

## ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

### PHOTO CONTEST SEEKS PICS OF ACTIVE PEOPLE, TRANSPORTATION

Alaska Trails is teaming up with the Safe Routes to School National Partnership on a photo contest highlighting physical activity, walking and biking to school, and active transportation in winter months. We'll post your best shots of:

- walking/biking to school in cold weather or darkness
- people riding bikes on snowy streets and trails
- active commuting (walking or biking) in snow/cold/inclement weather
- infrastructure that supports winter physical activity (i.e. a bike lane that is plowed)
- challenges of physical activity in snow/bad weather



E-mail your photos to: [office@alaska-trails.org](mailto:office@alaska-trails.org) with Photo Contest in the subject line. Please include a caption and contact information. You will be asked to sign a release for the photos you submit.

Alaska Trails and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership will retain rights to the photos and use them in order to promote active transportation. This will include, but is not limited to, use in the Alaska Trails and SRTS NP Facebook page, websites, and newsletters.

**Prizes will be awarded to the top five photos.**

### PACKED HOUSE FOR FIRST EVER TRAIL TALES FUNDRAISER!



Alaska Trails and the Chugach Park Fund were astounded by the turnout for the first ever Trail Tales storytelling event on December 1.

It was standing room only, with more than 200 in the audience at the 49<sup>th</sup> State Brewery in Anchorage. It is clear that Alaskans love both trails and storytelling. We are already planning the next Trail Tales – likely in March. Stay tuned for details.

The storytellers shared tales of trips ranging from Chugach State Park to Resurrection Pass, getting lost on the Lost Lake Trail and the

establishment of the Chester Creek trail in Anchorage. There were lots of laughs and warm memories as the storytellers shared their trail experiences and the emotions that went with them.

Please contact Alaska Trails if you are interested in hosting a Trail Tales event in your area.

(Photo: Storytellers from the very first Trail Tales: Standing (from left to right): Steve Cleary (host), Lanie Fleischer, Harlow Robinson, Matias Saari, Becca Patterson, Jen Aist, Reth Druir and Betsi Oliver. Kneeling: Amanda Roberts (host) and Blaine Smith.)

## CLEARY, FENTON TALK ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ON RADIO SHOW

Steve Cleary, our executive director, was on the Talk of Alaska radio show in December with Mark Fenton, the engineer who ran the Alaska Trails Active Transportation summit in October. Steve and Mark talked about Active Transportation and how trails, bike and pedestrian infrastructure can positively affect health and communities. You can listen to the show at: <http://tinyurl.com/hvpqvod>

## USE “PICK. CLICK. GIVE.” TO DONATE TO ALASKA TRAILS

Alaska Trails is included in the Permanent Fund Dividend’s “Pick. Click. Give” charitable contributions program. It’s a secure and easy way to make a donation. When you file for your PFD online, you will be given an opportunity to donate using money from your PFD. If you do, please remember Alaska Trails.

If you use “Pick. Click. Give” you will be able to check a box that authorizes the state to send your name, contact information and the amount you give when it sends contributions to an organization. We want to acknowledge and recognize your generous support, and this is the only way we will know it’s you making the gift.

For more information on “Pick. Click. Give” see: [www.pickclickgive.org](http://www.pickclickgive.org).

## ALASKA TRAILS NEEDS YOUR HELP TO PRESERVE, PROMOTE TRAILS

This newsletter is brought to you free by Alaska Trails. Our mission is to enhance the Alaska trail experience by supporting sustainable, world-renowned trails through advocacy and education. We couldn’t do this without support from our members. Please join or renew your membership here: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/join.html>

All year long we strive to:

- Promote the health, social and economic benefits of trails by educating users through forums, conferences, information materials, training and other activities.
- Preserve and improve public trail access by assisting public and private organizations in forming coordinated programs, policies, and standards.
- Promote sustainable trail systems for all users by developing and providing technical assistance for trail projects.

