



NEWSLETTER

Mar
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907/334-8049

www.alaska-trails.org

ALASKA TRAILS NEWS AND NOTICES

WE'RE SEEKING VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH IDITAROD START



Alaska Trails needs volunteers to help with the Iditarod Ceremonial Start on March 3, 8am – 3pm.

On the day of the event volunteers may perform duties such as parking attendant, trail crossing guard, bus stop manager, shuttle bus rider, or performing snow fence and sign maintenance. Actual assigned duties will be directed by BLM staff members, therefore flexibility is required.

Volunteers will be provided with breaks, including at least one extended break to enjoy the event. Volunteers will also be provided with snacks, lunch and hot drinks, along with

an indoor room for warming up, eating, etc., along with access to indoor restrooms.

Sign up now at: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0945acae2ca1ff2-itarod>

NEXT TRAIL TALES EVENT HAPPENS AT END OF MARCH

Alaska Trails is excited to present the sixth installment of the Trail Tales storytelling series on Thursday, March 29, at 49th State Brewing Co in Anchorage. Doors open at 6:30pm, stories start at 7. Tickets are \$15. Storytellers will share short stories about their trail experiences, adventures, and life in general. Come enjoy this fun event and support Alaska Trails. Food and drinks will be available for purchase throughout the evening. Buy tickets at the door or order online at: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/trailtales.html>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR 2018 STATEWIDE TRAILS CONFERENCE

The Alaska Trails 2018 Statewide Trails Conference will be held April 26-28 at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage.

We will soon be posting information to our website, such as the agenda, keynote speakers, breakout descriptions, and registration information. The format will be similar to last year. There will be door prizes, vendor tables, poster sessions, the popular Trail Olympics, and a pre-conference session on Trail Design and Layout with Mike Shields (details to be determined).



If you've had success with a project or got a great idea you want to share, please consider creating a display for the poster session. Displays don't have to be complicated, but they should educate and spur discussion and more ideas.

Vendors, please contact us soon to reserve your table. We have a limited number of tables and they are in a prime spot—right next to the lunch buffet. (Contact information in the masthead.)

Hope to see you at the conference. Please email or call to share any ideas for topics or presentations that you would like to see. To see what was presented last year, see: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/trails-conference.html>

Updates on the 2018 conference will be posted on our Facebook Event page at : <https://www.facebook.com/events/358363531293740/>

(Trail Olympics photo from 2017 by Steve Cleary)

SEEKING FREQUENT FLYER MILEAGE DONATIONS

Alaska Trails is looking for frequent flyer mileage donations to fly its board members from around the state to the 2018 Trails Conference. Please contact Alaska Trails at office@alaska-trails.org or 907/334-8049 if you have miles to donate.

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

To go directly to the Alaska Trails "Pick. Click. Give." page: <http://www.pickclickgive.org/index.cfm/pfdorgs.info/Alaska-Trails>

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.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Steve Cleary, Executive Director



Happy Spring! Time to Prepare!

From the Olympics and the Iditarod to lots of other exciting activities on trails, spring is coming to Alaska. It is an exciting time to plan for a successful 2018. Alaska Trails continues to connect the dots to build trails, enhance trail groups, harness volunteers and promote the health and economic benefits of trails all across Alaska.

Statewide Conference – April 26-28: Alaska Trails is excited to host its annual Statewide Trails Conference to provide trail users and others an opportunity for training and networking with trail professionals. Government agencies, trail builders and non-profits will be able to share best practices and new ideas. There are many benefits of Alaska's trails and the conference brings them together all under one roof. Trails and outdoor recreation are a public health asset and an economic engine for the state, and the trails conference seeks to raise the profile of trails and their importance to Alaska. The conference keynote this year is “The Power of Volunteers on Trails” by Steven Moore, volunteer program coordinator, Washington Trails Association

Trail Stewards Prepares to Expand: The Alaska Trail Stewards is gearing up for the next summer maintenance season. Together with great partners like the National Park Service RTCA program, Chugach State Park and many others – we are planning volunteer projects with new land managers. Our goal is to double the impressive stats from 2017. Last year, Alaska Trail Stewards recruited 112 volunteers who contributed 756 hours of donated labor. Volunteers improved 7,055 feet of trail on public lands in Chugach State Park, Chugach National Forest, the City of Whittier, and Kachemak Bay State Park, amounting to \$23,059 in donated labor!

