

ALASKA  
TRAILS

# NEWSLETTER

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[www.alaska-trails.org](http://www.alaska-trails.org)

## ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

### IDEAS BEING SOUGHT FOR STATEWIDE TRAILS CONFERENCE

We're excited about the 2017 Alaska Trails Statewide Trails Conference and wanted to get you the dates and ask for your input on topics / areas on which you would like to present and speakers you would like to hear from at the conference. The conference will take place at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage from April 20-22, 2017. Last years' agenda can be viewed at: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/trails-conference.html>

In addition to the presentations, the conference will also include:

- Door Prizes – All those who register for the conference and Alaska Trails membership will be eligible for a variety of door prizes from businesses across the state.
- Poster Sessions – bring a display to share with attendees on Thursday afternoon and Saturday morning.
- Vendor tables – A limited number of vendor tables are available – right next to the lunch buffet.

Please let us know your input and availability as soon as you can, including if you are interested in presenting a poster or having a vendor table. Email us at: [office@alaska-trails.org](mailto:office@alaska-trails.org).

Mike Shields will be holding a pre-conference session on *Trail Design and Layout* on April 18 and 19, from 9am to 5pm each day. This two-day class (one day classroom, one day field exercises) covers the basics of sustainable trail design, routing and layout. Cost is \$300 per person. For more information click the "Pre-Conference Session with Mike Shields" at: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/trails-conference.html>

### POPULAR TRAIL TALES TO HOLD SECOND EVENT IN MARCH

Back by popular demand, the Chugach Park Fund and Alaska Trails are excited to present second *Trail Tales* storytelling series. This event will be held Thursday, March 16, at the [49th State Brewing Co](http://www.alaska-trails.org) in Anchorage (717 West 3rd Ave; 907/277 7727). Doors open at 6:30. Stories start at 7:00 pm. Tickets are \$15 and are available at: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/trailtales.html>



In the spirit of Arctic Entries, storytellers will share seven-minute stories about their trail experiences, adventures and life in general. Come enjoy this fun event and support great trails in the Chugach and across Alaska. Food and drinks will be available for purchase throughout the evening.

## PRIZES ANNOUNCED FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PHOTO CONTEST

Several prizes will be awarded to the top five photos of the Active Transportation photo contest. Prizes include:

- Cycliq Rear Red Light with Built in HD Camera (Value \$169)
- Bontrager Bike Helmet (From Trek Bike Store - \$139)
- Trek bike jerseys
- Alaska Range: Exploring the Last Great Wild – Photo book by Carl Battreal



The Active Transportation photo contest is a joint venture of Alaska Trails and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership. The contest highlights 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. The deadline is January 31. 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.

## 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 LINK

- Alaska Trails Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Alaska-Trails-707066126002590/>

## STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### SNOWMOBILE TRAILS PROGRAM BACK IN GOVERNOR'S BUDGET

Gov. Bill Walker has included the Snowmobile Trails Program in his proposed Department of Natural Resources budget for the next fiscal year.

The program, which provides grant funds for trail projects related to snowmachine use, was cut by the governor last year. It was one of many programs cut or reduced due to the state budget woes. And while the program is aimed at snowmachiners, the projects it funds benefit a wide variety of winter trail users. For example, the program pays for snowmachine trail grooming, which benefits all winter trail users.

Now that the program is back in the budget, the state is advertising for people to sit on the Snowmobile Trails Advisory Council (SnowTRAC), a panel that recommends how the grant funds be spent. The deadline for applying for one of the four vacancies on the panel is February 20. See the SnowTRAC notice here: <http://tinyurl.com/jmk2dpz>.

Being included in the governor's proposed budget does not guarantee that the Snowmobile Trails Program will survive this year's legislative session. Sen. Pete Kelly, president of the Alaska Senate, has vowed to cut \$750 million from the Alaska state budget this session.