## ALASKA TRAILS LINKS

- 2016 Alaska Trail Stewards accomplishments: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/alaska-trails-stewards.html>
- Alaska Trails Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Alaska-Trails-707066126002590/>

## STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### FIRST DAY OUTINGS SCHEDULED IN HOMER, SITKA, DELTA JUNCTION

Alaska State Parks encourages Alaskans to celebrate the New Year by enjoying the great outdoors in their local state parks. Local volunteer groups will host three hike/ski excursions in Delta Junction, Sitka, and Homer on New Year's Day. These free, guided events are part of the national First Day Hikes initiative sponsored by state park systems throughout the United States. See more in the Southcentral, Interior, and Southeast regional news sections and at: <http://www.naspd.org/>

### STATE TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD TO MEET IN JANUARY

The Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board will meet Jan. 11-12 in Anchorage to consider grant applications. The public is welcome to attend the meeting, which will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on both days in Room 106 of the Atwood Building, located at 550 West 7th Ave in Anchorage.



During the meeting, the ORTAB will evaluate grant proposals for the Recreational Trails Program. The board will provide recommendations to the Director of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, who will make decisions on funding for those applications.

To join the meeting via free teleconference, please dial [\(866\) 918- 8374](tel:8669188374), conference code 5569714090. Contact Darcy Harris at [\(907\) 269-8699](tel:9072698699) or [darcy.harris@alaska.gov](mailto:darcy.harris@alaska.gov) for more information. For special accommodations, auxiliary aid or services, and/or an alternative communication format to participate in this meeting, please contact Darcy at least three weekdays in advance of the meeting to make the necessary arrangements.

For more information on the Recreational Trails Program, go to <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>.

### PERMITTING PRESENTATIONS OFFERED BY RIGHT-OF-WAY GROUP

To exist legally, trails need to have the proper legal protections. Those protections often require dealing with the various government and quasi-government agencies. A seminar was held in Fairbanks earlier this month on the permitting processes for most of those agencies. The seminar was sponsored by local chapter 71 of the International Right-of-Way Association.

For those who were not able to attend the seminar, the presentations have been posted on the IRWA chapter's website: [http://www.irwa71.org/IR\\_WA/2016\\_Seminar.html](http://www.irwa71.org/IR_WA/2016_Seminar.html)

The chapter also video recorded all the presentations. Although the quality is not professional, it should suffice for accessing information. The videos can be found on the IRWA Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/IRWACH71/>

The seminar was made possible with support from Street, Guinn Appraisals, DOWL, HDR, Golden Valley Electric Association, and the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

*(From [IRWA, Chapter 71](#))*

### KEEP TRAILS IN THE PUBLIC EYE DURING TOUGH BUDGET TIMES

The Alaska State Legislature will be meeting soon and the budget outlook is bleak. More cuts are being called for, as well as more revenues, such as taxes. Trail advocates need to speak loudly if trails are to be treated fairly. There are several ways trails could be affected.

- Staffing for the Recreational Trails Program could be cut, This would be a huge mistake as

\$200,000 in state funding brings in more than \$1 million from the federal government (a 7-to-1 return last year), but that \$200,000 has been considered for the budget axe before.

- Staffing for the Department of Natural Resources could be cut. Very few people in state government work solely on trails, but many deal with trails as part of their jobs. If positions are cut, other duties may take precedence over trails.
- Pullouts along roads that offer parking for access to trailheads could see less maintenance, including snowplowing, as the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities focuses on keeping high-traffic roads clear.
- Direct state grants for trail projects could dry up.
- General grants to local governments could be reduced or cut altogether. That will have a ripple effect on all local government operations, including any that deal with trails. So, what can trail advocates do? Let your voice be heard.
- Call or write your legislators. Our legislators will have many things vying for their attention this session. If they don't hear from trail advocates they may think that trails are not important to Alaskans. Contact information for senators and representatives can be found at: <http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/>
- Call or write the governor: <http://gov.alaska.gov/Walker/contact/office-locations.html>
- Write an editorial or letter to the editor for your local newspaper.
- Have your trail-related group pass a resolution, then send that to your legislators, the governor, and the local newspaper.