The Alaska Trail Stewards will continue to help land managers reap the benefits of working with volunteers. We will continue to build this program into a robust, statewide partnership option that benefits land managers and volunteers alike. Please let us know if you would like to get involved!

Farewell to Two Board Members: Thank you to Kristine Bunnell and Brian Burnett for their years of service on the Alaska Trails board. Their hard work and dedication has helped make Alaska Trails what it is and we are grateful.

Welcome to Two New Board Members: We are pleased to welcome two new Alaska Trails board members – Libby Kugel and Irene Turletes! Their energy and experience will help continue to build and sustain Alaska Trails. We are please to have them on the board.

Alaska Trails and its partners are looking forward to a busy and active summer trail season. We will continue to expand opportunities to build, maintain and advocate for trails all across this great state. We appreciate your support.

See you on the trails,

STATEWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

3 THINGS TO SUPPORT A STATE OUTDOOR RECREATION AGENDA

The Valdez Adventure Alliance is coordinating a “Juneau Fly-In for Outdoor Recreation” scheduled for March 7-8. Even people not participating in the fly-in, can help the effort. See suggestions below. For more information on the fly-in and the effort to start an Office of Outdoor Recreation contact Lee Hart (info@valdezadventure.com).

1. If you haven't already, read & sign the petition to Gov. Walker: <http://tinyurl.com/yd525l63>
2. Call or email your legislator to urge adoption of HCR 25: <http://tinyurl.com/y9aljxo4>
3. Encourage at least one of your colleagues in Juneau to join the fly-in group on March 7 at the House Natural Resources Hearing at 1 p.m. on March 7 then join them after work for the rally at Foggy Mountain Shop from 5:30 - 7 p.m., or at least ask them to sign the letter to the governor.

(From Valdez Adventure Alliance email)

SCA LOOKING FOR CREWMEMBERS TO GO OUT ON THE TRAIL

The Student Conservation Association is looking for adventurous Alaskans ages 15-19 to participate in summer Regional Crews. These crews are fielded during the summer months with the Launch! orientation program in May to prepare for the summer.

Crew Members work on crews of 6-8 members with 2 professional crew leaders. Crews are located throughout the state, with many on the Kenai and in Southcentral.

Members camp in tents, cook meals together, and fully participate in a team throughout the duration of their program. The team works together to complete conservation projects like trail work, cabin restoration, invasive weed removal, salmon habitat improvement, and forest fuel reduction. Teams will also participate in educational and fun activities like exploring the local ecosystem, practicing leadership skills, recreational hiking, and participating in local community events.



Application deadline is April 4. Find out more and apply at the SCA website:

<https://www.thesca.org/serve/program/alaska-regional-crews>

Interested in being a Field Leader? See this page: <https://www.thesca.org/serve/field-leaders>

(From the Student Conservation Association website)

COMMENT OPEN FOR DRAFT TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The public comment period for the 2018-2021 draft of the Alaska Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) closes March 16 at 5pm.

STIP is the state's four-year program for transportation system preservation and development. It includes interstate, state and some local highways, bridges, ferries and public transportation, but does not include airports or non-ferry-related ports and harbors. It covers all system improvements for which partial or full federal funding is approved and that are expected to take place during the four-year duration of the STIP.

Several trail and trailhead projects from across the state are included in the draft STIP. Some are associated with road projects while others are separate from such projects. To easily find trail projects in the STIP, search for the words “trail” and “path.”

To comment on the draft 2018-2021 STIP, view an interactive map for 2016-2019 STIP projects, and more see: <http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdplng/cip/stip/index.shtml>

STATE PARKS POSITIONS INCLUDE TRAIL DUTIES

Alaska State Parks is looking for seasonal employees and volunteers. Positions include trail crew and backcountry ranger assistant. Applicants must be at least 18 years old.