Walker vetoed the Snowmobile Trails Program after the legislative session last year in which the legislature did not come up with a fiscal plan to deal with the state's huge deficit. However, advocates for the program, including Dan Mayfield, a Mat-Su Borough assemblyman who sat on SnowTRAC, lobbied the governor to reinstate the program. Several legislators from the Mat-Su region supported Mayfield's efforts. In an email on July 28, 2016, Mayfield wrote:

*The Governor has indicated that he has something in the works that will restore funds but that it may have a different structure. Several Legislators have also told me that the money will be restored. Unfortunately, even after asking for specifics, I have not heard of any solid plans as yet. Time will tell if their commitment has substance.*

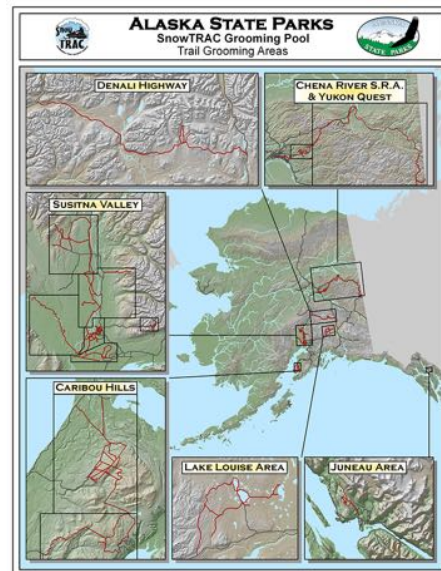
The program is paid for mostly by fees from snowmobile registrations. The registration fees, handled by the Department of Administration, Division of Motor Vehicles, were not cut.

### BILL WOULD BAN TRAPS, SNARES NEAR PUBLIC TRAILS

A bill has been pre-filed in the Alaska State House that would ban snares and traps within 200 feet of public trails, among other places. The bill was filed by Anchorage Rep. Andy Josephson. It states that:

*"A person may not set a trap or snare for animals within 200 feet of a*  
*(1) campsite, recreational beach, roadside rest, scenic site, or other public facility or area established under AS 41.21; or*  
*(2) public trail.*

The bill later states that:



*(e) In this section, "public trail" means a trail or footpath designated under AS 41.21.850 - 41.21.872 or other trail, footpath, or way that is open to public use as a matter of right.*

This bill has not yet received much press, though that will most likely change. It is already being criticized on online trapping forums. People supporting the bill have also started organizing.

- To read the full text of the bill see: <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/PDF/30/Bills/HB0040A.PDF>
- To read AS 41.21.850 - 41.21.872 see: <http://tinyurl.com/h8lhv6j>

## **BUY A PASS TO SUPPORT ALASKA STATE PARKS**

Please consider buying an annual park pass to support our Alaska State Parks. It's a way to support state parks during a time of tight state budgets. Permits are \$50 and, of course, your parking is then paid for when you park at a state parks trailhead that requires a fee. Passes are good for the calendar year:

<https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/Passes.cfm>

## **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.
- 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**

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

## STATEWIDE LINKS

- The U.S. will now measure the economic impact of outdoor recreation. What's that mean for Alaska?: <http://tinyurl.com/h82do43>
- Notice of Feb. 8 Public Open House for Parks Highway MP 231 Enhancements Project (project will include trail connections): <http://notice.alaska.gov/184280>

## SOUTHEAST LINKS

- Travelers see higher fees for southeast Alaska cabins: <http://tinyurl.com/zr89w7z>
- Sitka Trail Works has a new website: <http://sitkatrailworks.org>

## SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- Winter fun for the whole family: 5 ways to stay active in the cold: <http://tinyurl.com/zsj64az>
- Outdoor Explorer radio show:
  - Sailing the Northwest Passage: <http://tinyurl.com/zughvg7>
  - Avalanche equipment and rescue: <http://tinyurl.com/h83qepq>

## SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

### APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR ANCHORAGE YOUTH PARK JOBS



The Anchorage Park Foundation is partnering with the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department for another summer of the Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) program. This is a great opportunity for the young persons you work with or know, and those talented people you know who work with youth. For 10 weeks, teens work outside to construct and rehab soft surface trails, restore stream banks habitats, and beautify parks. They make close friends, meaningful connections between their work and their program education, and become leaders. Currently applications are being accepted for:

- YEP Crew Members – teens ages 16-19 Apply by: Sunday, March 19th
- YEP Senior Crew Members – returning teens Apply by: Sunday, March 19th
- YEP Project Crew Leaders Apply by: Monday, February 20th
- YEP Field Educator Apply by: Monday, February 13th

Learn more at: <http://anchorageparkfoundation.org/programs/youth-employment-parks/yep-jobs/>

*(From Anchorage Park Foundation email; photo of YEP employees working on trails in 2015, from of Anchorage Park Foundation website)*

### ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION CHALLENGE GRANT CYCLE OPENS

Do you have an idea for a project to improve an Anchorage park or trail? The Anchorage Park Foundation is now accepting applications for the 2017 Challenge Grant cycle.