## STATEWIDE TRAILS AND PUBLIC LANDS RELATED NEWSLETTERS

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- Eagle Watch, State Parks (several recent issues have had trail-related stories): <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/eaglewatch/eaglewatcharchive>

## STATEWIDE LINKS

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- Alaska State Park passes for 2017 are now available; starting Jan 1 the family two-pass discount will no longer be available: <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/Passes.cfm>

### SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- When Alaska backcountry meals go horribly wrong: <http://tinyurl.com/zxzwps>
- Artist residency open in White Mountains: <http://tinyurl.com/hrm8pr9>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show: ANILCA (Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act): <http://tinyurl.com/gshrbme>
- Confluence (outdoor recreation industry) newsletter: <http://tinyurl.com/hurmpgu>
- Why Trump's pick for Interior wants land to stay federal: <http://tinyurl.com/z6o4973>
- Alaska-made food for outdoor adventures: <http://coast-magazine.com/frontier-food>
- Wave the flag (or your parka) when dealing with ornery moose: <http://tinyurl.com/j2zljdb>
- In icy Alaska, footwear options abound to say upright: <http://tinyurl.com/hpfu4ko>
- Old-school tools of maps and trail markers being refined to save North Slope lives: <http://tinyurl.com/jd7sj98>
- Get outside: Making New Year's resolutions for 2017: <http://tinyurl.com/hpo9grh>
- International crew takes on Brooks Range traverse: <http://tinyurl.com/h44owe8>

## SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

### FIRST DAY 'HIKE' TO BE HELD AT HOMER'S EVELINE REC AREA

The outing below is part of the national First Day Hikes initiative:

#### Eveline Outing

- What: 3-mile roundtrip hike, ski or snowshoe
- Date/ start time: Jan. 1, 12 p.m.
- Location: Meet at the Eveline State Recreation Area parking lot. Take East End Road for 13.8 miles past the McNeil Canyon School, take the left onto Alpine Meadow Drive and go .3 miles to the trailhead.
- Difficulty: Easy
- Minimum Age for Children: All ages welcome
- Restrictions: Please leave your dogs at home for this hike
- Things to bring: Skis/Snowshoes/warm hiking boots (depending on conditions)
- Cancellation Information: 907/235-7042

### MAT-SU TRAILS FOUNDATION SEEKING APPLICANTS FOR GRANTS

The Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation has announced the start of its spring grant cycle. Applications are due February 1.

The group has changed its granting process and no longer requires a Letter of Interest. Instead, the group will work directly with applicants on submitting a full application by each due date. People who haven't applied in the past should contact the group ahead of time to review the application and ensure it is complete at the time of submission.



The group has also added a new grant category of up to \$2,000 for field training/education. Organizations wishing to conduct on-site classes or field-course training for sustainable trail design and construction may apply. These grants are not intended as sponsorship for conferences. Applicants should contact MSTPF staff to ensure eligibility.

The foundation also now provides the opportunity for eligible organizations to apply for grants up to \$30,000 for eligible trails and parks projects and up to \$50,000 specifically for trails connector projects. For the higher grant categories, the group has new matching fund requirements:

- **\$10,000 or less:** Matching funds or in-kind donations are encouraged, but not required.
- **\$10,001 - \$30,000: Minimum Match of 2:1 is highly encouraged.** Cash or In-kind (i.e., \$2 grant dollars for every dollar of cash or in-kind match. In-kind grantee volunteer hours limited to \$26 per hour. Contractors willing to donate time not associated with the grantee may do so at the rate they would normally charge.)
- **\$30,001 - \$50,000: Minimum Match of 1:1 is required.** Cash and In-kind match accepted. In-kind match should not exceed 50% of total match. Same in-kind terms as above. Projects in this category will **only** be considered for trail connector projects.