- For more information on the volunteer program see: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/vip/index.htm>
- For more information on Alaska State Parks seasonal jobs see: <http://tinyurl.com/7mog8q3>

RIVER FORECAST SITE KEEPS TRACK OF SNOW DEPTH



The National Weather Service’s River Forecast Center has a website that tracks snow depths at many locations across the state. In the spring, summer, and fall, the site also tracks several things regarding rivers, including how breakup is going and what river conditions are like. See the snow depth page for the website at: http://www.weather.gov/aprfc/Snow_Depth

STATEWIDE LINKS

- Eagle Watch (state parks newsletter): <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/eaglewatch/eaglewatcharchive>
- A simple step toward a sustainable economy: Alaska long trails: <http://tinyurl.com/yb2lagb9>

NORTHERN

- Lynden Oilfield Services winter off-road travel on the proposed community winter access trail to Utiqiagvik: <http://notice.alaska.gov/188763>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- State asks to build more public use cabins to meet demand: <http://tinyurl.com/yd8fw7by>
- Alaska files brief in support of hunter suing Park Service: <http://tinyurl.com/ydcf7xw8>
- Anchorage Rep. introduces bill to create Tangle Lakes game refuge: <http://tinyurl.com/yym955u4>
- Thank Senator Mia Costello for introducing Safe Routes to School legislation: <http://tinyurl.com/yacy6mnd>

SOUTHCENTRAL NEWS AND NOTICES

PARKS BOND ON ANCHORAGE’S UPCOMING VOTE BY MAIL ELECTION

The upcoming Anchorage municipal election will be entirely a “Vote By Mail.” (See more on Vote by Mail here: <http://tinyurl.com/y73g6dy9>.) Here’s what you need to know:

- Parks and trails are the ballot! Support the Prop 4: Parks Bond with a YES to be sure that our city's assets remain clean, green, safe, and secure into the future: <http://tinyurl.com/y93c4db3>
- Traditional polling locations will not be an option on election day.
- Ballots will be sent on March 13, so begin looking for yours in the mail after that date.

- You must use the ballot that has your name on it! Check now that your address is correct on your voter education: <https://myvoterinformation.alaska.gov>. If your ballot never arrives, visit one of the Accessible Vote Centers to cast your vote: <http://tinyurl.com/yaopfmj4>.
- To return your ballot, put a stamp on it and drop it in the mail, bring it to one of the 12 secure drop box locations, OR stop by an Accessible Vote Center: <http://tinyurl.com/y8ev7fxc>
- Mailed ballots must be postmarked by election day. The drop boxes and Accessible Vote Centers will close on April 3 at 8pm.
- There's still time to register to vote! Click here to register by March 3: <https://voterregistration.alaska.gov>

Still have questions? Visit www.muni.org/elections or call 243-VOTE (8683) for more information.

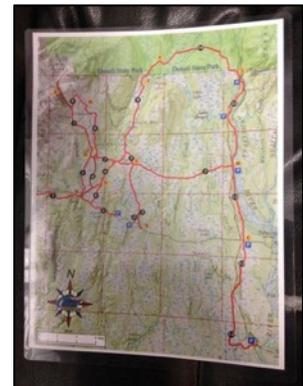
(From Anchorage Park Foundation email)

WINTER TRAIL MAPS AVAILABLE FOR SOUTH DENALI PARK AREA

Laminated maps of winter trails in the Petersville and south Denali State Park area are now available for \$10 each. On the back of each is the legend for waypoints. On the front are important telephone numbers for emergencies and businesses in the trail area. All the proceeds from the sale of these maps goes directly toward the costs for trail maintenance and grooming in South Denali.

- Anchorage Yamaha (Spenard Road at the RR crossing)
- Hatchers Pass Polaris Wasilla (next to AK Sales & Service on the Parks frontage road approaching Wasilla)
- Sheep Creek Lodge (MP 88 on the Parks Highway)
- Hatchers Pass Polaris, Willow (MP 67 on the Parks Highway)

(From Curry Ridge Riders Facebook page)



CHESTER CREEK TRAIL SYSTEM AFFECTED BY GAS PIPELINE WORK

Enstar Natural Gas Company is working on a project along the Chester Creek Trail system. The work will last into April but the company does not expect any trail closures. See the following post from the company's Facebook page:

We're in the process of replacing a critical portion of our pipeline system near the Chester Creek trail system between Bragaw and Northern Lights. The anticipated completion date is early April, 2018.

We do not anticipate trail closures in connection with this project and are taking active steps to minimize impact to trails & wetlands. As a result, you may notice that our work will include a combination of trenching and directional drilling as the project progresses.

We recognize the importance of Anchorage's trails and apologize in advance for any inconvenience that the project may cause. We are working to coordinate with trail users and events to ensure any conflicts are avoided.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call us: 907-334-7739

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.