This year Anchorage Park Foundation has a total of \$200,000 to award to community projects, thanks to generous funding from the Rasmuson Foundation. For every \$1 you raise through cash,

volunteer time, donations, grants, or in-kind services, the Anchorage Park Foundation will match \$1 for your project. You could be awarded up to \$40,000 in matching funds to make your dream a reality!

Challenge grants are special because they:

- Make community priorities a reality with lasting improvements to Anchorage parks and trails that benefit the public.
- Engage community groups to come together and develop effective partnerships within our community.
- Increase community stewardship and inspire volunteerism and philanthropy at a grassroots level.
- End with a new trail or park asset that is genuinely loved by the community.

Proposals are due by 5pm Friday, March 10, 2017. Click here to learn how to apply for a Challenge Grant: <http://anchorageparkfoundation.org/programs/challenge-grants/>

*(From Anchorage Park Foundation email)*

## SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Now's ideal time to book public-use cabin for a midsummer Alaska getaway: <http://tinyurl.com/h96cnr9>
- The making of an Alaska fat-tire fanatic: <http://tinyurl.com/z5cyf3h>
- The worst trail user: <http://www.anchoragepress.com/arts-entertainment/worst-trail-user>
- Anchorage Assemblyman wants to ask voters to expand where park maintenance taxes are paid: <http://tinyurl.com/zgrffgs>
- For Valley skiers, let there be lights: <http://tinyurl.com/jusdhaz>
- Anchorage Schools on Trails program: <http://tinyurl.com/zvppska>
- Why can't Mat-Su Borough keep traps from a few miles of public-use trails? (opinion): <http://tinyurl.com/j7ljxc9>
- 2017 Anchorage Transportation Fair (Feb 15): <http://tinyurl.com/hptg5xr>
- Ribbon cut on major improvements for skiing at Government Peak: <http://tinyurl.com/htc3zlj>
- Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation new website launched: <http://tinyurl.com/jzox4mx>
- Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation Fall 2016 Grants Announced: <http://tinyurl.com/gph2f57>
- Anchorage Assembly rejects most ballot questions but OKs vote for parks service area: <http://tinyurl.com/gudqc9d>
- Thank God, Anchorage finally got a snowy winter: <http://tinyurl.com/h7737ug>
- Photos: Snowy fun during Winter Trails Day in Anchorage: <http://tinyurl.com/hjpglc9>

## INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### INFO SOUGHT ON SUIT REGARDING TRAILS NORTH OF FAIRBANKS

A group of residents north of Fairbanks involved in a lawsuit is trying to determine how much two trails have been used in past and by whom. The outcome of this lawsuit could determine whether one of the trails can be used by the public or can be closed by the landowner.

A property owner is suing the residents for several things, including trespass. The residents are arguing that the use of one trail is protected by RS2477, a federal law, and AS 09.45.052, the Alaska adverse possession law. The adverse possession law requires, among other things, that the trail must have been used "uninterrupted" for at least 10 years. (The law can be read here: <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/statutes.asp#09.45.052>)

Proving such use requires some sort of evidence that the trail has been used for that period of time, such as testimonies of personal use or photographs from trail users.

The trail involved in the adverse possession case runs between the subdivision off Gold Mine Trail road and Gilmore Trail road. Specifically, the trail connects Bullion Drive on the Gold Mine side with Westwick Drive on the Gilmore side. Between the two it crosses the Trans-Alaska Pipeline corridor. The portion of the trail in dispute is on the north side of the pipeline corridor. The person suing the residents owns a block of land just over 50 acres on the north side of the pipeline corridor.

According to the residents, the trail was bulldozed in 1962 and used continuously until the landowner started blocking access and putting up no trespassing signs in 2014.

Anyone who has any information about use of that trail (see map) should contact Donna at [djgardino@gmail.com](mailto:djgardino@gmail.com).

The other trail runs along the north border of that 50-acre block and along the back of property lots off of Bullion and Tonsina roads, which are both in the Gold Mine Trail subdivision. This trail is supposedly protected by a seven-foot non-motorized public use easement. However, that easement is not included on the larger piece of property. Trails do not always follow exactly in their easements, as has been shown recently along the Skarland Trail, so determining if a particular section of trail is protected by an easement often requires an expensive survey. However, if it is determined that a trail falls within a public use easement then it is illegal to block that trail.