For more information on the grant program, including guidelines, application forms and instructions, see the foundation website: <http://matsutrails.org>

## CITIZENS' BOARD STARTS FUND TO SUPPORT CHUGACH PARK

Parks and trails are often asked to stand at the back of the line when it comes to state funding. Money for trail maintenance and upgrades is particularly difficult to obtain when state revenues are falling.



Recognizing a need and opportunity in these difficult times, in 2016 the Chugach State Park Citizens' Advisory Board created the Chugach Park Fund, a Field of Interest fund under the aegis of the *Alaska Community Foundation*.

The Chugach Park Fund's goal is to build and maintain trails and trail-related amenities. The fund won't be used to pay state salaries or routine operating costs. Instead, the board will work with the Alaska Division of Parks to identify and design specific, high-priority trail projects using

professional services when necessary, but also coordinate with other organizations to foster a more active volunteer program.

One of the fund's immediate goals is to rebuild several sections of the South Rim Trail, a popular segment in the network of Hillside trails. Another identified goal is to adopt, where feasible and appropriate, the navigational and safety standards for signs being developed for trails in the municipal parks.

While the near-term focus is on specific, relatively small projects, ultimately, with community support, the board hopes to create an endowed fund to better serve long-term trail development and maintenance in the park. Chugach State Park trails need help from the people who love them the most. The Chugach Park Fund will provide the necessary funding to ensure our world-class park remains a world-class experience.

Interested in supporting the Chugach Park Fund with a tax-deductible contribution? Please visit <https://alaskacf.org/blog/funds/chugach-park-fund/> and share this with your friends and family who enjoy the park.

*(From Judy Caminer; Mike Downs photo of volunteers working on the Middle Fork Trail in Chugach State Park.)*

## MAT-SU BOROUGH TRAIL PASSES AVAILABLE FOR 2017

Now is the time to get ready for 2017 and pick up your new trailhead day-use pass from the Mat-Su Borough. For only \$40 you get to access 13 different trails throughout the borough. And your participation in the program helps support the trails you value as part of our community.

Did you know that you can put your check for \$40 in one of the trailhead fee site envelopes and borough will mail you a pass? Quick, easy and convenient!

And this year, the Mat Su Trails & Parks Foundation will also be selling those permits during normal office hours if you are visiting Government Peak Recreation Area and want to get your pass onsite. Only cash or checks made out to the Mat Su Borough will be accepted.

Remember to get your annual pass and support our trails!

*(From [Mat Su Trails & Parks Foundation Facebook](#) post)*

## MAT-SU TRAILS FOUNDATION SEEKING BOARD MEMBERS

The Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation is seeking new board members beginning in 2017. Take an opportunity to learn more about our work on our website ([www.matsutrails.org](http://www.matsutrails.org)) and download an application at: <http://tinyurl.com/htgo7rf>

(*Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation [Facebook page](#)*)

## SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Repairs planned for Albert Loop Trail damaged by flood several years ago: <http://tinyurl.com/h9kau2f>
- State, feds battle over ownership of land beneath Knik River in popular recreation area: <http://tinyurl.com/zc4a3xo>
- Recent crimes on Anchorage trails leave us leery yet curious: <http://tinyurl.com/hyveqyd>
- Portage's Trail of Blue Ice offers solitude, beauty during winter: <http://tinyurl.com/hukrbux>
- Kodiak Island Borough Agrees to Hold Conservation Easements to Termination Point and Long Island: <http://tinyurl.com/zowvj29>

## INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### FIRST DAY HIKE/SKI/SNOWSHOE TO BE HELD AT QUARTZ LAKE

Alaska State Parks and Delta Junction Trails Association encourages the public to join in on a First Day Hike in the Delta Junction area. The hike will be held January 1 at 12-3pm at Quartz Lake.