YEP Crew Members take part in a 10-week summer program designed to be the best first-job experience ever. Anchorage teens between the ages of 16-19 learn natural resource management skills by building trails and restoring stream banks, while engaging in education, civic engagement, environmental awareness, and leadership. Make lifelong friends, build your resume, and have an enjoyable, paid job outside in Anchorage's public park lands.

Application deadlines are in February and March, depending on the position.

Learn more at: <http://anchorageparkfoundation.org/programs/youth-employment-parks/yep-jobs/>
(From Anchorage Park Foundation; 2015 photo of YEP employees from Anchorage Park Foundation)

SOUTHCENTRAL LINKS

- Proposed Land Use Permit and Public Access Easement for the Haessler-Norris Trail System, near Willow (comments due by March 5): <http://notice.alaska.gov/188679>
- Winter Trails Day celebrates greater Mat-Su parks access: <http://tinyurl.com/y9crbyz9>
- These 5 Southcentral Alaska road projects could change the way you get around (#5 includes bike lanes and pathways): <http://tinyurl.com/yclxqm7v>
- 9th Annual Kodiak Outdoor Film Festival (submissions due March 31): www.islandtrails.org/film.html

INTERIORWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

SURVEY RATES FAIRBANKS TRAILS OFFICE HIGH FOR REDUCTION

The Fairbanks North Star Borough is facing some tough budget cuts and has been canvassing the public on what to cut. Trail advocates who want to minimize cuts to the borough's Trails Office and Parks and Recreation Department will have to speak up as both were targeted highly in one survey as programs to reduce.

The borough recently conducted two surveys. One was a telephone survey conducted by a polling group that used scientific sampling methods. The other was a combination of an online survey and social media comments. It was not conducted using scientific methods. It's up to the administration how to view the importance of the comments from the different methods, but one thing is always true: Speaking up holds more weight than staying silent.

In the telephone survey respondents were asked "Which services would you prefer to reduce?" (page 13 of survey results) First on the list were "Air Quality Programs" (28.3%) and "Administration" (16.4%). However, the next two items were "Parks" (15.7%) and "Trails Management" (11.3%).

Interestingly, the telephone survey respondents did not strongly endorse reducing programs as an option for dealing with the budget problems (page 9 of results). "Reduce programs" rated at 24.3% compared to "Wait it out" (27.9%), "Increase taxes" (27.4%) and "A mix of tax increases and program reductions" (20.1%).

The borough also collected information through social media and its website. Through that method “Parks and Recreation” and “Trails” were placed much farther down the cut list. (See Question #3 on the report.) However, the choices were left to the respondents and so were not necessarily program-based. For example, some rated suggestions by participants included “Reduce,” “Borough,” and “Cut.”

Also, with this method of data collection “Reduce programs” rated much higher at 37.4% than with the telephone survey. (See Question #4 on the report.) Other categories in Question #4 of the social media/website survey rated as follows: “A mix of tax increases and program reductions” (27%), “Increase taxes” (17.3%), and “Wait it out” (12%).

- See full results of the telephone survey at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8b6oam6>
- See full results of the social media and website survey at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8f8aymn>
- Fairbanks Daily News-Miner story on the telephone survey: <http://tinyurl.com/y9kvtyys>
- Fairbanks Daily News-Miner editorial on the survey: <http://tinyurl.com/ydhv34d6>

THE TIME TO SPEAK UP IS NOW

Whatever your feelings on how the borough should deal with the budget situation, you need to speak up if you want your voice heard. Mayor Karl Kassel’s administration is putting together its budget right now. Here’s how to contact the mayor’s office:

- Email: <http://tinyurl.com/ybvd4kpv>
- Phone: (907) 459-1300
- Paper mail: 907 Terminal St. Fairbanks AK 99701

FAIRBANKS TRAILS CHALLENGE OFFERS REASONS TO GET OUTSIDE

Want to get outside more this winter? Take the Fairbanks Winter Trails Challenge and use the handy trail guide for instructions, tips, parking directions and trail maps! Grab a buddy or go it alone, but don’t miss out on the fun!

