming students, community members and volunteers to participate in all aspects of the project. Lee estimates this to be only one of eight complete killer whale skeletons on public display in the United States. While working on the skeleton, he frequently acknowledged the pristine condition of every bone - a testament to the careful cleaning and handling by park staff and community volunteers.

After two weeks of hard work, the 12 ft., 75 pound skeleton was carried by hand from the woodshop to the library and welcomed by a fanfare of song and dance.

The park hosted an Open House on February 25th to celebrate the culmination of this nine-year project. The Glacier Bay interpretive division facilitated an evening of orca-themed events and presentations, and welcomed honored guests from the Hoonah Indian Association to perform a Tlingit blessing of the whale. A special name *Keet'k'* meaning "little killer whale" was given to commemorate the return of her Spirit.

This beautiful display would not be possible without the support and hard work of many. Partners include Alaska Geographic, Gustavus School, the Gustavus Community Library, and over 60 Gustavus community volunteers and friends. We're very proud of our rare killer whale calf. It seems very fitting that *Keet'k'* found her home in our local library, surrounded by a myriad of books that tell stories. She will tell her own special story for future generations, connecting community and visitors to the magic of Glacier Bay for years to come.

To see this rare and unique specimen, be sure to stop by the Gustavus Public Library. You can view the whale six days a week, Monday through Saturday. Please call 697-2350 for daily hours of operation.

To learn more about Glacier Bay's killer whale articulation project, please visit:
<http://www.nps.gov/glba/naturescience/killer-whale-articulation-project.htm>

www.nps.gov

About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 401 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.