Participants will meet at the Gladfelder Trailhead. Park as you pull into Quartz Lake towards the boat ramp. The trail is on the left side of the lake where you will ski, hike or snowshoe 1/2 mile to the historic Gladfelder log cabin. Bring your own equipment, a snack, and dress for the occasion. A bonfire, ski trails and drinks will be provided. All ages are invited. Sociable pets welcome on a leash.

This event is inspired by a national "First Day Hike" initiative to connect people to the state parks in all 50 states

For more info call Alaska State Parks, Northern Region Parks Office at 907-451-2698

### FAIRBANKS BOROUGH TRAILS CHALLENGE RUNS THROUGH MARCH

How many trails can you explore this winter? Take the Fairbanks Trails Challenge!

Scattered around the Fairbanks North Star Borough Trails System are ten Fairbanks Trails Challenge signs. Challenge yourself, your friends and family to find as many as you can! This year's Winter Challenge will take place from December 2016 to March 2017 and is free for anyone who wants to participate. No registration required: just find, photograph and share! If you can prove you made it to all ten Winter Challenge Trails you will secure ultimate bragging rights and be eligible to win some great prizes.

For those who make it to ALL TEN TRAILS, an Awards Celebration will occur on March 16th, 2017 at the Tanana Lakes "Winter Try-Athlon" Race.

See the challenge "rules" here: <http://www.co.fairbanks.ak.us/pr/Pages/Trails-Program.aspx>

(*From FNSB Trails Office webpage*)

### DOG MUSHERS GROUP PRODUCES BROCHURE OF TRAILS, RACES

The Alaska Dog Mushers Association has created a brochure for this winter. It includes, trail map, race schedule, and trail etiquette. It is available to view and download on the website:

<http://sleddog.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/ADMA-FLYER02.pdf>

The group also installed kiosks this fall where trails at Creamer's Field meet the ADMA trails. The kiosks, which have trail maps and trail etiquette rules, were built and installed with the help of the Fairbanks North Star Borough Trails Office and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Read more here: <http://tinyurl.com/zfncpfr>

If you are not a musher, you may still use the ADMA trails. However, please know that the parking lot is the private property of the ADMA, a nonprofit organization, and that the trails are groomed solely by the ADMA. The group relies heavily on donations, so please give if you use the trails. The trail fee for skijorers, mushers, bikers and other users is \$5 per day to be deposited in the lock box at the ADMA Mushing Hall. You can also purchase a yearly membership online for only \$50. And please feel free to donate more if you use the trails a lot.



- To purchase a membership: <http://sleddog.org/membership-trail-pass>
- To donate: <http://sleddog.org/donate>

If you are planning to use the parking lot for an event please contact the ADMA (contact information on the group's website: [www.sleddog.org](http://www.sleddog.org))

*(Photo: ADMA trail map at intersection with Creamer's Field trails.)*

## POLL SHOWS DESIRE FOR SKARLAND WALKING AND SKIING TRACKS

Stan Justice, a volunteer groomer for the Pearl Creek Park and Skarland trails, held a poll in early December on how the trails should be groomed. The poll was held on the Facebook group Skarland and Pearl Creek Park Users. Justice sent out the following email on December 14.

*A long simmering issue for the Skarland 12 Mile Trail is the polite request that people not damage the set tracks by walking, running, or biking once tracks have been set. In the Magoffin Subdivision I have been setting a separate track for walking along with the ski tracks and it has worked well. I am pondering trying to do this on other sections of the 12 mile trail thus this poll.*

*Groom a walking lane and classic ski tracks 46 votes (88.5%)*

*Stop all machine grooming 5 votes (9.6%)*

*Just groom classic tracks as in past years 1 vote (2%)*

*The Facebook group has 208 members.*



*The trail has been set with a separate walking lane from the powerline above Pearl Creek School to the Musk Ox Farm. It worked better in some places than others. I put the tracks on the high side which results in them being on the steeper sidehill. Having skied the trail, there were no*

*places where the ski tracks were too close to trees. (Having the tracks on the low side would put it up against the trees since the trail has migrated downslope up against the trees.) And even in the narrow spots there was room for careful walkers to use the trail.*

*Thank you to everyone that took the time to vote.*

*(Photo illustration of potential multi-use trail grooming courtesy of Stan Justice.)*

## **COMMENTS DUE ON EXTENSION OF TANGLE LAKES HIKING TRAIL**

Comments are due January 7 for a proposal to extend a non-motorized hiking route near the Tangle Lakes Campground. (Note that the plan would extend the route and “cross the river.” The announcement did not say how the river would be crossed.)