## DELTA TRAIL ASSOCIATION TO HOLD WALK OF LIGHTS FEB 4

The Delta Junction Trails Association will be holding a Walk of Lights on February 4 from 5:30-7:00pm. Walk the ice candle lighted pathway from Sullivan Roadhouse to Alaska State Parks office in Delta Junction. Dress up in lights and come out and enjoy some fun, including see the Chamber of Commerce's Festival of Lights. Fireworks at the city park to follow!

## 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; photo of Trails Coordinator Bryant Wright at the Sandpiper Trail sign from Fairbanks Parks and Recreation Dept Facebook page)



## BIRCH HILL ROAD, STEESE EXPRESSWAY PATHS TO BE BUILT

Two roadside trails are on track to be built this coming summer in Fairbanks, according to the winter 2016/2017 e-newsletter of the Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System:

Projects that are expected to be constructed in 2017 are:

- Birch Hill Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility: Construct a bike/pedestrian facility along Birch Hill Road to allow safe access to the Birch Hill Recreational Trail System. Construction expected in 2017.
- Steese Expressway to Front Street Bicycle/Pedestrian Path: Construct a bicycle/pedestrian path from the Steese Expressway separated path to Front Street. To be obligated in 2016. Construction expected in 2017.

To find out more about FMATS, see: <http://fmats.us>

## FAIRBANKS TIME LAPSE VIDEO SHOWS DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

The Chena Ridge area of Fairbanks used to have a network of trails on the southern side of the ridge. There are still trails to be found there, especially on the Koponen Homestead and the subdivision being developed on some of the homestead land, but many of the trails were lost as the area developed. With proper advance planning some of these trails could have been saved and would have ultimately benefitted residents of the area and the greater public. The following Interior Alaska Land Trust Facebook post highlights a video that shows how the area was developed over the years.

*This Google Timelapse video of Chena Ridge (and surrounding areas) offers an an eye opening look at just how much development has occurred over the past three decades. Viewing these changing dynamics helps to highlight the case for land preservation in and around Fairbanks.*  
<https://earthengine.google.com/timelapse/-v=64.82336,-147.91538,11.294,latLng&t=0.93>

## INTERIORWIDE LINKS

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- Obama administration moves to protect some of the most remote areas of Alaska: <http://tinyurl.com/lj9vz25>
- BLM beings Central Yukon meetings: <http://tinyurl.com/z7k8h3u>
- Denali skiers take advantage of groomed park trails: <http://tinyurl.com/hogcmn5>
- Denali Winterfest to include snowshoe, ski outings: [www.nps.gov/dena/planyourvisit/winterfest.htm](http://www.nps.gov/dena/planyourvisit/winterfest.htm)
- Breaking sweat to break a trail: <http://tinyurl.com/gvysq89>

## NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

### 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

- American Hiking Society's National Trails Fund Grants (deadline Feb 19): <http://tinyurl.com/joprsrh>
- Polaris T.R.A.I.L.S. Grant (deadline March 1): [www.polaris.com/en-us/rider-support/trails-application](http://www.polaris.com/en-us/rider-support/trails-application)



## ADVOCACY

- Public Lands Encounter Grave New Threat: <http://tinyurl.com/hv9goeo>

## TRAIL GUIDES

- 8 of the Best Section Hikes on the Florida Trail: <http://tinyurl.com/hfaqmyc>
- 5 Reasons to Visit Montana: Epic Hiking Trails in Glacier National Park: <http://tinyurl.com/z633klw>
- Top 5 trails: Explore Pensacola's varied nature parks: <http://tinyurl.com/hxc6nk9>

## TRAIL-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- American Trails (Jan): <http://tinyurl.com/zu3yooj>
  - *See entries in photo contest for National Recreation Trails*
  - *From downhill ski trails to mountain bike trails*
  - *The five most dangerous hikes in the United States*
  - *and more...*

## OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- 10 beautiful ice skating trails in Canada: <http://tinyurl.com/zt4xanj>
- Find an American Hiking Society Volunteer Vacation That's Right For You: <http://tinyurl.com/zotv8eb>
- Conquering Insecurity, World Records On The Hiking Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/z9gq3zt>
- Recreational Trail Program Achievement Award nominations due April 1: <http://tinyurl.com/m693prg>

## SLIGHTLY OFF TRAIL

- Free Entrance Days in the National Parks in 2017: <http://tinyurl.com/go82aan>

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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)