- Fairbanks Winter Trails Challenge Guide: <http://tinyurl.com/yckcg2st>
- Fairbanks Winter Trails Challenge List 2017/18 (runs through April 15): <http://tinyurl.com/yc2yuobn>
(From Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation Facebook page)

INTERIORWIDE LINKS

- NSCF tours make skiing an adventure: <http://tinyurl.com/ychhkth7>
- Low temperature doesn’t stop snowmachiners’ ride to Nenana: <http://tinyurl.com/y7638klm>
- Snow travelers enjoy lots of powder on climb up Rosebud Summit: <http://tinyurl.com/y932t7bq>
- Jason Garron: All ski trails, no skiing: <http://tinyurl.com/yawd79lr>

SLIGHTLY OFF-TRAIL

- ‘Uphill skiing’ may be growing, but Moose Mountain has had enough of trespassers: <http://tinyurl.com/ybn64qgy>
- Denali Park Road Opens to Mountain Vista Rest Area: <http://tinyurl.com/ybhkyob3>

NATIONWIDE NEWS AND NOTICES

SUSTAINABLE TRAILS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN MARCH

Some of the world's foremost trail experts will gather in West Virginia this spring to present hands-on instruction in trail construction, design, maintenance, development and management. The annual conference of the Professional Trail Builder's Association features multi-day workshops, classes, equipment, and construction demonstrations to provide attendees with practical tools to bring great trails to life. The core conference is March 26-28, 2018, with multi-day workshops before and after. More information may be obtained at <http://www.trailbuilders.org/training/sustainable-trails-conference-stonewall-2018>.

(From Jon Underwood)

NATIONWIDE / INTERNATIONAL LINKS

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

TRAIL GUIDES

- 3 Breathtaking Trails to Explore Across America: <http://tinyurl.com/yb734rcn>
- New York City's Top 5 Dayhikes: <https://www.backpacker.com/trips/nyc-top-5-dayhik>
- The most thrilling — and dangerous — trails in America: <http://tinyurl.com/yckps2am>
- Oregon state history hikes: 14 trails to celebrate Oregon's birthday: <http://tinyurl.com/y7y5ytpj>
- 57 Dog-Friendly Trails in California's foothills and the Sierra Nevada: <http://tinyurl.com/yd3xscvw>

ADVOCACY/VOLUNTEER

- Yosemite National Park volunteer trail crew trip with Conservation VIP: <http://tinyurl.com/yd5699fu>
- Coalition for Recreational Trails Annual Achievement Awards (nominations due April 6): <http://www.americantrails.org/awards/CRTawards.html>

FUNDING

- Federal Highway Administration funding chart (has trails-related categories): <http://tinyurl.com/zqz2m8p>

TRAILS-RELATED NEWSLETTERS

- For the latest American Trails news publications: <http://www.americantrails.org/trailtracks/index.html>
- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy e-News (February 2018): <http://tinyurl.com/y9ob9vle>

STUDIES/REPORTS

- The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative (book): <http://tinyurl.com/y82es5wu>
- The Economic Impact of the Huron River: <http://tinyurl.com/ycsv83a>
- Best Practices for The Development of Snowmobile Trails: <http://tinyurl.com/yaug49yh>

OTHER NATIONAL LINKS:

- National Trails Day is on June 2; register your event here: <http://tinyurl.com/y7hmxntl>
- America's Ski Trails Are Vanishing. This Olympian Has Taken Up the Cause: <http://tinyurl.com/yc6wu5w2>
- Outdoor Recreation Roundtable Welcomes Government Recognition of Industry as GDP Contributor: <http://www.funoutdoors.com/node/view/3918>
- Design Concept For Iowa's Oldest OHV Park Well Received By Stakeholders (scroll down): <http://tinyurl.com/yde9pf83>
- 2017 National Recreation Trails Photo Contest Winners: <http://tinyurl.com/y8wvfv8q>
- Trail Jobs and RFPs for Trail Work: <http://americantrails.org/NewsAction/trailJobs.html>
- A hiking trail connecting NYC to Canada is in the works: <http://tinyurl.com/y9wwymbc>

INTERNATIONAL LINKS:

- Sinai Trail: Bedouin bet on Egypt's first long-distance hike: <http://tinyurl.com/y8g5qydz>
- The 7 Best Hiking Trails Just Outside Budapest: <http://tinyurl.com/y8cuqdvv>
- 7 stunning UK hiking trails you will fall in love with: <http://tinyurl.com/ybgjewrw>

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 fbxtrails@gmail.com