The BLM Glennallen Field Office proposes cutting brush, marking, and applying minimal construction techniques to the Tangle Ridge Trail beginning in the campground. The proposal includes a plan to extend the route northward within the Delta National Wild and Scenic River corridor toward the Delta River falls portage. The route would cross the river before continuing back in a southerly direction towards the Denali Highway. Tread construction would occur on some ascending and descending portions of the route.

Work would begin in June of 2017 and will be performed by Bureau of Land Management employees with the assistance of a Youth Conservation Corps crew. The project is expected to take up to five years to complete. Comments and concerns will be considered in the development of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for this proposal. Submit electronic comments to BLM’s NEPA register at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office>. Using an “Advanced Search,” enter NEPA number DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2017-0003-EA.

*(From What’s Up? by Peg Tileston)*

## **RECREATION SEAT OPEN ON TANANA STATE FOREST COMMITTEE**

The Tanana Valley State Forest Advisory Committee is seeking applicants for five seats, one of which is to represent recreation. The deadline to apply is January 4.

This 12-person committee advises the division on plans and proposals for managing the 1.8 million acre Tanana Valley State Forest and other forested lands managed by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources in the Tanana Valley. The committee is also a forum for gathering public opinion on management of state forests and helps build a regional consensus about forestry. These are unpaid, volunteer positions. Meetings are held about four times each year. More information about the committee may be found at [http://www.forestry.alaska.gov/tvsf\\_committee.htm](http://www.forestry.alaska.gov/tvsf_committee.htm).

The Recreation seat represents the non-commercial users who visit the forest and take advantage of both consumptive and non-consumptive benefits for pleasure and enrichment of life.

If you are interested in serving on the committee, send a letter explaining your interests and your qualifications to: Jim Schwarber, by fax to [\(907\) 451-2690](tel:9074512690); or email [james.schwarber@alaska.gov](mailto:james.schwarber@alaska.gov). For more information, call a Division of Forestry Office at Fairbanks (907) 451-2704 or Tok [\(907\) 883-5134](tel:9078835134).

*(From What’s Up? by Peg Tileston)*

## **INTERIORWIDE LINKS**

- Explore Winter Trails in Fairbanks (talk): <http://tinyurl.com/hy9y3nh>
- Application for Cross Country Travel from Nenana to Dune Lake: <http://notice.alaska.gov/184027>
- Goldstream land conservation project grows: <http://tinyurl.com/hxp2nkg>

## SOUTHEAST NEWS AND NOTICES

### FIRST DAY HIKE TO BE HELD ON SITKA'S MOSQUITO COVE TRAIL

The outing below is part of the national First Day Hikes initiative:

#### Mosquito Cove Trail

- What: 1.5- to 3-mile loop hike
- Date/start time: Jan. 1, 9 a.m.
- Location: Meet at the Mosquito Cove Trailhead parking lot. Drive north out the road past the ferry terminal, five miles from town, stop at the sign indicating the end of the road. Just before that sign, take a left into the Bay Side Campground, take an immediate right and go halfway around the loop and on the right the first parking space with a trailhead sign is the beginning of the Mosquito Cove Loop Trail.
- Difficulty: Moderate
- Minimum Age for Children: All are welcome
- Restrictions: None
- Things to bring: Weather appropriate gear, water
- Cancellation Information: 907/747-4821

#### SOUTHEAST LINK

- Haines to Juneau Traverse (Luc Mehl): <https://thingstolucat.com/haines-to-juneau-traverse/>

## NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF AMERICAN TRAILS ANNOUNCED



The board of American Trails is pleased to announce that, after a long and careful search, we have chosen Mike Passo as our new Executive Director.

Mike is eminently qualified for this position and we are excited for him to begin in this new and challenging role. He is eager to follow in Pam Gluck's footsteps, and continue American Trails' strong working relationships with all of our members, partner agencies, and organizations.

Mike comes from an extensive background in trails and is very familiar with American Trails from his recent years as a board member. He has conducted trainings and webinars on trail accessibility over the last 20 years. Many of you are familiar with Mike from his 10 years of working with the Professional TrailBuilders Association as their conference coordinator, workshop organizer, and executive

director.

Read more: <http://www.americantrails.org/NewsAction/Mike-Passo-AT-Director-2016.html>

*(From American Trails website story)*

## **FOREST TRAILS STEWARDSHIP BILL BECOMES LAW**

On November 28 President Obama signed the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act (NFSTSA), a bill for which American Hiking Society and partner organizations American Horse Council, Back Country Horsemen of America, and the Wilderness Society, all advocated.

This new law will help the Forest Service address the significant backlog of trail maintenance on Forest Service lands through a variety of stewardship measures. Chief among those measures, the law directs the U.S. Forest Service to develop a strategy that would increase the role of partners and volunteers in trail maintenance. Such a strategy would build on the already successful volunteer efforts that are on-going in National Forests and would likely increase Americans' connection to these spectacular natural resources. While the Forest Service does currently use volunteers to help maintain their trails, such a program as envisioned in the law would involve a more strategic and methodical approach to increasing and enhancing this valued resource.

Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/z792lew>

(From American Hiking Society [website](#))

## **SENATE PASSES RECREATION ECONOMY BILL**

The U.S. Senate passed the *Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act of 2016* in late November. This bill was passed by the House of Representatives in mid-November. This legislation, once signed by the President, would have the Bureau of Economic Analysis thoroughly assess the economic impact of outdoor recreation on the national economy.

A variety of groups have supported such action in the hopes that improved data would further make the case that public lands and trails are more than just fun – they're good business. With so many competing priorities for tight funding from various sources, sometimes it is too easy for decision makers to think of trails and public lands as non-essential when in fact trails not only keep health costs in check by promoting physical activity but are truly economic engines for the U.S. economy.

Read more: <https://americanhiking.org/advocacy/house-passes-recreation-economy-bill/>

(From American Trails [website story](#))

## **RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM TURNS 25 YEARS OLD**

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP), a landmark achievement of federal transportation legislation, is turning 25. And there is much to celebrate. The RTP has funded 22,000 trail projects all across the country, benefiting millions of diverse trail users – hikers and bikers, equestrians and snowmobilers, OHVs and paddlers, cross-country skiers, four-wheel drivers and more. States continue to add miles of trails as well as needed maintenance and improvements through grants to local project sponsors each year.

The RTP is funded by the federal gas taxes paid by off-highway recreational users and currently receives \$84 million of the more than \$270 million in federal gas taxes those recreationists pay each year. This very successful program also leverages hundreds of millions of dollars of additional support from other sources, promotes cooperation among all kinds of trail users, encourages economic activity in countless communities and provides essential opportunities for healthy, active outdoor fun. The RTP is a wonderful success story. And it can do much, much more in the next 25 years – especially if it receives its fair share of federal gas taxes!

For more information on the Recreational Trails Program, visit [funoutdoors.com/RTPInfographic](http://funoutdoors.com/RTPInfographic), [funoutdoors.com/crt](http://funoutdoors.com/crt) and [americantrails.org/rtp/rtp-25-years-2016](http://americantrails.org/rtp/rtp-25-years-2016).

(From *Outdoor Recreation in America* [webpage](#))

## NATIONWIDE / INTERNATIONAL LINKS

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### WEBINARS, MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, TRAINING, ETC.

- For a listing of upcoming trail webinars workshops, conferences, and other meetings, see the American Trails calendar at: [www.americantrails.org/Calendar.html](http://www.americantrails.org/Calendar.html)

### GRANTS

- Polaris T.R.A.I.L.S. grants (ATV trail projects; due March 1, Sept 1): <http://tinyurl.com/zcz8u7a>
- Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund ( applications due Jan 31): <http://tinyurl.com/gl6mvgb>
- National Forest Foundation Matching Awards Program (deadline Jan 17): <http://tinyurl.com/px7y6ke>

### TRAIL GUIDES

- 10 Best Hikes in Nevada: <https://americanhiking.org/rootsrated/10-best-hikes-in-nevada/>
- Family Trails: Creative Hikes for Kids: <http://tinyurl.com/zcc8kzf>

### STUDIES

- The New Science of the Creative Brain on Nature: <http://tinyurl.com/j7yk8zu>

### TRAIL-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- American Trails (Dec): <http://tinyurl.com/j2ly4f9>
  - *Recreational Trails Program celebrates 25 years of funding*
  - *Travel Oregon mulls need for statewide trails advocacy*
  - *Trail tourism: making trail memories that last*
  - *New Zealand Cycle Trail generates \$37 million from tourism*
  - *and more...*

### OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- Best of the Midwest: Five Major Trail Developments in America's Heartland: <http://tinyurl.com/jlunmc8>
- Photos: Advocates Imagine A 27-Mile Riverfront Bike Trail For Chicago: <http://tinyurl.com/jsy3x7d>
- Rescue locaters installed on Bainbridge Island trails: <http://tinyurl.com/z5rc92u>
- Disabled woman says Forest Service discriminates by barring e-bikes on trails: <http://tinyurl.com/hbyu39x>
- New Forest Service Citizens' Guide Invites The Public To Engage In Forest Planning: <http://tinyurl.com/j263k5g>
- Emergency Location Markers in Action: Lake County, Minnesota: <http://tinyurl.com/jan6mbc>
- A Crown Jewel of Bikeways: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/16novdec/05.cfm>
- National Trails Day set for Saturday, June 3, 2017: <http://nationaltrailsday.americanhiking.org>
- Conservation Volunteers International volunteering trips: <https://conservationvip.org/destinations/>
- Depressed area being revived by ATV trails: <http://tinyurl.com/z3lpyfk>
- North Country Trails Act could create interstate trails system: <http://tinyurl.com/j8qaohv>
- Registration open for the 2017 International Trails Symposium in May: <http://tinyurl.com/jgvs87q>
- Trail of the Week: Seattle's Burke-Gilman Trail: <http://tinyurl.com/jrqgr2z>
- ATV "Learner Loops" Help New Riders Develop Trail-Riding Skills: <http://tinyurl.com/jznmsn2>

## SLIGHTLY OFF TRAIL

- Fattest fattie (polar exploration fatbike): <https://craigmedred.news/2016/12/06/fattest-fattie/>
- There's An App For That: <http://tinyurl.com/ht8uol6>
- What Are The Differences Between National Parks And National Forests?: <http://tinyurl.com/h3bfshc>
- Bear spray manufacturers dispute changes to recommendations: <http://tinyurl.com/jjaojeu>
- 7 Reasons To Get Outside NOW: <http://tinyurl.com/j5ph92e>

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The Alaska Trails board meets via teleconference on the first Tuesday of each month from noon to 1:00 pm. If you want to hear more about Alaska trail topics, share trail information, or propose a trail project, join us for an hour. Members and the public are welcome. Call for more information and meeting details [907-334-8049](tel:907-334-8049).

A copy of this newsletter will also be posted to our web site. Newsletters come out at the beginning of each month. Deadline for articles is five days before the first of the month. Send stories to Editor Eric Troyer at [eric.troyer@alaska-trails.org](mailto:eric.troyer@alaska-trails.org)